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**LIFTERS AND GIFTERS:
KEEPING MILLENNIALS AND BOOMERS TOGETHER TO BUILD**

By

Richard P. Wilkerson, Sr

A Project Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of

SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

**In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree**

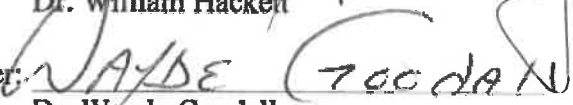
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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DEDICATION

To ALL Gifters and Lifters #StayTogether

ABSTRACT

One of the great needs of the church at this moment is to keep the primary funders, “Gifters,” and the primary workers, “Lifters,” of the church together in order to grow healthy, thriving, life-giving, Spirit-inspired churches. Inspired by the experiences of declining and plateauing church the author has witnessed and experienced, this dissertation will examine how to keep the church family together generationally, while at the same time planting new churches with the generations still intact. The research within this project, comprised of a theological study of biblical principles, a study of current literature, and surveys and interviews from pastors, Lifters, and Gifters from ten thriving churches, will help define that process by answering the question: How can the Church encourage Lifters and Gifters to work together for the success of the local church? The use of the terms Gifters and Lifters refers to the two entities that make up a great church. Gifters in this project are defined as those individuals forty and older who are the primary funders of the work of the Lord in a local church context. Lifters are thirty-nine and younger and are the primary servant leaders or volunteers in a local church. The Spirit of God moves the church forward through those who give and those who work to grow the church with no desire for monetary reward. This project will center on helping the local church keep these two groups together in loving unity, growing and expanding and planting the Church.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Project Introduced: Statement of Problem or Need

One of the great needs of the church at this moment is to keep the primary funders, “Gifters,” and the primary workers, “Lifters,” of the church together in order to grow healthy, thriving, life-giving, Spirit-inspired churches. Churches are living things, not mechanical things.¹ Christians are the people of God and, according to Scripture, the body of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit. The Bible says, “You also, like living stones, are built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus (1 Peter 2:5).² All followers of Jesus carry the teachings and ideas of Jesus Christ as the foundation for their mission to grow the Church, and, to reproduce organically, each must yield totally to Christ and His mission on earth, not personal agendas.³

Unfortunately, the church in the West has become a largely mechanical operation. The Assemblies of God (AG) is one example. The AG churches in America are in crisis. On August 2, 2013, Michael Clarensau, the former director of the “Healthy Church Network” for the AG, addressed the General Presbyters of the AG by saying, “Two thirds

1. Linda Berquist and Allan Karr, *Church Turned Inside Out: A Guide for Designers, Refiners, and ReAligners* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Pub., 2010), 17.

2. All Scripture citations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version.

3. Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 113.

of the AG churches in America have either plateaued or started to decline since 2007.”⁴ While these statistics are alarming, it is evident that the Assemblies of God throughout the world is on the rise. Recent numbers show that the worldwide church has grown to over sixty-nine million AG adherents, making it the largest Protestant organization in the world.⁵

The AG adherent numbers in the United States showed a decline from 2016 to 2017, with over 30,000 fewer attendees reported.⁶ Many church properties sit empty all week and house only a handful of people on the weekends. These empty, little-used buildings are becoming a scourge on the populace as they speak of another time in history that appears to be dead. These churches sit on properties that pay no taxes, taxes that would help the cities where they are located. Instead of building community, the churches infuriate local leaders because they have become the antithesis of what they once were—places that housed a message that brought life, vitality, and direction to the communities that previously depended on their existence.

The questions that must be answered are what is causing the decline, and what can be done to change it? One answer to the decline may be the desire of the younger generations to worship in a different way. Wherever Christianity has thrived, the family has thrived, and the Spirit’s leading and empowering of the church has been the prime motivator of each. Just as children want to break away from the family, the younger

4. Michael Clarendau, “Assemblies of God Church Growth Report,” Paper presented to Assemblies of God General Presbytery, Springfield, MO, August 2, 2013.

5. General Secretaries Office, “Statistics: Worldwide Churches and Adherents 1987-2017,” Assemblies of God, last modified 2017, <https://ag.org/About/Statistics>

6. General Secretaries Office, “Statistics: Adherents 1975 through 2017,” Assemblies of God, last modified 2017, <https://ag.org/About/Statistics>

generation in the church want to form their own church as well. What is created when the parents and children leave the grandparents' church is that the old church becomes practiced in funerals while the young church becomes practiced in baptisms.

My charge in this dissertation will be to examine how to keep the church family together generationally, while at the same time planting new churches with the generations still intact. The research within this project will help define that process by answering the question: How can the Church encourage Lifters and Gifters to work together for the success of the local church?

My use of the terms Gifters and Lifters refers to the two entities that make up a great church. Based on the experiences of the author, and the age ranges for common generation groups (Boomers, GenX, Millennials), Gifters in this project are defined as those individuals forty and older who are the primary funders of the work of the Lord in a local church context. Lifters are thirty-nine and younger and are the primary servant leaders or volunteers in a local church. It is possible and likely that both groups tend to cross over into the other's primary calling, but the idea is that the Spirit of God moves the church forward through those who give and those who work to grow the church with no desire for monetary reward. This project will center on keeping these two groups together in loving unity, growing and expanding and planting the Church.

Relation of Project to Student's Ministry

I have had the great privilege of serving the Lord through ministry in a professional ecclesiastical context. I became a licensed minister of the Assemblies of God denomination in 1973 in Fort Worth, Texas, and was ordained in 1976 in San Jose, California. For the first seven years of my ministerial service, I was the youth pastor in

two different churches: Rockwood Park Assembly of God in Fort Worth, Texas, led by Ira Stanphill, and Capital Christian Center in Sacramento, California, led by Dr. Glen Cole. In each of these contexts, I was given the opportunity to develop ministry skills in leadership, preaching, and discipling.

My second professional opportunity began in 1980, when my wife and I entered full-time itinerant evangelism. That evangelism, known as Rich Wilkerson Crusades Inc., became a two-million-mile adventure around the world lasting eighteen years. I spoke to approximately 2.5 million people in 1,700 different public high schools and over 1,000 churches in 27 different countries. During that time, we also developed a television ministry known as Peacemakers and started ten churches in ten of America's largest urban centers. Sadly, only a few of those churches remain.

That decline of churches is what led our family to leave full-time evangelism and move to the inner city of Miami, Florida, to build a prototype of what we felt an urban church could look like in the Assemblies of God denomination. The deacon board of a small inner-city church called Trinity Church asked us to be their pastors in August of 1998. During this season of professional ministry, I have observed many things in conjunction with my first two ministry opportunities and how everything fits together.

Because of our unique work, we attract many children and youth to our programs. In the last twenty years, our sons have all been through school. Three of the four have college degrees, and the youngest is a Princeton Theological Seminary graduate. All have followed us into the ministry. Three of the four have wives who are also preachers, and those three families have their own churches: one in Tacoma, Washington, one in Harlem, New York, and one launched a church plant only ten miles from us in Miami.

My sons and their wives all fall in the Lifter age range, as do many of the young servant leaders on our main campus. The church launch in Miami, and how the cooperation between Lifters and Gifters in our church led to that launch, is the driving force behind this dissertation project.

Limitations to the Project

In this project, I will research why Lifters are leaving established churches to the leadership of Gifters, examine how the local church can keep these two powerful groups of funders and volunteers working together, and show that the result of this partnership will be the growth and planting of life-giving churches with equal quantities of Lifters and Gifters. This project will not focus on the reasons once flourishing churches are now in decline. To limit the scope of the project, the research will not examine the coaching, mentoring, or training of the younger generation by the older. The project instead will focus on how to use the skills, passions, and talents of both groups. Finally, while acknowledging that there are many differences between the two generations, those areas will not be discussed; instead this project will focus specifically on those areas hindering the health of the Church and the areas applicable to growing the Church by strengthening local churches.

Several assumptions are made as research begins. First, I assume there is a way for Lifters and Gifters to work together successfully to build the church as they did in Jesus' ministry. Second, I assume the perceived divide between the generations will not only be bridged but instead will be closed on this generation's watch. The third assumption is that the results of this research will be applicable in most cultural contexts within the United States. The fourth assumption is that aging, failing churches can be

revived and do not always need to be replaced with new church plants. The final assumption is that the people interviewed for the project research will answer honestly and that they truly desire to work with others of different generations.

Ten pastors across the United States have agreed to allow me to reach out to their congregations as a way to receive feedback from Lifters and Gifters who are working together to grow their church. Each pastor has been contacted personally to discuss the scope of the project and the research. Three different surveys will be given. The first will go to the pastors of each church, the second will go to the 100 Gifters selected by the pastors, and the third to the 100 Lifters selected by the pastors. All surveys and the emails explaining the purpose of the surveys will be submitted to the Institutional Review Board for approval.

Each pastor has agreed to take a survey designed to gather his or her best practices in encouraging Lifter and Gifter cooperation and the experiences he or she has had with each group. Each pastor has also agreed to submit the contact information for ten Lifters and ten Gifters from their congregation. The pastors who have agreed to participate in the qualitative research are as follows:

- Patrick Conrad, Life Fellowship, Olive Branch, Mississippi
- David Divine, The Church at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill (Atlanta), Georgia
- Richard Gurganes, Church on the Rise, Rocky Mount, North Carolina
- Shawn Hennesey, Life Church, Green Bay, Wisconsin
- Cornelius Lindsey, Co-Pastors, The Gathering Oasis Church, Atlanta, Georgia
- Tom Manning, Christian Life Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Dale Oquist, Peoples Church, Fresno, California

- Adam Starling, Victory Church, Norman, Oklahoma
- David Stocker, Jr., Brave Church, Miami, Florida
- JonFulton Wilkerson, Church For All Nations, Tacoma, Washington

Surveys will be sent to each of those groups electronically. Basic demographic information will be collected on each survey: age, gender, church name, and role(s) in the church. Names will be collected only on the pastor surveys. Five of the ten pastors will be selected for follow-up interviews based on the data collected from the surveys submitted from their church. The responses and data gathered from the Gifter and Lifter respondents will remain anonymous, save for their categorization as either a Lifter or a Gifter. No names will be used when reporting the results of the research.

This project will focus on developing a practical way to help Gifters and Lifters work together for the good of their local church. The primary tool to be developed from the research will be a workshop the local church pastor and board can use to implement principles and strategies that encourage cooperation and partnership between these two groups as they work together in ministry.

Goals and Objectives

The first goal in completing this project is to develop a clear understanding of the motivation of the Lifters and Gifters, especially as it relates to their interactions in local churches in the United States. My personal observation and research have made it evident that there are real generational differences within these two groups when it comes to church involvement. A clear understanding of these differences is necessary to develop tools the local church can use to mitigate divisive generational differences.

The second goal will be to gain a comprehensive understanding of biblical mandates and examples, a firm theological understanding of why churches thrive when Lifters and Gifters work together, and an understanding of why they fail when there is a generational battle within the church. Scripture contains many examples of generations working together in worship. Particular attention will be given to Jesus' life and ministry, including examples of His interactions with older generations as a child, how He brought very specific people into discipleship with Him, and how the different generations worked together to found and grow the Early Church.

The third goal is to research current literature to gain an understanding of how generational differences are affecting other organizations and how those organizations are working to bridge the divide caused by the different philosophies and work habits of the different generations. That literature review will include an examination of how those organizations have limited generational divides to create cooperation and teamwork and how other types of organizations leverage the unique strengths each generation brings to the organization. The literature review will also include an examination of some of the unique characteristics of each generation that play a role in their participation in the local church.

During a recent visit to Church of the Highlands in Birmingham, Alabama, I witnessed some of those intergenerational dynamics first-hand at a conference focusing on the growth of the Church. The experience was beneficial as all ages were represented, and I was able to see the interaction of members of that church. Church of the Highlands is the second largest church in America, with over fifty thousand adherents on Sundays in seventeen locations throughout the state of Alabama. Their growth tracks, discipleship

courses leading to church membership, are taught at all age levels above elementary. Older students are encouraged to join a growth track immediately upon salvation. Consequently, the whole church has a culture that melds all ages into one powerful, heavenly machine that gathers the lost and beckons them into the fold. Church of the Highlands is one of the churches chosen for inclusion into my research because they are forming powerful intergenerational partnerships in the church from a young age.

Many of the systems in place at Church of the Highlands are good business practices taught at most universities in North America. Highlands has taken strong business systems and made them work in a Christian context that insists on measurable outcomes. The use of business systems and measurable outcomes coincides with one of the trends seen in current literature in businesses, organizations, and churches.

The fourth goal, and the primary objective of this project, will be to develop a workshop struggling local churches can use to bring their Lifters and Gifters back together. The workshop will be built on the principles revealed through the biblical and theological research, the best practices found in current literature, and the practical steps already being taken by successful local churches as discovered through the project research. The workshop will be specific enough to keep the local church focused on the goal of creating a spirit of cooperation between Lifters and Gifters while still being applicable in a variety of contexts and cultures.

The development of the workshop script, the practical application of this project, will be based equally on the biblical, theological, and literature reviews and on the data collected from the surveys. I will look for trends and best practices that are consistent throughout the research, and trends that are currently working in other fields but have not

yet been applied to the local church. The survey results will be vital to the crafting of the workshop as that data is the most current, and it will show what is actually working rather than theoretical. The results from the surveys will be divided into subgroups for analysis (pastor, Lifter, Gifter). This disaggregation will allow me to compare their responses through cross tabulation and filter the data to discover trends within each group.

Evaluation of the workshop will be given through feedback from a selected group of individuals, still to be chosen. This group will include my project advisor, five pastors from churches that are currently successful in integrating Lifters and Gifters, five pastors from struggling churches or church plants who would be the ultimate utilizers of the workshop, and the head of the Center for Leadership and Church Development of the Church Multiplication Network.

I will send each individual the workshop script along with an evaluation sheet, asking them to examine the document as if they were preparing to apply the product to their church or churches within their organization. Feedback gathered will include:

1. Any noted areas of weakness.
2. Clarification on information that is not clear to the reader.
3. Adjustments or additions they would recommend adding.
4. Their overall evaluation of the workshop.

Each of these individuals will bring a unique perspective through their personal experience, education, ministry tenure, and their experiences with struggling and growing churches.

Conclusion

The Church, especially the AG Church in the United States, must proactively work to find a solution to the decline of local churches and the generational splits that leave existing churches with reduced membership, slowed growth, and, eventually, closed doors. Church plants are vital to the overall growth of the Church, but should they occur if their creation weakens the parent church? Generational differences and conflict are not new; they have happened since the beginning of time. But biblical precedent shows that God calls the generations to work together to grow His Kingdom. The next four chapters will offer a review of biblical and current literature to show how generations can and should work together to grow the local church, introduce the research project that is the core of this project, analyze that research, and discuss how those elements come together in the creation of a workshop local churches can use to facilitate intergenerational cooperation between the Lifters and Gifters in their congregations.

CHAPTER 2: THE PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE

Biblical and Theological Rationale for Intergenerational Cooperation

Humans were created to be in relationship with God and with one another, no matter the age, gender, ethnicity, or demographic classification of the other people. God's relationship with His creation can be viewed as an "intricate relationship of community—many-layered, many-faceted and at many levels," and as we are created in His image that relationship of community binds us to one another as well.⁷ After God created man, He said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2:18).⁸ This narrative of relationship continues throughout the Bible.

The Need for Community

Followers of Jesus especially know they are called to community. Dietrich Bonhoeffer recognized the importance of that community and acknowledged that many Christians do not get to live in community with their brothers and sisters in Christ. To those who do, Bonhoeffer states, "Therefore, let him who until now has had the privilege of living a common Christian life with other Christians praise God's grace from the bottom of his heart. Let him thank God on his knees and declare: It is a grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren."⁹

⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 2.

⁸ All Scripture citations, unless otherwise stated, are from the New International Version.

⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 20.

Many issues divide humanity; however, when followers of Jesus stay focused on the Lord, they maintain their togetherness. Togetherness that attracts others to the fold of Christ. When speaking of the Early Church, the writer of Acts said, “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who are being saved” (Acts 2:46-47). There is an undeniable need in most people to surround themselves with those who are likeminded. Not that those friends are clones, but they have commonalities that bind them in conversation, appreciation for one another, and a willingness to protect one another.¹⁰ This is community. This is what God put in humans.

The more men and women of God connect with the Lord, the more they express a definite love toward fellow humans. This is an all-inclusive love that Jesus provides to each follower who desires to be more like Jesus. It is a love that emanates from the heart. According to Reggie McNeil, “Six qualities are essential for establishing friendships. Each of these is a benchmark of heart development: integrity, vulnerability, humility, willingness to listen, reasonable expectations, and sensitivity and responsiveness.”¹¹ The capacity to give, not just receive, is vital if the true lover of people is to emerge.

Growing the Church

People were also placed on this earth to grow the Church and spread God’s word. In the last verses of the book of Matthew, Jesus is quoted as saying, “All authority in

¹⁰ Dick Foth and Ruth Foth, *Known: Finding Deep Friendships in a Shallow World* (New York: WaterBrook, 2017), 186.

¹¹ Reggie McNeil, *A Work of Heart* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 129.

heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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” (28:18-20). David Sim says these verses, “can be understood not simply as the climax of the Gospel but as a summary of the Gospel or as its hermeneutical key. As its interpretative key Matthew’s story of Jesus must be read backward as it were, with the earlier sections being understood in the light of its dramatic conclusion.”¹² This would mean that the entire Gospel story can only be truly understood through the lens of the Great Commission. The only way to understand every decision Jesus made, every example in His every sermon, is to understand that it was all leading to that one moment.

Jesus’ words in the Great Commission were words of power, leading to the formation of the Early Church, and they still shape the growth of the Church today. Jesus had started this theme earlier in His ministry, when He said, “As You go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give’” (Matt. 10:7-8). There is little doubt that Jesus directly called His disciples to build the Church, and they were called to pass that responsibility on to future generations.

Paul, who wrote a large segment of the New Testament, also talked about spreading God’s word and building the Church through the Word of God. “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not

¹² David C. Sim, “Is Matthew 28:16-20 the Summary of the Gospel?” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 70, no. 1 (January 2014): 1.

chained” (2 Tim. 2:8-9). Paul suffered because of his desire to share the message he was given. But even though he was chained, there was no stopping the spread of the Word of God.

The mission of God has always been to bring His people back into relationship with Him, but not everyone has heard of His desire for all people. According to Melody Wachsmuth, “God’s mission through Jesus Christ is to actively reconcile, redeem, and transform humans, cultures, and creation until his reign is fully established—and he invites his church to be an active part of his holistic mission.”¹³ To fully understand this, a person has only to look at what He did to ensure each person has a chance for His blessing: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). This is reiterated in Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” If the Church is to obey Jesus’ command, so people the world over can receive God’s Word and the benefits of Jesus’ sacrifice, every follower of Jesus must be willing to respond to the Great Commission. When they respond, they further God’s mission to bless His creation.

A Matter of Joy

Spreading Jesus’ message should be a matter of joy. Father Alexander Schmemmann wrote: “From its very beginning Christianity has been the proclamation of joy, the only possible joy on earth... Without the proclamation of this joy Christianity is

¹³ Melody J. Wachsmuth, “Missional Reorientation God’s Mission as the Intersection of Surprise and Constancy,” *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology* 7, no. 2 (July 2013): 209–210.

incomprehensible. ... “For behold, I bring you tidings of great joy”—thus begins the Gospel, and its end is: “And they worshipped him and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy...” (Luke 2:10, 24:52). And we must recover the meaning of this great joy.”¹⁴ Chris Green said that the destruction of death is what gives us that joy: “God through Christ’s death destroyed death itself, and freed us once for all from the fear of death. And so we live here and now joyfully, even playfully.”¹⁵ All followers of Jesus are compelled to go forward with joy to spread the Good News of Jesus, but they need not do it alone. Jesus empowered His followers to be His emissaries on earth, and, before He ascended into heaven, He said to them, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit is vital for growth in both the local church and the corporate Church. According to Amos Yong, the Gospel is Christological, personal, and relational, and as “Jesus explains, ‘It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.’” (John 6:63).”¹⁶ The message of the gospel is powerful, but believers are powerless to share it effectively without the power of the Spirit.

¹⁴ Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1988), 24.

¹⁵ Chris E. W. Green, “The Comings of God & the Goings of Time: Refiguring History, Eschatology, & Mission in Conversation with the Letter to the Hebrews,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 27, no. 1 (January 2018): 48.

¹⁶ Amos Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 150.

If joy marked the countenance and fervor of the disciples of Jesus on the mission to spread His word, then love is the driving force behind every endeavor of evangelistic effort in the believer's life. Bill Hull looked at one of Jesus' commands:

“A new command I give you.” Jesus said. This Command raises the stakes of love. It means more than, “Do under others as you would have them do unto you.” It means more than turning the other cheek, forgiving someone who hurt you, or blessing those who curse you. Jesus asks us to do the impossible: to love other people until they “get it.”¹⁷

Love other people until they “get it.” Jesus asked His disciples to do difficult and seemingly impossible things, but this command surely met resistance. The difficulty comes because all humans are both the same and different. Sometimes the similarities are highlighted, sometimes the differences become the focus. When discussing the growth of the Church today, and the roles the different generations play, the differences often become excuses for conflict and discord.

The Generations Must Work Together to Grow the Church

It can be seen throughout Scripture that God's plan has been for Gifters and Lifters to work together in pursuit of His Mission. It is first seen in the lives of those in the Old Testament, and the stories and examples continue in the New Testament in the life of Jesus and the relationships of the Early Church Fathers. The Gifter to the Lifter, the elder to the next generation, without this continual approach to the gospel, there is no enduring message.

This relationship can be heard in the words of Moses to Joshua:

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the

¹⁷ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 140.

Lord swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deut. 31:7-8).

This can also be heard in the words of Paul to his son in the faith, Timothy. “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2 Tim. 1:6) and “You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1-3). The biblical model of generations working together is consistent and powerful, and it serves as a strong example for churches today.

Old Testament Examples

Throughout the Old Testament, there are numerous examples of intergenerational cooperation between Lifters and Gifters. These examples each offer lessons on what the believer should do. Key components from each example outline what is necessary for the two generations to experience fulfillment through their joint efforts to strengthen and grow the Church. One fact is important to remember: the people in these examples were not supernatural, they were normal. They had problems and weaknesses just like any person today. The one quality each possesses that set him or her up for success is faith.¹⁸

¹⁸ Frederick Brotherton Meyer, *Moses: The Servant of God* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1894), 8.

Jethro and Moses

Jethro was a priest of Midian. As a Midianite priest, he was a man of authority in his country. Moses had fled Egypt as a result of the murder he committed, and he finally came to a land foreign to him. The scripture says that Jethro's seven daughters came to the well where Moses rested to draw water to give to their sheep. Some shepherds started harassing them, trying to drive them away, and Moses stepped in to serve them (Exod. 2:16-17). Because of Moses' service, he was welcomed into Jethro's house.

Moses came into Jethro's household with no credentials proving his worth. But Jethro obviously saw something in him, and they developed a relationship that benefited both men. Moses learned not only service but patience and honor as well. After years of service to Jethro, Moses is granted one of Jethro's daughters as a wife. In Old Testament tradition, marriage is seldom about a blossoming relationship between the man and woman; instead it often indicates an event that establishes or formalizes "functional, familial relationships between the son-in-law and the father-in-law."¹⁹ Not only did Moses learn servant leadership and honor and patience while working for Jethro, but he also formed a solid relationship with him and was willing to listen to his leadership advice.

After Moses led the people out of Egypt, Jethro came to visit him in the wilderness and was impressed with Moses' success:

So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. Moses told his father-in-law about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the Lord had saved them. Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the Lord had

¹⁹ George W. Coats, *Moses: Heroic Man, Man of God, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 57*, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 52.

done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. Praise be to the Lord, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly. (Exod. 18:7-11)

After this, Jethro brought a burnt offering, as well as other sacrifices, to the God of Israel (vs. 12).

The next day after observing Moses' approach to listening to the needs of the people for the entirety of the day, Jethro offered Moses some leadership advice. He told Moses the work was too much for one man, and that he needed to focus on serving God and delegating the serving of the people to other, "capable men" (Exod. 18:17b-21). The phrase in verse 21 translated as "capable men" also means "men of competence," which can mean a warrior, a rich man, or a citizen of deserved respect and social influence.²⁰ But, for the judges, it also means physical stamina and material prosperity. "Men who hate dishonest gain" means they are immune to bribery because of their wealth."²¹

Moses valued Jethro's opinion, and his father-in-law continued to share his wisdom with him. In Exodus 18:22-23, he tells Moses that the judges should deal with simple cases themselves and they should bring only the difficult cases before Moses: "That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." This moment marks a change in Moses and Jethro's relationship, as "the role of Jethro as wise man or counselor on a national issue is quite different from his role in

²⁰ William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible Commentary Series (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 630.

²¹ Ibid.

the previous Moses-Midianite cycle, where he is a family patron.”²² Jethro has become a solid source of wisdom and counsel, serving Moses’ in his leadership role.

The older man, Jethro, was able to open up a door to servant leadership, patience, and honor to younger Moses. The critical, hands-on teaching from the older man taught the younger man the principles of delegating authority to other chosen leaders, a lesson that would assist him in leading the Israelite nation through the wilderness for over forty years.

Moses and Joshua

One of the most interesting examples of Gifters and Lifters in the Old Testament is that of Moses and Joshua. Both of these men are known for their unapologetic service to the Almighty. Moses was Joshua’s mentor, and Joshua was attentive to Moses’ leadership. The first thing Joshua most likely learned from Moses was the principles of war.

Josephus wrote of Moses’ prowess in battle in *Antiquities of the Jews*.²³ Moses, as the leader of the Israelites,²⁴ appointed Joshua as the leader of Israel’s makeshift army against the Amalekites. This left the guiding of the nation to Moses, and the overseeing of its defenses and offenses to Joshua. According to William Propp, “The division of command between Moses and Joshua is quite natural. Joshua is considerably younger

22 Jeon Jaeyoung, “The Visit of Jethro (Exodus 18): Its Composition and Levitical Reworking,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 298.

23 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book 2, chapter 10; see also, Feldman, Louis H. “Josephus’ Portrait of Moses. Part Three.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 83, no. 3/4 (1993): 232.

24 William J. Bryan, “Lessons from the Exodus Elders,” *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging* 21, no. 1/2 (January 2009): 20

than Moses. And in antiquity, generals (e.g., Joshua) conducted battles, while diviners and priests (e.g., Moses, Aaron, and Hur) examined the omens and besought the gods.”²⁵ Having just crossed the Red Sea (Exod. 14), Moses choice suggested he knew that Joshua had the capabilities to lead such an endeavor.

A common theme in the Gifter/Lifter relationships, Joshua wanted to be with Moses so he could serve him. Moses allowed this to happen, which indicates he was an active participant in Joshua’s growth. When Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the law, he took Joshua with him (Exod. 24:13-14). This was the first time Joshua was seen as someone other than a military leader. Moses including him on such an important occasion marked him as someone Moses was bringing near for mentorship.²⁶

While they were on the mountain for forty days and nights receiving the law, the people of Israel built the golden calf and turned their backs on God. When Moses and Joshua returned, it was Joshua who uttered the first words, “he said to Moses, ‘There is this sound of war in the camp’” (Exod. 32:17). Tremendous judgment came from the hand of God upon the Israelites for their sin, and Joshua was able to observe first hand God’s response to the people’s disobedience. This experience likely helped Joshua and Caleb respond when the other spies and the people of Israel rebelled against God’s plan by giving and then believing the negative report.²⁷

Joshua continued to stand strong as Moses’ understudy. The tent of meeting was the holy place in the wilderness. Joshua stood outside the tent of meeting when Moses

25 Propp, 617.

26 Bryan, 24.

27 Ibid., 24.

went inside and hear from God. After Moses left, Joshua would remain (Exod. 33:9-11). Joshua was growing in his faith as Moses' Lifter, and he desired to hear the voice of God.²⁸

At every point of Joshua's apprenticeship, Moses continued to elevate Joshua with new opportunities. When it came time for Moses to send twelve spies to check out the territory of Canaan, Joshua was one of the twelve. These spies, save for Joshua and Caleb, came back with negative reports concerning the promised land, leading the people of Israel to grumble and complain. God became so angry that He told the people that only the two spies, Joshua and Caleb, and those twenty and younger would be allowed to one day see the promised land. The rest would die before they got there (Numbers 13-14).

Joshua and Caleb pleaded with the people to let go of their negativism because they would surely be victorious in their pursuit (Joshua 14:9). But the people did not listen. As soon as the grumbling began, Moses and Aaron fell face down before the Lord. This was a sign of humility and repentance for the people because Moses and Aaron knew God and knew He would bring judgment against such an attitude. Joshua and Caleb followed the elder's example and immediately made their own plea (vv. 5-6)

The source of Moses' authority over the people of Israel was God's call on him. While Moses raised Joshua up as a leader, his authority also came from God's call on his life.²⁹ Moses contributed to Joshua's military prowess and leadership skills. By watching Moses seek the Lord, Joshua also developed a thirst for God's voice. By taking Joshua with him on Mount Sinai, he allowed Joshua to witness how Moses communicated with

28 Ibid.

29 A. Kay Fountain, "An Investigation into Successful Leadership Transitions in the Old Testament," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 7, no. 2 (July 2004): 190.

the Almighty. By assisting Moses, Joshua learned the proper response to rebellion. And at Moses' side, he learned the power of faith, positivity, and always asking God's will.

The end of Moses' tenure and the transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua was done with a laying on of hands (Deut. 34:9). The successful transition of leadership was orchestrated by God and carried out by Moses, "However, the direct access to Divine guidance enjoyed by Moses, did not carry over into the life of Joshua who, like Saul and David, and other kings and leaders, had recourse to the services of priests for this purpose."³⁰

Naomi and Ruth

One of the most critical lessons that the Old Testament figure known as Naomi taught her daughter-in-law Ruth was the lesson of faithfulness to God. Naomi and her husband Elimelek, along with their two sons, relocated to Moab because of famine in Bethlehem (Ruth 1:1-2). Elimelek died and ten years later so did the two, now married, sons, and Naomi was left with two Moabite daughters-in-law (Ruth 1:3-5). Naomi decided to return home to the safety of the people she knew and the God she loved. She had followed her husband out of loyalty and obedience. She told the wives of her sons to go back to their homes, and she would go back to Bethlehem (vv. 8-14). Orpah returned to her people, "But Ruth replied, 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.'" (v. 16).

³⁰ Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible Commentary Series (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 353.

Ruth could see faithfulness to God in her mother-in-law, and she shows faithfulness to Naomi. “Ruth’s final and climactic sentence promises loyalty to death and to the grave, including the adoption of Israelite burial custom.”³¹ Not only were these women committed to being faithful to the same God, but there was also a commitment to being faithful to one another. From this point in the story, two different generations began to work in tandem for a common goal: survival. They were two women living without the protection or provision of a male guardian. Commonly held beliefs about women in ancient Israel seemed to view women as if they were of little importance, but the book of Ruth showed otherwise. Carol Meyers posited that women had a more significant role in society than was previously believed.³² According to Alicia Suskin Ostriker, “Ruth is the only book of the Bible that gives us a hint of a women’s community and social life existing alongside yet distinct from male society.”³³ But even with that community, the Naomi and Ruth had no trade or sustainable way to provide for themselves. They needed food. Thankfully, they had returned to Bethlehem just as the barley harvest was beginning (Ruth 1:22).

Naomi had a relative on her husband’s side named Boaz, who owned a field where barley was being harvested. She told Ruth to glean in Boaz’s field. Boaz asked about her, and his associates told him everything they knew of Ruth and how hard she

31 Edward F. Campbell, *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible Commentary Series (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 75.

32 Carol L. Meyers, “‘Women of the Neighborhood’ (Ruth 4:7): Informal Female Networks in Ancient Israel,” in *Ruth and Esther*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1999) 110-127.

33 Alicia Suskin Ostriker, *For the Love of God: The Bible as an Open Book* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 41.

worked. Boaz met her and told her to stay in his field and that he prayed for the Lord to bless her. The Lord did bless her, and she worked hard:

So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough. Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!” (Ruth 2:17-19a).

This might seem like a story of a relationship between two women or a story of a woman stepping out in faith and working hard to get ahead in life, but what Ruth had accomplished was amazing. The quantity she gathered was impressive, especially for a gleaner following behind the harvesters. According to Daniel Block: “To thresh an ephah of grain from one day’s labor is an extraordinary feat, not to mention Ruth’s having to carry it home! Depending upon the quality of the grain and which standard one uses, an ephah of barley could have weighed from 30 to 50 pounds.”³⁴

Seeing what Ruth had brought home, Naomi began to bless the man who had allowed Ruth to work in his field. When Ruth told Naomi whom she had worked for, Naomi was overcome with gratitude and said, “The Lord bless him! He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers” (Ruth 2:20). A guardian-redeemer or kinsmen-redeemer, in Israeli custom and, by law, had a responsibility to care for the widow of a relative and produce an heir for the deceased relative if he was next in line.³⁵

³⁴ Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, The New American Commentary, vol. 6 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 670.

³⁵ Eryl W. Davies, “Ruth IV 5 and the Duties of the Gō’ēl,” *Vetus Testamentum* 33, no. 2 (1983): 2.

Two Hebrew words translate as redeem. The second word, *gō'ēl*, was used in this situation. *Gō'ēl* was a technical legal term, related specifically to Israelite family law. As a kinship term, it denoted the near relative responsible for the economic well-being of a relative, in this case the widow of a deceased man who had no offspring.³⁶

In chapter three of the book of Ruth, Naomi paid out an elaborate plan for her daughter to entice Boaz' attention, as Naomi was now concerned for Ruth's long-term provision. Ruth said to Naomi, "I will do whatever you say" (Ruth 3:5). She followed Naomi's directions precisely, and Boaz told Ruth that he was a near kinsman, but that there was another man who had a closer relationship. Should he decide not to assume his duty, Boaz would be Ruth's kinsman-redeemer (3:12-13).

The next morning, Boaz met the man and talked with him about the situation. The other man declined his rights as guardian-redeemer. Boaz then assumed his rights in front of witnesses:

Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!" (Ruth 4:9-10).

Boaz, with his actions, ensured the lasting legacy of Naomi's husband and son. Through this act of kindness, he also ensured that his name would be remembered as an ancestor of David.³⁷

³⁶ Block, 674.

³⁷ James McKeown, *Ruth, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary*, eds. J. Gordon McConville and Craig Bartholomew (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 65.

The power of this story is the intergenerational working of the two women, Naomi and Ruth. Because Naomi decided to be faithful once again to her God, her daughter-in-law chose to do the same. Their faithfulness to God and their trust in Him led to the birth of a son, not only for Boaz and Ruth but for Naomi as well. Their story did not end with the last verse of the book of Ruth, it served as a new beginning. Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him as her own, and “The women living there said, ‘Naomi has a son!’ And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David” (Ruth 4:16-17). Faithfulness, obedience, and love between two generations led to the birth of a lineage that would bring hope to all future generations.

Deborah and Barak

The story of a woman in an extraordinary position of leadership, named Deborah, is told in Judges 4. The story is followed by a song by Deborah and her associate, Barak. Deborah was one of only four women referred to as a female prophet in the Bible (Judges 4:4).³⁸ Her role as leader was unique, and the power of her story hinges on the idea of teamwork that Deborah encouraged. According to Scripture:

Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leaving Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’” Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.” “Certainly I will go with you,” said Deborah. “But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours,

³⁸ Hanna Tervanotko, “‘Obey Me Like Your Mother’: Deborah’s Leadership in Light of Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum 33,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 24, no. 4 (June 2015): 301.

for the Lord will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.” So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh (Judges 4:4-9).

Israel had run from God, and because of this disobedience God placed them under servitude at the hands of Jabin, king of Canaan.

The people cried to God for help and the Lord spoke to his prophet, Deborah, who relayed the commands to a general who led the armies of Israel. Michelle Knight points out, “Barak is first and foremost a recipient of a message from God through the prophet. Like Gideon and Manoah after him, Barak encountered a divine envoy—in this case, one who is clearly human. Her authority in the eyes of the narrator is unquestionable; like her vocational forefather, Deborah directly relays the commands of God to Barak, as Moses once did for the people of Israel.”³⁹ When her associate Barak told her he would not go if she did not go with him, his reply is a conditional reply to a direct command from God.⁴⁰ Deborah tells him if she comes, victory will not be his, because “while Barak fancied himself and his forces central to YHWH’s plans, and thus requested that the prophet accompany them to the battlefield, Deborah explained that God would bring victory in a completely different setting through an agent not associated with the militia.”⁴¹

Deborah responded as a leader, but with the approach of a person who was concerned for her team. She was quick to explain to Barak that he would not get the credit or honor if he insisted on her going with him. A thorough understanding of what

39 Michelle E. Knight, “Like the Sun in its Might: The Literary and Theological Function of Judges 5 in the Book of Judges,” (D.Min Project, Wheaton College, 2018), 123.

40 Ibid.

41 Knight, 126.

Barak would face after the event was complete was Deborah's approach to team. When the victory was completed, there is no indication that Barak chafed under her victory.

There is an important consideration at this juncture when speaking of Gifters and Lifters. In this particular case, the Gifter would be Deborah, the one with the complete authority. She was dealing with a major part of her team, Barak, representing the Lifter side of the equation. Also important is the concept of women in authority over men. "Barak's declaration that he will go to battle only if accompanied by Deborah (4:8) is not to be interpreted as cowardice; rather, within the context of the worldview of the literature, he was wise to know that victory comes with the presence of God's favorite."⁴² This is a powerful story from Scripture in which men and women work together while men are under the authority of a woman.

A look at the "Song of Deborah," found in Judges 5, shows that Deborah again praised the team. During the song, she and Barak praised the tribes that fought with them, including Issachar (5:15) and Naphtali and Zebulun (5:18). They also praised the work of the woman Jael (5:24-27). This team, led by a woman, serves as a valuable example of generations working together, women serving as leaders, and women in military leadership in Scripture.

Samuel and Saul

The story of the Prophet Samuel and the man named as Israel's first king, Saul, is a look at how a relationship spurned destroyed a person's entire lineage. The people of Israel were weary of a prophet as the leader of their nation, a system that dated back to

⁴² Susan Niditch, *Judges a Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 65.

the time of Moses and Joshua, then the judges. They wanted a real king, just like all the heathen nations surrounding them. Samuel was very upset about their complaining until God spoke to him in 1 Samuel 8:7, “And the Lord told him: ‘Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.’” The desire of the people was not to be like the Lord; it was their desire to be like other nations. But the people refused to listen to Samuel. They demanded a king (1 Sam. 8:19-20).⁴³

Samuel set out at the Lord’s direction to find a king, but Saul actually found Samuel. His father’s donkeys had been lost, and Saul and another young man were sent by his father to find them. Along the way, Saul became weary of the search and wanted to return home to his father. His servant disagreed, saying, “Look, in this town there is a man of God, he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let’s go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take” (1 Sam. 9:6). In that town they met Samuel, and God spoke to Saul: “When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, ‘This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people’” (1 Sam. 9:17).

Samuel and Saul’s relationship started in an atmosphere of tension. The people of Israel were demanding a king and Samuel disagreed with that wish. He prophesied that it would lead to problems for the nation. Being faithful to God, he acquiesced and followed God’s wishes to grant to the people what they wanted. The start of their tense relationship played out in 1 Samuel 10:6-8, which went back and forth “between Samuel encouraging Saul to follow his own intuition, inspiration, what his hand ‘finds’ to do under God’s

⁴³ Dawn Maria Sellars, “An Obedient Servant? The Reign of King Saul (1 Samuel 13—15) Reassessed,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 35, no. 3 (March 2011): 320.

prophetic guidance; and having to remain dependent on old man Samuel coming and telling the youngster what to do.”⁴⁴ The situation had to be difficult for the young man newly crowned with power, and for the older man who had to give control of the nation over to a young man who knew little and did not follow orders well.

Samuel anointed Saul to be king of Israel that day, and “As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day” (1 Sam. 10:9). His anointing was such a powerful event in Saul’s life that God changed his heart. Immediately following this, in the very next verse, Saul is seen entering Gibran where a procession of prophets met him. The Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul, and he began to prophesy with them. “Everyone who has known him for some time is surprised at what they now see: Saul’s being caught up among the prophets. Here they have already known something—or better, someone—for a long time, but what they now see is different from what they have long known.”⁴⁵

The story of Saul and Samuel contains two examples of how a Lifter (Saul) can reject the word of their Gifter (Samuel) and lose everything they were promised. It also shows how the Gifter can do everything God tells them to do to support the Lifter, but with reluctance and even at times harshness. The first example happened soon after Saul’s anointing, in 1 Samuel 13. The prophet had just told the people, “But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he

44 Rabbi Howard Cooper, “‘Too Tall by Half’—King Saul and Tragedy in the Hebrew Bible,” *Journal of Progressive Judaism*, no. 9 (November 1997): 13.

45 A. Graeme Auld, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 113.

has done for you. Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will perish” (1 Sam. 12:24-25). The people did not listen.

In chapter 13, Saul had blown the trumpet signaling war against the Philistines. The Philistines assembled, and they far outnumbered the Israelite army. The army, including King Saul, was “quaking with fear” (vs. 7). After waiting for seven days for Samuel to come, Saul offered a traditional pre-battle burnt offering on his own.⁴⁶ He did not wait for Samuel, the only one with the authority to offer sacrifices before the Lord. When Samuel arrived on the scene, he asked Saul, “What have you done?” (1 Sam. 13:11). King Saul made excuses for his decision, and received the response that foretold the end of his rule:

You have done a foolish thing,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. 14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command (1 Sam. 13:13-14).

A. Graeme Auld points out, “To develop the analogy with modern employment terms, Saul is told remarkably early in his probationary period that he has been appointed to a post with tenure, but has already demonstrated he is not up to the job.”⁴⁷ Even though Saul received guidance from Samuel, at the first test Saul appeared to be incapable of keeping the most rudimentary of His prophet’s direction and Samuel was not inclined to be lenient.

The second mistake Saul made through disobedience to his Gifter, Samuel, is found in 1 Samuel 15:1-2. God, through Samuel, told Saul to marshal the Israeli army

⁴⁶ Sellars, 323.

⁴⁷ Auld, 143.

and attack the Amalekites. He told him to destroy everyone, as well as their animals, but Saul spared the king and the best of the animals, wanting the spoils of the battle (1 Sam. 15:9). “Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: ‘I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.’ Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the Lord all that night” (1 Sam. 15:10-11). This second act of disobedience was the complete undoing of any future Saul, or his line, would have. When he asked Samuel to come back with him, so Saul could once again worship the Lord, Samuel declined. Samuel, the Gifter, had been faithful to God and anointed Saul. He had offered him guidance and been his conduit to the Lord. But Saul, in his greed and disobedience, had forsaken all of that.⁴⁸ He was offered every support, even if the support was offered reluctantly by Samuel, to serve the Lord and do His work (Lifter), and instead he threw the support of the Gifter away.

Saul, the Lifter or understudy in this story, was unwilling to follow the clear direction of his Gifter, Samuel, direction that in this case was actually coming from God. Samuel is the priest and prophet of God who was used of God as an oracle of divine truth, but he also seems to have resented Saul from before he even knew him. Saul’s downfall, however, was that he allowed his pride to lead him into disobedience and consequently he lost everything.

David and Solomon.

Saul had failed God, and his succession and lineage were taken from him because of his disobedience and unrepentance. David assumed the kingship at age 30, and

⁴⁸ Cooper, 17.

immediately started to restore the nation (2 Sam. 5:4). His first act was to reclaim Jerusalem from the Jebusites (vv. 6-7). Then he attacked the Philistines with God's approval and was victorious because he sought and followed God's counsel (vv. 17-25). His next act was to gather all of the young men of Israel, 30,000 in total, and they marched to Judah to collect the Ark of God and return it to the City of David (2 Sam. 6:6-12). After a time of peace, David was convicted that the Ark dwelled in a tent, while he had a palace (2. Sam. 7:2). Nathan initially advised him to build a temple for the Ark, but God came to him with a revelation. He told Nathan to go to David and give him a message, and Nathan obeyed and shared the revelation with David:

This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever (vv. 8-16).

Solomon was the son chosen by God to build a temple. The story of David and Solomon is a prime example of the Gifter and Lifter exchange working effectively to achieve a goal.

The story actually begins with an interruption in the plan. In 1 Kings 1, Adonijah, Solomon's half-brother, put himself up as the new king without his father's permission.

Bathsheba, Solomon mother, entered David's private quarters and argued for her son's place as the next king of Israel. She reminded the king that he had promised her that Solomon would follow him as king (vv. 15-21). Then the prophet Nathan came in to let the king know what his son Adonijah was doing. The king called for Bathsheba again and, "The king then took an oath: 'As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, I will surely carry out this very day where I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place.'" (1 Kings 1:29-30) David made Solomon king over the land.

David then charged Solomon before he died. This charge was administered by David to Solomon in 2 Kings 2:1-9, as required by God: "By God-given requirement a ruler had to pass on his responsibilities to his successor (Dt. 17:18-20). Such final directives marked a transfer of leadership, as by Moses (Dt. 31:1-8), Joshua (Jos. 23:1-16) and Samuel (1 Sam. 12:1-25)."⁴⁹ David was near death when he handed the kingship over to his son. The commands in 1 Chronicles 28-29 could have been presented over an extended period of time, yet the narrative suggests that David died soon after his charge to Solomon (vs. 10).

David's exit was prefaced by encouraging words and a reminder of the covenant God had made with him:

So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go and the Lord God may keep his promise to me; "If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with

⁴⁹ Donald J. Wiseman, *1 & 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 74.

all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel” (1 Kings 2:2b-4).

David told Solomon to be strong and obey the law of Moses, so he could truly prosper.

Part of that prospering was the construction of a temple to house the Ark.⁵⁰

Solomon took the admonishment well. David was still the anointed of God. When

Solomon finished handling his father’s unfinished business, he was firmly established on his throne and, “The kingdom was now established in Solomon’s hands” (1 Kings 2:46b).

The lessons the Gifter (David) taught his Lifter son (Solomon) included: be strong, live according to Moses’ law, and finish strong. Solomon applied these lessons and asked

God to grant him wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-14). Eventually, the people of Israel, “saw that he had wisdom from God” (1 Kings 3:28).⁵¹

Elijah and Elisha

Elijah and Elisha are closely connected in the Old Testament.⁵² Even when Elijah tried to separate himself from Elisha, the younger man would not go,⁵³ which means the younger Elisha had a good amount of time to learn from Elijah. According to John Noble, the beginning of Elijah and Elisha’s relationship was a curious exchange. In 1 Kings 19:19-21, “The old prophet finds his protégé plowing in the field with twelve yoke of oxen, passes by him, and casts a mangle on him. After this, and without further

50 Allen S. Maller, “Solomon: The Too Wise King,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (April 2011): 92

51 *Ibid.*, 91.

52 Kristin Weingart, “‘My Father, My Father! Chariot of Israel and Its Horses!’ (2 Kings 2:12 // 13:14): Elisha’s or Elijah’s Title?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 257.

53 *Ibid.*, 258.

instruction, Elisha runs after Elijah.”⁵⁴ After returning to the field, slaughtering the oxen, and hosting a feast, Elisha follows Elijah and “becomes his attendant.”⁵⁵ From that point on, Elisha is marked as Elijah’s successor.⁵⁶

As Elisha learned from Elijah, Elijah taught his young Lifter, Elisha, two critical lessons. First, Elijah taught the young man to prophesy the word of the Lord accurately. 1) Elijah prophesied accurately to King Ahab of Israel that there would be neither dew nor rain in the land for three years (1 Kings 17:1). 2) Elijah told the widow of Zarephath that if she fed him first during the famine, God would provide flour in her jar and oil in her jug during the drought. She did as he said, and God provided (1 Kings 17:13-15). 3) Elijah had King Ahab assemble 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah and meet at Mount Carmel. He told them that they were going to sacrifice an animal on an altar and pray to their respective gods. Whichever answered by fire, that was the God Israel would serve (1 Kings 18:19-24). The God of Israel burned up the sacrifice with fire causing the people of Israel to worship the true God (38-39). 4) Immediately thereafter, Elijah told Ahab to get something to eat and drink because rain was about to fall (v. 41). After three years, the rains came like a flood (v. 45). If Elisha was not in the near vicinity, he was hearing reports of what Elijah was doing. This may be why Elisha was so quick to respond to the call of God when Elijah came for him (1 Kings 19:19-21).

Elijah accurately made one more prophecy that must be referenced. In 2 Kings 1:1-17 Ahab had died, and Ahaziah, his son, took his place. Ahaziah injured himself in a

⁵⁴ John T. Noble, “Cultic Prophecy and Levitical Inheritance in the Elijah-Elisha Cycle,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41, no. 1 (September 2016): 46.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

terrible fall. He sent messengers to the heathen god of Ekron, Baal-Zebub, to see if he would recover. Elijah met them on the way and prophesied that because King Ahaziah had done this, he would surely die. When his messengers returned with this message, King Ahaziah sent two different bands of fifty men each to ask Elijah to come and meet with him. Each time, fire was called out of Heaven by Elijah and consumed the fifty men. When the king sent a third party of fifty men, the leader of the party begged Elijah to have mercy on his life. So Elijah went with him to see King Ahaziah. Once there he told the king in person what God had said, and the king died in his bed, just as Elijah had prophesied.

Elisha followed Elijah's example and listened closely to God. He wanted to live up to Elijah's example, and his loyalty would lead to Elisha being seen as the legitimate successor to Elijah.⁵⁷ As their time together was coming to an end, Elisha asked Elijah for a double portion of his anointing on his life (2 Kings 2:9). This request is a direct reference to Deuteronomy 21:17, and places Elisha in a position to receive the rights of Elijah's heir.⁵⁸ Elijah responded by saying, "... if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not" (v. 10). According to Nobel, "The implication is that the conferral of Elijah's spirit is a divine prerogative, and not really fully Elijah's to give."⁵⁹ At that moment, a chariot of fire descended from heaven, the fire separated the two men, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind (v. 11). Elisha's received the anointing and

⁵⁷ Ibid., 260.

⁵⁸ Nobel, 53.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 54.

became a powerful prophet himself, healing the bad water at Jericho (2 Kings 2:19-20) and sharing prophecies from God with the people of Israel.

That second critical lesson Elijah, the Gifter, taught the younger Elisha, the Lifter, was to trust fully in the miracle-working power of God. Elisha truly received a double portion of anointing. This was seen in the request Elisha made of Elijah before he was taken to heaven and came to fruition in the miracles recorded in both men's lives and ministries. There were eight recorded miracles in Elijah's life (1 Kings 17:1, 14, 22; 18:38-40, 41; 2 Kings 1:10, 12-14; and 2 Kings 2:8). Elisha had sixteen recorded miracles, double that of Elijah (2 Kings 2:14, 20, 24; 3:17; 4:5, 16, 35, 41, 43; 5:14, 27; 6:6, 17, 18, 20; and 13:21).

These Old Testament examples show that God created humans to be in relationship with one another and to work together to further His relationship with humanity. Without communication between the generations, this would not have been possible. That pattern of cooperation and partnership continued in the New Testament.

New Testament Examples

The importance of the elders passing knowledge and experiences on to the younger generations is not limited to the Old Testament. Jesus' life and ministry brought a new dynamic to the Gifters and Lifters mentioned in the biblical texts. In fact, those dynamics started before He was even born.

Elizabeth and Mary

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were connected for a lifetime through their shared pregnancies and the lives of their children. The story of young mother-to-be Mary going to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who was also

expecting a child is told in Luke chapter 1. Elizabeth and her husband Zachariah were elderly at the time. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive (v. 7). Barrenness was a great disgrace for a woman of that time, and finding that she was not only pregnant but carrying a special child ordained by God, “Elizabeth experiences joy in anticipating the arrival of her child and relief at being delivered from the opprobrium that she has endured.”⁶⁰ Elizabeth is likened to Sarah, who gave birth to Abraham’s son Isaac in her old age after a lifetime of barrenness (Gen. 18:12-14).⁶¹

Like Zechariah (Luke 1:11-20), Mary was visited by an angel who told her what would happen (vv. 26-38). This happened in the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. Mary set off to visit Elizabeth, and when Mary enters Elizabeth’s house, Elizabeth’s baby leaps with joy in her womb. Then “a prophetic utterance rises to the lips of Elizabeth. Gabriel had sung of the two children and of their mission, but Elizabeth sings of a young mother’s faith and courage.”⁶²

Elizabeth blessed Mary, welcomed the young girl into her home, and said, “But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (v. 43). It is quite apparent that this elderly woman was very much aware that something supernatural and mystical was happening in her life and in the young girl’s life.

Elizabeth, the Gifter in this story, proved that with the right attitude and approach, the Gifter can be as blessed by the Lifter as the Lifter is by the Gifter. Because of the elderly woman’s honor and yielded spirit, Mary instantly became anointed in a fresh way

60 Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds., *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 564.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid., 565.

to sing a song unto the Lord, the Magnificat (vv. 46-55). Elizabeth's reception of Mary gave her confidence, and she lived with her elderly relatives until John the Baptist was born (v. 56).

Elizabeth mentored Mary during that time, "as she anticipated a birth that would not be understood."⁶³ The two women were able to "enter a new sphere of women's experience" together as they learned to lean on each other and on God.⁶⁴ Elizabeth served the ultimate role of Gifter for Mary. She gave her guidance as she and Mary worked "their way through the delicate issues of faith and steadfastness against unbelievable odds."⁶⁵

The power of this relationship is that two boys were raised by their mothers to honor one another because their mothers, though separated by decades, honored each other. They supported one another during a difficult, but miraculous period in each's life. A selfless relationship and shared faith serve as a solid foundation for Lifters and Gifters to come together in cooperation and mutual respect.

Jesus and Peter

Giftor Jesus and Lifter Peter had a unique relationship, and it is one all believers should study and learn from. They were likely pretty close in age, as Peter was already married (Matt. 8:14-15) when he answered Jesus' call, but Peter learned in time that he was actually working with the Messiah. Later Peter writes, speaking of Jesus, "who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in

63 Ibid., 758.

64 Ibid., 564.

65 Ibid., 565.

submission to him.” (1 Pet. 3:22). What must it have felt like to work with a mentor who was and is God? Even beyond the wonders in the answers to that question, there are important Gifter/Lifter lessons in the Jesus and Peter relationship.

A Lifter must be humble enough to follow and learn from a Gifter. This is visible in Peter’s call:

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.” So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him (Luke 5:8-11).

Jesus had asked the group of fishermen if He could borrow their boat to use as a way to preach to the crowds. Peter agreed and rowed out a little way from the shore so Jesus could preach and the water would amplify His voice. When He finished preaching, Jesus told him to row out further and throw out the nets (v. 4). Peter, known at that time as Simon, responded, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets” (v. 5) They caught so many fish that Peter had to call for help from the other fisherman to prevent his nets from tearing (vv. 6-7). At that point, Peter knelt and asked forgiveness.

In most of the biblical stories concerning Gifters and Lifters, the tipping point in the relationship came when the Gifter decided to share his or her experiences freely, and the Lifter made the decision to accept the Gifter’s wisdom. Peter, acknowledging Jesus’ wisdom, decided at that moment to willingly learn from Jesus, and he accepted Him as master, which opened Peter to his vital role in founding Jesus’ Church.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Mark Bockmuehl, *Simon Peter in Scripture and Memory: The New Testament Apostle in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 5.

Somewhere between loaning his boat to Jesus and bowing before him confessing that he was a sinner, Peter decided he was not equal to Jesus. This was a lesson he learned again and again.⁶⁷ It is understandable that there may come a point where a Lifter will feel as though they have exhausted the wisdom of their Gifter, and at that point they move on. That was never the case with Jesus and Peter, or with any other disciple of Jesus then or now.

Another point of interest in this relationship is that sometimes a Lifter will experience their greatest rebuke at the hands of their Gifter, often after their greatest accomplishment. Peter's confession is such an instance. Jesus had come to His disciples and asked whom they thought He was. It was Peter who gave the answer Jesus was looking for: "Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it'" (Matt. 16:16-18). Jesus' response seems to have empowered Peter rather than humbling him, leading to Peter's later correction. Peter's role as the first of the apostles likely contributed to his outspokenness.⁶⁸

Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone He was the Messiah, and then He began preparing them for what would happen to Him in Jerusalem. Unable to believe what Jesus said, "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!' Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You

⁶⁷ Ibid., 66.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 5.

are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns” (Matt. 16:22-23). Markus Bockmeuhl stressed the importance of Peter being rebuked by Jesus: “The effect of the authoritative Peter being immediately rebuked is to reinforce the point that, despite his unique teaching authority, he remains paradigmatic as both a positive and a negative example—a fallible, weak disciple who in no sense detracts from the role of Jesus nor occupies a pedestal.”⁶⁹ Peter’s action and the resulting consequence is important. The Lifter (Peter), because of his or her lack of experience, might be tempted by his or her pride to speak out of turn. Because of life’s challenges, most people gradually form a reservoir of life experience that prepares them for a life of humility. Peter was not yet at that point.

After His scathing rebuke of Peter, Jesus took the opportunity to teach on what it means to carry one’s cross, an action fueled by humility, telling His disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (Matt. 16:24-25). Jesus, as the Gifter, never harbored a grudge or held onto the past. After Peter’s numerous recorded mishaps, including his rebuke of Jesus, he appeared to have dealt himself a fatal blow in terms of potential future ministry within the circle of Jesus’ closest associates. As Jesus was being held and prepared for crucifixion, Peter denied the Lord three times (Luke 22:54-62), as Jesus had predicted he would (Matt. 26:34). This failure drives home the fact that Peter was human. He had failings, in this case a catastrophic failure, but he also had great promise and he showed true remorse.⁷⁰

69 Ibid., 78.

70 Ibid., 83.

But, after the resurrection, Jesus sought Peter out. He asked Peter if he loved Him. Peter affirmed three different times that he did (John 21:15-17). Jesus wanted Peter to lead His new work after He was ascended into heaven. Jesus quickly forgave Peter and moved on, trusting Peter to take care of His flock (John 21:15-19).

Jesus and His Church

Jesus, in relationship to His Church, taught three basic truths to His followers. Those three truths have propelled the Christian Church for over 2,000 years. Jesus functions as the Gifter in this relationship, and the Church as the Lifter.

The first principle He taught is that of prayer. Jesus taught His followers to pray by giving crucial directives on how they should pray in private, the differences they must resolve before they could come to the altar, and the attitude they should assume. First, it is important that followers of Jesus learn to pray in private (Matt. 6:5-6). Second, Jesus followers must take care of unreconciled differences between themselves and their brothers or sisters in Christ before coming to the altar in prayer (Matt. 5:23-24). Third, followers of Jesus should pray with boldness and authority (Mark 11:24). But Jesus did more than that. He modeled prayer (Luke 5:16). Jesus also took His disciples with him to pray (Luke 9:28). The disciples saw Jesus pray so often they finally asked Him to teach them (Luke 11:1), which He did.

Jesus' life of prayer seriously impacted the Early Church. He told His disciples after His resurrection to go to Jerusalem and wait to be filled with the Holy Spirit. By waiting, the disciples must have felt He meant to pray, because the Bible says they went to an upper room and, "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers" (Acts 1:14). Prayer became

a way of life for the first Christians (Acts 2:42). The first reported post-Pentecost miracle happened as Peter and John were going to the temple to pray (Acts 3:1). Peter was in prison in Acts 12, and an angel of the Lord came and rescued him. He immediately went to the home of Mary, “where many people had gathered and were praying” (Acts 12:12). Prayer is the means of communication between Jesus and His Bride. All of the disciples prayed in the book of Acts, and Paul advised believers to “Pray continually” (1 Thes. 5:17). Prayer will keep followers of Jesus in warm relationship with Him (John 10:27).

The second principle Jesus emphasized was generosity. He said, “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matt. 5:42). Giving was a sign that Jesus’ followers are in warm relationship with their Master. Jesus told His followers very clearly how to give and be generous (Matthew 15:31-40). Jesus taught that generosity is the very heart of Christ, through His Bride, to people who cannot help themselves. All believers, no matter their economic success, must give sacrificially. Jesus did not teach equal giving, but equal sacrifice. This was seen when Jesus took His disciples to the temple to observe people bringing their offerings to the Lord and the widow put in all she had (Luke 21:1-4).

When the church fully embraced the spirit of generosity, it fueled the third principle Jesus taught. In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus said:

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Prayer keeps the believer’s heart warm and in tune with Jesus. When the heart is warm, generosity becomes a way of life. When the church is generous, the gospel is sent forth around the world. This principle was promoted by Jesus while on earth. As He was

preparing to ascend into heaven, He gave His disciples the Great Commission, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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” (Matt. 28:18-20). The Bride of Christ (Lifters) moved forward in prayer, in generosity, and in evangelism for some 2,000 years, and Jesus, our Gifter, has monitored every step of His Bride along the way.

Paul and Timothy

The Apostle Paul was a man who took the life and teaching of Christ and became the theological architect of the Early Church. During his life and ministry, he was forever linked with Timothy, whom he called his “son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2). Timothy, son of a Jewish woman who believed in Jesus and a Greek father, became Paul’s protégé.⁷¹ According to N. T. Wright, “a bond of understanding and mutual trust developed between them of the sort that happened with few others.”⁷²

At first glance, this appears to be the most one-way relationship of a Gifter (Paul) with a Lifter (Timothy) in the Bible. None of Timothy’s communications or sermons were recorded in the New Testament. It is impossible to deny that he communicated regularly with Paul, however, as Paul reported on Timothy’s continued growth and increasing abilities.

71 N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (New York: Harper One, 2018), 175.

72 Ibid.

On Paul's second mission to Lystra, he invited young Timothy to join him and Silas (Acts 16:13). Timothy was, from that point on, linked with the great Apostle. In Philippians 4:19-22, the Apostle openly praised Timothy. Paul inferred that Timothy was someone he could depend on as he had sent the young man to the church in Philippi (v. 19). In the next verse, Paul said Timothy was someone who would show genuine concern (v. 20). Paul went on to say that Timothy was only mindful of the interests that pertain to Jesus and that Timothy had proven himself to Paul as a son would to his father (vv. 21-22). Paul took spiritual leadership in Timothy's life and referred several times to Timothy as "My son" (1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:2, 2:1). Paul mentored the younger man with great affection.

It must also be noted that the Apostle Paul trusted his young Lifter and he sent him on missions to encourage the different churches in his place (1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:19-23). Timothy's arrival to visit him in prison with news from Thessalonica even resulted in the letter to that church known as 1 Thessalonians.⁷³ Paul was giving Timothy an opportunity to grow in his own ministry while still under Paul's guidance. Stacy E. Hoehl said, "Paul's approach to mentoring Timothy included carefully selecting and training him as the right person for the job, equipping him for the task of ministry, empowering him for success, employing him for effectiveness and communicating the value of their relationship."⁷⁴ The Apostle acknowledged in Philippians 2:22 that Timothy was a

73 Ibid., 214.

74 Stacy E. Hoehl, "The Mentor Relationship: An Exploration of Paul as Loving Mentor to Timothy and the Application of This Relationship to Contemporary Leadership Challenges," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 3 No. 2 (Summer 2011): 34.

worthy and trusted servant who had served “with me.” That is believed to be the moment when Paul fully released Timothy to be a minister of the gospel in his own right.

Paul made a career “out of telling people things he knew they would find either mad or blasphemous,”⁷⁵ but he never hesitated to share also his love of his fellow believers. He wanted the churches to succeed, and Timothy was a vital agent in that goal. Timothy likely faced difficulties as he soothed those Paul had insulted or offended in some way. Paul was not an easy man to get along with, and he never hid that fact in his communications. He opposed the Apostle Peter “to his face” (Gal. 2:11-13), the one chosen by Jesus to birth the Church, although in that instance he was fighting for unity amongst the believers.⁷⁶ He became so irate at his own mentor, Barnabas, that they parted ways over a disagreement concerning John Mark (Acts 15:36-39).

Paul appeared to take a domineering approach with Timothy, as he did with many of his relationships; however, Scripture has proven the relationship certainly was not without affection. There are Gifters in local churches today who are much like Paul. They are sometimes confrontational, but they confront because they want the best for the ministry. The challenge for these Gifters is to be willing to love the younger Lifters, as Paul loved Timothy. Paul trained and supported Timothy, but he ultimately set him on his own ministry path.

75 Ibid.

76 N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God: Parts 1 and 2* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 388.

Summary

Numerous Scriptural precedents exist in both the Old and New Testaments showing the older and younger generations, the Gifters and Lifters, working together to ensure the continuation of the mission of God from one generation to the next. Jethro advised Moses on how to lead and delegate and Moses responded positively. Moses was willing to call out and anoint Joshua as his successor after spending decades preparing him for the position. Naomi gave Ruth ample opportunity to go back to her homeland; instead Ruth chose to stay and learn from her beloved mother-in-law Naomi, starting a new family line that had enormous biblical impact. Deborah and Barak worked together to bring victory to Israel. Samuel and Saul's tumultuous relationship showed how the generations not working together can lead to chaos and the downfall of an entire family. David and Solomon's story showed how a father/son team successfully handed the torch from one generation to the next by following the word of the Lord. Elijah, after leading the younger Elisha for quite some time advised his Lifter to be close by when the Lord was ready to take him. Elisha heeded his advice and received the double portion mantel of Elijah as he was taken to heaven.

In the New Testament, Elizabeth, an elderly woman, and Mary, a young woman just ready for marriage, were brought together through a common challenge. They supported each other on the journey, learning to depend on one another and that faith in God is paramount. Jesus mentored and guided Peter, preparing him for the future. He corrected Peter when he lost his humility and forgave him before he even denied Him. Peter successfully transitioned from Lifter to Gifter on the day of Pentecost, accepting his role in launching the Church. Peter's story was one of the greatest illustrations of true

redemption ever recorded. Paul and Timothy's story illustrated a spiritual father/son mentoring and guidance dynamic. Paul, who had no children of his own, considered Timothy a spiritual son and freely shared his wisdom and knowledge. Timothy loved Paul and eagerly learned all he had to teach, passing that knowledge on to the local churches.

Jesus knew His Church would need a solid foundation. During His short time of ministry, He poured wisdom and knowledge into His disciples (Lifters) and He ascended into heaven leaving behind eleven men and an unknown number of other men and women who would change the world by sharing His message of love and redemption. Jesus is the ultimate Gifter for His Church, the earthly Lifter. These biblical figures knew that it was incumbent upon them to hand the mission of God to the next generation. From the Old Testament people of Israel through to Jesus laying the foundation of His Church, Gifters and Lifters have been used mightily by the Lord to continue His Great Commission.

A Review of Current Literature

Jesus was and is the master builder of the Church. His approach to everything was that of a servant. According to Carolyn Tennant, "Some people want leadership so badly that they usurp power and authority. Then they try to appear humble by choosing certain actions to give the impression of being a lowly servant. Jesus, on the other hand, chose the place of a servant first; it's at the core of his being. He wasn't acting when he

behaved like a servant; that is completely who he is.”⁷⁷ Service is what elevates the Christian Church above religion and into a way of life.

With servant leadership at the core of His Church, Jesus chose a diverse group of people crossing gender lines, educational lines, financial positions, and age boundaries. He understood that the coming Church would need individuals from all walks of life to grow and share His message. Jesus was so intent on reaching people from all walks of life that He let His disciples know He would be revealed in and through the most desperate of souls. Murray Dempster says, “Jesus himself made the astonishing claim that he was encountered *incognito* in the destitute, the desperate, the disabled, and the disenfranchised. So great was Jesus’ sense of solidarity with the ‘least of these’ that he actually shared identity with them—to minister to these poor ones, Jesus said, was to minister to him.”⁷⁸

There appears to be a definite crisis in the American Church. Bill George states, “When facing a crisis, it is prudent for you to assume that the crisis will last a long time. When things return to ‘normal’ (if there is any such thing as normal), everything will be different.”⁷⁹ The crisis in the local churches, and in the Church at large, centers on a growing generational divide between the Gifters and the Lifters.

The primary role of the Gifters is that of funding the vision of the church. The primary role of the Lifters is to be ready when called upon to serve in any capacity

⁷⁷ Carolyn Tennant, *Front Line A Daily Devotional Guide for Christian Leaders* (Minneapolis, MN: North Central University Press, 2004), 176.

⁷⁸ Murray W. Dempster, “Eschatology, Spirit Baptism, and Inclusiveness: An Exploration into the Hallmarks of a Pentecostal Social Ethic,” in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatology: World Without End*, eds. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 179.

⁷⁹ Bill George, *7 Lessons for Leading in Crisis* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2009), 62.

necessary (physically and creatively) to move the vision of the church forward. This last group is sometimes known as volunteers, but in this project they will be referred to as servant leaders. Richard Waters and Denise Bortree state, “Although churches, synagogues, mosques, and other types of religious institutions are spiritual in nature, many also are reliant on tithing, volunteer work, and other contributions from their members.”⁸⁰ If the local church is to thrive and grow, cooperation between these two entities must flourish. This means cooperation and intergenerational relationships are necessary. A survey of current literature helps to understand the two groups and facilitates the formation of a plan to bring the Lifters and Gifters together in the local church to help the overall growth of the Church.

Characteristics of the Lifter

Lifters are characterized in this research as those thirty-nine years of age and under (ages eighteen to thirty-nine). Much of this group has been referred to as Millennials, those born after 1981.⁸¹ According to the Pew Research Center, “Fully one-in-four members of the Millennial generation ... are unaffiliated with any particular faith.”⁸² Like most emerging generations, Lifters are very independent and have defined opinions on how church should go. Lifters long for nurturance and for instructional aid

80 Richard D. Waters and Denise Sevick Bortree, “Can We Talk About the Direction of This Church?: The Impact of Responsiveness and Conflict on Millennials’ Relationship with Religious Institutions,” *Journal of Media & Religion* 11, no. 4 (October 2012): 201.

81 Pew Research Center, “Religion Among the Millennials: Less Religiously Active Than Older Americans, But Fairly Traditional in Other Ways,” A Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life Report, last modified February 2010, <http://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2010/02/millennials-report.pdf>

82 Pew Research Center, 1.

from their spiritual leaders. Nurturance is not just taking care of someone, “The concept of nurturance captures aspects of caretaking and protecting others while instructional aid involves helping another person accomplish something.”⁸³

This data is significant as the church must go beyond one-way communication from pulpit to pew to communicate with this generation of Lifters. If they long for nurturance and individual instructional aide, more must be done between Sundays. This involves the marketplace. Andy Stanley says looking to the marketplace narrows the focus. In arguing for Sunday School on Sunday versus small groups during the week, Stanley writes, “We decided to put all of our eggs in the ‘small group’ basket as a church ... once we gave the groups our undivided attention, we discovered that they had the potential to grow at a faster rate. Today, the ratio of church attendees to those who participate in small groups is better than we ever experienced with the Sunday school model.”⁸⁴ The small group or connect group model forces the local church outside the four walls of the building and into the marketplace, which is where Lifters appear to find their greatest joy and fulfillment.

Larry Alton reported, “On average, Millennials would be willing to give up \$7,600 in salary every year to work at a job that provided a better environment for them.”⁸⁵ The Lifter generation’s value of their livelihood at work reflects in their interest

83 Waters and Bortree, 204.

84 Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner, and Lane Jones, *7 Practices of Effective Ministry* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2004), 107.

85 Larry Alton, “How Millennials Are Reshaping What's Important in Corporate Culture,” *Forbes*, last modified June 20, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/larryalton/2017/06/20/how-millennials-are-reshaping-whats-important-in-corporate-culture/#6eb8d9332dfb>

in culture rather than ritual or liturgy. Three of their primary pursuits help summarize the culture Lifters are building. First, they are passionate about community service.⁸⁶ On a specific Saturday during the year, churches are posting on social media about serving their cities during Serve Day. Thousands of people from local churches, predominately Lifters, go into their cities to serve the people as part of the initiative. In 2018, 930 churches in 26 countries on 6 continents, including churches in all 50 states in the United States, came together to serve their communities.⁸⁷ This program was started as a response to Dino Rizzo's book *Serve Your City: How to do it and Why it Matters*, and churches are finding it is an effective way to give the Lifters in their church an outlet for their passion for community service.

This type of activity in the church is appealing to the Lifter population. One church in Miami, Vous Church, has taken the idea a step further and hosts regular community service events through their "I Love My City" ministry.⁸⁸ Their projects to serve the community have included cleaning public school buildings and painting them, fixing homes for the elderly, and hosting community parties.

Second, Lifters embrace collaboration. In their book *Millennials Momentum: How a New Generation is Remaking America*, Morley Winograd and Michael Hais state, "Tired of exalted rhetoric from Boomer leaders that rarely produced results and frustrated by their older Gen-X siblings lack of interest in pursuing any collective action to address

⁸⁶ Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd, "Spotlight on Leadership: The Next Generation: Mentoring Millennials," *Harvard Business Review* (May 2010), 1-2.

⁸⁷ Serve Day Movement, "Serve Day 2018," Serve, accessed October 10, 2018, <https://serveday.com/>

⁸⁸ See <https://www.vouschurch.com/ilovemycity>

broad social problems, Millennials have embraced individual initiative linked to community action.”⁸⁹ Lifters want to work together to enact change.

Third, Lifters embrace diversity and feel most comfortable in a diverse population. A Millennial testifying to this fact stated, “We seem to have a new sense of geography. Unlike the generation of my parents, my generation comes out of the truly multi-ethnic culture. Now that the population has exceeded the 7 billion mark, our multi-ethnic culture is here to stay.”⁹⁰ Because of this emphasis on multi-ethnic culture, Lifters relate more easily to those from different cultural backgrounds than previous generations.⁹¹ Lifters seem to place more value in relationships and serving others than in themselves.

Retaining Lifters in the Church

Many different issues factor in the church being able to retain Lifters in the congregation. One of those issues is that Millennials harbor perceived grievances against the church. In his book *You Lost Me*, David Kinnaman details six perceptual grievances, saying, “These grievances hold that the church is (1) intolerant of doubt, (2) elitist in its relationships, (3) anti-science in its beliefs, (4) overprotective of its members, (5) shallow in its teachings, and (6) repressive of differences.”⁹² Whether true or not, perceived

89 Morley Winograd and Michael D. Hais, *Millennial Momentum: How A New Generation is Remaking America* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 226.

90 Abigail Zwick, “Millennial Perspective: The Global View,” *New Geography*, last modified November 9, 2009, <http://www.newgeography.com/content/00662-millennial-perspectivethe-global-view>

91 Courtney Crappell, “Millennials in Action: Playing to Our Strengths,” *American Music Teacher* 61, no. 4 (February 2012): 16.

92 Clint Jenkin, and A. Allan Martin, “Engaging Adventist Millennials: A Church Embracing Relationships,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 96.

grievances can cause a breakdown in communication and cooperation. The key to solving this issue is making sure the Lifter forms lasting, strong relationships within the church, especially intergenerational relationships. These relationships can be more vital than even peer relationships, especially for those Lifters transitioning from one age group and role in the church to the next.⁹³

A real and close relationship with God is also vital for the Lifter if he or she is to remain in the church. If the Lifter does not feel that connection, he or she will go elsewhere to find it. Brian Capper writes:

It is hardly surprising that we find the expanding community of believers, recently impressed with an extraordinary sense of God's holiness and powerful presence, implementing the local Judean ideal of communalized, holy living, renouncing personal possessions and devoting themselves, after their working day, to prayer, study and common meals. This development was also the appropriate way to continue the common life initiated by Jesus and the local settled, community.⁹⁴

Lifters are a complex generation, but they are no more difficult to serve or include than any other generation. As in the past, the church needs to learn how to connect with them. This might take some work, but the health and growth of local churches and the corporate Church depend on Lifters finding and thriving in their place in the church.

Characteristics of Gifters

Gifters are those individuals who are forty years old and above. This would not necessarily include those who are in nursing homes or are incapacitated in any way. This group includes those usually referred to as the Baby Boomers and Generation X.

93 Jenkin and Martin: 99.

94 Brian J. Capper, "Holy Community of Life and Property amongst the Poor: A Response to Steve Walton," *Evangelical Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (April 2008): 118.

According to Russell Heimlich, Boomers are retiring at a rate of 10,000 people every day, and that is set to continue for the next 19 years.⁹⁵ Generation X is moving in to fill their leadership positions, and that is leaving positions open for Millennials. This is also changing the dynamic in the church.

Most Gifters are at home in a more conservative church setting. They are more religious as opposed to outreach oriented in their approach to the gospel. Deep in the recesses of their souls is the old familiar call to reach the unreached, no matter the cost. According to Charles Van Engen, “Parents and grandparents and extended families are some of the most influential leaders in the congregation.”⁹⁶ This leadership role is necessary for the health and growth of the church.

Gifters are also the primary funders of the Christian mission worldwide. As age sets in, some individuals must physically step aside from the hands-on, physical working and mental engagement of the details of the mission of the church. At that point, those individuals change their contribution to the church, and instead of providing physical labor and volunteering in a more active role, they provide the funding for the mission in monetary terms. In fact, “Aging guru Ken Dychtwald says expected charitable giving by US retirees over the next two decades could reach \$8 trillion. That’s \$6.6 trillion in financial giving and \$1.4 trillion in volunteer services (calculated at \$23.63 an hour). And

⁹⁵ Russell Heimlich, “Baby Boomers Retire,” Pew Research Center, last modified December 29, 2010, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2010/12/29/baby-boomers-retire/>

⁹⁶ Charles Van Engen, *God’s Missionary People* (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 166.

if he can help it, retirees will ramp up their giving game, making an even bigger impact.”⁹⁷

In no way does this suggest that Gifters are not servant leaders or that Lifters are not wonderful givers. This division of labor and resources makes sense in the church. The elders share the knowledge and the fruit of their life’s labor, while the younger generation picks up the mantle of the more physical work and learns from the older generations.

Gifters in Relationships

Presently the group within the Gifters age group known as Baby Boomers are going through an amazing change. This age group brought about the biggest cultural change in the nation’s history as it relates to sexual moorings, and, for those Boomers born between 1945 and 1964, the divorce rate has increased 50 percent for the past two decades.⁹⁸ Gifters are faithful at work and are committed to their church, but this faithfulness does not seem consistent in the home.

According to Sara Bein, “Boomers may also be repeating “marital instability” patterns from their own early years.”⁹⁹ She cites the Pew Research Center as saying, “during their young adulthood, Baby Boomers had unprecedented levels of divorce,” a

97 Ashlea Ebeling, “The Coming \$8 Trillion-Plus Retiree Giving Boom,” Forbes.com, last modified October 23, 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleaebeling/2015/10/23/the-coming-8-trillion-plus-retiree-giving-boom/#254846821956>

98 Bella DePaulo, “Why Do Boomers Divorce So Much More Than Everyone Else,” Psychology Today, last modified January 5, 2014, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/living-single/201401/why-do-boomers-divorce-so-much-more-everyone-else>

99 Sarah Bein, “Grey Divorce: Why Are More Baby Boomers Ending Their Marriages When They Get Older?” National Post, last modified July 24, 2018, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/grey-divorce-why-are-more-baby-boomers-splitting-up-their-marriages-as-they-get-older>

fact that might “be contributing to divorce among them today.”¹⁰⁰ While the statistics may be alarming, the church does provide stability and support in those relationships.

One major difference between Gifters and Lifters in relationships is that Gifters are more largely more comfortable with peer relationships, while Lifters actively seek out relationships outside of their peer group. This is an area Gifter need to work on, as there is immense value in learning from the younger generation, a process Earl Creps calls reverse mentoring. According to Creps:

Asking a younger person for instruction exposes the deception from which jealousy gains its power: the notion that everything gained by them must somehow be a loss to me. This subtle fraud treats leadership as an earned status that entitles me to certain privileges, rather than a calling imparted by grace that means surrendering my own preferences for the sake of others and rejoicing in their success.¹⁰¹

A good example of this is technology. While there are Gifters who are skilled in technology, the idea of it scares others. That fear at not being able to master something easily can create resentment from the Gifters aimed at the Lifters, most of whom have grown up with technology as an integral part of their everyday life. This is an area of potential growth in the Gifter/Lifter relationship. Creps says, “Confessing my lack of understanding to a younger person and expressing willingness to take his or her counsel seriously brings a healing grace back into the relationship. Without fail in these situations, I have found that the younger person’s esteem for the older actually increases when help is requested.”¹⁰² Gifters must learn to form relationships with Lifters. Some

100 Ibid.

101 Earl Creps, *Reverse Mentoring: How Young Leaders Can Transform the Church and Why We Should Let Them* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 58.

102 Ibid.

relationships might be teaching relationships, as they pass what they have learned on to the Lifters, but the relationship needs to be open and work in both directions.

Gifters in the Church

Gifters are firmly entrenched in most local churches. They serve as elders, support the pastor, and give to further the church's mission. They often control the purse strings of the church, and this can lead to conflict. Unfortunately, Gifters seem to be the exception in most church plants. Gifters are the ones who are left by the Lifters, as the Lifters plant a new church they want to attend. Gifters need to proactively become a part of every church, including the church plants by Lifters. For the Gifter to be accepted, he or she may have to serve their way in.

Serving will always open doors. In their youth, Gifters were the servant leaders in the church. They took on the more work-related roles as their parents and grandparents graduated to positions as elders in the church. When the Gifters assumed those elder roles, many moved completely out of servant leadership. For many, this leads to a loss of the joy believers get only from serving. In their book *Inside Out*, Rich and Robyn Wilkerson write, "We guarantee you that you—as a servant leader—will experience the same level of joy as you watch those you serve ... this is the reality of servant leadership. Better than that, it's also the joy and the reward."¹⁰³ Servant leadership is an area often neglected by the Gifters in the church, and it is vital that all Gifters serve in some

¹⁰³ Rich Wilkerson and Robyn Wilkerson, *Inside Out: How Everyday People Become Extraordinary Leaders* (Springfield, MO: Salubris Resources, 2015), 11.

capacity if they want to connect with the Lifters. Gifters who serve most often have a seat at the table.

Areas of Conflict

Money

One of the great challenges in the church today appears to be the rule of money. Money is the “other god” Jesus said would vie for people’s attention and worship: “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Matt. 6:24). Money has been the downfall of many church leaders and churches. When there is not enough money, it drives men and women in search of money in areas they may not be gifted to operate in, such as leadership.

Leadership is in high demand, especially leadership that can be trusted. Michael K. Simpson, author of *Unlocking Potential* says, “Often trust is overlooked as a hidden variable. And yet we can all cite situations where low trust is evident. All we have to do is glance at the media headlines concerning global economic markets, corporate scandals, banking and government improprieties, and abuses in the world of politics, entertainment, or athletics.”¹⁰⁴ People who are already predisposed to doubt leadership enter a church plant or a worn-down older church where the pastor is struggling to make ends meet, and they quickly begin to wonder if the leadership is competent to lend help to their weary souls. A lack of competency in any area, including financial competency, can lead to a lack of trust.

¹⁰⁴ Michael K. Simpson, *Unlocking Potential: 7 Coaching Skills that Transform* (Grand Haven, MI: Grand Harbor Press, 2014), 42.

According to Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, close to one-third of pastors in America have no money in savings. Thirty-five percent of pastors have less than 10,000 dollars in savings for retirement.¹⁰⁵ When a pastor operates personally from such a place of financial weakness, he or she can become less a servant leader to board directors, and more of a subservient person asking for permission to move the church's mission forward. Leonard Sweet states:

Across the world, 1.3 billion people live on less than one dollar a day; 3 billion people live on under two dollars a day; 1.3 billion have no access to clean water; 3 billion have no access to sanitation; 2 billion have no access to electrical power. When it comes to missions bigger than ourselves, there are plenty to go around! A mission is what buys us life space. To be born is to be chosen – chosen for a mission. If you're alive, your mission on earth is unfinished.¹⁰⁶

Whether the leader is a Gifter or a Lifter, money must not be the determining factor as to whether or not the mission can be fulfilled.

Music

The better word for music in the church in this contemporary age would be worship. Music is an old word in the church, and worship is a contemporary word. The Reformed Church in America is an historic church in the United States. Yet on their website they have a lead line that answers the question "How We Worship." They state, "Worship celebrates God's greatness and faithfulness to his people. Worship enables

¹⁰⁵ Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, "The Major Money Problems of Church Planters vs. Other Pastors," *Christianity Today*, last modified April 27, 2016, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2016/april/major-money-problems-of-church-planters-vs-other-pastors.html>

¹⁰⁶ Leonard Sweet, *Summoned to Lead* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 105.

God's people to articulate their faith, and to act it out in word, song, and action."¹⁰⁷

Michael W. Goheen says, "Worship is the central calling of the church partially because it gives the people of God their focus and direction in the whole of their lives; from worship the whole life of the church flows, and in worship the whole life of the church find it's true end. Getting our worship right, therefore, must be a top priority."¹⁰⁸

What is established is that worship is the fuel for the church's mission. The mission of the church is to go into all the world and make disciples (Matt. 28:19). If the worship is not happening, it stands to reason that perhaps the light has burned out. What is the Church when it fails to be a light in the darkness? It is imperative that every believer remembers the purpose of the call to worship the Lord. Worship that can come in the form of a hymn or a more beat-driven song. Bill Hull says, "The discipline of worship can release us from constant preoccupation with ourselves. Spiritual disciplines are about information, but about the formation of our spirits and the attitudes and actions that arise from exercising these disciplines. We practice them until they become second nature, until we enjoy God's presence more than TV or an evening with friends"¹⁰⁹ When Gifters and Lifters believe in their hearts that worship in any form—deep from the heart—is what fuels the mission of the church and keeps their attention on Jesus instead of themselves, then revival happens.

¹⁰⁷ Reformed Church in America, "How We Worship," RCA.org, accessed November 15, 2018, <https://www.rca.org/howweworship>

¹⁰⁸ Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to The Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 203-204.

¹⁰⁹ Hull, 206.

Staging and Production

Technology within the actual sanctuary where church gatherings are held each week has become a potential threat to Gifters and Lifters staying together for the good of a particular congregation. Lifters are interested in seeing their friends attracted to their worship place. After all, if a person accepts Jesus as Lord, the next step is being a part of a regular meeting place for worship. The directive by the writer of Hebrews is not a suggestion: “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the day approaching” (10:24-25).

Intelligent lights, sound, fog, large greens, videos, PowerPoint, tracking for the band, cables, projectors, cameras, switchers—these are the technical items some feel are necessary to for church gatherings in large churches across the United States. This does not even include the live streaming for the online church attendees or the running of the online chats during service. These churches also offer online giving, text giving and kiosk giving to receive offerings. A Facebook page must be established and monitored daily by someone from the church. A Twitter account and an Instagram account must also be established and maintained daily. These are marketing tools championed by Lifters.

Edward Foley asks the question:

Can theology—that communal process by which the church’s faith seeks to understand—can theology aim at understanding technology? Can we put the words God and technology together in any kind of meaningful sentence? Can theology guess what God is doing in today’s technology? Or by our silence do you leave it utterly godless? Can we have a theology of technology that

comprehends, gives meaning to, dares to influence the direction and sets limits to this explosion of new powers?¹¹⁰

There may not be much of a discussion here. The Bible says to make a joyful noise unto the Lord (Ps. 98:4). Any generation that has followed that command has most likely run into some interference from the previous generation, because of the way they are projecting their interpretation of that directive. It usually boils down to the fact that the new generation is not doing it the way the previous generation has done it in the past.

However, if the goal is to reach people with the good news, there must be a yielding on the part of the Gifters when it comes to style and technology if they are at all interested in handing this gospel to the next generation. The National Association of Evangelicals state that 98 percent of American Christians accept Jesus as their savior before they reach the age of 30.¹¹¹ A battle is being waged in the Lifter age group. Millennials must know that their church is all about reaching them and their friends. If the church gives in that sense, they will be ready to work and lift the church to victory both here and abroad.¹¹²

Encouraging Cooperation

Cooperation and positive relationships between the generations are not a given in any situation, especially not in the church. Church leadership must be intentional in encouraging the development of those relationships. Ram Cnaan, Richard Gelles, and Jill

¹¹⁰ Ronald Cole-Turner, "Science, Technology, and Mission," in *The Local Church in a Global Era: Reflections for a New Century*, eds. Max L. Stackhouse, Tim Dearborn, and Scott Paeth (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2000), 101.

¹¹¹ National Association of Evangelicals, "When Americans Become Christians," NAE.net, last modified Spring 2015, <https://www.nae.net/when-americans-become-christians/>

¹¹² National Association of Evangelicals.

Sinha state, “Teenagers living with married parents attend religious activities 44.5% more than any other group. This is followed by teens with parents who were previously married, including divorced, separated, or widowed 36.5% parents.”¹¹³ Parents have the biggest influence on their children as it concerns their potential church involvement in the future. It stands to reason that two-parent families who are in church increase the potential for their children’s participation in church and faith activities.

This means older people have an influence on the younger set. Yet, just like a parent has to put effort into the process of influencing their children, it is incumbent on the older generation to keep working in a loving way with the younger generation. Cnaan, Gelles, and Sinha further found:

Today’s youth exhibit the same religious trends as previous generations if not more. It is likely that Baby Boomers and Generation X parents though there are few were Generation X parents who have teenage children yet encourage their teens to attend worship service is carried out by organize religions and to be part of religiously-based social programs. Our study finds more continuity than change in youth religious behavior and involvement.¹¹⁴

Each generation would like to think itself unique, and each has unique characteristics, but trends between the generations tend to remain consistent. The church can learn by studying those trends and looking at the commonalities instead of the differences. This process may be hindered in some way by denominational boundaries. Scott Bader-Saye states,

Nondenominational churches have a tendency to be more accepting of diverse perspectives and populations. Rather than stress a doctrine, these institutions are more likely to encourage conversations about different points of view than stress that the church has all the answers. This concept of the emerging church

113 Ram A. Cnaan, Richard J. Gelles, and Jill W. Sinha, “Youth and Religion: The Gameboy Generation Goes to ‘Church,’” *Social Indicators Research* 68, no. 2 (September 2004): 192.

114 *Ibid.*, 195.

conversation in regard to religious doctrine helps provide a framework to better understand Millennials religious preferences. More so than previous generations, Millennials are very supportive of one another and more accepting of cultural and social differences.¹¹⁵

When doctrine becomes the focus instead of the mission, progress grinds to a halt.

Church organizations that do not have long-standing organizational relationships, including non-denominational churches and tens of thousands of independent Charismatic churches in the United States, are more likely to reach the person who is uncomfortable with immediate conformity. The Lifter generation would like to change that, but the doctrinal focus of many Gifters brings the issue back to conflict. In this case, Gifters must open their hearts and minds and learn from Lifters. Cooperation creates a pathway of ideas, allowing both generations to contribute to the mission of the church.

Creating Growth

Gifters and Lifters must work together if the church is to grow. This includes cooperation between the generations in successful church plants. The situation is never a win if the Lifters all leave the Gifters from the mother church and start out without a balanced family unit initiative. A launch team of Gifters and Lifters should leave together from the mother church, with the original church's blessing and support, to launch a new work for the Lord. Three important components are necessary to ensure church growth.

Mission is the first component. Developing a missional mindset is vital, and that mindset must start with the leadership: "This missional quality is the foundation of inspiration for effective leaders as it directs their personal lives and propels their pursuits

¹¹⁵ Scott Bader-Saye, "Improvising Church: An Introduction to the Emerging Church Conversation," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 6, no. 1 (March 2006): 12–23.

by nourishing their energy. A strong sense of calling offers perseverance and generates positive purpose to every challenge they face in pursuit of accomplishing their life mission.”¹¹⁶ If mission is at the heart of the church’s motivation, the vision will eventually become a reality.

The church’s mission has always been to make disciples and become emissaries of the most high God. Never has it been about lining up with the government. Nothing kills the church quicker than alignment with the opposition. Scripture says when speaking of Abraham, “For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb. 10:11). Like Paul, the church leader must be driven to establish light in the form of Good news. Brian Peterson shares, “The life of the church is a claim about where good news is found. It is a declaration about Divine embodiment, about the proper form of God, to use language from Philippians 2, and it is a declaration that is a direct contradiction to Rome and to the power of empire today.”¹¹⁷

The church planter in his or her context is the church telling one other person the good news and reproducing the church in that person. Why?

The Christian mission is firmly based upon the conviction that Jesus Christ is the unique savior of all those who receive the gospel. The nature of believers’ witness may differ, ranging from life witness (including martyrdom) to verbal proclamation, but the belief undergirding such witness is that, unless people hear the gospel and believe in Christ, they will spend eternity separated from God and Christ.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Stephen Lim, *Your Call to Work and Mission—Following Jesus 24/7: Whole Life Discipleship* (Springfield, MO: Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2015), 3.

¹¹⁷ Brian K. Peterson, “Being the Church in Philippi,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 30, no. 2 (December 2008): 176.

¹¹⁸ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 249.

Mission must remain at the core.

Having effective mentors is the second component of a successful church plant. Mentoring will continually be discussed because the right mentoring is everything to the Lifter church planter. In the work of the Christian Gifter to the Christian Lifter, mentoring must be done as a servant leader.

A truly great and endearing vision will extend beyond the leadership season of any one individual and be carried in the hearts and minds of those to whom it has been entrusted. The fruit of great servant leadership is realized when I leader seeks to send the next generation of leaders to meet the challenges of their season with all the wisdom, knowledge, and spiritual resources he or she can provide.¹¹⁹

This type of relationship only occurs effectively when the Lifter and Gifter are both seeking. Wisdom is not wisdom unless it is asked for. Celinne DaCosta writes, “Millennials are looking for mentors who will not hover over them at work and dictate what they’re doing inadequately. Here is what they want. Mentors who will create a relationship with them based on trust and understanding. Mentors who let their understudy’s fail and then help them get back up. Finally, Millennials are looking for mentors who give them space to grow.”¹²⁰ These words work perfectly in the church world as well as the business world.

When a church is driven by mission, and relationships are in place to help implement the mission, the final component needed is momentum. Momentum carries the new church over the initial rough places. It is challenging to motivate people to help build

¹¹⁹ Ken Blanchard, and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2005), 111.

¹²⁰ Celinne Da Costa, “The Millennial Workforce Needs Mentors Not Managers,” *Forbes*, last modified May 25, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/celinnedacosta/2018/05/25/the-millennial-workforce-needs-mentors-not-managers/#39977d3f127a>

the church if momentum does not exist. Energy or excitement or momentum is what generates the will to keep moving forward. These components are necessary.

After a new church is launched out of the mother church, how does leadership strengthen the original church? The best way to be renewed and restored after a church plant is to go back to the original mission statement. By keeping the mission central, and by seeking to create eternal value, then the mission and mission statement drives the team. The team in this case is comprised of not only staff, but of the entirety of the constituents of the mother church, Lifter and Gifter alike. Reawakening them to the mission statement and what is valued revitalizes the mission and the mother church is revived.

Conclusion

A thorough review of biblical theology showed that God always meant the generations to work together. In the Old Testament, there was a consistent storyline of Lifters and Gifters waiting for the spiritual baton to be handed off. The theme continues in the New Testament. Jesus was the architect of the Church, and He intentionally formed a relationship with His disciples so they could effectively plant the New Testament Church in the book of Acts. A survey of current literature supports that not only is intergenerational cooperation between Lifters and Gifters possible, but it is as vital for the church today as it was for believers in the Old and New Testaments.

The church has moved forward through the centuries because the older generation trained and nurtured the next generation, and in time they handed off the leadership roles to the younger generation. Today there are dying churches across this great North American continent. How can they be revitalized and how can new churches be planted?

Is it possible for Gifters and Lifters to stay together to grow healthy churches, and from those healthy churches can Gifters and Lifters be sent out as a combined team to fund and volunteer their way to healthy and vibrant new church plants? There is a way for this to happen

CHAPTER THREE: THE PROJECT NARRATIVE & FIELD WORK

Introduction

The Church cannot grow without community, and that community flourishes when discipleship is present.¹²¹ Scripture makes it clear that the members of the Church must operate as parts of one body, working in cooperation for the good of the whole.¹²² One place this is clearly stated is in Romans 12:4-5, “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” As separate parts of a whole, we operate together as one unit, in community with one other. Fellowship is a vital part of being a member of the body of Christ. Dallas Willard stresses the importance, saying, “Personalities untied can contain more of God and sustain the force of his greater presence much better than scattered individuals. ... The members of the body must be in contact if they are to sustain and be sustained by each other.”¹²³ Gathering together in fellowship is an experience of transformational worship that happens in community. As JR Woodward and Dan White Jr. state,

While we are chasing the latest methods and models, God is seeking to transform us for his mission in the world. For the One who made us has clearly revealed that movement starts with our imitation of Christ, the person in whom all wisdom

121. Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 4.

122 Robert Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology: With Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 228.

123 Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988), 186-187.

abides. From Jesus we learn why we live, how we live and how to involve him in our everyday living. Transformation comes by following Christ through the Spirit *with others* [emphasis mine].¹²⁴

It has been the author's intent from the beginning to discover and identify the generational divide indicators that separate Lifters and Gifters. The biblical and literary research identified trends and best practices, showing what it looks like when the generations work together for the furtherance of God's mission. Those practices, applied by the local church to combat the indicators present in their church, will allow them to start the process of coming back to true community.

The research in this project is designed to give a thorough assessment of what generational divide indicators currently exist in the local church setting. After identifying those indicators, qualitative research will be utilized to understand how some churches are bridging this divide, and the resulting data will be used to develop a workshop that will enable the two groups to unite and build more unified churches throughout the country and the world.

The research discussed in chapter two indicates that there are biblical mandates and examples that, if followed, will keep the two groups together in this present age. The need for believers to work together to share Jesus' message is illustrated throughout the New Testament (Mark 6:7; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 John 1:7; 3 John 1:18). Jesus presented a clear vision for His church. In Matthew 16:18, He mentions the Church for the first time, making it clear that His ministry will continue after He is gone.¹²⁵ He continues offering guidance to the future Church for the rest of His time on

124. JR Woodward and Dan White Jr., *The Church as Movement: Starting and Sustaining Missional-Incarnational Communities* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 19.

125 Woodward and White, 26.

earth, building on what He had already taught the disciples. In Matthew 18:20, He told His disciples, “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” As Michael Wilkins describes it, “Jesus emphasizes that the responsibility of the community of disciples is to come to a corporate consensus in which there is correspondence between heaven and earth in carrying out the will of the Father.”¹²⁶ Jesus encouraged community as a way for His followers to reach consensus and carry out the will of God. With the biblical precedent set, anything less than following the lead of our Lord is disobedience.

The review of current literature in chapter two shows that the generational divide is prevalent in secular organizations and society as a whole. That divide has become more and more apparent in the local church. Matt Marcantonio states:

For years, research and conversations have focused on generational differences. There have been fascinating studies on how each generation reacts and responds, with corresponding hope that one day the local church will unify the generations. Yet there is still tension between the young and old. The repetitive and exhausting conversations on styles and traditions continue, but lines of division remain.¹²⁷

The literature review in chapter two established that organizations and churches are responding to the challenge of crossing these generational divides to grow exponentially.¹²⁸ Some of those best practices, combined with the proven biblical principles, will help the local church heal the break in community.

¹²⁶ Michael Wilkins, *NIV Application Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 619.

¹²⁷ Matt Marcantonio, “Overcoming the Church Generation Gap,” *Influence*, last modified May 15, 2017, <https://influencemagazine.com/Practice/Overcoming-the-Church-Generation-Gap>

¹²⁸ See Blanchard and Phil Hodges, Da Costa, Woodward and White, Cnaan, Gelles, and Sinha.

Preparation for the Project

The blessing of the Lord on the author's life has led to frequent travels throughout the United States and the world. This has allowed the author to network with church leaders and witness the growth of some churches and the decline of others. During four decades of Christian ministry, questions have arisen about what factors contribute to the growth of the church: why are many churches plateauing or declining, and how is it that culture is, in many of these churches, so abysmal? Further reflection led the author to question why the older church attendees (Gifters) and the younger attendees (Lifters) appear to be at odds or operate as though they are on different teams going in the opposite direction. That question led to the development of this project. The research developed for the project has been formatted to discover what can be done to bridge this widening gap so a church that has lost its young might be revitalized and thrive once again.

This research project began with a desire to discover ways to bring these two groups together once again in unity. To some degree, there is always the desire on the part of the younger to escape the hold of their parents on their lives in order to launch out on their own and prove they also have the ability to be victorious. This desire has morphed into a complete break between the generations, a trend that has now become the norm, and it is having a devastating effect on local churches. It appears that the divide is much more than that. It is up to the church to develop opportunities for these two groups to feed into each other's world within the body of Christ. The data retrieved from this qualitative research should provide a complete look at the problem, and that will lead to

the opportunity to develop resources showing how to frame the discussion between Gifters and Lifters going forward.

Research Method

Qualitative research is the chosen method of practical research for this project. Qualitative research is more subjective than quantitative, allowing for interpretation and giving the researcher the opportunity to pursue relevant information further. Using qualitative research in the pursuit of theological data allows the researcher to apply his or her practical theological knowledge to the interpretation of the data. This is especially important in research that intersects with theology. As John Swinton and Harriet Mowat state, “The important thing is that the practice pairs faithful witness to the God from whom the practice emerges, and it reflects, and that it enables individuals and communities to participate faithfully in Christ’s mission.”¹²⁹ Swinton and Mowat suggest theologians can utilize qualitative research methods to aid in ensuring Christian practice is in correspondence to the event of God’s self-communication.¹³⁰

For this research, the qualitative research process will be used to gather and analyze data that can be used to cross-cultural divides when facing the challenge of Gifters and Lifters staying together to build the church. The critical thing to remember in qualitative research studies is that the task of such a research is “to describe the lived realities of individuals and groups in particular settings and to give the reader theoretical

129. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed., (London: SCM Press, 2016), 21.

130. *Ibid.*, 86.

comparisons and explanations that can be used elsewhere.”¹³¹ The surveys and interviews created for this research will provide data showing that changes must be made, and it will help guide what those changes should be in order to move forward in unity. The outcomes can be used in a variety of settings through practical application, making sure the potential impact of the project results is far-reaching.

Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln define qualitative research as “multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that the qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.”¹³² For this research process, the author will look at Lifters and Gifters and how they are interacting in the local church setting. Representatives of each group, along with the lead pastor of the church, will answer a series of questions, in survey form, that seek to understand better where the gaps in Lifter/Gifter relationships are occurring. All of the churches chosen have successfully integrated Lifters and Gifters to some extent, creating a sense of community that is helping the church thrive. Any areas of dissension or disconnect found in this research will most likely be even more prevalent in struggling or failing churches.

Research and findings are the primary objectives of qualitative research. The researcher is not as removed from qualitative research as he or she would be from quantitative research. When qualitative researchers turn their attention to their world and

131. Ibid., 44.

132. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, “Introduction: Entering the Field of Qualitative Research,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994), 2.

discover something new about that personal world, they are searching for and defining reflexive knowledge.¹³³ Because of the researcher's direct interaction with and interpretation of the data, reflexivity is important. "Reflexivity is the process of critical self—reflection carried out by the researcher throughout the research process that enables him/her to monitor and respond to his/her contribution to the proceedings."¹³⁴ Personal reflexivity is the process in which one is forced outside of the process in order to give an autobiographical sketch of what is going on. Even though the researcher is in the moment, he or she must be willing to detach from the process to ensure a non-biased personal motive. The researcher's motive, in this case, is the healing of the division taking place between Lifters and Gifters and the growth of the Church by ensuring a strong sense of community and health at the local church level.

Survey Development

The research for this project will include three surveys. The first will be given to pastors and the second and third to church members, Lifters and Gifters, from churches that are successfully integrating both generations in the growth of the church. The purpose of these surveys is to ascertain what local churches are currently doing to encourage intergenerational participation in the growth of the Church, and what areas need more focus. The data obtained from the surveys will be analyzed to determine trends and areas of need. Those surveys and how they will be distributed and analyzed will be discussed further in this chapter.

133. Swinton and Mowat, 33.

134. *Ibid.*, 57.

The author chose ten churches to focus on in the qualitative research. Each of the ten will bring a unique element to the research. Each is moving forward, is experiencing growth, and has a balance of Gifters and Lifters attending the church. The first church is Life Fellowship, located in Olive Branch, Mississippi. Patrick Conrad is the senior pastor of the church. Conrad and his wife started the church 17 years ago, and approximately 3,600 people currently attend services on six different campuses. The Conrads have been friends of the author's family for about ten years.

The second church is The Church at Chapel Hill, which is located in an Atlanta suburb. David Divine is the senior pastor. Divine and his wife started the church 17 years ago, and they currently have 3,300 attending each weekend on 4 campuses. The third church is Church on the Rise, pastored by Richard Gurganes. He and his wife started the church twenty-two years ago with eight people. Today, 1,350 gather each week on three campuses in the Rocky Mount, North Carolina area, and they also host two prison services.

Pastor Shawn Hennesey leads the fourth church, Life Church, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Hennesey started Life Church in 2013, and they now have 3,000 attending each weekend. The fifth church, led by Cornelius and Heather Lindsey, is The Gathering Place Oasis Church in Atlanta, Georgia. They started the church 7 years ago, and now they are at 700 attendees on 3 different campuses. Their church is made up of largely Lifters and is growing steadily. Cornelius will be the pastor who participates in the research.

Dr. Tom Manning pastors the sixth church, Christian Life Center, in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Manning arrived in Ft. Lauderdale six years ago to take over

leadership of an aging, highly successful church that had moved from a predominately white congregation to a mostly Black American congregation throughout the 35 years of the previous leader's pastorate. When Manning took over the church's leadership, they were averaging 1,500 people on Sundays. Now the church is over 3,500 people each weekend, and Manning has evened out the Gifter/Lifter population in the church. They lead four campuses.

Dale Oquist pastors the seventh church. Peoples Church, in Fresno, California is over sixty years old. Oquist and his wife took over leadership of the church 9 years ago. The church had a long history of success and was known as the largest church in Fresno for many years. However, the previous pastor had aged, and the congregation had aged with him. When Oquist took over, the church was lacking in Lifters with approximately 2,000 in attendance. Today there are twice as many people attending as when he came, and the Lifters population in the church is back. People's Church is now in a complete remodel and building program.

The eighth church, Victory Church, is led by Adam Starling and his wife. Victory Church is located in Norman, Oklahoma. Starling and his wife started the church in 2013. Today they have approximately 5,000 attendees on 3 campuses with a healthy mix of Gifters and Lifters. Pastor David Stocker leads the ninth church, Brave Church, located in Miami, Florida. Stocker took over his father's church about five years ago, and the congregation was primarily older Gifters. Today Brave Church averages 2,000 attendees on two campuses. Many of the 400 hundred attendees present when Stocker took over did not like that a Lifter pastor (35 years old at the time he and his wife arrived) was taking over the church. Several large groups left (including his sister and her family) before the

church started growing. However, many of the Gifters stayed and were eager for growth and now the church is thriving.

The final church is Church For All Nations, pastored by Jonfulton and Ashley Wilkerson. The Wilkersons took over the 100-year-old Tacoma Washington church in November of 2018. Wilkerson is 38 years old (in the Lifter age range), and the congregation is mostly Gifters. The elder board has two Lifters out of the twelve elders. Because the church was dying when he arrived, the Gifters are supporting the ideas of the younger pastor. They have already grown from 500 to 800 people. Most of the growth is Lifters, and the Gifters in the church are thrilled. The goal to include churches from across the country led to the inclusion of two West Coast churches, two Midwest churches and six East Coast churches represented in the research.

Three surveys will be created for the research, one for each group: pastors, Lifters, and Gifters. Each survey will start with an informed consent statement (see appendix C). General demographic data will be collected on each survey, including the respondent's age, his or her church name, and how long he or she has attended the church. A copy of each survey can be found in the appendices (appendix D). Collecting and analyzing data is not enough to solve this problem, however. Future action must be planned and executed. Five pastors will be chosen for follow-up interviews. The answers to the interview questions, along with the survey data and the results of the biblical and literature research, will be used to create a workshop. Churches of all sizes and demographics can use that workshop to take active steps and bring Lifters and Gifters back into community and working together to grow the Church.

The Workshop

The final stage of the project development is the creation of a workshop local churches can utilize to help build relationship and community between Lifters and Gifters in their church. The principles and data collected in the previous stages of research will be used in the creation of a workshop script to help local churches, both new and old, build a platform for cooperation between Lifters and Gifters. This workshop script will consist of multiple parts. The first will be a resource guide for pastors and board members that will help them understand why the two generations may be having difficulty communicating and working together. It will also contain a list of best practices, with examples and case studies from churches that are successfully integrating the generations and utilizing their talents and skills. The second part of the workshop script will consist of practical steps the church can take to bring Lifters and Gifters together. This workshop will be presented to a group of pastors and church members for critique and feedback. Changes will be made as necessary, and then the workshop will be offered as a resource for local churches.

Execution of the Project

Survey links will be sent to each respondent group via email using MailChimp. A reminder email will be sent after seven days, with a final thank you for participating/reminder email sent five days later. After reviewing the survey results, and before complete analysis, the author will perform follow-up interviews with at least five of the pastors to gauge their intent for future action as they continue to bring Lifters and Gifters together to grow their church. Each pastor interviewed will be asked these questions:

- What is the biggest disconnect you see in your church between Lifters and Gifters?
- What changes might you make in the next year to encourage more interaction and cooperation between Lifters and Gifters?
- Are there any particular ministries in your church that would benefit from increased cooperation between the Lifters and Gifters?
- I am creating a workshop that churches can use to help build a relationship between key Lifters and Gifters in the church. What elements would you like to see in that workshop?

Data from each survey, along with the answers to the interview questions will be reviewed for language/word similarities, trends in intergenerational relationships, and similarities or discrepancies between the survey data and the results of the biblical and literature research.

Survey Analysis

The survey results will be vital to the crafting of the workshop as that data will be the most current, and it will show what is working in a practical rather than theoretical way. The results from the surveys will be divided into subgroups for analysis (pastor, Lifter, Gifter). The author will compare their responses through cross-tabulation and filter the data to discover trends within each group.

Workshop Development

The development of the workshop script, the practical application of this project, will be based equally on the biblical, theological, and literature reviews and the data

collected from the surveys and interviews. The author will look for trends and best practices that are consistent throughout the research, and trends that are currently working in other fields but have not yet been applied to the local church.

Workshop Review

Evaluation of the workshop will be given through feedback from a selected group of individuals. This group will include the project advisor for this research, five pastors from churches that are currently successful in integrating Lifters and Gifters, five pastors from struggling churches or church plants that would be the ultimate utilizers of the workshop, and the head of the Center for Leadership and Church Development of the Church Multiplication Network.

Each will receive the workshop script along with an evaluation sheet, asking them to examine the document as if they were preparing to utilize the product in their church or churches within their organization. Feedback gathered will include:

1. Any noted areas of weakness.
2. Clarification on information that is not clear to the reader.
3. Adjustments or additions they would recommend adding.
4. Their overall evaluation of the workshop.

Each of these individuals will bring a unique perspective through their personal experience, education, ministry tenure, and their experiences with struggling and growing churches.

Results of the Research

All of the participating pastors completed the survey. Thirty-seven Lifters responded and completed the survey, and fifty-five Gifters completed the survey. The

goal was for fifty participants from each of the attendee groups, but the data gleaned from the thirty-seven Lifters and the Gifters was insightful and will provide useful in the formation of the workshop.

Pastor Survey

Eleven pastors completed the pastor survey. Each pastor was assigned an identifying number by the survey software when they completed the survey. Three of the pastors fell within the Lifter age range, and the other eight were Gifters. The median age of the pastors was 41.8. Table 3.1 shows the percentages of respondents in each age range.

Table 3.1. Age of pastor respondents.

Age Range	Percent	Responses
30-39	27.3%	3
40-49	27.3%	3
50-59	45.5%	5

Each pastor answered twenty-three survey questions. The first two questions gathered the name of their church and their age. The other questions asked specific questions about Lifters and Gifters and the challenges they face with each in their church (if any). A full list of the survey questions is available in appendix D. A brief overview of the answers will be given here, focusing on those responses most relevant to the current research.

The third question asked on the survey was: “What is your number one, biggest challenge when you blend the Lifters (39 and under) and the Gifters (40 and over) in your church?” The responses were very similar to the issues seen in the literature review in chapter two. The pastors struggle with the different worldviews between the two groups,

the different communication styles, and the different aspects each group seeks from the church (experiences and community vs. programs). As expected, the Lifters are very experiential, seek community, and want to be involved in the process. The Gifters want to control the process and the programs, and they are at times resistant to change.

The answers to question four will provide valuable guidance in developing community-building resources for local churches. The question asked was: “In your position as pastor, what benefits do you see from each of these two age groups?” The responses are shown in table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Pastor perceived benefits from Lifters and Gifters.

Gifter Benefits	Lifter Benefits
Stability, Faithfulness, Generosity	Creativity, Energy, Passion for Social Causes
Direction, Stability	Enthusiasm, Idealism
Mentor, Provide Stability	Passion, Energy
Stability, Doctrinal Purity, Loyalty	Passion, Vision, Hunger
Wisdom	Zeal, Energy
Maturity, Resources	Energy, Creativity, Understanding Of Culture
Experience, Their Ability to Lift Vision Financially	Aggressive in Evangelism, Vision
Stability	Energy
Work	Community
Encouragement, Financial Support	Motivated for Change, Vision
Wisdom, Understanding of Success	Energy, Perspective on Current Trends

Five of the eleven pastors used the word “stability” to describe Gifters, and ten used “energy” or a related word to describe Lifters. This seems to support Gifter and Lifter traits discovered in both the biblical and literature research. The stability provided by the Gifters forms the solid foundation needed to grow the church, while the energy from the Lifters drives the growth.

The responses to questions five through seventeen, nineteen, twenty-three, and twenty-four will be discussed more in the workshop development section of chapter four. The responses to those questions provide enormous value to struggling churches who need to build community between Lifters and Gifters. The complete list of responses can be seen in appendix D.

Question eighteen asked the pastors, “Is social justice a large concern with either or both age groups in your church?” The author was surprised to find that one church answered no. The other ten pastors answered yes. Social justice is a primary concern of Lifters, and an interest in taking care of the community must exist for Lifters to feel involved.

Question twenty asked the pastors, “Have you intentionally planted new campuses with equal numbers of both age groups in the new campus?” Five pastors responded yes, 4 no, 1 has not planted a church yet, and the final pastor said their church plant was 70 percent Lifters and 30 percent Gifters. This is a growing concern for church plants, especially with the data showing that Gifters bring stability and the needed financial resources.

Question twenty-one was directed more toward the older pastors: “Has the primary leader of your young adult ministry ever given you a reason to feel like you have to look over your shoulder?” Nine pastors had not experienced this issue, two had. Question twenty-two asked those two pastors how they had dealt with the issue. The responses to this question were significant because they show how the pastor deals with the energy and drive the Lifter young adult pastors bring to the church. One pastor, identified as P12, responded:

Their youthful zeal and ambition is scary. While I'm proud that they're ambitiously moving forward, I'm concerned if their zeal and ambition will override their loyalty to the vision. That means that the first offense could push them away to pursue their own thing even if it means ruining what they were working on with our church.

This reaction is common when Gifters encounter the unchecked drive and vision Lifters bring to the church, and even pastors must learn to mitigate the potentially harmful effects. One solution is to ensure those Lifters are partnered with a Gifter mentor who can help temper the drive with wisdom and a more well-rounded view of the goals of the church. That Gifter must be open to listening to and truly hearing the Lifter's heart, and the Lifter must be willing to consider and apply the Gifter's wisdom.¹³⁵

Lifter Survey

Thirty-seven Lifters responded to the survey. Of the thirty-seven, four marked that they had just turned forty, and might have been classified as Gifters instead. They were kept as part of the Lifter group as they responded to that survey. Table 3.3 shows the number of respondents in each age range.

Table 3.3. Age of Lifter respondents.

Age Range	Percent	Responses
20-29	29.7	11
30-39	59.5	22
40-49	10.8	4

Question three asked the Lifters how long they had been attending their church. Eighteen of them, almost 50 percent, had been at the church for 1 to 5 years and the remainder had been there for five years or more.

135. Dennis Moberg, "Mentoring and Practical Wisdom: Are Mentors Wiser or Just More Politically Skilled," *Journal of Business Ethics* (2008) 83:835–836.

Table 3.4. Lifter length of time at church.

	Percent	Responses
1-5 Years	48.6	18
5-10 Years	16.2	6
10-15 Years	18.9	7
15-20 Years	16.2	6

The responses to question four show that 70 percent of the respondents have family that also attend the church.

Question eight asked the Lifters how members of both generations being involved in various church ministries contribute to that ministry’s success. Most research found for this project seems to point to Lifters as having a kind of tunnel vision when it comes to viewing the older generation. In the author’s personal experience, that has been true at times, but there have always been Lifters who sought out and recognized the wisdom and value of the older generations. This did not mitigate the disagreements between the generations, but it did make conversations to resolve those disagreements more productive as each generation could see the value of the other. That personal experience had already led to the decision to include a time in the workshop for each group to acknowledge the value of the other. Focusing on and intentionally recognizing this value will open lines of communication and start rebuilding a sense of community. The Lifters’ responses to this question support that decision. Respondent L3 pointed out that involvement from multiple generations, “Empowers every generation to be involved and play their part in the body of God.” L4 recognized the benefits of the two groups working together:

From my perspective, the older generation is able to provide their time and wisdom to the younger generation to help them leverage their social reach while maintaining a strong spiritual foundation which gives direction in creating effective local projects and global mission trips.

The trend in the responses was the recognition of the wisdom the older generations can share with the younger through mentorship, sharing their life experiences, and by sharing perspectives. None of the responses was negative toward the older generation. This trend continued in the responses to questions nine through twelve, with all of the respondents expressing appreciation for the skills and abilities of the Gifters.

Question 13 asked the Lifters: “In your estimation, what areas of the church could use more input from church leadership to help foster generational camaraderie?”

Seventeen of the respondents had no answer or felt the church leadership was already being intentional. The other twenty gave specific examples of how leadership might make changes in specific ministries or areas of the church. L3 stated, “I feel like if we interacted more it would be more natural. Maybe the church can facilitate more opportunities for connections between the two generations so that those relationships happen.” L4 responded similarly, stating, “We may need to be more intentional with generational interactions. I don't know if this could be possibly done through social events (i.e. church game night, picnic, etc.) or planned programs (i.e. forum discussion on current societal topics).” L16 focused on the helping youth transition into the adult body of the church:

I believe the largest area of lack in most churches is the 18-25 age group. The stats of how many fall away in this group is depressing. I feel it is due to having so many programs for teens and so many for young marrieds on up, but most churches have very little in between ... I believe part of this gap is generated because church leadership is done by those over 40 in most cases with no input from the younger. I do not believe any college age should run a church, but I do believe those in leadership need to make an intentional effort to reach and understand them. I believe the best answer is bringing on an individual into leadership that while being older still feels called to reach the college age group.

The trend in the answers to this question was intentionality in giving the generations the opportunity to blend and create relationships, whether through programs, mentorship, discipleship, or special events.

Question nineteen asked the Lifters if they feel their voice is heard in the church. Only three respondents stated no. The responses to this question were surprising as over 50 percent of young adults in the secular world feel their voice is heard.¹³⁶ Several of the respondents did clarify that they were intentional about voicing their opinion. Overall, the Lifters' responses to the survey questions, especially those questions about Gifters, received positive responses. Lifters want community. They want relationships with Gifters. It is up to the church to give them opportunities to foster those relationships.

Gifters Survey

Fifty-five Gifters responded to the survey. Two of the respondents fell in the Lifter age group but were left in the results as they were at the upper end of the age range.

Table 3.5. Age of Gifter respondents.

Age Range	Percent	Responses
30-39	3.60	2
40-49	27.20	15
50-59	38.20	21
60-69	14.50	8
70 or above	16.40	9

Question three asked the Gifters how long they had been attending their church. Sixteen of them, almost 30 percent, had been at the church for 1 to 5 years and the remainder had

136 World Economic Forum, “Global Shaper’s Survey,” last modified 2017, http://www.shaperssurvey2017.org/static/data/WEF_GSC_Annual_Survey_2017.pdf

been there for five years or more. Twelve of the respondents, 21 percent, had been at the church for over 20 years.

Table 3.6. Gifter length of time at church.

	Percent	Responses
1-5 Years	29	16
5-10 Years	23.6	13
10-15 Years	18.2	10
15-20 Years	7.27	4
Over 20 Years	21.8	12

Forty-eight of the respondents have family who also attends the church.

Question eight, as for the Lifters, asked the Gifters, “How does having people from different generations involved contribute to that success?” While the Lifter responses all talked about what the Gifters bring to the table, only about half of the Gifters did the same. The other half of the responses talked about how the Gifters could help and guide the Lifters. G5 said, “There is both experience and ability to learn from those who are seasoned.” G8 stated, “Their gratefulness for what we do.” While both of these statements are likely true, they do not say anything about the values the Lifters bring and instead place the focus back on the validation of the Gifters as vital to the church.

Several responses did talk about the need for both groups to maintain church growth. G2 stated: “You must have an older set to provide wisdom and guidance but who are also willing to accept and embrace change. You must involve the younger generations in leadership and internship and training programs or your church will die. There must be a good balance of both.” G5 spoke about the joys of the generations working together in outreach, “As far as outreach goes, it's just priceless to see the older and younger generations minister together. Working together.” G11 focused on how the generational

differences bring value to the whole, “Each generation brings a different level of experience, background, energy, excitement, and expectations. The combination of wisdom and fresh ideas create a greater dimension of service. Even more so when involving a diverse group.” This question shows one area on which the local church will need to focus. Gifters must learn to recognize the value Lifters bring to the church and that they are not being pushed aside so a new generation can step into their place. Both groups have value, and both are necessary for the health of the church.

While recognizing value was split down the middle, Gifters unanimously expressed a desire for a relationship with Lifters. The responses the author was expecting to find in question eight were reflected in questions nine and ten. When talking about Lifters in terms of relationship, instead of their contribution to the church, the Gifters were free with their praise and recognition of the value Lifters bring. G2 stated, "They are always kind and respectful. They go "all out" for God. It helps excite me when they are excited." G7 said, “They are world changers. They see a need and jump in. They are Kingdom minded. They are fun and kind.” G14 spoke specifically of their boldness, “They are open to creative and new ideas. As a Social Entrepreneur, I am always searching for fresh approaches and risk takers; business or spiritual. This age group is not afraid. They will do whatever God ask them to do. They are bold and courageous.” Gifters place high value on Lifters relationally, just as Lifters do for Gifters. This should make it easier for the local church to facilitate those relationships and build community between the generations.

Like the Lifters, most of the Gifters felt their voices are heard in the church (question twenty). This seems to be an area of strength for these growing churches and is

an area that will be included in the leader's resources section of the workshop. As the body of Christ, every voice is important.

Questions twenty-three to twenty-five were unique to the Gifters, with the purpose of discovering if the Gifters intentionally seek out Lifters for a relationship. Question twenty-three asked if the Gifters invite young adults to their home. Thirty-seven, 67 percent stated they do. Question twenty-four asked if the Gifter had ever been a mentor to a Lifter. Forty-four, 80 percent, stated they have and three of the respondents stated they have not done so yet but plan to the in future.

Question twenty-five asked the Gifters, "What three things could you personally do to engage the young adults in your church?" Only one respondent declined to answer this question. The trends in the answers to this question were creating more intentional relationships, mentoring, and actively seeking to spend more time with Lifters. G22 wants to seek Lifters, "More mentoring, more social activities, more pursuing (make a call or send a text to check up on them)." G28 focuses on reciprocation, "Introduce myself. Ask for their help with something. Help them with something." G37 acknowledges the importance of supporting them, "Invite them to dinner, host events, and invest money in their projects." The overall trend with both Lifters and Gifters is the desire for a relationship with members of the other group.

This research reflects the trends found in biblical and literature research. Gifters bring stability to the church, but they must embrace and raise the Lifters if the local church is to flourish. The generations desire a relationship with one another. Lifters who are willing to learn from the Gifters and recognize their wisdom benefit from their involvement in their lives. Those who refuse to see the Gifters' value ultimately leave that

church, often to the detriment of the programs they were passionate about. Those Gifters who embrace the Lifters' roles in the church find joy in their presence, while the Gifters who fear the Lifters' influence try to show their value instead of working in cooperation with the Lifters to grow the church. There is room for improvement in every church, and the church leadership must guide the process. Just as church growth is an intentional process, building community between the generations within the church must be intentional as well.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE PROJECT EVALUATED

Introduction

The final stage of the methodology is an evaluation of all areas of the project. This evaluation will be used to develop plans for future research and additional materials and resources. The research in the project has been used to create materials churches can utilize in attracting Lifters back into active fellowship in the local church. Furthermore, the information gathered will be an activator for Gifters to re-evaluate the positions they have taken. The decision each declining or plateaued church will have to make will be to keep moving toward demise or to change and be a blessing to the Lifters coming in the future. The church's welcome mat has to be an action, not just something upon which to wipe one's feet.

Explanation of the Research Process

The research process for this project was completed in four stages. The first stage included the research of biblical, theological, and current literature that relates to the project topic, the results of which are shown in chapter two. The biblical and theological research focused on the biblical examples and scriptural mandates of all generations working together to grow the Church. The current literature research focused primarily on literature examining generational differences and how those differences affect giving and cooperation in organizational situations, how each generation views giving and philanthropic work, and how generational differences are currently affecting existing and new churches.

The second stage of research involved selecting churches to include in the practical research project. Each pastor was contacted, and, after they agreed to participate, it was requested that they send an email list of ten Lifters and ten Gifters from their church. Those lists, as well as the emails for the pastors, were entered into a Mailchimp database so emails could be sent to all participants with links to the surveys created for the project. The emails thanked each for their participation, told a little about the research project, and included a link to the survey for their group (pastor, Lifter, Gifter).

Three surveys were created to gather qualitative data from the participants. The first survey was formulated for the pastors, the second for the Lifters, and the third for the Gifters. The goal of the surveys was to ascertain what local churches are currently doing to encourage intergenerational participation in the growth of the Church, and what areas need more focus. The data obtained from the surveys was then analyzed to determine trends and areas of need.

The analysis of the data gleaned from the research was the third stage of the research methodology. The biblical and theological research and current literature, reflected in chapter two, were analyzed for principles and best practices the local church can use to encourage cooperation between Lifters and Gifters. Next, the survey data were analyzed to form a more complete picture of how churches are accomplishing the principles and practices discovered in the biblical and literature research. During this process, the author looked for trends and for anomalies to those trends that are still successful. The author took note of both successful practices and those issues that created

division. The data contains real-life examples of what is currently working and what is not working as it relates to generational communication and cooperation.

The fourth stage of the methodology focused on applying the principles and data collected in the previous stages by developing a workshop script to help local churches, both new and old, build a platform for cooperation between Lifters and Gifters. This workshop packet consists of multiple parts. The first is a resource guide for pastors and board members that will help them understand why the two generations may be having difficulty communicating and working together. The second part of the workshop packet is a script consisting of practical steps the church can take to bring Lifters and Gifters together. The script outlines a one-day workshop a local church can use to facilitate interaction between a selected group of Lifters and Gifters. This workshop was presented to a group of pastors, Assemblies of God leaders, and academic experts for critique and feedback. Changes were made according to their feedback. In the future, the workshop will be offered as a resource for local churches.

Research Application

The ultimate goal of the research was the creation of a workshop training for local churches. The author believes that it is necessary to intentionally create an event that brings members of each generation together to acknowledge the current challenges the local church is facing because of generational conflict. If twenty people, equally represented by Gifters and Lifters, can gather for one Saturday to work through some of those issues, the cooperation resulting from that meeting will hopefully spread to the entirety of that church. Unless there is cooperation between the generations, it is doubtful that the challenges the local church is facing in our country can be overcome.

Trends Discovered in the Biblical and Literature Research

The research being accomplished in the marketplace encompasses a broad range of categories dealing with intergenerational cooperation, but very little research currently exists dealing specifically with the effect generational divide is having on the local church. This project has looked at how intergenerational cooperation can help the struggling or new local church grow and thrive. Scripture contains many examples of generations working together. The biblical and literature research offered many tools and trends the contemporary church can use to encourage intergenerational cooperation.

One of the ways intergenerational cooperation takes place is through mentorship and discipleship. In chapter two, the relationship between Moses and Joshua was referenced. Their story is an excellent example of a younger man longing for the mentorship of an elder. Shortly after the Children of Israel escape the slavery of Egypt they were faced with a war against the Amalekites (Exod. 17). However, they were not skilled in acts of war.¹³⁷ Josephus tells us that Moses had been a young General in the Egyptian army before his downfall.¹³⁸ Consequently, he must have seen military prowess in the younger Joshua. Moses trusted Joshua, and he sent him to lead the newly formed armies of Israel while Moses stayed on the top of a nearby hill with his arms held high before the Lord praying for the Lord to intervene. When his arms would begin to drop, Israel's army would fail. However, as long as his arms were raised, they were triumphant (Exod. 17:11). When Moses grew tired, Aaron and Hur held Moses' arms high before the Lord until Israel won the battle (v. 12). Joshua learned the power of faith during his time

¹³⁷ Feldman, 232.

¹³⁸ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 10.

of mentorship with Moses. Throughout their relationship, there were many more opportunities for Joshua to learn from Moses (Exod. 24:13; 32:17-19; 33:11). It is evident from the accounts of that relationship in Scripture that Joshua cherished those opportunities, and with each success Moses elevated him to higher levels of responsibility (Num. 11:28; 13:16; 14:6-10; 27:18-23).

Another trend apparent in biblical research is the necessity for both generations to show a willingness to listen and learn (Ruth 1:1-2, 8-17). One of the greatest stories in the Old Testament of this kind of give and take is from the story of Naomi and Ruth. Naomi and her husband Elimelek moved from their home in Israel during a famine into Moab for work and sustenance (Ruth 1:1-2). While there, their two sons married women from Moab. In time both sons died as did Elimelek; one daughter-in-law, Orpah, moved on. The other, Ruth, stayed with Naomi as Naomi headed back to her homeland (vv. 8-17). It was a new culture, new people, and a new country, but Ruth would not separate from Naomi. Their intense give and take communication, which featured Naomi giving instructions and Ruth following through with joy and obedience, produced food, money, a husband for Ruth, and a legacy that includes Jesus Christ (Ruth 2:17-19a, 20; 3:5, 12-13; 4:9-10, 16-17). That all happened because the two women, Naomi (the Gifter) and Ruth (the Lifter), decided that they would work together and take leadership and advice from each other.¹³⁹ Because neither were interested in getting the credit for saving the other, God abundantly blessed them both.

Respect for each generation's skills and talents is another trend seen in Scripture. Barak and Deborah are an excellent example of respect for one another. Barak was the

¹³⁹ Edward, 75.

warrior, and Deborah was the prophet/leader. Deborah, on behalf of God, commissioned Barak to go to war, but Barak said he would only go if Deborah went as well (Jud. 4:6-8). Barak respected Deborah's anointing from God, and he knew that if she were present God would anoint them as well.¹⁴⁰ Deborah let Barak know that if she went, he would not be given credit for the victory (v. 9).¹⁴¹ Barak assured her that was not important to him. Deborah led, and Barak followed (vv. 9-10). Together they defeated the enemy, and, when the battle was over, they sang a song in which they praised other members of their team (Jud. 5).

Lifters in the Bible continually sought the advice of Gifters. This is seen in the life of Moses and his father-in-law Jethro. Early on, as a shepherd working for Jethro, Moses gained such appreciation from Jethro that Jethro gave him his daughter to marry (Exod. 2:21). This showed approval on the part of the Gifter, Jethro, for the Lifter, Moses. In time, after Moses had led the people out of Egypt's bondage, Jethro went to visit his son-in-law (Exod. 18:7-11). The next day, Jethro gave wise leadership advice to Moses, advice Moses immediately accepted and instituted (Exod. 18:17b-21). Moses continued to value Jethro's opinion, and Jethro continued to share wisdom with him.¹⁴² This trend is also reflected in the story of David and Solomon. The young Solomon sought his father's wisdom and received his blessing and the admonishment to lead Israel. The old Gifter said to the young Lifter, "So be strong, act like a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws

140 Niditch, 65.

141 Knight, 123.

142 Jaeyoung, 298.

and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go” (1 Kings 2:2-3). Part of the prospering was so Solomon could build the temple of the Lord to house the Ark of the Covenant.¹⁴³ Solomon obeyed his father’s words explicitly, and he did prosper.

The importance of both Lifters and Gifters seeking the direction of the Spirit cannot be underestimated. The stories in the Bible show how the godly men and women who worked to further God’s mission continually sought His guidance. One instance is found in 2 Kings 2 when the prophet Elijah is being taken up into heaven. Elijah knew he was about to go and kept telling Elisha to wait for him, to go to a particular place, and that he would come back. However, Elisha would not let him leave him.¹⁴⁴ This happened three separate times. The first two times, a group known as “the company of the prophets,” came and asked Elisha if he knew his master Elijah was going to heaven that day? Both times Elisha said he knew. As they approached the Jordon River, Elijah smote the river with his cloak, and the waters split so the two men could cross on dry ground. Once they had crossed, Elijah said to the Lifter, Elisha, “Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken?” Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah’s anointing (2 Kings 2:9). Suddenly a fiery chariot with horses appeared and took Elijah (v. 11). When it happened, he dropped his cloak (mantel) and Elisha caught it. At that moment Elisha struck the Jordan River with Elijah's mantel and asked, "Where is the God of Elijah?" (vv. 13-14). The waters split and immediately the company of the prophets recognized

143 Maller, 92.

144 Weingart, 258.

that the Spirit of God had fallen upon Elisha (v. 15).¹⁴⁵ The Spirit led this entire event. The two men were moving almost in tandem as if their words and actions were being written and choreographed by the Holy Spirit.

Another trend evident in Scripture was the relationship Gifters and Lifters had with God. That relationship strengthened their relationships with one another. Elizabeth and Mary are a good example. Elizabeth was an elderly, previously barren woman (Luke 1:7), who was pregnant with her first child by her husband Zachariah at the time of this story. She was most likely in a holy state of spiritual bliss, as God ordained the child.¹⁴⁶ During this same season, her young cousin Mary had been visited by the Holy Spirit and was now pregnant with the Christ child (vv. 26-38). Their biological relationship may have been what drew the two together, but they drew closer through their mutual love for the Almighty and the unique circumstances they faced.¹⁴⁷ This same mutual love for the Lord can strengthen the relationships of Gifters and Lifters in the church today.

The survey of current literature also showed valuable resources the local church can use to build relationships between Lifters and Gifters. One area that appears to frighten some Gifters is the increasing use of technology. Although many Gifters work well in that field, some are resistant to a technical language they do not understand. This becomes an area of division in the local congregation as technology becomes more critical to the day-to-day functioning of the church. Instead of technology widening the gap between Gifters and Lifters, Earl Creps believes it could become a tool to unite the

145 Noble, 54

146 Kroeger and Evans, 564.

147 Ibid., 758.

two groups. In *Reverse Mentoring: How Young Leaders Can Transform the Church and Why We Should Let Them*, Creps shares that his experience has shown that his willingness to admit a lack of understanding and his openness to counsel from younger individuals, “seriously brings a healing Grace back into the relationship. Without fail in these situations, I have found that the younger person’s esteem for the older actually increases when help is requested.”¹⁴⁸

Another trend found in the literature review is that the younger generations, the Lifters, are mostly cause-driven, and they are passionate about community service.¹⁴⁹ This trend is one that must be further analyzed and adapted as future generations join the Lifter group. Responses from pastors and lifters to the surveys show that Lifters want to get their hands dirty. They give money, but their heart drives them to get personally involved as well.¹⁵⁰ Examples of this in the local church might include passing out flyers, physically working at the mission to deliver food, or spending a day at a local orphanage assisting the workers. Lifters want personal involvement with the mission.

At the same time, Lifters desire nurturance from their spiritual leaders. According to Waters and Bortree, “Nurturance captures aspects of caretaking and protecting.”¹⁵¹ This data is vitally important to the local church that truly wants to attract and keep Lifters. The church leadership cannot expect a Sunday message to be enough for the

148 Creps, 100.

149 Meister and Willyerd, 1-2.

150 Pastor responses to question five can be found in appendix D; Lifters answers to questions five and question twenty can be found in appendix D.

151 Waters and Bortree, 204.

Lifter. Their longing for nurturance and individual instruction calls for more interaction. Andy Stanley experienced a significantly faster growth rate by instituting a small group system in his church, which ensured the younger generation was getting the nurturance and interaction they desired.¹⁵²

Honor seems to be the missing ingredient in the equation. God created us to need honor (Rom. 13:7). In fact, “Love and honor are the keystones of every successful relationship ... And a big part of honor is mutual support, affirmation, praise, and recognition for what a person does.”¹⁵³ Without a relationship of honor, Gifters feel disrespected and Lifters feel abandoned. A continual emphasis of the priesthood of all believers by leadership will help Lifters and Gifters alike understand that both groups are desperately needed for a church to remain healthy and grow. As Charlie Self states, “A robust theology of the priesthood of all believers joined with the full gospel of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:14–6:2) will transform individuals, communities, and ecclesial structures while honoring proper authority and sacerdotal vocations.”¹⁵⁴ Since Lifters find their greatest joy in community service, it is essential that Gifters join them as they serve during the week. This has the added benefit of removing the Gifter from his or her comfort zone and allowing him or her to feel like he or she is making a difference. Both groups must feel respected and needed.

¹⁵² Stanley, Joiner, and Jones, 107.

¹⁵³ Rich Wilkerson, Sr. *I Choose Honor: The Key to Relationships, Faith, and Life* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2019), 74.

¹⁵⁴ Charlie Self, *Flourishing Churches and Communities: A Pentecostal Primer on Faith, Work, and Economics for Spirit-Empowered Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian’s Library Press, 2013), 61.

If honor is a missing ingredient in the Lifter/Gifter relationship, then so is humility. A divide between the generations does exist, and it is hurting the local church.¹⁵⁵ Both groups must acknowledge their role in the struggle the local church is facing. In their book *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*, Larry Bossidy and Ram Chatham write, “The more you can contain your ego, the more realistic you are about your problems. You learn how to listen and admit that you don’t know all the answers. You exhibit the attitude that you can learn from anyone at any time. Humility allows you to acknowledge your mistakes.”¹⁵⁶ When one person or group operates with humility, the other person or group is attracted to that humility.¹⁵⁷ One of the ways to humble oneself as a Gifter is to invite the Lifter into significant decisions within the church. Lifters must also operate in humility, acknowledging that they need insight and wisdom from the Gifters if the church is to thrive.

Trends Discovered in the Survey Results

The results from the surveys were divided into subgroups for analysis (pastor, Lifter, Gifter). This allowed for the opportunity to compare their responses through cross-tabulation and filter the data to discover trends within each group. Those trends are

¹⁵⁵ For more information on the difficulties the generational divide is causing the local church, see Jackson W. Carroll and Wade Clark Roof, *Bridging Divided Worlds: Generational Cultures in Congregations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002); and Alton Garrison, *A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model* (Springfield, MO: Influence Resources, 2015).

¹⁵⁶ Larry Bossidy and Ram Chatham, *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done* (New York: Crown Business, 2002), 82.

¹⁵⁷ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), 307.

important as they form the foundation for the development of the workshop that is the result of this project.

The research discussed in chapter three showed that the primary trends discovered in the research are reflected in the survey results. As reflected in their answers to survey question three, the pastors struggle with the differences in the groups, primarily their different worldviews, their different styles of communication, and that Lifters and Gifters seek different experiences in church. The pastors responded to question four stating that Lifters bring energy and passion to the church, while Gifters bring stability, wisdom, and funding.

Lifters want relationship and community, and, if they do not find it, they will leave and go to a church that fosters a healthy community. They want to be involved in the decision-making process in the church, which sometimes becomes an issue because, as several of the pastors responded, Lifters can lack experience and sometimes feel entitled and do not check their attitude while serving in the church (P1, P6, P12). The desire for relationship is one of the best ways the church can reach out to Lifters. They value the wisdom Gifters can offer them (i.e., L4, L5, L7, L10), but many felt they were not given many opportunities to develop a strong enough relationship so the Gifters would be open to sharing. L27 offered a plan for increased interaction:

Quite simply, the two groups need to be put in the same room where communication is promoted from both directions. The younger generations need to know that someone has been where they are now, and the older generations need to listen to be sure that they are answering the questions that are being asked. Small groups are a great place to create healthy relationships which will result in the kind of vulnerability that results in spiritual growth.

Many of the Lifters mentioned the need for church leadership to be more intentional about offering opportunities for interaction between the groups (see responses in appendix D).

The Gifters feel secure in their place in the church. They are involved in the decision-making process and provide stability and funding the pastors are seeking. As the results discussed in chapter three shows, the Gifters love and value the Lifters as people, but they sometimes have difficulty recognizing the value Lifters bring to the church (L5, L8, L50). They desire relationships just as profoundly as the Lifters, and they are willing to take steps to create those relationships by mentoring, attending social activities, seeking them out, hosting events for Lifters, volunteering with them, and intentionally funding the Lifters' projects (see responses in appendix D).

These are results local church leaders should take into account when planning their strategy for bridging the gap between the Lifters and Gifters in their congregation. Creating opportunities for Lifters and Gifters to develop and grow relationships will lead to increased growth in the church itself. In addition to creating opportunities, they also need to be intentional about bringing Lifters and Gifters together through mentorship, blended programming, small groups, and volunteer opportunities.

The survey results also offer other trends useful to heal the divide that exists between the generations. Question five on the pastor survey asked, "What are the three primary differences you have found between the two age groups?" The results were enlightening. These responses are from pastors whose churches successfully blend the generations, yet they still face difficulties with generational differences. Some of the differences they mentioned were:

- Methodology
- Finances
- The gap between the generations in their basic understandings of Scripture
- Cultural preferences
- Technology
- A teachable work ethic versus a lack of teachability
- Expectations about the future
- Level of investment
- How they see social issues
- Different attitudes toward time management.

They also offered some specific comparisons between the groups, as shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Pastors’ perceived differences between Lifters and Gifters.

Gifters	Lifters
Fundamental doctrine	Compassion for people
Find meaning in doing	Find meaning in being
Grateful	Entitled
Have life experience	Untried and little experience
Driven by principle	Driven by purpose
Loyal to the organization	Loyal to a cause
Dress up	Prefer casual dress
Understand the importance of attitude	Need to understand the importance of attitude
Give to tangible items	Give to experience
Have money	Have a heart for outreach

Question seven asked the pastors, “Have you experienced rifts between the two age groups?” Four of the eleven stated they have. Their responses to the follow-up question of how they dealt with the issue give insight to other pastors dealing with the same issues. P7 stated, “I have to have a lot of relational intelligence and emotional

awareness conversations between the millennial and boomer generations on my staff.” This suggests that a constant awareness on the part of Lifters and Gifters will help them overcome the differences and develop strong relationships. P9 dealt with the issue by, “Working directly with both to hear their concerns, ideas, and helping to each group learn to work together to fulfill the mission of God. Making room in leadership for younger leaders and creating space at board table to pastoral team for both groups.” These are all proactive, intentional acts on the part of the leader to include both groups in the decision-making process.

P12 dealt with a particular problem: “We had a situation where our casual dress code wasn't well received by one of a few of our Gifters. We discussed the vision of the church and who [we] were reaching. That helped them to fall in line with what they perceived to be a ‘youthful approach’.” The division is never one-sided. Both groups will occasionally need a conversation about the true purpose and vision of their church. P18 dealt with a Gifter-related problem as well and started, “By reminding the Gifters of our core value of reaching the next generation. Also, by trying to cultivate mutual trust and respect.” Each pastor took proactive steps to deal with the division in their churches. This is vital to ensuring positive relationships between the Lifters and Gifters.

Development of the Workshop

As the results from the research and the surveys show, there is most definitely a divide between Gifters and Lifters within the church. The author determined that the best way to move forward and begin bridging the gap between the two would be with a workshop designed to have an equal number of people from the Gifter group and the Lifter group (twenty total is the total number of recommended) join together on a

Saturday to acknowledge the need for change. This led to the development of a workshop designed to help local churches create Gifter/Lifter partnerships within their local church. After analyzing the research data and the trends discovered from the surveys, a resource guide for pastors and board members was written to help them understand why the two generations may be having difficulty communicating and working together. This guide is the first element in the workshop packet. The major differences between Lifters and Gifters are established, and potential resources for the church leadership and the workshop are listed. These resources offer solutions and more information on the major issues discussed during the workshop.

The development of the workshop script, the practical application of this project, was based equally on the biblical, theological, and literature reviews and the data collected from the surveys. The author looked for consistent trends and best practices throughout the research, and then considered trends that are currently working in other fields but have not yet been applied to the local church. The survey results were vital to the crafting of the workshop as that data is the most current and it shows what is working. The script for the workshop (see appendix D) includes a step-by-step guide the moderator (a pastor or leader in the church) can follow throughout the day. Some text is provided for the moderator, but the script leaves room for personalization and adaptation to the specific needs of the church.

The moderator will begin the day by discussing the differences between Lifters and Gifters, with group feedback, and then he or she will set ground rules for moving forward during the workshop. After the basics are covered, the Lifters and Gifters will be

divided into five groups of four people each. The members of each group (two Lifters and two Gifters) will work together to answer eight different questions (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Workshop group discussion questions.

Question 1. Do you believe “Things that are healthy grow.” is a true statement? If so, how would you categorize our church? Is it winning, has it plateaued, or is it declining?

Question 2. Since Gifters see the church as Comfortable, Predictable, Where my Christian friends are, Where good doctrine is preached, and Where my soul is nurtured, can we discuss whether or not these are the overall qualities that will ensure growth sustainability and momentum going forward?

Question 3. In Wilkerson’s studies, he has documented the fact that 98% of the Christians in the world, accept Christ before they are 30 years of age. It stands to reason the war from hell for souls is being waged against children, teens, and young adults. Is it possible that the only way to win these age groups to Jesus is to relate to them first and develop a friendship?

Question 4. What are we doing well at in our church? What can we improve on? What are the big needs right now?

Question 5. As stated earlier, Lifters believe the church as a whole is intolerant of doubt, elitist in its relationships, anti-science in its beliefs, overprotective of its members, shallow in its theology, and repressive of different opinions. Remember that this may not be true of our church, but this is what the statistics say nationwide. With that in mind, what must we do as a church to open up and talk about it?

Question 6. Because Lifters desire community service, collaboration, and diversity, how can we better address those issues in our own community?

Question 7. Knowing that Gifters are especially gifted by God at helping to fund the work of God, is there a possibility that we as a church could raise money or begin to look at a portion of our missions’ dollars to help reach out locally? Can we have that discussion?

Question 8. It has been stated that Gifters would love to impart wisdom from their years of life experience to Lifters, but seldom get asked. Is there a way that the Lifters in our church might be willing to search out Gifters when pressed with a challenge?

Each group will have a table leader, and, at the end of the day, the table leader will stand and share the findings/answers for their table. The moderator will gather all information while it is being shared at the end of the day and will then present an

immediate assessment on progress made that day. A more in-depth assessment will be offered to attendees at a later date.

Evaluation of the workshop was given through feedback from a selected group of individuals. This group included my project advisor, five pastors from churches that are currently successful in integrating Lifters and Gifters, five pastors from struggling churches or church plants which would be the ultimate utilizers of the workshop, and the head of the Center for Leadership and Church Development of the Church Multiplication Network.

Each was sent the workshop packet along with an evaluation sheet, asking them to examine the document as if they were preparing to apply the product to their church or churches within their organization. Feedback gathered included:

1. Any noted areas of weakness.
2. Clarification on information that is not clear to the reader.
3. Adjustments or additions they would recommend adding.
4. Their overall evaluation of the workshop.

Each of these individuals brings a unique perspective through their personal experience, education, ministry tenure, and their experiences with struggling and growing churches.

Based on their feedback, several changes were made to the workshop. The list of possible resources was expanded to include recently published books focusing on church health, intergenerational cooperation, and further leadership resources. Examples and case studies were added to the resources packet that shows how actual issues were resolved by church leadership. A recommendation was added to the workshop suggesting a schedule of further interaction between the Lifters and Gifters in each group. Several

areas of the workshop instructions and script were also reworded for clarity. Additional changes will be made in the future as the workshop is field tested.

Future Use of the Workshop

The workshop will be used in conjunction with a book the author will write on this topic. The author believes this workshop and the in-progress book will benefit large churches that are growing as well as churches that have plateaued and are in decline. Every lead pastor, male and female, who desires to stay contemporary in their approach is looking for opportunities to engage Lifters and Gifters in meaningful exchange. This workshop serves as a perfect anecdote to such an endeavor.

Summary

The time constraints placed on this research impacted the number of responses, but the data stayed consistent and relevant. All of the pastors participated in the research. However, it was difficult to get a list of Lifters and Gifters from several of them due to their busy schedule. As anticipated, there was a higher response rate from Gifters than Lifters, but an adequate sample was received from each group to complete the research. The results of the research were invaluable in the development of the workshop designed for the local church.

A few points should be clear to all pastors. Lifters want to be included in leadership circles, not necessarily because they want to be the leaders but because they want input into the leadership decision-making process. They want to be heard and understood. Gifters must then step forward and learn to truly listen to Lifters and ask for their input and feedback rather than making decisions based on what they think Lifters want or need. The development of a relationship and a strong sense of community

between these two groups is vital. The church must take an active role to ensure this happens. Some relationships do happen organically, but the gap is too wide at this point, and both groups need guidance on relating to the other.

At the beginning of this research, the hypothesis was that Lifters serve as the hands of the church, volunteering and continuing the forward movement. Gifters serve as the wisdom factor and fund the programs of the church. While both of these were reflected in the research, many of the Lifters and Gifters indicated that Gifters are still very active in volunteering. Lifters did express an interest in having Gifters volunteer more often in programs that deal with youth. This would help create a bond between the groups at an earlier age and help youth through the often-difficult transition to young adulthood. Survey results showed this role is primarily left to Lifters in most of the churches, as church leadership feels that Lifters relate better to the youth. By having Gifters step into that role alongside Lifters, it would generate a natural environment for mentoring and relationship-building, leading to a stronger community.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE PROJECT CONCLUSIONS

The idea for this project started developing at the beginning of my doctoral journey. Somewhere during this course of study, I read the words of Simon Chan, and they stuck:

Up to now Pentecostals have been focusing on how to keep their communities vibrant through revival meetings, new techniques of church growth and new strategies. What they generally lack is a coherent theology of the church which allows for the truth that they hold dear to be systematically extended from one generation to the next.¹⁵⁸

This has not been a doctrinal journey to unite the generational divide. However, I sincerely desire to unite the generations back into a loving, needed, interconnected, never-to-be-severed bond that thrives into the future. Even successful growing churches must move intentionally in the coming years to bridge the generational gap in the church.

Lessons Learned from the Research

It must be noted that the churches and pastors chosen for the surveys are all winning churches. There was one reason for this decision: in a declining church, there are very few Lifters to survey. Even out of the ten churches chosen, and the one hundred Lifters the survey was sent to, only thirty-seven responded after all initially saying they would be glad to participate. Many of the responses are favorable as the respondents are part of a winning church. The survey results yielded valuable data, that data was applied

¹⁵⁸ Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay in the Development of Doctrine* (Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2011), 7.

to the workshop, and it will continue to shape the author's ministry, research, and writings.

As a brief review of the survey data discussed in chapters three and four, the results reflected that data gathered in the biblical and literature, justifying the author's initial thesis. The pastors surveyed suggested that they struggle with the different worldviews of each group. Lifters are experiential and desire community. Gifters, on the other hand, are program oriented. Gifters are more likely to want to control the programs and process and, at times, are resistant to change, whereas the Lifters certainly want to be involved in the process. Many of the pastors used the word “stability” to define what Gifters brought to the church, and ten of the eleven pastors used the word “energy” or a similar word to describe what the Lifters bring to the church.

The author was surprised to find that one of the pastors said “social justice” was not a primary concern of his church. As social justice is a primary concern for the majority of Lifters, this seems as if it might be a potential area of conflict in that church. Two pastors had felt threatened by the success or ambition of their young adult pastor. They were, in fact, concerned that the young adult pastor was developing a separate mission. One pastor referred to the young pastor as threatening “our” church. That kind of wording appears to have already alienated the young pastor away from the fold in the pastor’s mind. All three of these pastors are facing issues many pastors deal with when Lifters are active in the church.

What was very encouraging was the desire of the Lifters surveyed who want to be a part of the process. They want to be at the table and part of the decision-making process. It is not their desire to rule or take over, but to be included. There was also a real

desire on the part of the responding Lifters for the pastor and church leadership's help in bridging the divide between the two groups.

The Lifters were overall very positive when responding to questions about the Gifters in the church. One could almost feel a heart of honor coming from these Lifters as they wrote of the Gifters and their influences on the Lifters' lives. One Lifter, in particular, had a great heart for the 18-25 age group, which they were concerned are being ignored by the church. From a personal point of view, the author had the same concern more than forty-five years ago.

One concern from the findings came from the responses of some of the Gifters. They wanted their wisdom and guidance to be heard and did not feel as though they were being asked for their input by the Lifters. Other Gifters were enthusiastic about what the young Lifters bring to the church, and they actively seek relationships with them. The same Gifters who felt they had more to offer the Lifters focused on their benefits to the Lifters rather than what the Lifters might bring to the Gifters' lives.

The survey results proved that these two groups want a relationship and are trying to find a way to make it happen. The author believes that pastors and church leaders cannot sit on this issue and do nothing, because it will not happen organically on the scale needed to heal the divide. There is a way for pastors and leaders to effectively begin this process of unifying the Gifters and Lifters in their church. One way is through the workshop created for this project, "The Bridge: Bringing the Generations Together for Church Health and Growth" (see appendix A for the workshop packet).

God created us to be in a relationship with Himself and with other believers;¹⁵⁹ this is a biblical truth Lifters and Gifters must embrace. Change in the church must happen from within the individuals, through personal transformation guided by the influence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).¹⁶⁰ The transformation and openness to a relationship with the Spirit translates into an openness to relationships with other individuals in the church and an increased sense of community.¹⁶¹ Mark Cartledge states,

I would suggest that the presence of the Holy Spirit is discerned in the gathering of people together who are seeking God. They seek God through each other's lives and in the corporate act of worship. I believe that the Holy Spirit is indeed meeting these people as they create a 'space' within their services to meet with the God whom they worship.¹⁶²

Leadership that blesses intentionally helps guide individuals through this process, and a strong discipleship program is beneficial to the growth of the church.

The review of the literature and current research available on the topic of intergenerational cooperation and community shows the church can learn from the successful efforts of leaders in other areas. Business leaders have been working to ensure intergenerational cooperation for decades.¹⁶³ They have had successes and failures, and the documenting of those efforts can serve as a starting point for church leaders who are approaching the same issues in the church.

159 Moltmann, 2.

160 Grenz, 12.

161 Yong, 150.

162 Mark Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 127.

163 Nancy Pekala, "Conquering the Generational Divide," *Journal of Property Management* 66, no. 6 (November 2001): 38; Lisa Fall and Chuck Lubbers, "Does a Generational Divide Create a Fork in the Road?" *International Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 40.

It is essential to reference back to chapter two and remark once again on the mission, the mentoring needed, and the momentum that will carry intergenerational connectedness. If the mission is rehearsed over and over again by pastors and church leaders to both Gifters and Lifters, both groups will begin to recognize the need for mentoring from the older to the younger for the success of the mission. Mentoring is one way to mitigate the Lifter disconnect from the church, as “The goal of all mentoring aims for valuable relationships that promote spiritual health.”¹⁶⁴ As Siang-Yang Tan and Douglas H. Gregg wrote, “Common purpose or a shared vision for mission and outreach is necessary for any healthy Christian community. It is vital that members of a community be involved together in ministry and service to provide direction, give shape, and create growth for the fellowship.”¹⁶⁵ According to Michael E. McCrary, “Millennials generally feel abandoned, complicating intergenerational mentoring.”¹⁶⁶ When Lifters feel the connection of Gifters mentoring and cheering them on, they can become the momentum for victory. That victory may manifest in the ongoing growth of the fellowship they are each a part of or a new church plant they launch together.

The results of the independent research contained within this project support the trends and best practices found in the biblical and literature research. As stated, the pastors felt Gifters bring stability to the church, but Gifters must embrace and raise the Lifters if the local church is to flourish. The generations desire a relationship with one

164 Michael E. McCrary, “Intentional Intergenerational Ministry Practices Discovered at Central Assembly of God in Springfield, Missouri,” (D.Min project, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO, 2014), 44, 90.

165 Siang-Yang Tan and Douglas H. Gregg, *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 171.

166 McCrary, 87.

another. Lifters who are willing to learn from the Gifters and recognize their wisdom benefit from their involvement in their lives.

Change in the church must happen one person at a time, through personal transformation guided by the influence of the Holy Spirit. That transformation and openness to a relationship with the Spirit translates into an openness to relationships with other individuals in the church and an increased sense of community (Gen. 11:6; Acts 2:46-47). Leadership must intentionally guide individuals through this process, so a strong discipleship program is beneficial to the growth of the church.

Key Factors to Project Effectiveness

Several key factors contributed to the successful outcome of this project. The author's personal observations and knowledge about Lifter/Gifter interactions helped form a solid hypothesis, which guided the research. There were adequate biblical examples to show the importance of the relationship between the generations and the importance of community within the local church. Relationships with other pastors allowed access to successful churches, providing a broad participant base for the research project. The pastors willingly took the survey, wholly and honestly answered the questions, and were amenable to follow up questions and to reviewing the workshop. Their willingness to participate was vital to the success of the project. The biblical nature of the workshop gives strength to the resources it offers the local church. Feedback from the workshop reviewers helped to strengthen the potential effectiveness of the product further.

Key Factors for Improvement

It is not possible to cover in its entirety a challenge of this magnitude in one project. However, more time to complete the project would have allowed for a more extensive research sample and greater pastoral backing to ensure a more substantial response rate. More time would also have allowed for a more extensive sampling of churches, allowing for the inclusion of struggling or plateaued churches.

A test run of the workshop materials, in addition to the review process, would have allowed for tailoring the resource and ensuring positive results. The workshop has great potential value and improving and refining it will continue after the conclusion of this project. Additional materials and resources might also be helpful to struggling local churches.

Considerations for Future Research

Two critical concerns became apparent during the biblical literature study of this project that requires further research. One concern involves the Gifters and is realized in the life of Saul. The other involves the Lifters and involves the son of Solomon, Rehoboam. The author calls these “The Saul Factor” and “The Rehoboam Factor” and plans further study and writing on these concerns in the future.

Scripture is clear that Saul, the first King of Israel, had everything anyone could ask for going into his new position. Saul was handsome and stood out above all the other men of Israel (1 Sam. 9:2). He was God’s choice to be King of Israel (1 Sam. 9:15-17). Saul was anointed by Samuel the prophet to be King of Israel (1 Sam. 10:1). God gave Saul a new heart (1 Sam. 10:9). In addition, Saul was confirmed and accepted by the people of Israel as their new king (1 Sam. 11:14-15). However, immediately afterward

Saul sinned by offering a sacrifice that only the prophet/priest Samuel was qualified and worthy to offer on behalf of the people to God (1Sam. 13:8-14). Then Saul disobeyed God again, and God rejected him as king (1Sam. 15:7-35). God then had Samuel anoint David as the next King of Israel (1 Sam. 16:6-13).

One thing rarely mentioned when speaking of the life of Saul was his seeming disregard for his son, Jonathan. The first time his son is mentioned is in 1 Samuel 13:2. Jonathan was Saul's living legacy and would have been the successor to the throne if Saul had not rebelled against God. Saul did not show respect or concern for his son, a scriptural Lifter.¹⁶⁷ David, however, respected and admired Jonathan and became close to him.¹⁶⁸ Much in this story calls for future research. Saul had everything going for him. He had God's backing and a wonderful son to provide him with a winning legacy. However, he opted to rebel against God and disregard his Lifter son. Consequently, he lost his legacy. Is that an issue among some Gifters who would seek to control the church today with their money? Are they on the brink of destroying local churches' legacies? There is a sincere desire on the part of the author for a personal theological study of generational divides in the historical church and how those divides were overcome.

In addition, the author would like to research what he refers to as "The Rehoboam Factor." Some Lifters are in danger of reaping this if they continue on their current path. Rehoboam was the successor to his father, Solomon. Following the wisest man who ever lived must have been daunting. At the outset of his rule, Jeroboam and the assembly of Israel visited the new king and said, "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten

¹⁶⁷ Robert B. Lawton, "Saul, Jonathan and the 'Son of Jesse,'" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 18, no. 58 (June 1993): 35.

¹⁶⁸ Patricia K. Tull, "Jonathan's Gift of Friendship," *Interpretation* 58, no. 2 (April 2004): 136.

the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you” (1 Kings 12: 4). Rehoboam sought counsel from his father’s wise men and asked for their advice (v. 6). They responded, “If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants” (v. 7).

Rehoboam went from that counsel to ask his friends what they thought of the Gifters’ counsel. They said to Rehoboam, “These people have said to you, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.’ Now tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist. My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions” (vv.10-11). Rehoboam rejected the counsel of the Gifters and embraced the foolishness of his younger Lifter cohorts. At that point, Jeroboam split the ten tribes of the north away from Judah, and Rehoboam was left only with Judah (vv. 16-20). Is there an element of Lifters who are rejecting the word of their elders for a lesser word that appeals to their flesh? Could it be that “The Rehoboam Factor” may be undermining the work of the Lord in the west? These two potential factors show promise for further research and added insights for the personal growth of Gifters and Lifters, along with the stability and growth of the Church.

The Development of Further Resources

In the future, additional workshops, breakout sessions, small group guides, and resources will be compiled and created for local church use in facilitating Lifter/Gifter relationships and increased community in the church. Beyond the one-day “Bridge” workshop, there is a real need for Gifter/Lifter retreats, where a weekend could include teaching and small group interaction that would expand on the one session of small group

discussion. This could include a Friday night through Sunday noon retreat. The Saturday night and Sunday morning sessions could be devoted to spiritual renewal and praying over one another for divine unity, helping to infuse each member of the retreat. The positive results from such a retreat could overflow into the rest of the congregation, and as such events are leveraged the Gifter/Lifter relationship will begin to take on an organic nature.

Limitations to the Project

To limit the scope of the project, the research did not examine the coaching, mentoring, or training of the younger generation by the older. The project instead focused on how to use the skills, passions, and talents of both groups. While acknowledging that there are many differences between the two generations, those areas were not discussed; instead, this project focused specifically on those areas hindering the health of the Church and the areas applicable to growing the Church by strengthening local churches.

Several assumptions were made at the start of the research. First, the author assumed there is a way for Lifters and Gifters to work together successfully to build the church as they did in Jesus' ministry. All of the research has supported this assumption. Every member of the body of Christ was created to operate as one unit, in community with one another. There are no limitations to this; no barriers. Followers of Jesus are not divided by age, economic status, gender, or any other demographic our culture uses for classification purposes. The biblical research clearly shows how God created humans to be in relationships, with Him and with other humans. That relationship did not stop at the end of the Old Testament. It intensified with the birth of Jesus as God Incarnate formed new relationships every day. The literature review also showed the importance of the

generations working together for lasting church health and growth. The research carried out in this project clearly shows the desire of the Lifters and Gifters for relationships with one another. Church leadership must be intentional about fostering those relationships and creating opportunities for them to happen organically. Those relationships will lead to increased understanding, a stronger sense of community within the church, more outreach into the broader community, and ultimately church growth.

Second, the author assumed the perceived divide between the generations would not only be bridged, but it will also be closed on this generation's watch. This was proven in the research for this project. Lifters are bringing passion and energy into the church. They are serving as a catalyst for change and growth. They need the stability, wisdom, and support of the Gifters to temper and guide that process. It takes Lifters and Gifters working together to close the divide. The Lifters surveyed for this research, without fail, expressed their appreciation for Gifters and their desire to form lasting, learning relationships with them. The Gifters who welcome those relationships recognized the value the Lifters bring, and they seem determined to roll up their sleeves and work in the trenches with them. Those Gifters who are resistant to change and growth were more critical of the value Lifters bring to the church. Intentionality was the recommended resolution to this issue from both the Lifter and Gifter respondents. Each group expressed the need for them to seek out relationships with the other intentionally. Each group also expressed a need for church leadership to be involved in that process.

The third assumption made was that the results of this research would be applicable in most cultural contexts within the United States. The churches surveyed were multigenerational, multiethnic, and were located throughout the country. They were

representative of a variety of cultural contexts. More importantly, the principles and trends discovered in this research are not bound by cultural boundaries. They are universal truths that can be applied by any church, at any time, in any location.

The fourth assumption was that aging and failing churches can be revived and do not always need to be replaced with new church plants. Several of the churches who participated in this research are proof of this assumption. They grew so much after their revival that they went on to plant other campuses. Church plants are vital to the growth of the church in this country, and around the world. Ensuring the health and growth of existing churches is just as vital. It will take both to fulfill Jesus' mandate to share His message with all of the world.

The final assumption was that the people interviewed for the project research would answer honestly and that they truly desire to work with others of different generations. The results show that this was and is accurate. The respondents were open and honest about their struggles, their fears, and their hopes for the future. The pastors were open and honest about the struggles they faced, how they dealt with them, and how they plan on proceeding as they continue to bring Lifters and Gifters together to grow their church.

Conclusion

The initial challenge the author faced was discovering what is causing the church in America to decline. That challenge is the divide between those forty years of age and over and those thirty-nine years of age and under. The older has been referred to in this project as Gifters, and the younger have been referred to as Lifters. The Gifters are the primary funders of the work of the Lord, yet only 10-25 percent of church attendees tithed

regularly.¹⁶⁹ Lifters are the primary servant leader, hands-on workers, yet “nearly four in ten (39%) young adults (ages 18-29) are religiously unaffiliated.”¹⁷⁰ The declining church in America features a smaller group of Gifters who appear to be waging, in most cases, a losing battle. Here is what has been discovered from this project. When Lifters and Gifters fail to work together, the church struggles and declines. Leaders of struggling churches need help healing the Lifter/Gifter divide in their church. A sense of community is vital to the church, and without it the local church struggles and fails. The Early Church was known for its daily community. As referenced in chapter two, the book of Acts says

They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42,46,47).

It is noteworthy that when the sense of community was strong in the Early Church, souls were being added to the church daily. In no way was the Early Church suffering from decline. Only with a desire on the part of Gifters and Lifters for the Holy Spirit to have full influence in people individually and the Church corporately can real change and renewed vitality occur. Let the author make it very clear that the woman or man in the pulpit is the ultimate bridge-builder between the generations. The messages delivered by God’s spokesperson week in and week out, under the anointing of the Holy

¹⁶⁹ Nonprofits Source, “The Ultimate List of Charitable Giving Statistics For 2018,” N|P Source, accessed March 23, 2019, <https://nonprofitssource.com/online-giving-statistics/>

¹⁷⁰ Betsy Cooper, et al., “Exodus: Why Americans are Leaving Religion—and Why They’re Unlikely to Come Back,” PRRI, last modified September 22, 2016, <https://www.prii.org/research/prri-rns-poll-nones-atheist-leaving-religion/>

Spirit, still set the tone for healing each time they are delivered. In the words of the great preacher of the gospel John Stott, "In developing the picture of preaching as a bridge-building operation, I am not proposing anything new. Christian preachers in every age have seen the need to relate God's revelation of the times in which they lived, and have responded to the challenge."¹⁷¹ These words are true for every pastor of every church.

During the execution of this project, the author has endeavored to reveal the biblical focus on cooperation between the generations and show that by learning from each other Lifters and Gifters are inclined to begin supporting one another as never before. This, in turn, will build together to further God's mission on earth, to bring humanity back in a full relationship with Him. A full and concise survey of current literature on how Lifters and Gifters operate in society and the business world was accomplished. How businesses are addressing the rift between the generations was also reported. There was, as well, a biblical foundation established that a real sense of community and healthy relationships can, in turn, build the local church.

The survey and interview results show that the Lifters and Gifters want to work together to grow the church. The difficulties Lifters and Gifters have forming relationships with one another, and a lack of community is one of the most significant struggle the church faces today. Church leadership must help the Lifters and Gifters gain a better understanding and appreciation for each other.

Finally, as a personal note, the author wishes to make it clear that it has been his passion through over forty-five years of ministry to reach young people with the good

¹⁷¹ John R.W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 149.

news of Jesus Christ. At no time has the author forgotten the battle is always for those under thirty years of age. In 2015, Fuller Youth Institute, a branch of Fuller Seminary, contacted the author and told him that the church that he pastors, Trinity Church in Miami, Florida, was one of 250 congregations they were studying that appeared to be winning the battle of reaching young people and discipling them. They asked to come to Miami and interview a number of the people in the congregation as well as the church staff and he and his wife, the co-pastor. That visit happened over two days in the summer of 2015. As a result of that visit, Trinity Church was chosen, along with forty other church congregations in America, to be featured in a book called *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*. On the inside front of the book cover, the opening sentence reads, “Churches are losing both members and vitality as increasing numbers of young people disengage.”¹⁷² That is the primary reason for this project. Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin state,

Warm leadership is not limited to churches of a particular size; we found it alive and well in churches both large and small. During our visit to Trinity Church, a 5,000-attendee Assemblies of God congregation in Miami, nearly everyone mentioned the relational warmth of the church and attributed this to the pastors. When we asked these pastors how they relate to so many people, they shared that it starts with a commitment to be with people rather than remain cloistered in an office.¹⁷³

This is in no way offered up as a point of self-promotion, but to say that at every age leadership must remember the growing edge of the congregation is under thirty.

Whatever it will take for the man or woman of God leading Jesus’ local church to keep

¹⁷² Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin, *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), inside cover.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 63.

growing young, he or she must pray daily for that to happen. If that is the heart of the leader, Gifters and Lifters will flood to that local assembly.

APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP PACKET

The Bridge:
Bringing the Generations Together for Church Health and Growth

by
Rich Wilkerson, Sr

A word of introduction from Rich Wilkerson Sr.

In my years of ministry, from 1972 until the present, I have had the privilege of serving as an associate pastor, an evangelist, and a lead pastor. This has been the joy of my life. I have seen three different kinds of churches during this time and while speaking in over one thousand different churches worldwide: Winning Churches, Plateaued Churches, and Declining Churches.

In more recent times, I have watched the Declining Churches become the challenge of our day in the Western Church. While churches decline for a variety of reasons, one of the primary issues churches face is creating community and relationships between the Lifters and the Gifters in the church.

My use of the terms Gifters and Lifters refers to the two entities that make up a great church. Gifters are defined as those individuals forty and older who are the primary funders of the work of the Lord in a local church context. Experience has shown that this age group is more likely to financially support the local church.

Lifters are thirty-nine and younger and are the primary servant leaders or volunteers in a local church. It is possible and likely that both groups tend to cross over into the other's primary calling, but the idea is that the Spirit of God moves the church forward through those who give and those who work to grow the church with no desire for monetary reward. We must keep these two groups together in order to grow healthy, thriving, life-giving, Spirit-inspired churches.

Churches are living things not mechanical things.¹⁷⁴ As Followers of Jesus, we are the people of God and, according to Scripture, the body of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit. The Bible says, "You also, like living stones, are built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus (1 Peter 2:5).

We are all, Lifters and Gifters together meant to act as one in building the Church. Unfortunately, in many churches a divide has grown between these two groups.

This workshop is designed to help speak to this issue by bringing Gifters and Lifters back as active participants in the church as they work side by side to overcome this growing challenge.

¹⁷⁴ Linda Berquist and Allan Karr, *Church Turned Inside Out: A Guide for Designers, Refiners, and ReAligners* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Pub., 2010), 17.

RESOURCES

Humans were created to be in relationship with God and with one another, no matter the age, gender, ethnicity, or demographic classification of the other people. God's relationship with His creation can be viewed as an "intricate relationship of community—many-layered, many-faceted and at many levels," and as we are created in His image that relationship of community binds us to one another as well.¹⁷⁵

Creating Community

"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who are being saved" (Acts 2:46-47).

Followers of Jesus know they are called to community. Dietrich Bonhoeffer recognized the importance of that community and acknowledged that many Christians do not get to live in community with their brothers and sisters in Christ. To those who do, Bonhoeffer states, "Therefore, let him who until now has had the privilege of living a common Christian life with other Christians praise God's grace from the bottom of his heart. Let him thank God on his knees and declare: *It is a grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren.*"

This sense of community directly relates to the follower of Jesus' relationship with God, and the sense of community within the Trinity itself. God created humanity to be in relationship with Him. According to Stanley J. Grenz, "This biblical vision of community—this core set of beliefs— can provide the foundation for truly Christian living, as we are drawn by the Holy Spirit to live on the basis of this vision."

God calls us to community, with Himself, with Jesus, with the Holy Spirit, and with one another. He has done so since He created Adam and Eve. When that 360 degrees of community exists, *the Church will thrive.*

It is true that many issues divide humanity; however, when followers of Jesus stay focused on the Lord, they maintain their togetherness. It is that togetherness that attracts others to the fold of Christ.

Resources for Creating Community

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¹⁷⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 2.

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The Generations Must Work Together

It can be seen throughout Scripture that God's plan has been for Gifters and Lifters to work together in pursuit of His Mission. It is first seen in the lives of those in the Old Testament, and the stories and examples continue in the New Testament in the life of Jesus and the relationships of the Early Church Fathers. The Gifter to the Lifter, the elder to the next generation, without this continual approach to the gospel, there is no enduring message.

This relationship can be heard in the words of Moses to Joshua: "Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged'" (Deut. 31:7-8).

This can also be heard in the words of Paul to his son in the faith, Timothy. "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim. 1:6), and "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1-3). The biblical model of generations working together is consistent and powerful, and it serves as a strong example for churches today.

There are numerous biblical examples of intergenerational cooperation between Lifters and Gifters. These examples each offer lessons on what the believer should do. One fact is important to remember, the people in these examples were not supernatural, they were

normal. They had problems and weaknesses just like any person today. The one quality each possesses that set him or her up for success is faith.

In most of the biblical stories concerning Gifters and Lifters, the tipping point in the relationship came when the Gifter decided to share his or her experiences freely, and the Lifter made the decision to accept the Gifter's wisdom.

Biblical Examples of Generations Working Together

Jethro and Moses - The older man, Jethro, was able to open up a door to servant leadership, patience, and honor to younger Moses. The critical, hands-on teaching from the older man taught the younger man the principles of delegating authority to other chosen leaders, a lesson that would assist him in leading the Israelite nation through the wilderness for over forty years.

Moses and Joshua - The source of Moses' authority over the people of Israel was God's call on him. While Moses raised Joshua up as a leader, his authority also came from God's call on his life. Moses contributed to Joshua's military prowess and leadership skills. By watching Moses seek the Lord, Joshua also developed a thirst for God's voice.

Naomi and Ruth - The power of this story is the intergenerational working of the two women, Naomi and Ruth. Their faithfulness to God and their trust in Him led to the birth of a son, not only for Boaz and Ruth but for Naomi as well. Their story did not end with the last verse of the book of Ruth, it served as a new beginning. Faithfulness, obedience, and love between two generations led to the birth of a lineage that would bring hope to all future generations.

David and Solomon- The lessons the Gifter (David) taught his Lifter son (Solomon) included: be strong, live according to Moses' law, and finish strong. Solomon applied these lessons and asked God to grant him wisdom (1 Kings 3:5-14). Eventually, the people of Israel, "saw that he had wisdom from God" (1 Kings 3:28).

Elijah and Elisha - Elisha followed Elijah's example and listened closely to God. He wanted to live up to Elijah's example, and his loyalty would lead to Elisha being seen as the legitimate successor to Elijah. The second critical lesson Elijah, the Gifter, taught the younger Elisha, the Lifter, was to trust fully in the miracle-working power of God. Elisha truly received a double portion of anointing. This was seen in the request Elisha made of Elijah before he was taken to heaven and came to fruition in the miracles recorded in both men's lives and ministries.

Elizabeth and Mary - Elizabeth, the Gifter in this story, proved that with the right attitude and approach, Because of the elderly woman's honor and yielded spirit, Mary instantly became anointed in a fresh way to sing a song unto the Lord, the Magnificat (vv. 46-55). Elizabeth's reception of Mary gave her confidence and she lived with her elderly relatives until John the Baptist was born (v. 56).

Elizabeth mentored Mary, "as she anticipated a birth that would not be understood." The two women were able to "enter a new sphere of women's experience" together as they learned to lean on each other and on God. Elizabeth served the ultimate role of Gifter for Mary. She gave her guidance as she and Mary worked "their way through the delicate issues of faith and steadfastness against unbelievable odds."

Paul and Timothy - Paul appeared to take a domineering approach with Timothy, as he did with many of his relationships; however, Scripture has proven the relationship certainly was not without affection. There are Gifters in local churches today who are much like Paul. They are sometimes confrontational, but they confront because they want the best for the ministry. The challenge for these Gifters is to be willing to love the younger Lifters, as Paul loved Timothy. Paul trained and supported Timothy, but he ultimately set him on his own ministry path.

The Ultimate Example

Jesus and His Church - Jesus, in relationship to His Church, taught many truths to His followers, but this text will focus on only three of those truths. Those three truths have propelled the Christian Church for over 2,000 years. Jesus functions as the Gifter in this relationship, and the Church as the Lifter.

The first principle He taught is that of prayer. Jesus taught His followers to pray by giving crucial directives on how they should pray in private, the differences they must resolve before they could come to the altar, and the attitude they should assume.

The second principle Jesus emphasized was generosity. He said, *“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you”* (Matt. 5:42). Giving was a sign that Jesus followers are in warm relationship with their Master. Jesus told His followers very clearly how to give and be generous (Matthew 15:31-40).

When the church fully embraced the spirit of generosity, it fueled the third principle Jesus taught: evangelism. In Matthew 5:14-16 Jesus said: *“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

Prayer keeps the believer’s heart warm and in tune with Jesus. When the heart is warm generosity becomes a way of life. When the church is generous, the gospel is sent forth around the world. This principle was promoted by Jesus while on earth. As He was preparing to ascend into heaven, He gave His disciples the Great Commission, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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”* (Matt. 28:18-20).

Understanding the Generations

The primary role of the Gifters is that of funding the vision of the church. The primary role of the Lifters is to be ready when called upon to serve in any capacity necessary

(physically and creatively) to move the vision of the church forward. If the local church is to thrive and grow, cooperation between these two entities must flourish. This means cooperation and intergenerational relationships are necessary.

Lifters

Like most emerging generations, Lifters are very independent and have defined opinions on how church should go. Lifters long for nurturance and for instructional aid from their spiritual leaders. The church must go beyond one-way communication from pulpit to pew to communicate with this generation of Lifters. If they long for nurturance and individual instructional aide, more must be done between Sundays.

The Lifter generation is interested in culture rather than ritual or liturgy. Three of their primary pursuits help summarize the culture Lifters are building. First, they are passionate about community service. Second, Lifters embrace collaboration. Third, Lifters embrace diversity and feel most comfortable in a diverse population. Lifters place more value in relationships and serving others than in themselves.

Many different issues factor in the church being able to retain Lifters in the congregation. One of those issues is that Millennials harbor perceived grievances against the church. According to Clint Jenkin, and A. Allan Martin, David Kinnaman details six perceptual grievances, saying, “These grievances hold that the church is (1) intolerant of doubt, (2) elitist in its relationships, (3) anti-science in its beliefs, (4) overprotective of its members, (5) shallow in its teachings, and (6) repressive of differences.”

Whether true or not, perceived grievances can cause a breakdown in communication and cooperation. The key to solving this issue is making sure the Lifter forms lasting, strong relationships within the church, especially intergenerational relationships. These relationships can be more vital than even peer relationships, especially for those Lifters transitioning from one age group and role in the church to the next.

A real, and close relationship with God is also vital for the Lifter if he or she is to remain in the church. If the Lifter does not feel that connection, he or she will go elsewhere to find it.

Lifters are a complex generation, but they are no more difficult to serve or include than any other generation. As in the past, the church needs to learn how to connect with them. This might take some work, but the health and growth of local churches and the corporate Church depend on Lifters finding and thriving in their place in the church.

Gifters

Most Gifters are at home in a more conservative church setting. They are more religious as opposed to outreach oriented in their approach to the gospel. Deep in the recesses of their souls is the old familiar call to reach the unreached, no matter the cost.

According to Charles Van Engen, “Parents and grandparents and extended families are some of the most influential leaders in the congregation.”¹⁷⁶ This leadership role is necessary for the health and growth of the church.

Gifters are also the primary funders of the Christian mission worldwide. As age sets in, some individuals must physically step aside from the hands-on, physical working and mental engagement of the details of the mission of the church. At that point, those individuals change their contribution to the church, and instead of providing physical labor and volunteering in a more active role, they provide the funding for the mission in monetary terms.

Summary

In no way does this suggest that Gifters are not servant leaders or that Lifters are not wonderful givers. This division of labor and resources makes sense in the church. The elders share the knowledge and the fruit of their life’s labor, while the younger generation picks up the mantle of the more physical work and learns from the older generations.

Cooperation and positive relationships between the generations are not a given in any situation, especially not in the church. Church leadership must be intentional in encouraging the development of those relationships.

Older people have an influence on the younger set. Yet, just like a parent has to put effort into the process of influencing their children, it is incumbent on the older generation to keep working *in a loving way* with the younger generation.

Each generation would like to think itself unique, and each has unique characteristics, but trends between the generations tend to remain consistent. The church can learn by studying those trends and looking at the commonalities instead of the differences.

The church has moved forward through the centuries because the older generation trained and nurtured the next generation, and in time they handed off the leadership roles to the younger generation. Gifters must open their hearts and minds and learn from Lifters. Cooperation creates a pathway of ideas, allowing both generations to contribute to the mission of the church.

Gifters and Lifters must work together, in community, if the church is to grow.

Potential areas of discussion for the workshop:

Conflict areas in the church
Money
Music/Worship
Staging and Production

¹⁷⁶ Charles Van Engen, *God’s Missionary People* (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 166.

As a church, we must embrace our mission!

Here is a proven mission statement for a local church that may not have one: Outreach, Compassion, Abundance

Outreach: “Win The Lost” Prov. 11:30, “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who wins souls is wise.”

Compassion: “Help The Disenfranchised in The Community” Proverbs 19:17, “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and he will reward them for what they have done.”

Abundance: “Teach Abundant Living” John 10:10, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

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A WORKSHOP DESIGNED TO HELP
LIFTERS AND GIFTERS
STAY TOGETHER AND GROW

A Note About the Workshop:

The information presented in this workshop comes from the research done for Rich Wilkerson's doctoral project, and the information presented comes from documented sources and from experiences in my own life and ministry.

I suggest that the moderator and information collector for the workshop should be the Pastor/Leader of the congregation (referred to as pastor for the remainder of this guide).

The pastor will open up the event with the provided information and any other information he or she would like to promote along with the guide. The exact content can be tailored to the context in which the workshop is being presented. The first part of this workshop packet is a resource guide containing a thorough overview of the subject, suggested resources for church leadership and participants, and a list of biblical examples.

Mediator Instructions:

** Materials needed for the workshop are a private meeting room with 5 tables (4 chairs at each table). Five easels with paper that can be written on and flipped over to the next page. Twenty writing tablets and pens for note taking (just in case).

Prior to the workshop, the Pastor/Leader should spend time meeting with the potential participants in one-on-one meetings (this could take up to four weeks, depending on schedules). In these meetings, they should discuss the challenge the church is facing due to the division between Lifters and Gifters and explain that 10 people from each group (including that person) will come together in a one-day workshop. This workshop will become a focus group that will work together to mitigate the differences and show the need for unity between Lifters and Gifters to build the church Jesus is calling them to build. As the Pastor/Leader is faithful over the four weeks the right team will assemble. The Pastor/Leader should ask each potential participant to commit to the workshop and follow up with a confirmation call the night before the event to make sure the right number is present. Several alternate attendees for each group might be a good idea.

A note about participants: Try to incorporate as much diversity in the group as you can – a wide range of ages and a good mix of both genders. This is an important step to gaining the cooperation of the Lifters who will attend, and it will give a better cross-section of your church.

This is a one day, 6-hour workshop. The attendees should be 10 Lifters and 10 Gifters. This workshop is provided as a way of traversing through issues that divide the two

groups and determining how to make these very issues the issues that unite the team into a victorious church.

Sample Schedule:

All Day Saturday Event

9:00 AM	Light Continental Breakfast/Refreshments
9:30 AM	Opening Prayer and Definitions of Engagement
9:45 AM -10:45 AM	Session 1
10:45 AM -11:00 AM	Break
11:00 AM - 12:15 PM	Session 2
12:15 PM – 1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM – 2:15 PM	Session 3
2:15 PM – 2:30 PM	Break
2:30 PM – 4:00 PM	Group Presentation

SESSION 1

Welcome/Introduction by Pastor

Thank attendees for being there.

Give a brief *definition* of Gifters and Lifters. [see resources portion of guide.]

It is important that we understand each other so we can work together to grow Jesus' Church. The purpose of this workshop is to learn how Lifters and Gifters are different, what they have in common, and how we can all work together in community.

Let's get started!

SECTION A: GIFTERS AND WHAT THEY EMBRACE

[Pastor, please give a brief overview of Gifters. This is available in the resources portion of this workshop guide.]

Gifters believe church should be:

Comfortable not stressful.

Predictable in a way that allows them to connect with Jesus.

A place to spend time in worship with their Christian friends.

Where good doctrine is preached.

Where their spiritual maintenance occurs so they can grow as Christians.

[Ask for further input from the Gifters in the workshop and list them on a board.]

So what drives a Gifter in their local church?

Opportunities for their generosity to make a difference both here and abroad.

A desire for Lifters to ask them for advice and help.

[Ask for further input from the Gifters in the workshop and list them on a board.]

These desires mean Gifters are still very much active in the church. There is a need and they are looking for someone who will promote a vision within the church.

The second desire of the Gifter, for Lifters to need them, is overwhelming. Dr. Wilkerson, who is a Gifter himself, states, “The experiences and knowledge they have gained due to their age, life experiences, and education means Gifters have much wisdom to offer.”

At the same time, the Gifter knows that it’s not truly wisdom if it’s not asked for. When the Gifter’s opinion is seldom called for, a sense of loss and aloneness occurs.

SECTION B: LIFTERS AND WHAT THEY BELIEVE ABOUT CHURCH

Now let’s take a look at Lifters.

[Pastor, please give a brief overview of Lifters. This is available in the resources portion of this workshop guide.]

For most Lifters, church is:

Intolerant of doubt

Elitist in its relationships

Anti-Science in its beliefs

Overprotective of its members

Shallow in its theology

Repressive of differences

[Ask for further input from the Lifters in the workshop and list them on a board.]

What Lifters Champion:

Culture over liturgy

Community Service

Collaboration

Diversity

[Ask for further input from the Lifters in the workshop and list them on a board.]

It is clear that the view of what the church should be about from the Lifters perspective is almost a 180-degree view from that of the Gifters. The Lifters vision for church can be scary for the Gifters and threatens their desire for comfortability. Yet what is scary for the Gifter translates to exciting and mission-driven from the Lifters perspective.

These desires of Lifters set the stage for what is needed to bring the church together in unity, for the potential of unlimited vision, and for money to fund that vision.

Section C: How Can Leadership Bring Gifters And Lifters Together?

We have a biblical mandate to grow the Church together, as the Body of Christ. Let's take a few minutes to brainstorm how we can come together in this church to generate growth.

Brainstorming session

[After the brainstorming session, have the speaker for each group share their "best" idea with the rest of the attendees.]

SESSION 2

[Moderator, this session is 75 min. The first 30 minutes should be devoted to teaching/general discussion. The last 40 minutes will be devoted to focus group]

Mentors

The Bible is filled with stories of mentors and their understudies (Gifters and Lifters). Here are just a few:

Jethro and Moses
Moses and Joshua
Naomi and Ruth
David and Solomon
Elizabeth and Mary
Paul and Timothy
Jesus and His Church

[The leader may expound on each of these. If they desire, they can give an added emphasis to what the Bible says is important as it relates to Gifters and Lifters. This is available in the resources portion of this workshop guide.]

Momentum

Momentum is the result of “WHY” we’re doing what we’re doing.

When Gifters and Lifters work together for a healthy mission, Core Values become all important. These Core Values keep The Church on track and produce a powerful culture and a strong community to accomplish the mission.

[If the Pastor and Leaders of the church have not established strong Core Values, then here is a list of 7 Core Values that has helped establish a dynamic culture at Trinity Church in Miami, Florida, and their church plants.

- 1- Jesus Is Our Message
- 2- People Are Our Heart
- 3- Generosity Is Our Privilege
- 4- Excellence Is Our Spirit
- 5- Servant Leadership Is Our Identity
- 6- Honor Is Our Calling
- 7- Passion Is Our Pursuit

These seven Core Values, if taught, practiced, and reinforced, will in time produce a stellar culture that will be acknowledged by people from within the church and in the surrounding community. For more information on the 7 Core Values please refer to www.trinitychurch.tv]

Focus Groups [40 mins]

Now we are going to split you into 5 groups of 4.

[Included in the mix of each group will be two Gifters and two Lifters. The groups should be made up of four people who don't know each other that well except to greet one another in church.]

The goal of each group is to have each person state their case/opinion, and then have the group work together to find a consensus so you can reach a majority decision.

Remember, the reason we are doing this is so Gifters and Lifters can work together in community and build relationships. This will translate to a strong, healthy congregation and church growth!

Each group must choose a table moderator who takes notes on the paper standing on the easel. He or she will lead by reading the first question and writing out answers, make notes concerning emotions during the answering.

Questions for Group Discussion

Question 1. Do you believe “Things that are healthy grow” is a true statement? If so, how would you categorize our church? Is it Winning, has it Plateaued, or is it Declining?

Air it out ...

[Moderator, please keep track of time and move them on to the second question if they are stuck.]

Question 2. Since Gifters see the church as Comfortable, Predictable, Where my Christian friends are, Where good doctrine is preached, and Where my soul is nurtured, can we discuss whether or not these are the overall qualities that will ensure growth sustainability and momentum going forward?

Air it out ...

[Moderator, please keep track of time and move them on to the second question if they are stuck.]

Question 3. In Dr. Wilkerson's studies, he has documented the fact that 98% of the Christians in the world, accept Christ before they are 30 years of age. It stands to reason the war from hell for souls is being waged against children, teens, and young adults. Is it possible that the only way to win these age groups to Jesus is to relate to them first and develop a friendship?

Air it out ...

Follow-up question. When Lifters cherish Culture over Liturgy, is it possible that they see developing a winning culture in their church is the only way to get their lost friends into church?

Air it out ...

[Moderator, please keep track of time and move them on to the second question if they are stuck.]

Question 4. What are we doing well at in our church? What can we improve on? What are the big needs right now?

Air it out ...

It's time for a break, but at some point during the break the moderator of each group should summarize the information gathered so they can be prepared to present it at the end of the day.

Lunch Break

SESSION 3

Focus Groups

Let's resume our focus groups.

Question 5. As stated earlier, Lifters believe the church as a whole is Intolerant of doubt, Elitist in its relationships, Anti-Science in its beliefs, Overprotective of its members, Shallow in its theology, and Repressive of different opinions. Remember that this may not be true of our church, but this is what the statistics say nationwide. With that in mind, what must we do as a church to open up and talk about it?

Air it out ...

Question 6. Because Lifters desire community service, collaboration, and diversity, how can we better address those issues in our own community?

Air it out ...

Question 7. Knowing that Gifters are especially gifted by God at helping to fund the work of God, is there a possibility that we as a church could raise money or begin to look at a portion of our missions dollars to help reach out locally? Can we have that discussion?

Air it out ...

Question 8. It has been stated that Gifters would love to impart wisdom from their years of life experience to Lifters, but seldom get asked. Is there a way that the Lifters in our church might be willing to search out Gifters when pressed with a challenge?

Air it out ...

[It is suggested that the females (Gifter and Lifter) and the males (Gifter and Lifter) at the table would exchange contacts so that a friendship might be established and wisdom passed on to the Lifter from the Gifter.]

Let's take a break. The leader for each table should use part of this time working on their summation.

Break

GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Each table moderator should present their table's findings/responses to the 8 questions. Each presentation will be followed by questions and comments from the floor. Each table moderator should follow suit until all five table moderators have presented.

Please present your summations.

[While this is happening the Pastor/Leader should be moderating the moderators, writing main points on the board, and forming a summation themselves so that when the last table has weighed in the Pastor/Leader can then give an uplifting finish to a great day by giving an overall summation.]

Pastor/Leaders Summation and Dismissal

[In conclusion, the Pastor/Leader will then anoint each participant with oil on the forehead and pray a blessing for each Gifter and Lifter and then a final hug or handshake and goodbyes should be offered. The pastor should prepare a formal written summation that is sent to all attendees *within the next week.*]

After the Workshop

The Pastor/Leader is now encouraged to study the data he or she has gathered from the focus group and continue the discussion and workshop with other groups. It is believed that the continuation of just three or four Saturdays spent with groups of Gifters and Lifters will bleed over into the entire church so that relationships and a strong sense of community will begin to happen between the generations.

This should also lead to organic mentorships, more balance on leadership teams and in volunteer groups, a natural seeking of opinions and input for the opposite group when planning events, and more comradery overall.

It is recommended as well that the Pastor/Leader encourage additional meetings between the Lifters and Gifters who worked together during the workshop. This may take place as more casual meetings or as scheduled retreats.

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APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Thank you for participating in my doctoral research project. Please read this statement and note that you have read it before beginning the survey.

Title: Generational Differences in a Local Church Context

Investigator(s): Rich Wilkerson

Purpose: The purpose of the research study is to look at how those who are over 40 and those who are under 40 work together to grow your church.

What to Expect: This research study is administered online. Participation in this research will involve completion of one questionnaire. The questionnaire will ask for your answer to a list of questions about your interactions in your church. You may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. It should take you about 20 minutes to complete.

Risks: There are no risks associated with this project which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you. However, you may gain an appreciation and understanding of how research is conducted.

Your Rights: Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time.

Confidentiality: Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored on a password-protected computer in a locked office and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. Data will be destroyed after the study has been completed.

Contacts: You may contact the researcher at the following email address, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study: rpwilkerson@seu.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the IRB Office IRB@seu.edu

Please, click NEXT if you choose to participate. By clicking NEXT, you are indicating that you freely and voluntarily and agree to participate in this study and you also acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age.

APPENDIX D: RESEARCH DATA

Pastor Survey Questions and Responses

1. What is your age?

Value	Count
30-39	3
40-49	3
50-59	5
	11

2. What is the name of your church?

Responses omitted to protect anonymity.

3. What is your number one, biggest challenge when you blend the Lifters (39 and under) and the Gifters (40 and over) in your church?

ResponseID	Response
6	Getting them to interact and communicate in meaningful ways.
7	Balancing the energy and expectations of Lifters with the maturity and experience of the Gifters
8	They simply see the world 2 very different ways
9	Mentality and world view
12	We don't have many Gifters. Our church is mostly Lifters. Many of the Gifters who attend our church see it as a "youthful experience". They see the sea of youthfulness and feel uncomfortable. Nevertheless, the few we do have fall in line with the vision, and they embrace their youthfulness. They've stated to me that being around the younger

	generation makes them feel more youthful. I don't have a challenge in that area though.
13	Navigating Change
14	Not style but substance. Lifter want more community. Gifters seek more programs
15	Educating lifters to start giving and coaching gifters to release control of their giving
18	I think the biggest challenge is "mentality." So knowing the difference in perspective and approach to serving, working, problem-solving becomes essential for success with both.
19	Style preferences
20	different perspectives on what should be priority

4. In your position as pastor, what benefits do you see from each of these two age groups?

ResponseID	Response
6	From Gifters: stability, faithfulness, generosity. From Lifters: creativity, energy, passion for social causes.
7	The Lifters provide enthusiasm and idealism, and the Gifters provide direction and stability.
8	Gifters mentor and provide stability, Lifters give passion and energy
9	Younger Generation bring passion, vision, and hunger; older generation bring stability, doctrinal purity, and loyalty.
12	Lifters have the zeal and energy to get a task completed. The Gifters have the wisdom to make sure it's done right the first time.
13	Maturity and resources vs energy, creativity & understanding of culture.
14	Lifters are aggressive in evangelism and running with vision. Gifters see their experience and their ability to lift vision financially as their primary ability. The beauty of leading both of these dynamics simultaneously is that we all get to learn from each other.

15	Lifters bring such energy while gifters bring such stability
18	Lifters value community Gifters value work Therefore the two create balance.
19	Lifters are very motivated for change and moving the vision forward. Gifters tend to encourage me behind the scenes and financially support endeavors.
20	Lifters provide energy and perspective on current trends Gifters bring wisdom and understanding of what it takes fro something to be successful, the sacrifices needed.

5. What are the three primary differences you've found between the two age groups?

ResponseID	Response
6	1. Gifters are more about fundamental doctrine where lifters are more about compassion for people. 2. Gifters find meaning in doing while lifters find meaning in being. 3. Gifters are grateful, lifters tend to be entitled.
7	1 - Expectations about the future 2 - Experience / lack of 3 - Level of Investment
8	1. they see social issues very different 2. gifters are driven by principle, lifters by purpose 3. gifters are loyal or organizations, lifters are loyal to a cause
9	differing attitudes toward managing one's own time, texting, social media, organizational structure, and of course, clothing preferences
12	1. Attire (our few Gifters prefer to dress up; our Lifters prefer to be casual) 2. Experience (our Gifters have experience on their side, which helps to curb the consequences that awaits youthful zeal without restraint 3. Attitude (our Gifters are motivated to serve with great attitudes. I attribute it to them been taught throughout life whereas the Lifterd have to learn the importance of serving and giving with the right attitude.
13	Basic understanding of scripture Worship & cultural preferences Usage of technology

14	Teachability Work ethic Technology
15	Lifters are driven to give to experiences while gifters want to give to tangible items
18	Mentality: 1. Work 2. Community 3. Worship
19	1) Methodology 2) finances 3) energy
20	- Gifters have more money - Lifters have a heart for outreach - Lifters tend to overload themselves

6. Do you feel both groups have an equal voice in your church?

ResponseID	Response
6	Yes.
7	Yes
8	I do
9	Yes
12	Absolutely! Without a shadow of a doubt. I work to be a bridge builder. I don't believe we can persevere into the new without understanding the old.
13	Yes
14	Yes
15	Yes
18	Yes, with intentional effort
19	Absolutely
20	Yes

7. Have you experienced rifts between the two age groups?

Value	Count
Yes	4
No	7
	11

8. How did you resolve the issue?

ResponseID	Response
7	I have to have a lot of relational intelligence and emotional awareness conversations between the millennial and boomer generations on my staff
9	Working directly with both to hear their concerns, ideas, and helping to each group learn to work together to fulfill the mission of God. Making room in leadership for younger leaders, and

	creating space at board table to pastoral team for both groups.
12	We had a situation where our casual dress code wasn't well received by one of a few of our Gifters. We discussed the vision of the church and who were reaching. That helped them to fall in line with what they perceived to be a "youthful approach".
18	By reminding the gifters of our core value of reaching the next generation. Also, by trying to cultivate mutual trust and respect.

9. What steps do you take to ensure there are no rifts?

ResponseID	Response
6	Solid leadership that is celebrated from both groups.
8	we are only 6 years old as a church so we set the culture early. We havent had to make changes so its been easy. We give both opportunities to serve and lead. We are united by a purpose not divided by preference. Again, its just easier for us because we have never had to make big changes
13	Communicate the need for under 39 to be so valued to the point that we will consistently lean their way. Keeping the worship culture and style of ministry leaning younger.
14	Our focus is on vision. Everyone call rally behind vision that reaches their city regardless of age. Also, blending of both on serve teams and leadership.
15	Equal treatment and as much equal focus to both areas they love giving to
19	I constantly answer the "why" privately and publicly. I believe over communication is a key component to maintaining a peaceful and orderly culture.
20	blended teams, and acknowledging the priorities of each group as part of the priorities of the church.

10. What are the three components of your church that tend to rally both groups?

ResponseID	Response
6	Loving and serving our city. Food and eating together.
7	Vision Service Word
8	1. salvations 2. missions 3. outreaches
9	1. Leadership Team 2. Leadership Meetings 3. Striving for Unity of mission, Vision, Strategy.
12	1. Community. We encourage the Gifters to teach the Lifters, and we teach the Lifters the importance of being taught by the Gifters. 2. Worship. We cater to both groups with our worship. We have a great mix of contemporary worship with more soulful gospel. 3. Stage acknowledgement. I do my part to acknowledge both groups in my sermons. I make it a point to talk to both groups so they know they're both appreciated.
13	Weekends Small Groups Outreach & Global Missions
14	Leadership Service style Social media
15	Lifters - human trafficking, homeless community, community outreach Gifters - buildings land and external businesses
18	1. Community Outreach 2. Church Services 3. Short-Term Missions Trip
19	1) Outreach 2) Evangelism 3) large events
20	- Testimonies of changed lives - Holidays - Missions giving

11. Have you found a greater hunger for the Word of God from either of the two groups?

Value	Count
Yes	5
No	6
	11

12. How do you see that hunger manifest for each group?

ResponseID	Response
6	Gifters: From in depth Bible study groups. Lifters: From expressive experiences in worship.
7	Gifters love the teaching Lifters love the practical outworking of the word in their lives
8	gifter tend to like a teacher setting and lifters like more of an interactive setting
9	The older generation that has been around the church longer, has a deeper knowledge of the word, however, I do see a growing hunger in the younger generation to live for and walk in the ways of God.
12	I've seen both groups hunger for simplicity. The Lifters are tired of the complications and the Gifters just want to know what to do.
13	Weekend participation Small group participation SOAP - testimonies Life change
14	More discipleship is requested and engaged. Serving the community.
15	Lifters love anything online driven while gifters love anything small group related
18	Hunger from gifters manifests in church services. Hunger from lifters manifests in community groups. These both are nurtured by leadership.
19	The desire for more growth and discipleship midweek classes etc.
20	Gifters and lifters both love God's word, it is really more personality differences than ages that make it vary.

13. What black and white issues in the church have grayed during your tenure?

ResponseID	Response
6	The overall view of divorce and remarriage. The views on alcohol consumption. Same-sex marriage. Abortion is not a hot topic any longer.
7	Requirements for serving The metrics for life change

8	the church is so young that I dont know that we have had much change
9	Sexuality; Marriage; Pre-marital relationships, Homosexuality
12	I honesty cannot think of any.
13	Importance of weekly church attendance Sunday best dress Attitudes toward divorce Alcohol use in moderation
14	Style of music, stage presentation, methods of presenting the word.
15	We haven't really encountered any of those
18	The traditional definition of marriage.
19	I've only been here for less than three months so I haven't come across anything of that nature yet.
20	our church draws people on both side that are fatigued with politics and do not want to focus on it in the church, which we do not.

14. Are they age related?

ResponseID	Response
6	Yes. The lifter generation is not as "pure" in doctrine and orthodoxy as the gifter generation. The gifters are politically committed while the lifters tend toward ambivalence.
7	No
8	no
9	I think it's more a battle of world values clashing biblical values
12	N/a
13	No
14	Yes
15	NA
18	Yes
19	=

20	not really
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15. What active steps have you taken to create cooperation between the two age groups?

ResponseID	Response
6	Encouraged multi-generational small groups. Putting all generations on our platform. Hiring staff that mirrors both generations.
7	Vision initiatives are both sustainable and impactful which is attractive to both groups inviting them to engage. Our weekend experiences blend creative and practical elements with depth and substantive teaching
8	We create spaces on Sundays and monthly events that connects all ages. We have every age in every volunteer area as well as on the stage.
9	We don't make a seperation of the two groups, they naturally blend and work together in our setting.
12	We do everything together. I don't split the groups up. We're one big community. That forces even communication between both parties.
13	Being inclusive with activities, vision casting and encouraging over 40 to reach and serve the Next Gen.
14	Young serving older. Older mentoring younger.
15	Pairing them in leadership positions in every ministry
18	We strive to create a culture of honor and that has helped the most.
19	Constantly reminding them of the value they bring to our church and how important they both are as they are.
20	shared and blended teams and small groups

16. What benefits, skills, and talents do you feel Lifters (39 and under) bring to the church?

ResponseID	Response
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6	Creativity, technology, energy and enthusiasm and the push toward social justice causes.
7	Creative and innovative ministry tools and techniques. A hunger to contextualize the Gospel message to current cultural issues.
8	passion, energy, tech savvy, easy to adapt.
9	Passion, technology, computer literacy, energy
12	Youthful zeal, creativity and flexibility
13	Energy, music and technology gifts, creative gifts, global missions heart, and they attract more Lifters.
14	Technology Family dynamics Youthful perspective
15	Technology and vision
18	Their value for community. Their skills and talents in the area of innovative outreach, leveraging technology through social media, and sights and sounds that reach this generation.
19	Lots of energy and excitement. They tend to bring more new people, young families etc. They tend to show up at more things etc.
20	Tech, creativity, worship

17. What benefits, skills, and talents do you feel Gifters (40 and over) bring to the church?

ResponseID	Response
6	Wisdom, prayer, giving and generosity, stability and faithfulness. Our gifters understand the need to reach the lifter generation.
7	Experience and stability that provides a great foundation for a church and offers incredible mentoring possibilities.
8	mature, stable, dependable, able to teach the word and mentor.
9	Financial resources, maturity, wisdom, discernment, experience, doctrinal purity
12	Experience, wisdom, education and stability

13	They keep us balanced and focused on the main thing. They provide the greater levels of prayer support, financial support, wisdom, counsel, and encouragement.
14	Wisdom and life experience Financial stability Less materialistic
15	Wisdom, patience
18	They provide stability, both theologically and financial.
19	As a young pastor they legitimize my leadership to the rest of the congregation. They finance our church. They're natural encouragers to me and to so many. Some are lay counselors.
20	money wisdom work ethic

18. Is social justice a large concern with either or both age groups in your church?

Value	Count
Yes	10
No	1
	11

19. How does that concern manifest?

ResponseID	Response
6	Initiatives of serving our city in numerous ways: chaplaincy of police department, seasonal causes (gifts for community at Christmas), initiatives of clean up and beautification for our city.
7	People want to serve social justice issues - often times at the expense of serving the Gospel.
8	conversation
9	What to being involved in social issues and projects.
12	My church is predominately Black, so it's a big concern. I speak to it from the pulpit. It usually manifests as frustration because it seems as if the

	church doesn't care about the plight of social issues.
13	Racial justice concerns
14	Political Social buzz Social media Desire for creating places to meet those needs
15	We lean in to those areas a lot locally. We give most of our missions money toward those issues locally
18	Primarily with Lifters.
19	I haven't ran into that yet
20	Lifters are less jaded, Gifters can be more cynical

20. Have you intentionally planted new campuses with equal numbers of both age groups in the new campus?

ResponseID	Response
6	No
7	it wasn't entirely intentional, however, it worked out that way because our demographics at each campus include a healthy blend of the two
8	YES
9	Yes
12	No.
13	No
14	Yes
15	No
18	We have planted a new campus but the age groups are 70% Lifters and 30% Gifters.
19	I haven't planted one yet.
20	yes

21. Has the primary leader of your young adult ministry ever given you reason to feel like you have to look over your shoulder?

Value	Count
Yes	2
No	9
	11

22. How did you resolve that situation?

ResponseID	Response
12	Their youthful zeal and ambition is scary. While I'm proud that they're ambitiously moving forward, I'm concerned if their zeal and ambition will override their loyalty to the vision. That means that the first offense could push them away to pursue their own thing even if it means ruining what they were working on with our church.
20	weekly accountability with staff More training

23. When you plant a church, do you offer specific advice to the planting pastor about generational cooperation?

Value	Count
Yes	5
No	6
	11

24. What is that advice?

ResponseID	Response
8	Be you, don't change for anyone but understand who you are talking to and appreciate the differences. We talk a lot about who you platform will be who feels welcome. So if you have both on stage then both will feel welcome. I talk about surrounding yourself with people different than you in both age and race.

13	Work hard to engage the Lifters. Cast vision to the Gifters for them to allow the younger to serve with them. Remind the Gifters to not demand their own preferences.
14	Your church needs both to be successful. Lifters lift the lid of energy and creativity. Gifters loft the lid on maturity and continuity.
18	Our church plant has an automatic draw to the Lifters, so we are intentional to not exclude the Gifters in everything that is planned.
20	start with who God sends you, but be intentional with developing chronological and racial diversity

Lifter Survey Questions and Results

1. What is your age?

Value	Count
20-29	11
30-39	22
40-49	4
	37

2. What is the name of your church?

Responses omitted to preserve anonymity.

3. How long have you attended your church?

Value	Count
1-5 years	18
5-10 years	6
10-15 years	7
15-20 years	6
	37

4. Is your immediate family part of your church?

Value	Count
Yes	25
No	12
	37

5. What ministries or projects in your church do you feel are succeeding in a way that causes you joy?

ResponseID	Response
1	s

3	The diversity gives me life. The cultures, the gender representation the ages you see them everywhere. We are really about the word and education and being Spirit led. It's also nice that my community there is strong.
4	Kingdom Builders and how it supports local communities and global missions.
5	Various ministry opportunities to serve in, small group involvement, missions participation (trips and giving)
7	I grew up in the church mainly my middle school and high school years. What really helped solidify a strong relationship with a god was the High School ministry. To this day I see that this ministry has impact in hooking students to the church and this brings me joy.
8	Prayer Service Serve Day Sunday worship experience
9	Kingdom Builders - Missions across the globe.
10	Missions, outreach, Nehemiah, lifegroups, children's...in fact most ministries that I know about.
12	youth
13	Preaching/teaching, prayer, worship, kids, youth
15	I am currently involved in our youth program, a prison ministries group. I also am leading in all painting projects for the revamping of our buliding!
16	Pastoral leadership, tech ministries, and youth ministries. I believe being as heavily involved with the current interworkings of the church I have seen and participated in a lot of work to bring our church to the next level. From my intimate viewpoint I see a lot of ways we are working towards creating an environment that makes it as hard as possible for those in our community to go to hell. There is a lot more to be done towards that end, but I think many great strides have been made since the inauguration of our new senior pastors.
17	Guest Services KP Studios Serve Day Kingdom Builders Pregnancy Resource Center The Pantry

	The greeters and host The worship team The security team
19	The music ministry is what initially drew me in, but the hospitality team and host teams kept me coming back. The pastoral staff is an incredible example to us of God's love, grace and mercy, and they always welcome with open arms.
20	Marriage Ministries
22	Kids Ministry, Student Ministry, Marriage Ministry
23	I help in the creative department. I help film and edit videos the church uses on a weekly basis
24	I get joy from watching our Kids ministry, Youth ministry, Worship, and discipleship. Love it when people learn more about God or when my kids come home talking about what they learned in kids church or want to read the bible!
26	Youth, children, men's and women's ministry.
27	Small Groups, Women's Ministries, Worship, Preaching
28	Creative Team: Worship Online Campus Production
29	Worship Mentorship from leaders Outreach - Peace Makers Wednesday Connect
30	There is an emphasis on Men and Women's ministries. It brings me joy hearing about the hundreds of women gathering on Tuesday nights to grow more in the Word. Women need to be connected with other women. And it brings me joy knowing that there are hundreds of men gathering for breakfast and learning how to lead their household. I believe if the men in the church are excited about church and winning in their relationship with God, then the whole landscape of the family unit will win as well. Overall, every week I am seeing minor changes being made that I believe are yielding good results. But ultimately, seeing more people commit their lives to Christ is what causes the most joy!
31	Overall Growth, our church is like no other. people at VFC love to volunteer and help others. its infectious. Makes you want to do more.

32	Helping those in need from within the church. There are plenty of people that volunteer, go to services every Sunday, etc. that need plenty of help themselves. I feel like we do a good job of identifying those people and lending them assistance.
34	The worship is amazing, Pastors will preach bible cover to cover, College ministry is amazing.
36	Our Outreach's and small groups.
37	Women's ministry
38	Global Missions
39	Our general online presence
40	Visitors and new families are so welcome. Youth. Kids programming. Women's/Mom ministry.
41	Women's ministries, children's ministry, missions.
42	Believe building campaign, kids ministry, assimilations, People's Church in Espanol
43	Students-junior high and high school. Young adults 18 to 25. Children's ministry
44	Student ministries. VIP-first time guest and assimilations
47	Breakaway and I love my city our local outreaches
48	Our college ministry, awakening, brings me joy in seeing new students know Jesus and trust him for the first time.

6. Are people of all ages involved in those ministries or projects?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	96.7%	35
No	3.3%	2
	Totals	37

7. What ages are involved in those ministries or projects?

ResponseID	Response
8	18 to 30
12	11-24

8. How does having people from different generations involved contribute to that success?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	It empowers every generation to be involved and play their party in the body of God.
4	From my perspective, the older generation is able to provide their time and wisdom to the younger generation to help them leverage their social reach while maintaining a strong spiritual foundation which gives direction in creating effective local projects and global mission trips.
5	Opportunity to learn and grow from those both older and younger. Learning from different perspectives and phases of life.
7	There's the ability to connect from younger people to the students but then there is also good mentorship from those that are a bit older.
8	Reach more people
9	Regardless of age, anyone can give. Most anyone can also support missions by going on a missions trip.
10	Well older folks have wisdom and experience that they can share with the younger ppl. Younger people bring energy and a new look about how to handle certain situations.
13	different perspectives and approaches to ministry. allows us to reach people in different ways.
15	Everyone has a different aspect on things and older generations have a lot of experience with life in general. I think that working on projects with different generations helps each other understand each other as an individual. This tends to make us more of a community in my eyes because the more you know someone the more you feel able to lean on someone if you need it .

16	I believe that everyone has something to offer. The older and more wise members of the church have contributed a lot of wisdom and knowledge from their years that enables us to better avoid pitfalls. The younger hand contributed in helping provide perspective to how the younger generation thinks. This enables us to better reach those coming to maturity as well as those progressing in their young adult life.
17	It allows the whole family to be involved from the youngest to the oldest.
19	We can all learn from one another and best serve one another and our surrounding communities because of our diverse experiences.
20	They all have different wisdom they can provide.
22	Different experiences can help others gain a better understanding
23	Its great to have different perspectives and vision
24	You get the perspective of each person. Something that might have worked 20 years ago might not work today and something that is working now wouldn't have worked 20 years ago.
26	A blend of ages gives a well-rounded approach to projects, organizations and ministries. When you are all Jesus followers, each person can understand another's journey with Christ.
27	When combined in the right way, the wisdom that comes from experience and the energy and excitement that comes from youth create a symbiotic relationship that is contagious.
28	Putting people on the platform of all generations can help those in the congregation relate to those they see and how they interact with God during worship and others off the platform
29	It allows for the young ones to mature and develop while keeping the older ones teachable and passionate.
30	There is not just one right way to ministering and reaching people. Everyone comes from different walks of life, different ethnic backgrounds, different upbringings, etc. So your approach has to be tailored to the individual. You can't serve up a "corporate standard" way of reaching the lost for

	<p>Jesus. The message doesn't change, it's still Jesus and will always be Jesus. But the way in which the message is delivered can be tweaked per person or per setting or per ministry outreach. And I ultimately believe that is best achieved by having multi generational involvement. Sometimes new followers want to be able to see someone who looks like them and has similar stories as them so they can relate and hear how God can move and change them at this age of their life. A 60 year old new in the faith may not want to hear from a 20 year old in skinny jeans and extra large white shirt so when you have a multi generational leadership team, you better your success rate of relating to more people. I also think there is just so much to learn and use from the wisdom the elders bring but it would almost be useless if you didn't know how to translate that in to a way of getting in front of younger people. You sort of have to gather bits and pieces from all ages and walks of life and blend it all together in hopes that it works for all people. It's a balancing act.</p>
31	It shows the community we are all one. There is not one race, age, or background that stands out. we all intertwine
32	I know I want my kids, as well as others kids to be lead by example. Adam does a good job of announcing when these types of things are happening so that all people in the church are aware of specific things that are happening.
34	I believe that is does.
36	People working hand in hand learning from each other.
37	I love that woman from different generation and walks of life can receive wisdom that can help them uncover their identity more in more in Jesus since women have been looked down upon as far as being involved in any ministry in the Church at large.
38	Different generations bring different ideas and perspectives. It's a learning experience for everyone.
39	I think it paints a better picture of who we are as a church

41	I'll different experiences and walks of life converge. More needs can be met this way; it is more likely that newcomers will find at least one person they can really connect with.
42	New ideas and perspectives. Relatable thought processes for programming.
43	They have different ideas and out looks to help reach people of all ages and backgrounds.
44	With these specific ministries it is important to have the involvement of those that are older than those the ministry is attempting to reach for the purpose of discipleship.
47	We all look different. Not the same. This engages everyone and not a singular group of people.
48	Broad range of skill sets. Mentorship around short term projects. Opportunity for families to serve together.

9. Do you have favorite people in the church in the 40 and over age group?

Value	Count
Yes	35
No	2
	37

10. In what ways do those people feed into your life?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	Getting to glean from their lies by watching them is edifying. I do wish I had a closer relationship with at least one older woman who would really speak into my life but I at least feel comfortable and moderately connected to them.
4	Their transparency and authenticity regarding challenges they have experienced thus far over their lifespan and how their love for the Lord is still growing despite of which comes through in messages and general conversation.
5	Encouragement, life experience, mentorship
7	Currently it's minimal. There are people that I look upto because of how they carry themselves but not many 40 year old plus individuals from church have an active role in my life. Other than my father.
8	Wisdom, parental advice, encouragement
9	Mentorship. Watching how they conduct businesses, and leadership to many people.
10	Well they have experience different things in life (marriages, owning a home etc.), and they speak with me about what worked for them and give pointers on what to look up and how to handle it.
12	prayer
13	personally through relationships and prayer.
15	I wasn't raised in a church setting growing up so being new to this it is important to be around people who can give you knowledge. When your working with people it also opens up more of a chance to talk with people then just passing by and saying hi after a Sunday service. I always felt like just a person who came and sat in the back heard the message and went home. Getting more involved in projects or groups has made it possible to be a part of a community.
16	Every person alive is only capable of doing the best they know to do. Many do not push themselves to be their best, but even those that do are limited by their experience and knowledge. I am and strive to be the best I can be and those 40

	and older in my life feed my wisdom and I understanding through a support structure I depend on. Thereby helping my best become better and more Christ-like tomorrow than it was yesterday.
17	They are great leaders and prayer warriors.
19	Many times they serve as spiritual mentors and friends to me. They provide me with sound spiritual advice and tangible examples of how the Word has impacted them through different seasons of life.
20	Their life experiences from raising kids, to having a healthy marriage or healthy Jesus Journey.
22	Not sure
23	Past experiences, and giving good advice to help me in my leadership.
24	They encourage me, love on me and support me. I love to hear the God stories from their past, knowing what they did back then and how God showed up, he still does today! Might be a different method but it still shows up and shows out.
26	a Jesus follower who has been walking for many years longer than I have can only be a blessing and utilize as an asset for Christ.
27	I am a listener/observer and when I hear the testimonies of those who, with God's guidance, have persevered and overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles through reliance on God it bolsters my faith.
29	They genuinely show care. I am invited to their house, I am hired to do work for them, I can go to them for counsel and advice.
30	I am still pretty new to CFAN and haven't had too many opportunities of those people feeding into my life. But I would say just by their example and servants heart they feed into my life. They show me that all the things I am doing now or desire now don't matter as much later in life. Their example shows that being faithful to God's house first helps keep all other priorities and areas in your life, in the right order. As I continue to attend CFAN and grow in more relationships over time, I

	am excited to see what other areas of my life they add value.
32	There are a few of them that members of a small group that I am in with Adam. These monthly lunches motivate me, inspire me, and challenge me. I am thankful to have them.
34	Through serving others in the church.
36	We have a lot in common, and our age groups are going through the same life issues and problems that arise.
37	They have wisdom that they impart to younger generations that are life building.
38	Life experience and wisdom. They've already been through the mud so whether or not you agree with them or not, it's good to hear wisdom from experience.
39	Through wisdom and experience
41	Wisdom, life experiences, perspectives. Even if I don't talk to them on a regular basis, I admire the way they serve, minister, love people, and live their life.
42	Small group, volunteer in ministry, common interests in family lives.
43	They have life experience to help me grow and teach me things that I wouldn't normally experience.
44	They have taking care of my family in times of need. I have invested into my leadership. They have allowed us to become part of their families, giving us the opportunity to learn from their lives.
47	They go out of their way to communicate and connect.
48	They coach me and life decisions and small groups help create friendships.
49	They take me to lunch and dinner and offer wisdom, prayer, and different perspectives

11. What has kept you from forming relationships with individuals in that age group?

ResponseID	Response
28	I am forming relationships, I just wouldn't say I have "favorites"
31	it hasn't i just don't have a favorite

12. What specific programs or strategies in your church help blend the over-40 age group and the under-40 age group?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	There aren't many that are intentional but I think that's okay because I don't really think there should be a divide. As a 29 year old I want to feel just as much and I am just as much a part of the church as a 40 year old. I can think of our women's events. In the last few years they have been intentionally adding you her women to the team and pushing them to bring others to events and while the events are still predominantly older women the younger ones still show up!
4	Small Groups
5	Ministry involvement, serving with them, small group atmosphere, weekend worship experience participation
7	With my age group, there isn't a specific strategy or program to do that. Within the young adults ministry we do try to incorporate the voice of the generation before us but it's not something set in stone with measurables and goals.
8	Prayer service
9	Weekend worship. Culture of our church is that older generation invests in the younger generation and tolerating styles of media and worship not preferred by their generation as a means to have an investment in a younger generation.
10	Mentoring, lifegroups different serving ministries.
12	none

13	weekend worship together, small groups, participating in ministry opportunities together
15	As far as for me the volunteering aspect more than anything
16	The majority of our ministries and volunteer opportunities have roles that can be filled by the younger generations under the leadership of those over 40. These roles could be all filled by those over 40 and likely would create a more smooth sailing ship, but we as a church heavily encourage the younger generations to volunteer in spite of naturally havinbrg less skill and experience in the given roles. This will help to create more healthy, active, and godly leaders in our future.
17	?
19	There are women's, men's, and churchwide family events and small groups to incorporate all ages.
20	Their outings are not age specific. Girls/Guys Nights Life Groups or Events
22	Life groups
23	Volunteering and Life groups
24	I think the biggest thing is the Worship!
26	Small groups, men's breakfast. Woman's Bible study group.
27	Quite simply, the two groups need to be put in the same room where communication is promoted from both directions. The younger generations need to know that someone has been where they are now, and the older generations need to listen to be sure that they are answering the questions that are being asked. Small groups are a great place to create healthy relationships which will result in the kind of vulnerability that results in spiritual growth.
28	Love Groups - They are small groups and for all ages
29	A great strategy is simply asking those over 40 to help with things going on with the younger crowd. For example, to help with youth ministry, or to host a young Adults event at their house. Also, having bible studies throughout the week incorporate multiple generations. Having a choir

	<p>once a year has helped blend generations. Intentionally being on the look out for those up in age who may need help moving or things like that.</p>
30	<p>This is a harder one for me to answer but I will try to name a few... - the recent men's breakfast was a night mix of all ages of men. They marketed it well to the younger crowd while appealing to the older crowd since gathering around food is a more elderly act. They aren't going paintballing or skydiving and limiting it to only the physically able and adventure junkies. - a strategy I feel that has been great is that they have recently started putting sermons on Podcasts. I think that speaks to a young persons way of getting in the Word not only on Sunday. - the women's bible study is an all ages welcome event for women. Overall the church does well not always seperating the age groups like you tend to do on Sunday's (adults in the main service, youth have their own service, etc.). They do their best to bring everyone together.</p>
31	<p>Our volunteer program. I was over 40 started volunteering in the college group now i have several college age kids who seek me out every week.</p>
32	<p>Not sure. All outreach opportunities involve all ages.</p>
34	<p>They use over 40 in the volunteer positions for the services offered to under 40s</p>
36	<p>Single women's, Christmas and back to school outreach's along with mission trips. And small groups</p>
37	<p>Small groups help blend both age groups. There are small groups that are designed to allow all generations to fellowship.</p>
38	<p>Unfortunately, I wish there was a strategy but there really isn't. My wife and I joined the "older" service for that reason and we love the connections that we have made but there is a severe lack of desire from both sides to really want to blend. Stubbornness and just wanting to stay comfortable from both sides.</p>
39	<p>I think a lot of ministries are aimed at family's and that includes the over and under 40's groups</p>

41	Welcome programs. Women's/men Bible study.
42	Moms group, women's Bible studies, men's group.
43	Employing people of all ages. In kids Ministry junior leaders (junior high/high school ages) serve alongside adult leaders.
44	None that I can think of besides Sunday morning
47	None that I know of
48	To my knowledge, there aren't any programs etc. with the express goal of blending age groups/generations.
49	None that I can think of

13. In your estimation, what areas of the church could use more input from church leadership to help foster generational camaraderie?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	I wish there was more intention in getting older women to take us younger women out and invest in us maybe over coffee or a shopping date. I know that's hard because you can't force relationship. I feel like if we interacted more it would be more natural. Maybe the church can facilitate more opportunities for connections between the two generations so that those relationships happen.
4	I believe some of the generational camaraderie occurs organically through small group dynamics and service projects but we may need to be more intentional with generational interactions. I don't know if this could be possibly done through social events (i.e.church game night, picnic,etc.) or planned programs (i.e. forum discussion on current societal topics).
5	Nothing comes to mind
7	Discussing ways to blend more. There's is some segregation which is understandable because each age group has specific needs and maturity levels, but specifically with the young adults I think church leaders should discuss more ways to retain our young adults within the ministry.

8	Our kids ministry is separated from us on Sunday. I'd like to see presentations from the kids and Family Wordship
9	By not segmenting ages by individual ministries, though allowing common purposes to allow all age groups to gather for Kingdom Building.
10	I would say men ministry
12	more youth leaders regardless of age
13	na
15	I dont have an answer for this question
16	<p>I believe the largest area of lack in most churches is the 18-25 age group. The stats of how many fall away in this group is depressing. I feel it is due to having so many programs for teens and so many for young marrieds on up, but most churches have very little in between. Even speaking from experience I was a student leader in high school, youth leader while in seminary, and i participated in an internship program at the church. After that I felt I did not fit in the men's group because they naturally catered to the problems of their largest peer group. Those problems included mortgages, married life, the passing of parents, and other such problems that I couldn't connect with. The topics and messages were aimed at a group that I was entirely disconnected from. Because of this I felt entirely disconnected from the groups themselves. Personally I chose to remain in youth leadership until 24 simply because I had nowhere I felt I could go. To make a long story short I believe part of this gap is generated because church leadership is done by those over 40 in most cases with not input from the younger. Those over 40 have their concerns that fit in with the men's group archetype I mentioned. They also usually have children 1-18. So those concerns are a active in their minds. This prevalence of priorities creates a dominating force towards the areas they are actively involved in their daily life. The remaining college age tends to gets left behind. I do not believe any college age should run a church, but I do believe those in leadership need to make an intentional effort to reach and understand them. I believe the best answer is bringing on an individual into leadership that while being older still feels called to reach the college age group.</p>

17	I think our church already does a good job of that.
19	Possibly more seasoned and mature members could be teamed up with those newly dedicating their lives for more guided mentorship.
20	none, I think they do a great job at having a mixture of generations.
22	Not sure...
23	Im not sure.
24	Discipleship. I think we should have more of the older crowd to disciple the younger crowd.
26	I believe each apartment within the church has a proper blend of ages on the full spectrum. I think that it will serve the church well if this maintains.
27	Rather than being overly prescriptive and specific, I think there needs to be a general objective in place that promotes the dissemination of lessons learned by those with experience. I have always thought that it is good to learn from your own mistakes, but much better to learn from someone else's. In general, there should be preaching/teaching and testimonies from the older generation in order to prevent the younger generation from falling into the same holes they did, and situationally, those who have dug themselves out of holes should be connected with those struggling through similar issues currently so that healing comes through community and not isolation.
28	I think every department has a great blend of generational camaraderie
29	I would love to see more of your youth and young adults incorporated in the Sunday services doing announcements or testimonies etc. Doing more corporate outreach events where all are invited to come serve. I believe relationships form on mission. So we have to find a way to serve together.
30	From my perspective, I don't think there are specific areas where they could use more input. I think right now, they are probably receiving a lot of great input from all people but being as though they just took over pastorals roles at the church a few months ago, these things take time to see

	change. So with that said, I don't feel I can really add much to this question.
31	I honesty cant think of any. we are very well balanced
32	I honestly don't know.
34	Not sure, There are over 200 small groups with a vast array of ages and ethnicities
36	Not sure.
37	Nothing I could think of.
38	Not quite sure what it means by areas. I would say all areas.
39	Not sure
41	Women's ministries – for younger women 20 to 30.
42	Where ship, college young adult groups, life groups, men's group.
43	Membership. Majority are older people
44	Volunteerism could use a boost from church leader ship, there is no real common identity. First impressions.
47	Serving and getting involved isn't very clear. Other than joining a small group.
48	Main gathering
49	Assimilations and our youth and college programs. I believe this is why we lose so many young adults, because we never invite them into the hole and then throw them in when they graduate or hit the workforce. Greater integration would ease the shell shock.

14. What areas/programs in the church have more over-40 leadership?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	Everything
4	Outreach ministry

5	Small group leadership maybe. Although we have a lot of small groups lead by young adults for the younger generations.
7	Ushers and greeters.
8	Na
9	Mens/Womens Accounting Kids Ministries Campus Pastors
10	Drive thru prayer, care ministry, healing point ministry and gatekeepers ministry.
12	prayer and bible study
13	small groups, ministry teams
15	More roles in administration or our groups like torch bearers and small groups
16	Executive leadership(the elders), music ministries, and torch bearers.
17	We don't know
19	Community-based ministries and lead campus pastors.
20	Greeting or Ushers are usually over 40
22	Ushers/Greeters
23	Lifegroups
24	Gatekeepers. They are more of the seasoned saints.
26	Men's ministry
27	Nearly all of them.
28	Greeters/Ushers
29	Pastoral ministry Men's ministry Women's ministry Teaching ministry Outreach Ministry
30	From my observation, Torchbearers Ministry is a 55 and older ministry. Also, more over 40 leadership is seen in Men's Ministry events. Projects around the church seem primarily to be done by over 40 leadership as well.
31	so many i couldn't tell you. Maybe 100-150

32	I honestly don't know
34	It is probably 50/50. I don't think much of the staff is over 40. Therefore the recruitment of the volunteers is under 40 mostly.
36	Small groups
37	Small group leaders, deacons and elders, food bank staff.
38	Decision making about church matters (inhouse things such as maintenance, daily operations, etc)
39	Quite a few if not all
41	Kids, men's, women's.
42	Seniors group, men's group, missions, women's Bible study, worship, facilities.
43	Senior adults/Cara. Worship arts. Women's and men's.
44	Pretty much all besides the non-senior ministries
47	The main gathering experience
48	Men's group, women's group, missions
49	All senior/executive leadership. Vision. Warship. Sunday content.

15. What areas/programs in the church have more under-40 leadership?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	Young adults youth and kids
4	Youth and Worship ministries
5	Music, production, youth, young adults, kids, cafe, guest services
7	Vibe young adults, Powerhouse High School ministry, parking lot, choir,
8	Kids ministry
9	Youth Young Adults Worship Media

10	Parking lot ministry, powerhouse, vibe and wired ministries.
12	youth and young adults
13	youth and kids
15	Our youth and kids programs music leadership and kids camps
16	Tech ministries, youth, and children's
17	We don't know
19	Young adult and teen ministries
20	Children's area
22	Kids/Teen ministries
23	Lifegroups
24	Youth/Kids ministries
26	Youth ministry
27	Kids and youth.
28	Family Life (maybe)
29	Kids ministry Youth ministry Young adult ministry Worship ministry Missions
30	From my observation... - Praise & Worship - Sound/Lights/Video Production - Youth Ministry - Cafe
31	More than over 40 but its close
32	Youth projects, missions, worship leaders.
34	Refer to last ?
36	College leadership and youth groups
37	Everything else aside from previously mentioned areas.
38	Not sure if there are any.
39	Again, quite a few if not all because of our team lead approach to almost everything
41	College, youth

42	Youth group, college group, children's, outreach
43	PC kids, student ministry and college and young adult ministry.
44	Children/youth/young adults
47	Student ministries and kids
48	Students, kids, young adults
49	Youth and college ministry. Kids is divided down the middle.

16. When your church plants a new campus, is there usually a good representation of those under 40 and those older than 40 who help plant the new work?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	Yes
4	N/A
5	Yes
7	I am not fully aware of how the planting goes. I'd think there's equal representation
8	Don't know
9	Yes
10	I would say yes.
12	no
13	yes
15	I'm not sure
16	I have participated in a church merger, but never a church plant.
17	Yes
19	Yes
20	I haven't been a part of any church plants with Life Church, but I feel like they would send those that would fit the roles the best, not necessarily based on age.

22	N/A
23	Yes. We have a great mix of generations helping on a weekly basis.
24	It really depends on the location, when we have launched a new campus, we try to get the people that live in that area to help.
26	We have not planted another church yet.
27	Not applicable.
28	Yes
29	We haven't had that situation since I've been here. So I'm not sure.
30	Not applicable but I could imagine that I would be saying "yes" if I experienced a church plant.
31	Well taking this survey a couple weeks too soon. ask me in 2 months we should open our first campus in 3-4 weeks
32	I honestly don't know
34	We have not launched #2 yet
36	In the process of a new transplant so not sure yet.
37	I have not witnessed or have knowledge of Church plant that my church has done.
38	They haven't planted a new campus.
39	We haven't planted a new campus
41	Maybe. I think there is a good balance. An older one who has been at the church a while knows the ins and outs, and younger who has vision and passion
42	I don't know
43	I am not sure.
44	No. Our other campuses didn't really feel like they are ours. I know little if anything about them.
47	Not sure
48	N/A
49	N/A

17. In what ways do the members of the church in the over-40 group contribute to church programs?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	Mostly in service they serve a lot in that generation
4	It appears that they are in the majority when leading church programs.
5	Volunteer participation
7	Whether through simple participation/volunteering or leadership, the over 40 crowd is present. In our life group ministry there are a lot of leaders over 40.
8	Guidance
9	Not sure
10	Well they are normally there, willing to volunteer.
12	money
13	leadership and participation
15	More leadership roles and volunteering over seeing certain aspects
16	Those over 40 usually become the heads of ministries and provide direction, wisdom, and overall organization.
17	I don't know
19	Planning, organizing, leading
20	They serve in many different areas of the church which contributes to the overall feel of a sunday morning service.
22	Not sure...
23	People over 40 are all over our church helping in different ways.
24	If they are involved, they are typically leading a group. They tend to give and support when asked to give to certain ministries more.
26	Leadership planning, the overall structure oh, and the overall contribution of the ministry

27	Leadership Oversight Accountability Teaching
28	Some of them are team leads. Some lead life groups
29	Money, encouragement/verbal support, prayer, helps
30	- Wisdom - Experience - Funds (I am assuming) - Physical labor
31	VFC is so well rounded and so unaware of that we just don't look at people as age groups. We all step up when needed. everyone gets along
32	I honestly don't know
34	Through Service. Our church is mostly volunteer ran.
36	Youth groups and some small groups.
37	They lead the small groups.
38	They are involved in almost every program
39	Quite a bit as we have team lead approaches to most things
41	Lead well; a lot of experience in a lot of different situations and scenarios. Seen a lot more. Grew up with a different culture.
42	Financially, volunteer
43	Serving and financially support. They make up a majority of the congregation.
44	A good amount serve whole heartedly, most are content with giving money and sharing their dislikes with what we do.
47	Finances and involvement in church production. Most gathering experiences are geared toward over 40 population
48	Leadership, volunteer, council, coordinating events
49	Volunteers and money

18. In your opinion, does the church cater to one age group more than the other? Please explain.

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	The church as a whole caters to over 40 in the way they market things outside you youth and young adults
4	It is clear that there is a lot of focus on the youth ministries.
5	No. Although we are trying to really have a younger generation focus for the church of the future.
7	Not necessarily. Preaching reaches all ages and worship reaches all ages. So for the service elements we do go for all ages. A major part of the church is the lifegroup and those are arranged partly by age. Giving each age group representation. Where t think there could be Growth is for the young adults. I think the high school and children ministries get more exposure.
8	No
9	No. We don't do a good job of letting a specific generation know what we cater to, meaning new people probably don't know if it's an old or young church, which makes it difficult to really pursue evangelism to a younger generation.
10	I don't think so, they have programs and ministries for all ages...in fact they try to encourage the younger generation to be more involved and help out...
12	yes those that can write checks
13	no
15	I think so but not in a negative way. I feel like our church has a huge number of younger people and there are older generations that feel it important to feed into you get adult and in return the can feed into the kids
16	At present our church caters more to those under 18. This is because we have quite a few leaders in those ministries that are fired up and getting a lot rolling. That is not to say those in other ministries are not fired up, but the change of senior pastors involves a lot of transition. Those in youth did not have as much transition to make.

	We are still working on how we want our other ministries to look and function as well as putting everything together organizationally. So while active I believe our other groups are still in our transition phase.
17	No
19	There does seem to be more attention given to teens and young adults, but more resources and opportunities are slowly being reintroduced to the 40 population.
20	no, I think the church does cater to a certain demographic, but not age specific.
22	No, I feel like my church does a good job of including/catering to all different age groups.
23	I feel like it could be both. I think a smaller church could cater to one or the other where a bigger church makes efforts to cater to both.
24	No, I think we have a good balance of keeping everyone engaged!
26	Children's and youth ministry.
27	Our church is currently in transition from a pastor of 30 years to a much younger pastor who is under 40 years old. I believe that the previous pastor created an environment that catered more to the over 40 demographic, though not intentionally. Our new pastor(s) have a bent that is more conducive to the younger generation. Currently, there is more focus on aesthetics, technology, and reaching the younger generation.
28	No
29	It seems that youth and those over 35 get catered to. The gap is 20-35. There's a limited budget for that group, no hired pastor for that group, or any great attention given to that group. We have very minimum amount of people in the church that fit that age range. And since that age range is looking for a spouse, it makes it difficult for those looking within the church for a potential partner.
30	No. The church I attended before CFAN completely catered to only young people. Pastor dressed 30 years younger than his age, only young people on stage, primarily a white congregation, music was always super loud, etc. When I walked

	into CFAN though, I felt like it resembled the closes thing to Heaven. Multi-generational, multi-cultural. You don't get a congregation like that by catering to one age group.
31	no same answer. Adam has been given an amazing gift of leadership that he makes it a point that no one group stands out. i honestly cannot think of a group that gets any more attention than another. He is methodical in his approach to making the church all feel blended
32	It probably leans towards the catering of younger people....especially college age...but that has a lot to do with the town we are in. The university of Oklahoma is just down the street.
34	No. I think that all ages can gather up and be fed here
36	No
37	I believe that the church heavily emphasize the younger generation to train and raise them to be leaders and excellent role models in the community.
38	Maybe not intentionally but yes, I believe it happens. I think it caters to the over 40 crowd. Which isn't a bad thing! I think it's caused by the lack of initiative from the under 40 crowd.
39	I think our church caters to families with kids. That includes, to me, grandparents as well.
41	No. There is a good balance of communities for people of all ages. I think every person can find a niche.
42	Yes. Elderly generation is more catered to, as they are the financial foundation of the church congregation.
43	Yes. At times. Not all the time though. I feel it focuses on the 40 to 60-year-old adults.
44	Yes. Our demographic is older and what we do caters to that.
47	Yes. Not intentionally. The majority of staff is over 40. However I'm excited that our church is noticing this and engaging a younger population by hiring young people.

48	Hard to say, there are lots of age specific options on a Sunday, very few expressed on catering to a wide age group.
49	Yes. I think we say we want to be a church geared toward the young adult family, but of all of our big decision makers are not a part of this demographic. We have decisions made based on assumed preferences rather than actual information. With the possibility for younger to voice opinion.

19. Do you feel like your voice is considered in the church?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	Yes but that's because I make my presence available
4	If I had something to voice, then I feel as though there are resources available to allow me to share directly to leadership. During some messages, it is evident that others have shared things with leadership which in turn directs the focus of the message.
5	Yes
7	Yes
8	Yes
9	Yes
10	I do believe my voice is considered
12	no
13	yes
15	Yes
16	I believe so, but I understand I am in a unique position where-in I am at the church many times a week. Being heavily involved and speaking to the other leaders of the church very often is understandable that my voice would be considered. I do not believe that most in my age group feel the same as I do. Simply because I have a number of friends who are less involved

	that have expressed explicitly that they do not feel considered.
17	Yes
19	Yes
20	Yes.
22	Absolutely!
23	Yes
24	Yes. Because we have people under 40 on staff, then ideas from that age group gets talked about quite often.
26	Yes
27	Yes, I am in a position that allows my voice to be heard.
28	Yes
29	I do!
30	100%
31	I feel like I am heard but more than that Adam is great about listening to several people in the church. Most people at VFC are so plugged in we all desire to help and grow the church. Adam has been fantastic about making sure everyone feels like this is YOUR church not his not any one group. He has made it personal so we all feel like we are heard.
32	Absolutely
34	Yes but only because I am in a small group with Pastor. I can see why someone who doesn't know staff could feel unheard.
36	I believe it would be if I had to talk to someone.
37	Yes
38	Yes
39	Yes
41	Depends. It's so big, and unless you are in a smaller circle/ community/group within the church it is easy to not be seen/heard/overlooked.

	But I don't think the church would quieter voice, it's just big.
42	Yes
43	Yes. If expressed to those with control/say then yes. But I don't know how much it is sought out.
44	No Answer
47	No. I don't know how to have a relationship with superiors who are older than me. I feel critiqued before celebrated.
48	Yes. Being part of multiple creative meetings for different departments and the opportunity to voice good and bad observations during our weekly all staff meetings
49	No. As a staff member I am afraid to offer real thoughts about programming and style.

20. What do you and others your age like about your church?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	They like others their age
4	Youth ministry and Praise and worship ministry.
5	Worship, bible teaching, small group atmosphere, opportunities to serve
7	We like the freshness of what God is doing. The genuinity of the church leaders. The community feel of the church.
8	Family environment, everyone encouraged to volunteer and find their ministry
9	Weekend worship at some locations Global outreach
10	That they have ministries and opportunities to serve as young ppl. They have classes that help us grow spiritually and ministries to help us connect with other young ppl.
12	no many ppl my age in our church

13	cultural diversity, engaging worship and bible teaching
15	It is a close knit family we can be ourselves regardless of age differences
16	One of the big changes the new pastors brought is a desire to bring the church into the 21st century technologically and visually. Our previous pastor was good at presenting his messages in a way that still connects with the younger generation, but the look and setup of the church was so obviously dated it did not create an open, inviting, and engaging atmosphere. They say you have somewhere around 3 minutes after a person pulls into the parking lot before they have already decided if they are coming back. The problem with this is that for the majority of those 3 mins the only thing that the person will encounter is the environment and atmosphere of the church. A great message is great unless the person has already been turned off by the time they got to the sanctuary.
17	I don't think it has anything to do with our age. We like the church because we feel welcomed and loved. We like the message every week. We like the leadership and communication. We like the worship and the children's ministry. We like the opportunities our church offers us to serve others not just within our church walls, but also for our community. And we especially like that our children are welcomed to join us and when they can't be, childcare is usually always provided. We love our church's mission.
19	Diversity, spirit-lead messages, and contemporary worship music.
20	We like that the Pastor is down to earth, he is engaging, funny and makes you think in a non-condemning way. The church is friendly and inviting.
22	The worship, the teaching, and the fact that it feels real/authentic
23	Connections, acceptance, good services and kids ministries.
24	We enjoy: worship, teaching and how tech driven we are.

26	We have so many people that are involved in each area of the church. Everyone takes it upon themselves to meet and greet others before and after services.
27	As eluded to in a previous answer, change has brought about a certain level of anticipation for what God will do in the future. The momentum that results from new pastor(s) is in full effect.
28	The welcoming atmosphere
29	The worship, and the church has a more contemporary vibe.
30	- Younger Senior Pastors led by wise, older Elders and counsel. I think its a perfect combination. - Relevancy (easier to invite people my age knowing they won't feel out of place at church, too young to be at church, etc.) - The emphasis on servant leadership and the many ways you can easily get involved
31	This age question is getting old. its not relevant at VFC
32	availability of small groups, the worship experience as a whole, a consistently energized pastor
34	Worship and Message
36	I like how the church gives back to the community the country and to the world.
37	Being able to lead younger generations , the children and youth, and help them discover their gifts, calling, and assignment in life.
38	I think they like the fellowship from peers. I think that's the problem though, they are unwilling to get uncomfortable and go outside of the comfort zone to people not like them.
39	The aim at young families and the content that's brought.
41	The inter-generational aspect is really great. As a young person there are ways to get involved with people my age or glean wisdom from those older than me.
42	The feeling of a small church in a big church

43	People my age like the third hour which attempts to be more contemporary in worship.
44	Family atmosphere
47	We love the multi generational dynamic of our church. We have a long way to go, but we are making strides. Multi generational church is messy, but worth it. I love her wisdom and passion can meet.
48	Connections with each other and the opportunity to be involved
49	I think we like how big it is, the notoriety. We like the programs and friendship offered in our demographic and we like the teaching.

21. Do you believe you will be a part of your church for many years to come?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	Yes
4	Yes.
5	Yes
7	For the next 3-5 years yes. After that I don't know where God will be taking me in life.
8	Yes
9	Yes
10	Yes I believe I will be.
12	no sure
13	yes
15	Yes most definatey
16	Yes
17	Yes
19	Yes. If that's where the Lord calls us to be that's where we'll remain.
20	Yes

22	yes!
23	Yes
24	Yes I believe i will be.
26	Absolutely
27	Yes
28	Yes
29	At this point, I do.
30	100%
31	Until God calls my family elsewhere. I pray its VFC for decades to come.
32	Absolutely
34	I hope so unless they kick me to the curb. The diversity is important to me because of my 5 adoptions. We are a diverse family.
36	Absolutely
37	I am not sure. However I would want to grow into this church if God allows. I follow His leading.
38	No
39	Yes
41	I think so. With no immediate family in a change in community, I often long for something familiar. But this has been my home for years, so we'll see.
42	Yes. I hope to be used in a way to see the ministry I'm involved and continue to grow.
43	Yes. This church has become a home and a safe place filled with people I love and respect. The only way I could see myself leaving would be if I moved away.
44	Yes
47	Yes. Currently on staff. It is a place to raise a family. I like the dynamic of mentorship with being on staff.

48	Yes. I call this place home. I am proud to be here and to be loyal here. Unless God calls me elsewhere, I am here through thick and thin.
49	No. I would like to move in the next year. To work somewhere that is better at that integration and missional aspects of ministry.

22. With ten being the highest possible score, what three areas of your church score close to a ten?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
3	Education Spirit Strategy
4	Youth ministry, Praise & Worship, Outreach
5	Worship, production, preaching/teaching
7	Overall worship experience, Encounter God retreat, Life Group ministry
8	Worship experience Hospitality Prayer service
9	Multi-site campuses Media and innovation Messaging
10	(Encounter/Sod process), School of ministry and (missions kingdom builders)
12	6
13	worship, preaching
15	Youth program, with our new pastor the energy in our sunday services is so overwhelmingly good! And our volunteering is great as well
16	General atmosphere(visually as well as greeting and congregation atmosphere)(8.8), Youth (8.6), and tech(8.2)
17	Children's Ministry Guest Services/Hosts Worship
19	Service Excellence Diversity
20	Creative Department Childrens Department First Impressions
22	Kids Ministry, Student Ministry, Worship
23	Kids Creative lifegroups
24	Kids Ministry Worship Service Groups
26	Children's, youth nation, women's ministry.
27	Preaching Kid's Church Women's Ministry
28	I all our major areas score close to a 10. I feel like we have come up with a good system that works for our teams and the people in our church.

29	Love, friendships, transparency, outward focus, worship, overcoming racial divides, counsel
30	- Senior Pastors Leadership - Church Accountability (board of elders, deacons, members all have a voice on church matters and budgets, I have never been a part of church with this sort of accountability system set in place) - Evangelism (always an altar call and opportunity to receive Christ or the Holy Spirit)
31	Leadership volunteering its a family and Adam makes it feel that way
32	Worship team Pastoral leadership Small groups
34	Worship, Message, outreach
36	Pastor Worship team Community outreach
37	Children's ministry, Women's ministry, and small groups
38	Global Missions
39	Preaching Worship/Creative Family life ministries
41	Welcoming – as best we can with as big as we are. Sermons are Christ oriented
42	women's ministry, missions, children
43	Women's ministry. Facility/events. Greeting/welcome team.
44	Send a gathering. Staff system. Giving.
47	Student ministries department. Kids department. First time guest follow up.
48	College, events, logistics
49	Teaching. Big event programs. Assimilations.

Gifter Survey Questions and Results

1. What is your age?

Value	Count
30-39	2
40-49	15
50-59	21
60-69	8
70 or above	9
	55

2. What is the name of your church?

Answers omitted to preserve anonymity.

3. How long have you attended your church?

Value	Count
1-5 years	16
5-10 years	13
10-15 years	10
15-20 years	4
Over 20 years	12
	55

4. Is your immediate family part of your church?

Value	Count
Yes	48
No	7
	55

5. What ministries or projects in your church do you feel are succeeding in a way that causes you joy?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	Music ministry is constantly seeking new material and incorporating those who wish to be a part of it. The children's, youth and young adult ministries are thriving because of the present leadership and their passion for the ministry. They love what they do and love the people they are ministering to. The ladies ministry is beginning to revive itself after some tweaking and changes. The response team, ushers, greeters and traffic units are doing extremely well and are a pleasure to see every Sunday. So many areas of COTR are having "new life" after leader changes and changes in how the program is run. But I think all the changes stem from the overall changes in the spiritual growth of the church. There is a bigger focus on prayer for the church as a whole, and I believe that has had the biggest impact on all areas of ministry.
3	The Welcome team for one. It can be the "first" interaction for new people and can make them feel at home. The Men's prayer huddle. Peacemakers. *There are many others but these are the first that come to my mind
4	Go Trips, Pantry, Care Place. Small groups
5	Lifegroup, School of discipleship,
6	I love our outreach ministries like our food bank and our free health clinic. Also, our small group ministry is really really effective.
7	Kids Ministry, Youth Ministry, Peacemakers, S
8	Compassion Cafe, teach kindergarten class monthly, salvation team, greeter.
9	Home based Bible study groups, continued Spiritual Growth through Berean Education. Sunday morning classes and Sunday morning Altar time. The youth program is fantastic, I have 2 young adult children that grew into their Ministry through the program at my church.
10	Children church; Pantry; Careplace; PRC
11	Children's; Transit; Small Groups; Hospitality; Community Outreach including pantry and

	primary healthcare; Missionary Support and Go Trips.
12	Encounter God Retreat School Of Discipleship Women of Grace Vibe Powerhouse Surge
13	Outreach, Fresh Fire Dance Ministry, Life Group Leaders, Growth Group Facilitator, VIBE (young adults)
14	The Women's ministry has grown tremendously. Women have the opportunity to serve as well as fellowship with one another. The Encounter Ministry is truly a blessing. Many women experience a true encounter with God. Seeing women delivered and truly walk in their purpose truly brings me joy. The youth ministry and Go Kids are growing. Youth are learning about Jesus on a weekly basis. The peace and happiness I feel on baptism night can not be described. So thankful for Pastor Larissa and her team as well as Pastor Chris and his team.
15	Missions and outreach
16	Alpha Journey to Wholeness Volunteer recruitment
17	Mission Ministries and local outreach programs
18	I believe we have a strong local outreach for the broken, homeless, and disenfranchised. Our Divorce Care program has been very effective and personally rewarding to me. Also, our children's programs are robust and growing, which I believe is critical. Mens and women's Bible studies are growing which pleases me greatly.
20	Local Missions
21	1) Seeing Discipleship through the Word and Prayer 2) Community connection 3) Growth in attendance
22	I love our outreach ministries, and our children's and youth ministries.
23	Family Life Ministries Creative Team Ministries Discipleship (Alpha, J2W, MarriageLife, ParentLife)
24	I love that we are always focused on so many projects but they can only go through if they point to Jesus. Right now prime time services. The exchange coffee house is a business but so many customers are feeling Jesus

25	Worship Small Groups
26	Outreach and World Missions
28	Growth Outreach Woman's Men's
29	Discipleship, Outreach and church planting
30	I get joy from seeing the constant and consistent growth and soul saving at every service. I love the fact that our church reaches out to meet the needs and minister to the families in our local community. I love the African water well drilling project. I love the attention paid to single mothers. I love the focus on scripture in every sermon. I love the encouragement of small group as well as individual bible study.
31	Peacemakers The outreach ministries
34	Primarily the development and expansion of Online/Digital Ministries. I'm also delighted to see kids ministries, parenting ministries, and Journey to Wholeness (emotional healing) ministries thriving
35	New lead Pastors are transforming every area to a more contemporary level. Impacted greatly by this are our student and young adult ministries.
36	Children's Ministry Youth Ministry Young Adults Ministry (reaching out to Wesleyan College students-across street from church) Church growth with frequent salvations
37	Children's Ministry, Sunday Services, Young Adult Ministry, Worship
38	More people connecting Finding and following Jesus Water baptism Church family continues to grow
39	All the key ministries (youths, children church, kids nation, worship, prayer, nursery, are preceding forward according to God's direction and plans, which reflects highly on our current Pastors and their desire and obedience to God.
41	Worship, Outreach, Marriage, Small Groups, Prayer and Hospitality
42	Men's (just started) Women's (also just started) Small Groups Apartment outreach Music
43	God Encounter Retreats School of Discipleship SEU Campus Music Ministry Women's Ministry

44	The Outreach programs. Water wells, building group homes for women in Middle East, single mom days or others bring a sense of succeeding. It brings joy to spread the gifts of Christ to those in need.
45	Ministries four children youth women and men all seem to be growing thriving. The Advent of small groups are just beginning but I think they will be a tremendous blessing to the church. Participation in various projects to upgrade the facility has been very successful.
46	Small groups Children ministry Discipleship Young people Outreach Young adult/youth
48	Greeting, serving, missions, giving
49	Pointing people to Jesus each Sunday in service and online and Monday Night Live online give many people an option to be in person and feel loved by all teams or online I. The comfort of their own home. The kids and youth ministries are obvious priorities we have that families can see when they walk in the door and see a b-ball court and playscape through the glass
50	There is new life in our body under our new pastors. The church is finally growing and reaching out to our community.
51	Salvations, community outreaches, worship nights, mother's day of pampering (single mothers ministry), global outreach including bibles for the Middle East, water wells for Africa, safe houses for sex trafficked women, building homes in Haiti, etc.
52	Children's
53	Worship, Pastor Sermons
54	Our Spanish gathering is growing!
55	VIP, Welcome Brunch, Missions, I LOVE MY CITY, Peoples Church Espanol, PC Kids
56	Spanish speaking service and churches Support groups for healing
57	Children's ministry Women's ministry Missions
58	Children's, discipleship and new believers, worship
59	VIP room welcoming newcomers. Response station helping people say yes to God. Welcome

	branch connecting newcomers. Christianity 101 basics of the faith. Christianity 201 growing in Christ. Men's Bible study.
60	Worship. Young kids events
61	Senior care to shut ends. Children's department. Youth ministries. Women's especially programs for young mothers.

6. Are people of all ages involved in those ministries or projects?

Value	Count
Yes	54
No	1
	55

7. What ages are involved in those ministries or projects?

ResponseID	Response
16	14

8. How does having people from different generations involved contribute to that success?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	You must have an older set to provide wisdom and guidance but who are also willing to accept and embrace change. You must involve the younger generations in leadership and internship and training programs or your church will die. There must be a good balance of both.
3	Well when you have younger people come to church, it is good to see someone that you can relate to and the same holds true for the older people.
4	We are a multi generational church and multi racial church. Having diverse people in ministries is critical to reaching our community... which happens to be multi racial and multi generational

5	There is both experience and ability to learn from those who are seasoned.
6	As far as outreach goes, it's just priceless to see the older- and younger generations minister together. Working together. In small groups, the ages are usually grouped together.
7	It is a must! The younger generation have fresh and new ideas. Not mention energy and enthusiasm. The older generations have wisdom and experience.
8	Their gratefulness for what we do.
9	In a world where wisdom is gained by Youtube, the world's way is losing respect for previous generations. When a study group has both young and old whether at home or church, we can understand across generational lines. A great example would be when a man in his seventies talked about stealing from employer by lining up at the time before the shift was over, and many of the people into the middle of their working years thought of stealing from employer was more like the opposite direction that today employers contract and pay you for an hour for something that takes 80 minutes. Together we learn to understand the past and evolve to the future. We can not lose the wisdom of our past, so as a church we must engage across lines.
10	I believe that being involved in ministry is important to each Christian to live out their faith.
11	Each generation brings a different level of experience, background, energy, excitement, and expectations. The combination of wisdom and fresh ideas create a greater dimension of service. Even more so when involving a diverse group.
12	The generations are able to learn from one another and gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the way in which each approach situations and resolve difference in a healthy manner.
13	Gray hair has some wisdom; youth has vitality and exuberance
14	People from different generations bring a different approach. We can share our ideas, knowledge, and experiences. Each generation is unique within itself. When the uniqueness is embraced, it is mindblowing to see what can be and is accomplished.

15	Each generation brings unique experience, availability and resources
17	It allows for a huge sharing of knowledge and in my view energizes both young and old. The young learn from the old and the old learn from the young.
18	Having the different generations involved fosters a sense of inclusion and understanding of differences of opinion, values, how we communicate, and how to interact with someone who is different. There should also be an understanding of racial and cultural differences integrated into the mix as well. The Word is clear that the old shall teach the young. This is a critical component as the church is only a generation away from extinction.
20	Keeps the family unit engaged by having something for everyone to get involved and feel included.
21	Mentoring each other and connecting with small groups. Getting involved with church projects and just connecting with all ages equals success!
22	It's great to see the younger generation showing interest in building God's kingdom.
23	Understanding how different views, perspectives, and beliefs per generation and how they work together and also what differences we need to overcome to be a benefit to everyone
24	So many different view points
25	Different perspectives; forced to communicate in different ways. Everyone does not look the same so we can appeal to different people in the church.
26	I believe that having different generations allow for a broader perspective to be shared when considering effective ways to minister. In addition, God's experience with each person is so unique that having this perspective helps avoid the trap of being narrow minded when considering how to reach different parts of our society.
28	With the older, there is a sense of root, stability and wisdom, mentorship With the younger there is a sense of energy, hope for new excitement
29	Helps the church to keep evolving , new ways of reaching the next generation with core values
30	Youth brings energy, age brings experience

31	Since we are reaching out to people of all age groups then I believe it helps both the "giver" and the "receiver" to better relate
34	It doesn't take much time to realize that carried generations have different perspectives on life based on their experiences and what they've seen in the world around them. Older generations have expressed more difficulty with digital ministry while younger individuals have adapted quickly. Keeping open to the voices of all generations helps us to understand what content, what mediums, and what platforms speak the language of that generation. For instance, people of my age group tend to prefer Facebook if experiencing something digitally whereas younger groups would rather engage with Instagram, YouTube, or through varied apps. And engaging the church digitally is no different than sitting in a seat in the auditorium for many in younger demographics. Involving different generations helps us cast a wide net and be effective while doing so.
35	This models Ideal discipleship with the old bringing wisdom and the young bringing a freshness
36	The church has a culture of high energy generated from those of the millennials. At the same time, the earlier generations: Generation X, Baby Boomers, a few of the Traditionalist Generation help provide financial stability and support toward the operation of the church and its functions through example, sharing, teaching, providing wisdom to the younger generation.
37	The younger people give fresh perspective ,energy and animation. The more seasoned adults give wisdom and mature spiritual covering .
38	Older teaching / modeling Jesus Younger generations brings excitement.
39	The combination of age and a multicultural church has enhanced a successful balance between the difference generations.
41	In planning and executing the program they bring their own individual life experience, values and costumes. People that come to the church see people of the same demographic, culture, race and background involved and living out God's calling in their lives.

42	Gives a covering of wisdom from the older and also the motivation and drive from the younger to move forward in a culturally relevant way. I love seeing the wiser generation pouring into the younger. It is so necessary and Biblical. It also challenges the older to not get critical to the younger ones and be open to new ideas but make sure none of them compromise the gospel in any way!
43	Experiencing the gifting, talents and abilities of the ages coming together and making something work leaves a sense of satisfaction for all involved.
44	Different generation lend different perspectives that help better determine the priority of needs. It helps to have people who may have walked in similar shoes to those you are trying to help.
45	They produce ownership and buying by participating in the various ministries and projects.
46	There are lessons learned. Its good to hear generational views on various events and aspects of life. It shows that learning is a continuous process
48	Making others feel welcome and included
49	They tell their friends of all generations about it all
50	Each generation reaches out to their peers. I am more likely to invite and interact with my age group.
51	Cross-generational experiences help grow the young (discipling by the more mature Christians), keep the old young (give purpose to those who may be retired or no longer have close family)
52	Works well
53	good growth for all ages
54	They learn from each other and work together to grow.
55	When you look through the eyes of the person involved you see many different things. It gives variety.
56	More people's needs are met.
57	Wide variety of viewpoints, life experience

58	It keeps the staff volunteers and those involved and touch and current with generational concerns. Fresh perspective from younger; wisdom from old.
59	Makes it more interesting and fun
60	Energy and stamina (Stick to it)
61	Enriches total perspective

9. Do you have favorite people in the church in the under-40 age group?

Value	Count
Yes	48
No	7
	55

10. In what ways do those people feed into your life?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	They are always kind and respectful. They go "all out" for God. It helps excite me when they are excited.
4	Energy, joy, curiosity and just generally their approach to ministry
6	I work with youth a lot, and I just love the energy that they have. A lot of them are really teachable.
7	They are world changers. They see a need and jump in. They are Kingdom minded. They are fun and kind.
8	Their dedication and willingness to serve God
9	I was recently running a Ministry with a young adult and it was encouraging to see that not only had she taken up the mantle of the ministry, but she encouraged participants of all ages.
10	Fellowship; a place to conduct life together.
11	They bring expectations for the future...the continued growth and sustainment of our church. It is a joy interacting and serving with them. They

	bring a freshness and a excitement when sharing life experiences.
12	We participate in active conversations that tend to be a two way street. We learn from one another and help each other in multiple situations. I am able to give what I hope is Godly advice and guidance to both young men and women. At times it may be motherly advice. Always love abound.
13	Bring JOY and allows us (wife and I) to feed into their lives which brings satisfaction and joy into my life
14	They are open to creative and new ideas. As a Social Entrepreneur, I am always searching for fresh approaches and risk takers; business or spiritual. This age group is not afraid. They will do whatever God ask them to do. They are bold and courageous.
15	Their ambition and potential inspire me
16	Companionship Energy Mentoring Opps
17	They remind me to dream and their enthusiasm is contagious.
18	My favorite group is the young marrieds.I love to interact with them with my wife so it keeps us thinking young and we can be an example of what a Godly marriage should be. I love speaking at thier retreats and interacting with them at church as it gives me great joy to seed into thier lives.
21	They "show" Love just not speak it. Their lips and their lives speak the same message.
22	It blesses me to see them grow and succeed. I actually enjoy it more to feed into theirs.
23	We are interconnected. They feed into my life to challenge me, to stretch me to understand and see life and views from all different perspectives
24	Technology new view points
25	Eager to learn and mature. Have a fun, happy go - lucky attitude. Want to be taught.
26	They have great energy and are very excited about learning more about the things of God, especially outside of the four walls of the church
28	I'm seeing younger people experience the joy and hope that comes from serving the Lord. There is a

	feeling that the Lord is at work in the lives of this next generation.
29	Active and energetic
30	They make me feel connected to something lively, active, and new
34	I'm consistently learning what's new and what connects to a younger generation. They help me grow and discover the "why" behind the preferences they have. It expands my understanding and scope of perspective. I like that they help me have a broader vision and avoid being as myopic as I could tend to be if left to my own ideas.
35	Many are my peers so in many ways relate to me on many levels. The younger keep me young and keep the church relevant to that generation.
36	As an employee of the church, over 40% of our staff are under the age of 40. I am always challenged by their passion to grow in their calling and giftings. I am encouraged through what I see God doing through them for others of all age groups, including me.
37	They make me want to try new things and they give me a fresh energy. I love seeing ministry through their eyes.
38	Watching and when asked contributing to their spiritual journey
41	Provide opportunity to mentor, to hear their perspective on God's word. Encouraging, verbally supported and uplifting have lots of energy and passion for God.
42	Through encouragement and accountability. This life throws many challenges at us all and doing life together with people is so important. Also making sure that they are people that push me towards my walk with Christ and also have fun and laugh with.
43	There is a measure of trust, comfort level, dependency and love that moves beyond church members to that of family,. A connection in the physical and spiritually.
45	They feed into my life by seeing the zeal, there love for the Lord, and their desire to serve.
46	I am able to understand the way they interpret occurrences. Understand their struggles. It helps to

	bridge the generational gap, which gives opportunity to speak into their lives and also able to learn
48	New perspective on various items
50	They are ministry leaders.
51	We serve together in capacities as greeters, serve on the worship team, meet in small groups, and have groups with purposefully different ages over to dinner to fellowship
52	Bring joy
53	excited to see them grow
54	They bring new ideas and their youth gives life and hope.
55	I get to love on them, pour into them, watch them love on and pour into my children.
56	Knowing their passion for people
57	It's wonderful to see through young eyes and have the wisdom of older people.
58	We interact and work alongside of each other to support the ministry of the church.
59	They give a sense of future ministry.
60	Freshness
61	A joy to see their love for the Lord.

11. What has kept you from forming relationships with individuals in that age group?

ResponseID	Response
3	I like "younger people" so that is not the reason. I don't feel like I have favorite ones though. I have not been able to spend as much time in ministry as I would like to because of an elderly mother and ill wife.
5	I have relationships but no favorites
20	New to the church. Attended for 3 months now.

31	It is not that I don't have relationships with younger people it is just that I don't "favor" them over other ages.
39	I have established relationships with all age group which contributes to the church and person growth.
44	I have relationships with some, just don't believe I have a favorite.
49	I just try not to favor :)

12. What specific programs or strategies in your church help blend the over-40 age group and the under-40 age group?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	Children's ministry, Marriage builders, music ministry, greeters, traffic. I think COTR is unique in that is has many different programs that involve all age groups.
3	We have them do things like "dance" during regular services. They sometimes lead other things in the church. We older one have opportunities to support them in several different ways. One way is to sponsor a child that may need help to participate.
4	Not sure of a specific program to blend these groups, as a matter of fact we have a seniors group, a young adult group a teen group... but very little in the way of generational integration as an intentional ministry
5	The Outreach program along with School of Discipleship.
6	The younger generation is strongly encouraged to join the older generation by being ushers, greeters, etc. Just to work and do life together.
7	Kids Ministries for sure. The Different service Groups, Outreaches. Pastor has different speakers for Wednesday night Church and they range from all ages.
8	We have an amazing women's ministry. Also, book clubs and Bible studies.

9	Evangelism, we need to reach a community that may not be ready to cross those lines.
10	Providing opportunities of ministry together;
11	Serve days and hospitality ministries along with small groups provide great opportunities to interact between age groups.
12	Encounter SOD Nights Ablaze
13	Life group that we do is married couples but of any age. We have senior senior citizens and just married with new born babies. God's love and support abounds.
14	I can not think of any specific strategies that are specifically structured to blend the two groups. I
15	Not sure
16	Volunteer Opps Alpha
17	Mission Trips
18	Our church has integrated both groups into our Eldership and Deacons which gives both groups a voice. Our small group program is very diverse and seems to bring participants from all ages.
20	I believe the small groups that combine all age groups more by interest than by age is important in this factor.
21	1) Small Groups 2) Work projects 3) Social events
22	Our outreach and mission trips.
23	Our strategy is "find your pocket of people". This allows for like-minded, like-gifted and like-talented to connect and automatically the blend happens without age being a barrier
24	I never feel a difference. We all blend
25	life groups (small groups). They are not demographic in nature (some are) but we offer them to anyone and that allows people form all ages to join in the same group
26	Focus on bringing the groups together instead of always having separate age focused ministries. Jesus did not divide groups based on age. If are kingdom focused, I believe it will draw young and old alike.

28	Small groups, different serving opportunities, men's breakfast, woman's bible study
29	Smallgroups , Outreach and Community service's
30	I believe each ministry team tries to include someone from not only every appropriate age group, but every demographic
31	Worship Receiving of tithes and offerings Outreach ministry
34	Our online campus and digital broadcast ministries are a strong blend of multi-age engagement. The next steps we are exploring is how to increase engagement of the people with each other and not only with the broadcast/streaming service itself. Our goal there is to build community not only a crowd
35	Small groups are noticeably a key factor for that blending. They promote discipleship across those two generational demographics.
36	Men's and Women's Encounters Bible Studies Market Groups-common interest groups Service Groups Music ministry and teaching ministry
37	Worship team, Facilitating team, Bible studies, Service Groups, Life Groups, Children's Ministry
38	Men's group Small group Just starting baseball team
39	Various small groups, worship and fellowship.
41	Open small groups, Mentoring opportunities for Marriage, Life and Outreach searving. All Diverstiy is inportant and every Sunday you should see people on stage and in postion of authority living out God's purpose in their lives.
42	Men's and women's. Worship ministry Small groups
43	Encounters School of Discipleship Music Department Life Groups
44	Small groups can and do help. While age may be different, some of the issues that bring certain small groups together may be the same for individuals in each generation.
45	Working on projects together and sharing knowledge expertise help to draw us closer to each other.

46	By serving together on projects. School of discipleship, encounters, nights ablaze. Leadership seminars to name a few
48	Small groups, missions, serving
49	We don't talk about ages ever. We talk in "any season and stage of life" when promoting teams and groups. Basically "there is something for everyone"
50	Affinity small groups
51	Small groups help, as many of them are based on subject matter. Many of the subjects span age, and naturally lead to diversity.
52	Not sure
53	small groups
54	Our classes aren't age specific. There are youth and college groups but volunteering and outreaches help them build a bridge to each other.
55	Missions, Community Outreach, Serving - when service is offered to all it puts different age, gender, economic classes together with the same goal.
56	Women's Worship Support Groups Lunch Bunch
57	Summer Splash, Bible Studies, Crafting Groups, Worship Team
58	I am not aware of a specific program.
59	No specific ministries just recruiting and deploying a cross-section of ages.
60	The intentionality of having a multi generational worship gathering
61	Women's ministry is probably one of the most successful mix of ages. Men's Bible study Thursday a.m. and men's prayer breakfast also does this.

13. In your estimation, what areas of the church could use more input from church leadership to help foster generational camaraderie?

ResponseID	Response
1	s

2	I'm sure we have some gaps but overall most programs have a variety of ages. My only thought might be to have a younger couple on the Deacon board.
3	I really believe that Church on the Rise does a good job in this area.
4	It seems we do a good bit to actually create the striations in age. I cannot think of any specific programs aimed at connecting and building the family across the generations
5	None i can think of
6	I think that the young adults would benefit from more mentoring or accountability programs.
7	The Women's Ministry but we are working on that.
8	More organized activities for senior citizens...trips, etc.
9	There are always people willing to share, some that don't like to share and some that share too much. All areas need to be open for input with clear lines as to where to take it. This is not a suggestion box mentality. Individuals to team leaders, team leaders to ministry leaders, ministry leaders to coaches ...
10	not sure
11	There has been focus on this area in ministries, small groups and in the general congregation through church wide after service dinners. Perhaps there is an opportunity in the praise and worship ministry.
12	Both Men and Women Ministries
13	Relationships, Christian dating, pornography, physical abuse, 'men' being 'men' and their responsibilities regardless of age. There has to be a 'feeder' system from serving in young adults and being engaged in ministry and transitioning into the overall body of the church where folks can integrate freely and learn from one another,
14	I think the music department could use more input from church leadership to help foster generational camaraderie. They do a great job and I enjoy the music. However, a blend or a variety of style of Christian music may not be a bad idea.
15	All

16	Develop mentoring/discipleship programs
17	Not sure.
18	I think guest speakers from the different generations would help. Also, developing some activities that would bring the generations together, such as the youth helping the elderly, the elders teaching a craft, etc...
20	None/ Unknown
21	Our church leadership has been doing this through Women's ministry and Men's ministry. Our leadership is already involved in developing camaraderie.
22	I would like to see more active discipleship in mentoring the young adults. Those that are too old for youth ministries, but are not quite established in adulthood.
23	Hmmmm.... Not sure
24	Unknown
25	marketing and communication
26	Don't underestimate the power and impact that young members can bring to a church. I believe many times they are written off by some pastors.
28	Serving, projects around the church, outdoor events, picnics, hiking, theme decorating around the different age group areas around the church, going out and canvassing area near the church for special events, ministering to the homeless
29	New Generation involvement in serving
30	I wish they would actively encourage "adoption" of college students, particularly those away from home. Perhaps connecting families with young children that don't have solid local family support with older couples that could serve as surrogate grandparents. That might take some research.
31	I am sure it is possible to have more but I believe that Church on the Rise does a very good job of that already
34	Our church does well in bringing varied generations into leadership positions and then getting us all in the same room for discussions/staff meetings/etc... This helps voices to be heard. Perhaps we could see additional benefits if we could find ways to

	increase camaraderie at all levels if we could find ways to "cross-pollinate" departments and teams. Younger volunteers tend to gravitate towards youth ministries while older volunteers may gravitate towards being a greeter or usher. Outside of Sunday worship there is little opportunity for these volunteers to interact
35	Student ministries and Senior (we call torch bearers) ministries needs to promote more cross pollination.
36	I think that happens throughout the ministries and activities at Church on the Rise. EX: Deacons and Elders Boards have representation across the generational groups giving input into the decision-making process from across the board.
37	Women's Ministry
38	We just launched men's breakfast Great start
39	Community outreach, fellowship and effective communication between both youth and adult.
41	Small Group and Marriage Ministry.. Always seeking new ways to connect though outreach.
42	Youth Small groups
43	Women's Ministry Men's Ministry
44	Perhaps more specific small groups that purposefully blend the generations.
45	Because our new pastors are so young coming from that age group that's still under 40, they provide the impetus for working together
46	Probably the most senior generation..its my belief that the awareness and reaching out to the older generation is not there. It's becoming far fetched where the thought of probably visiting the shutin by the younger generation is not there.
48	Add additional opportunities for mentoring
49	Probably some older staff members. Our oldest is 50
50	Sorry, don't know.
51	I'm not sure if there is one area that is clearly lacking. I do think, just was we are purposeful in ensuring cultural, ethnic and racial diversity in all

	we do, the addition intentional age diversity should be an underlying theme.
52	Children's ministry
53	nothing
54	More presence in the several groups and classes showing interest in what they have to offer.
55	Honestly, our womens and mens groups I think struggle the most. It's the old crowd vs the younger crowd, but most don't overlap or mix.
56	Children's
57	No answer
58	There are some opportunities to serve but possibly a greater connection from the youth and college to serve on weekend gatherings.
59	I don't see this as an issue because people tend to gather with others with like-minded issues and concerns.
60	Encouraging the much older to be involved with a much younger.
61	No answer

14. What areas/programs in the church have more over-40 leadership?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	There are a few life groups that have a larger over 40 crowd.
3	Men's prayer huddle Maybe the Cell Groups Motorcycle Group Certain Bible Studies
4	Obviously the over 55 church group, it seems the outreach programs,
5	None i can really think of
6	I would say guest services.
7	Salvation Team, Bible Studies, Greeters
8	Compassion Cafe, teachers in preschool classes, go kids, deacons, leaders, coffee servers, greeters, gatekeepers, and probably more.

9	Care Ministry, Prayer Ministry, Teachers
10	Pantry/Careplace
11	Hospitality and prayer partners.
12	Women Ministry Board Members
13	Prayer teams, Gatekeepers, Growth groups, Outreach
14	I believe all with the exception of the youth ministry.
15	Not sure
16	Marriage
17	Not sure.
18	Up until recently, the Elder board and Deacons have been over 40, as with most ministry leaders. This is changing to be more balanced, and I am seeing positive results.
20	Unknown
21	Elders - Deacons
22	Not completely sure, but I would think our prayer ministry and guest services.
23	Ushers/Greeters (First Impressions)
24	First impressions. Alpha
25	I think the "over 40" is actually the minority.
26	Men's Ministry, Prayer Ministry
28	Pre service prayer, administration
29	Community service
30	Not sure
31	Elders Deacons Men's prayer Huddle
34	Our over 40 leadership primarily resides in executive ministry giving oversight to the full church. Other areas with over 40 leadership is ushers/greeters
35	The majority of ministries currently have leadership over 40. The exception would be elementary. More specifically newborn through 5th grade.

36	Most areas/programs in the church have more over-40 leadership with volunteer involvement from those both over-40 and under-40 groups. Probably the Youth Ministry would be the one exception as the Youth Pastor and his leaders naturally fall in the under-40 leadership.
37	Women's Ministry
38	40-50%
39	Our Torch Bearers group which comprises ages 40- 95 years and most of the ministries have over 40 leadership.
41	8:30 (in attendance) usher and security team, Pastoral care, Marriage Ministry.
42	Eldership Divorce care Military outreach Singles Torchbearers Security Prayer ministry
43	Women's Ministry Men Ministry Encounters SOD
44	I don't know everyones age. I don't tend to pay much attention to age, specifically close to the line in these generational groupings. I am not far from that line myself.
45	I think very few areas have that over 40 leadership. I think leadership is shared with the under 40 age group very well.
46	There is a mixture..there are vaious levels of leadership..it depends on which
48	Small groups, serving
49	Usher team, life group leaders
50	Senior group - divorce care
51	Probably areas such as bible study small groups (those that are reviewing the deeper, more intellectually challenging books, etc.), ushers, those that provide support to construction projects, etc.
52	Prayer team
53	n/a
54	Sunday classes, Singles class, Step in Ministry, Couples, Evangelism Explosion, Prayer, Spanish Ministry, Missions, Worship Team, Active Adults, Senior Care.

55	Ushers, greeters, women's, men's ministries, caregiver support groups, route 66, active adults
56	No Answer
57	Bible Studies
58	Worship, Sunday school, staff, greeters. I am not sure of any others.
59	We have a "classic service" of ministries for seniors. However, many baby boomers don't care to be pigeonholed into a senior adult ministry.
60	Worship, frontline
61	Senior care for caregivers and shut ins. Route 66 program for seniors. Hospital visitation. Active adults fellowship and events for seniors.

15. What areas/programs in the church have more under-40 leadership?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	Youth probably has the largest under 40 leadership.
3	Dance group The younger bible quiz group
4	Youth ministry, young adult, kids ministry
5	Serge Children Ministry
6	Youth and children's ministries, cafe, small groups leadership.
7	Worship team
8	Youth, book club leaders, Bible study leaders, go kids, preschooler and nursery teachers.
9	Kids, Teen and Young adults, Parking but not Greeting
10	Childrens ministry;
11	Praise and Worship, Children's, Cafe'
12	Men's Ministry Red Carpet Team Youth Ministries Young Adult Ministry Music Ministry
13	Children and young adult ministries. Technology areas

14	Only the youth ministry
15	Youth and Young Adults
16	Everything else
17	Not sure.
18	Our youth groups and some of the childrens program leaders. I beleive more over 40 leadership would be benficial in these groups, but still with an emphasis on under 40 leadership.
20	Youth/ Childcare
21	1) Youth Ministries 2) Office support
22	Children's ministry, youth, music ministries.
23	Family Life Ministry
24	Creative
25	creative arts
26	Youth ministry, nursery, Greeters and Audio/Video production
28	Children's Worship
29	Vibe Ministry / young adults
30	It seems that most do
31	Rise Youth Go Kids Dance
34	Under 40 leadership is more involved in youth/student ministries and Creative/production ministries
35	Only ministry that has leadership under 40, to my knowledge, is elementary (newborn through 5th grade) and our lead pastors.
36	Youth Ministry and Children's Ministry-The pastors over these ministries are under 40. The ministry team leaders in the Youth Ministry are mostly under 40. The ministry team leaders in the Children's Ministry fall within a more equal combination of over 40 and under 40 groups.
37	Children's Ministry
38	Children's Youth Music
39	Small groups

41	Everything else - Kids, Production, worship, Youth, Finance,
42	Men's Women's Youth Children's Music Drama
43	Music Department Assimilations
44	Previous answer applies. Most appear to be close to that generational line. Most are probably under it. I don't know that that area needs more.
45	I think in the area of worship teams we have more representation in the under 40 group.
46	Probably youth. Red carpet
48	Staff, worship
49	Kids, youth, creative teams, coffee team
50	Worship team, young married, children's church, youth programs
51	The worship team probably has the overall youngest average age.
52	Children's ministry and media
53	all
54	PC Kids, Youth, College
55	Youth including college
56	Children's Youth
57	Children's ministry
58	Children, youth, college
59	Youth, college, kids
60	Kids programs sixth grade and below
61	Children and preschool department.

16. When your church plants a new campus, is there usually a good representation of those under 40 and those older than 40 who help plant the new work?

ResponseID	Response
1	s

2	When we started Nashville, it was a great mix of over/under 40 and the congregation continues to be that way today.
3	There are both but more of the over 40 group
4	Yes
5	Yes..usually those older than 40
6	Yes, I believe so.
7	Yes
8	I really don't know.
9	Yes, God calls the old and the young and the obedient will follow.
10	Yes
11	Yes there is and all are encouraged to visit the church plant.
12	I am not sure of the equality of each age group
13	Have not witnessed this event. Sorry
14	I am not sure.
15	N/A
16	N/A
17	Yes.
18	My experiance has been the over 40 is the majority.
20	Yes
21	More over 40
22	I have limited experience with that, but I don't think there are as much people over 40 involved.
23	N/A
24	Yes
25	I would say it would be more under 40
26	Yes
28	Yes

29	Somewhat, we could do with more younger representation
30	I'm not sure
31	Probably more over 40 but those under 40 are also included
34	Whenever we pursue a new project all ages have a desire to step up and be involved
35	We have only done that one and no it was primarily the lead pastor, who at the time was over 40, and an elder couple, who were also over 40.
36	Yes
37	Yes, I believe so
38	No recent plants
39	The last church planted had under and over 40
41	Yes
42	Have not done that
43	Yes
44	Again, slight below that generational divide or slightly above. I believe (Newcastle) our newest plant has a good mixture.
45	We have not planted a new church.
46	There are a balance
48	Yes
49	Yes
50	yes
51	Currently a church plant is underway. It appears that there is a good representation of all age groups.
52	Yes
53	yes
54	Majority has 40
55	NA
56	Yes
57	I think so

58	I am not sure of those statistics.
59	Yes. However, church planting is usually successful by focusing on families with young children.
60	I don't know
61	No answer

17. In what ways do the members of the church in the under-40 group contribute to church programs?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	The under-40 group serves as teachers, greeters, singers, musicians, servers - anywhere they choose.
3	Their bible classes Their sports programs They work in the parking lot. They sometimes take the tithes and offerings
4	Creative, innovative and passionate when involved
5	They do not usually
6	They are there to minister, help out in many ways.
7	They help lead, volunteer, brain storm
8	Ushers, opening prayer, life group leaders, go kids interns, nursery workers, go kids helpers, parking attendants, and again probably more.
9	Worship, in fact church staff average age has been dropping, which may grow the church but it must remain relevant to the over 40 crowd.
10	They have more energy but are also limited because they need to take care of children.
11	Bring fresh ideas and energy. Willingness to learn and reach new members.
12	The under forty group is very active in various ministries, often ready to take on new projects and challenges.
13	All VIBE young adult activities from broward community college outreach to fashion shows to panel discussions to worship nights are all planned

	and executed by under 40. Music and Creative Arts Pastor is under 40 as well as Outreach, Couples, & singles, and kids Pastors.
14	From what I can tell, they contribute by serving but not in leadership capacity.
15	Not sure
16	Volunteer
17	Technology and energy.
18	Our under 40 groups are strong in outreach and facility support as well as the youth events.
20	More Youth/ childcare programs
21	1) Music 2) Performing Arts 3) Sports
22	They have several leadership positions.
23	All areas are populated by this age group. Well-covered
24	Our creative team really thrives in this
25	give a lot of ideas & input, new ways to do things
26	They are tireless volunteers who are willing to do any task without concern about position and/or status
28	They have the ability to relate more closely with the younger generations, they're a little more familiar with the current trends.
29	Serving
30	Most of the people I see involved in church leadership or volunteering are under 40
31	Bible Bowl Rise Youth Go Kids
34	The under 40 group tends to contribute with use if their gifts/abilities and through volunteer hours
35	They are probably the largest pool of volunteers.
36	Service group volunteers such as: Worship Team, Coffee Team, Greeter Team, Parking Lot Team, Teaching within the Children's Ministry Team Adult Bible Study teaching and facilitating
37	Their ideas, usually their whole family are involved, Serving

38	They are involved with home mission opportunities
39	Teaching the kids and youth. In Addition, they participate and contribute in all church programs.
41	Energy, vision, work, Outreach, Keep up with the Kids, Physical Labor, Execution of the Plan
42	Serving Organizing New ideas
43	The under 40 group are very active in leading in key areas: music, assimilations, red carpet, pr, youth ministry, kids ministry, young adult ministry and more
44	They are a part of all aspects. Creative, outreach, small group, leadership. They contribute to most things within the Church
45	They were involved in almost all areas
46	Serving, planning
48	Worship, small groups, leadership
49	They are most likely to help
50	youthful vigor and excitement
51	Overall, I see very little difference in the contributions of those over and those under 40.
52	Not sure
53	they are encouraged to get involved
54	Youth worship, computer graphics, video cameras, camps
55	They bring forth a fresh set of eyes. They bring excitement and energy.
56	Hosting on Sundays Childrens
57	Planning, volunteering
58	All staff meetings and pastoral staff has a strong percentage of under 40 group. Weekly meetings.
59	They are engaged in a lot of volunteerism and staff (as volunteers). Our kids, youth, college ministries.
60	Energy and not afraid to jump in
61	No answer

18. Are there changes you would like to see in those programs and the young adults' contribution? Please explain.

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	I'm sure that no matter the age, training for the ministry you are working in is crucial. Every area can always provide more training and that goes for any ministry in the church. We should never just place an under or over 40 person in any area without some type of training.
3	I am pleased at how my church uses them
4	More engagement in general
5	No. The program is fine as is
6	Yes, I would like to see the young adults working together with the 40 generation. And glean some knowledge and wisdom. I often see young adults at work who have great intentions, but they lack the maturity and wisdom needed to deal with unexpected situations.
7	The only negative I see is that in some cases the young adults aren't as committed or reliable.
8	Would really like to see more of them take an active role.
9	With most of the support Pastors under or near the Forty mark, it would be good to see just the opposite the older Staff Pastors brought in for announcement or offering. Keep the Sunday crowd connected across generational lines.
10	Young adult leaders need to be open to experience/knowledge of adults.
11	Not that I am aware of.
12	I would like to see the younger generation interact in some way with the older generations in tangible ways. Perhaps having a team of different age groups to visit the sick and shut-ins, helping the elderly with paying bills (writing checks and getting them in the mail) Reading to them. Likewise the older generation could be mentors to the young men and women. Giving Cooking lessons, sewing lessons, house cleaning tips, etc. Reading to toddlers and young children.

13	More young men needed and the celebration of any male that walks through the door.
14	I do not want to answer this question.
15	Young adult participation and leadership should be nurtured in all programs
16	No
17	Not that I am aware of.
18	I believe our church does a good job of blending the generations. I do believe developing some opportunities to integrate the groups would be beneficial.
20	No
21	Not at this time
22	I think that it would be beneficial for the young adults to invite the older people to co-lead these ministries. One can not ignore the treasure trove that life experience, and sadly most people don't reach that point until they are a little older. In my opinion, a lot of these young adults lack that life experience which makes them ill prepared to deal with certain situations. But many of adults don't volunteer for those positions because we generally get a sense that we are not wanted, needed, since there are plenty of the younger generation available.
23	No
24	No
25	The young adults are not very commitment heavy. I like that our church offers programs and areas that are low commitment but big impact.
26	I would like to continue to see more focus on teaching the Word of God and how it can be applied to the real situations that young adults are dealing with in today's world. Also, push back against the strong winds of moral relativism.
28	It seems like there is a huge emphasis on salvation and receiving Christ, and not much teaching on confession and repentance, I think that should change.
29	Transition from young adult ministries to adult ministries, (mentorship)

30	Not necessarily
31	Believe that there is a good mix of the ages
34	I think when young adults give of their hours and abilities they are giving quite a lot. They may not always have as much to give financially to advancement of programs, but they contribute so much in enthusiasm, and investment of self
35	The current small group change is one that we have been seeking for many years so I am very optimistic it will bring about further change. The discipleship of the leadership over those groups will be key.
36	Overall I think Church on the Rise does a great job involving members from the two age groups: Over 40 and Under 40 into all of our programs and ministries. It has been a part of the church from its beginning. It is our DNA.
37	If I had one complaint it would be commitment. I would like to see some of our younger people be more responsible in that regard.
38	If anything, continued evaluation of how the next generations are integrated into all leadership positions
39	Most changed have already been made
41	Our church is made up of lots of under 40 leaders which bring energy but not always wisdom.
42	I think it's just getting more young people involved. Our church has a lot of people serving but some are serving in multiple areas and can get burnt out
43	No. Those involved are very dedicated and bring new energy and ideas to the areas they are involved in,
44	No, Our Church seems to function well
45	I would like to see continued growth in their participation.
46	I think the young contributions are great.
48	Encourage mentor programs with older generations
49	They are all in
50	no

51	N/A
52	N/A
53	no
54	Yes. Given larger roles and expectations.
55	Yes. I would like to see more programs for both age groups to mix together. I think we cater to the older and the younger have not bought in.
56	No answer
57	Yes. I would like to see more of them in Bible Study.
58	No answer
59	No
60	Yes. Encouraging new help from the ones that bring kids. Specifically on Sundays.
61	No answer

**19. In your opinion, does the church cater to one age group more than the other?
Please explain.**

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	I do not believe that COTR caters to one age group over the other. I was under 40 when the church started and have worked in many areas of the church over the years. Now I still serve in the ladies ministry and bible studies and am constantly striving for more. It seems that is the culture of our church - to keep learning, to do more, to help others and serve God wholeheartedly.
3	Not at Church on the Rise
4	I think we look at the ends of the spectrum
5	No. It is a balanced situation
6	Yes, but that us because our church is trying to train the younger generation for leadership.
7	Absolutely Not!

8	I don't think so. I do think more needs to be done with active senior citizens.
9	With the SEU extension site. The growth and opportunities have made a turn to the younger side.
10	No
11	I would say more to the under-40. They are our future. College age people are the highest percentage of un-churched.
12	I feel that the focus is more on the youth than the seniors. There are more people involved in youth actives and more opportunities open to the youth and young adults and not so much or many to the seniors. Seniors are the forgotten generation.
13	Not that I have witnessed. Church has 3000 attendees so lots of ministry opportunities
14	I believe the church focus on both age groups. The programs are diverse.
15	No
16	No
17	No.
18	Prior to our new younger pastors (upper 30's) coming on board, our church did cater to the older generation. Now we are seeing an influx of under 40 attendees and leaders which is very healthy and encouraging.
20	No
21	Only in leadership "roles"
22	No, I don't
23	No
24	We really try to offer groups that fit all
25	no
26	I think churches sometimes cater to those who can contribute more financially
28	I think our church is working very hard to reach everyone, I think the older generation is struggling to fit in, the church has moved away from the traditional, hymns, more casual dress,

29	No ,
30	It looks like our church is led by people under 40 and appeals to people under 40. This is unusual in my church experience, but I believe it is a major factor in our unusual church growth.
31	I don't see that at Church on the Rise
34	I don't see or church cater to in specific to an age group, however, I could readily see that some of an older generation could feel they are not being catered to. Anytime a church communicates in the language of the present time, it could risk a sense of marginalization by those of an older generation. It's also likely to face a younger generation that will eventually have a perspective of what they may change when their time comes to lead
35	Yes, I feel that it always will depending on the lead pastors.
36	No
37	No, I don't think so
38	No
39	No
41	Sure.. Always looking to draw under 40 but not to the exclusion of the over 40. We are not in the 5 things church leadership focuses to do best.
42	We are definitely leaning more towards the 40 and under
43	Yes, I feel the church is focused on the next generation more so than others.
44	No, It appears to incorporate both groups. If your generational line was 55, this answer may be different.
45	I think in general the church does lean towards the under 40 age group. This is not a bad thing. I think it is healthy for the next generation to start to assume responsibilities and to grow the church. We should be becoming younger not older.
46	No
48	We do a great job with diversity of all areas

49	We try to hit the family and young family. Family does include people with any age of kids. We have lots of empty nesters too
50	no. I think the outreach is across age groups
51	I think our church does an exceptional job at both cultural, ethnic and racial diversity (which I am certain is purposeful) and age diversity (in which I am uncertain if this is purposeful as I have never discussed with church leadership)
52	No
53	no
54	No
55	Yes. We offer more for the older group of people than we do for the younger group.
56	No
57	No. We have classes and groups for infants through visitation to shut-ins (older people who are now in assisted living).
58	No. There is a large percentage of ministries that attend to the needs of both.
59	No. Peoples does a good job of reaching across section of people. If anything, we are expanding in upgrading our children's ministry.
60	Yes. We seem to be intentional about reaching kids.
61	We are trying to reach out to young families but also involve an honor our more seasoned church family.

20. Do you feel like your voice is considered in the church?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	Yes, I believe that if I have a concern or suggestion, I can go to Pastor Richard or Pastor Jason or any Deacon and express my concern or feelings and it would be heard without judgment and would be taken into consideration.
3	Oh yes I do

4	Yes
5	Yes.
6	I'd like to think so. :-)
7	Yes
8	Yes.
9	I don't believe the proper channels are in place at this time, but when given opportunities, I feel my input is valued. This comes at a time of recent transition from campuses and shifts in Pastorial roles.
10	yes, to some extent. Due to the size of the church it's hard to have a huge influence. However, in the individual ministires it is possible to pose advice;
11	Yes.
12	At times yes and at other times no.
13	"Considered" yes but I understand delegated authority so very easy for me to accept my Pastor's position and then ensure my attitude is in alignment as well.
14	Sometimes
15	Yes
16	Yes
17	Yes
18	Very much so.
20	Yes
21	Very much.
22	I'd like to think so
23	Yes
24	For sure
25	yes
26	Yes, we have a very open and welcoming environment.
28	Yes, I'm part of it, I try to serve and help as much as I can

29	Somewhat
30	In a small way. I believe our pastor has a wide range of people he consults and I am one of those, when he is confronted by an issue in my area of experience.
31	Oh yes it is.
34	Yes.
35	Yes
36	Yes
37	Absolutely!
38	Yes
39	Yes
41	Sure
42	Yes
43	In certain areas.
44	Absolutely. I have the ability to communicate to my pastor and other members of the Church.
45	Yes I do feel that my voice is heard that my opinions are taken into account.
46	Yes
48	Yes
49	Yes
50	yes
51	Yes, I feel highly valued
52	Not always
53	yes
54	No. I do not have enough experience.
55	Yes because I work here but if I didn't no because I'm not on the council or a large tither.
56	Yes
57	Yes

58	Yes. There is a good amount of trust given to be involved in our areas.
59	Sure
60	Not really. What I do here is more specialized so I wouldn't have a great input for other areas.
61	Yes

21. What do you and others your age like about your church?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	I'm probably not like everyone my age because I still feel like I belong with the under-40 crowd. I'm not one to just sit around so I would have to say the overall culture of COTR of accepting everyone and taking them as they are and letting God do the clean up is the biggest area that might separate the over/under 40 crowd. Over 40 has a tendency to be more regulated and want them to be or look better ahead of time, whereas the under 40 just takes them in. But COTR is always seeking ways to be better, find ways to engage the whole body of Christ, and how we can serve the community - that is large draw that many love about COTR.
3	It is not a "legalistic church" ALL people are welcome there ! All are invited to participate in some area
4	Our pastor is Biblical based, humble and genuine. This is felt through the staff
5	It is continuing to grow in the Lord. Many have confirmed their spiritual growth.
6	We love the way that the Word is preached. Love the worship and the small groups. We also like the programs, small groups and activities for our children.
7	The biblical teaching, worship, oppurtunities to serve, the people.
8	Love our Pastor and the fact that he is humble and God fearing. I like the opportunity to serve in various ways.

9	We are there because God is there. The Spirit is alive and His presence is real.
10	Focus on missions (growth and supporting other ministries)
11	There is something for everyone. If you want to serve there are enourmose opportunities. Our pastors are great communicators and are not afraid to deliver the gospel and speak to current events, race, political concerns and community conflict. The praise and worship team is amazing.
12	There is the opportunity to have a mid week day time service geared to seniors, along with a day time intercessory prayer group and Bible study that is open to all ages.
13	Truly the people. Big church but feels smaller every day. Access to the Pastoral staff if required. Living "life" with people. A praying church.
14	We like that our Church is God focused and Christ centered. We are a church that believes in prayer. Prayer is the foundation of everything we do.
15	Engaging worship, life giving teaching, focus on touching the world
16	Transparency and authenticity
17	I like that people genuinely want to make a difference in others lives. I like that the Church is very open about its financials and that the Church staff is not using offerings as a means to achieve personal wealth.
18	The inerrant Word of God is preached. Our youth programs are growing. We have a specific ministry for the older folks. And we have good outreach ministries.
20	The programs, the worship team, pastor.
21	1) The ministry especially 2) Music 3) The Campus environment
22	I like the way that the Word is preached, live the worship, and I love the fact that everything seems to be running so smoothly and efficiently.
23	Life-giving environment. Everyone is encouraged to "find their pocket" of people. Get involved and get connected and we have avenues for all ages
24	The sermons and worship

25	the authenticity, the transparency, it is staying up to date with culture but staying true to the message of Jesus. We are very people focused.
26	We love our Pastor and his authenticity and passion for God and helping others.
28	We are working hard to make it a place of worship, through all different areas. Worship the Lord Worship singing Worship tithing Worship in the word Community
29	Teaching , friendliness , Growth opportunities bonding and culture diversity
30	I can only speak for myself, but I like the worship experience, the scriptural preaching, the outreach miniseries both local and abroad, the evidence of meeting the spiritual need of our local community evidenced by the constant number of soul saving conversions. I liked the focus on bible study. I like that everything is a product of and is supported by prayer.
31	The church is "open" to ALL Everyone is encouraged to serve somewhere That the younger people are included
34	It's practical and relevant to daily living
35	It is currently in a state of change that focuses on a more young, contemporary feel.
36	The Life Groups The Teaching Ministry Outreach Opportunities Local and Foreign Missions Support
37	I like the many programs offered. I like that we are so diverse. from age to race
38	Multicultural Healthy multigenerational
39	Relationship and unity
41	Family, worship and prayer as core principle.
42	Our new pastors!! The strong foundation and eldership Not wavering from the truth of God's word Great worship Powerful word The great relationships
43	The love and inclusion, although it can be improved greatly.
44	I love my Church. It is the first Church in my 44 years that I truly love being at. It is built around acceptance of all, scripture based, and full of love.

	My pastor is honest, not pretentious, comes across as a human trying to live the best Christian life. I don't perfect from the pulpit, I need someone is trying to get to that Christ like perfection who when he makes mistakes, teaches from them, and helps me move forward. Someone who is sent as to teach with God at his side. I have that here.
45	I love the vitality and the dynamic praise and worship and preaching.
46	Unity and love and a sense of belonging
48	Inclusion and respect
49	Relevancy to "getting to next Tuesday
50	Being part of something that is growing.
51	We love the down-to-earth honesty and sincerity of our pastor, we love the mission to be a true family of Christ, we love the everything we do as a church is biblically-based and born out of love for a lost world.
52	Fellowship
53	fun friendly and family
54	It is a large congregation but it is an individual experience due to the efforts of this church to outreach.
55	We have great kids/youth programs. There are a lot of ways for our kids to get involved that are service minded.
56	Teaching, fellowship, active adults
57	The way you are loved and cared about from the time you walk in the door. You receive the Bible teaching that makes a difference in your life.
58	It is forward thinking and movement with building programs that are focusing on children's ministry as well as offering services and care for the elderly.
59	It is a great church with excellent evangelism and excellent ministry. The preaching is positive and has depth.
60	Multi generational
61	The energy, the excellent Bible teaching. The heart for outreach into the community.

22. Do you believe you will be a part of your church for many years to come?

ResponseID	Response
1	s
2	yes, I have no plans to go anywhere
3	I do
4	Yes
5	Yes for sure unless led otherwise by God
6	Yes, I believe so.
7	yes!!!
8	Definitely.
9	I love my church, but I am not yet ready to retire. That being said, after multiple years of Under Employment, if a time of opportunity arises, I would seek God for guidance.
10	Possibly although I have concerns about liberal influence in the church.
11	Yes, if the Lord is willing.
12	yes , if the Lord is willing.
13	Servants of the Lord. We go where he tells us. HOWEVER, if he decides to keep me in SoFlo rather than the North I will personally be elated. :-)
14	Yes, unless God say otherwise.
15	Yes
16	Yes
17	Yes
18	Yes.
20	Yes
21	Yes
22	I do
23	Yes
24	Yes

25	absolutely
26	yes
28	I hope so Serving in my church has changed my heart for the lord, it has made me want to be more like Christ,
29	yes
30	Yes
31	I believe so
34	Indeed
35	Yes
36	For as long as I live, or as long as my health allows. Then I will join the Live Stream group of participants of the Sunday A.M. services. I'm not expecting that to be the case in the near future, as I believe I still have another 15-20 years before that is necessary.
37	Yes!
38	Yes
39	Yes
41	Yes
42	Yes
43	Yes, If the Lord enables me. I am a full time staff member now.
44	Yes, hopefully the rest of my life
45	The Lord willing yes I do.
46	As long.as the Lord will have me
48	Yes
49	Yes
50	yes
51	yes
52	Yes
53	yes

54	Yes. Their hearts are truly in reaching for Jesus. They try all methods to ensure a personal relationship with Jesus.
55	Yes. I feel this is the place God has placed us. It's multigenerational so I feel we will have opportunities to connect for years to come since we are already older. I pray my kids will connect during and out of college.
56	Yes. Great leadership and passion for people.
57	Yes. I love the fellowship and family environment here. The teaching is amazing and Holy Spirit inspired. You are fed the Word of God and shown how to apply it.
58	Yes.
59	Yes. If I live that long.
60	Until God moves us, since I work here.
61	Yes. Why change? We have excellent Bible centered teaching, evangelistic heart. Like other church families but this is Home.

23. Do you invite young adults to your home?

Value	Count
Yes	37
Now	18
	55

24. Have you been a mentor to a young adult?

Value	Count
Yes	42
No	8
Not yet, but I plan on doing this in the near future.	5
	55

25. What three things could you personally do to engage the young adults in your church?

ResponseID	Response
1	e
2	I am always willing to assist in programs or events for the young adults. I can invite them over to my house and feed them (food always wins). I can go with them on a trip. I can just listen to them - call them by their name and be a part of their life.
3	Invite them to attend. Become a mentor Become a sponsor
4	Be intentional Seek out young people to pour into Challenge my own views to learn instead of assume
5	Be an example of Christ. Minister to them more Develop closer relationship with them
6	Take more of a mentoring role, host more activities at my house and pray for them regularly.
7	Invite them to join my family for different occasions. Plan age appropriate events through church. Pray over them
8	Take someone to lunch/coffee. Ask for help in my class. Invite them to serve at Compassion Cafe.
9	It is tough because my Ministry is mostly teaching and we have cut them off from Sunday School groups to better allow them to build the relationships needed to grow the church by having a young adult only class. Personally I can encourage younger people in their serving. Provide classes relevant across age lines. Be pleasant and engaging to people of all ages.
10	Be active in my small group Engage with young folks @ Pantry Keep engaging the ones I know
11	Invite them into the ministries in which I serve. Join them in small group. Show interest in what matters to them. Be available.
12	Introduce myself Ask about their need s and interest Be willing to listen
13	Topics for discussion regarding men and their purpose, passion, and desires. How to find a wife? Classes on 'before I say I do?' Teach young men

	how to ride dirt bikes and motorcycles; also playing soccer
14	Youth Sunday Mentor Program Care Ministry
15	Make myself more available to them Seek opportunities to learn from them Offer to be involved in their activities
16	Reach out Develop opportunities Be available
17	Making time to be available The rest would work itself out.
18	More mentorships. Teach in the youth programs. Develop a youth future leadership group.
20	Unknown
21	1) Connect Group 2) Lay Counseling 3) Mentoring

22	More mentoring, more social activities, more persuing (make a call or send a text to check up on them)
23	Build relationship by connecting on a Sunday then connecting during the week. Join where they're at versus looking for them to join where I'm at. It's a broad answer because it's different for everyone
24	Talk about our events
25	communicate in a way that speaks to them. offer community outreach days 1x1 personal mentorship programs
26	Be more intentional to get to know them outside of church Join a ministry that is focused on young adults Teach a relevant Bible-based class focused on young adults
28	Introduce myself. Ask for their help with something. Help them with something.
29	Mentorship, Life groups and serving in adult ministries
30	I could actively seek more mentor-like connections. We could invite them over to our home. I could get more involved in the college that our church operates.
31	Spend time with a male in a single mother home to help mentor Help pay for a trip for a youth that may not have money for it Invite to the Men's prayer huddle
34	I value being side by side with young adults whether in church on a ministry team or as I work with them in the marketplace. Igives opportunity to engage in discussion, learn from each other, and speak into their lives
35	By being more intentional in my interactions so as to facilitate a more personal relationship.
36	Make opportunities to pray with them. Encourage them to use their gifts and talents in the various ministries of the church. Provide counsel when opportunities arise.
37	Invite them to dinner, Host events, and invest money in their projects
38	Trust Jesus to help you no matter what your dealing with Put Jesus first Do what it takes to be a warrior

39	Mentor Encourage Follow-up
41	Continue to volunteer as Marriage Mentor, continue to open our home for VFLC, Small Group activates.
42	-More outreach to the college age group which we are starting this month -encourage more involvement and serving from my peers -pray
43	Actively interested in what they are doing Actively listen to them Spend time with them
44	Speak to them about my mistakes, let them know of my imperfections, let them know of my being forgiving, let them know I have walk in similar shoes at their age.
45	Mentoring, participating in their activities supporting their programs.
46	Be a listener, relationship, affirmation
48	Encourage Mentor Support
49	Mentor staff
50	Be more available and friendly. offer to team with them.
51	Typically, finding those with common interests is a good place to start. From there, friendship can lead to the more serious conversations regarding life, and how to approach challenges from a biblical standpoint - as well as passing on wisdom regarding everyday life decisions such as money, relationships, etc. The key is to first have a relationship with that person
52	Not sure
53	be open to needs more involved Available and willing
54	Get to know them personally, attend their events, volunteer to help.
55	1 Create a small group. 2 Invest in them personally. 3. Help in the ministries they are in.
56	1. Offer childcare for their children 2. Gather young couples to our home for an evening and provide childcare. 3. Take individual couples out to eat.
57	No answer

58	Be open to meet and listen as much or more than I talk. Support their ideas and offer opportunities for growth. Be patient as they process.
59	Recruit them. Inspire them. Challenge them.
60	Be there. Encouraged by showing at their events. Stay in touch.
61	Encourage them. Pray for them. Talk with them

26. With ten being the highest possible score, what three areas of your church score close to a ten?

ResponseID	Response
1	w
2	Children's Ministry Youth Ministry Community Service/Involvement
3	Inviting ALL people to come Inviting ALL to become active in the church Reaching out to people in the community whether they are a part of the church or not
4	Teaching/ preaching Worship Serving
5	Lifegroup
6	The preaching The hospitality ministry (really friendly and helpful to first time visitors) The punctuality.
7	Biblical teaching, Kids Ministry and Praise and Worship
8	Preaching..Friendliness..love for each other
9	Utilizing our young adults. Keeping an active youth program that is relevant to todays teens. Prioritizing the move of God at the Altar and engaging young and old to press in.
10	Support for Missions Local ministries - pantry and careplace Solid preaching
11	Leadership of our pastors through focus on Gods word and prayer. Praise and Worship. Community service and missionary support.
12	Prayer Messages (Pastoral) Praise and worship

13	Pastoral Leadership and team - never really prayed for my pastors before Encounter and School of Discipleship opportunities Revivals
14	Youth Ministry Encounter Ministry Sunday Morning Worship
15	Worship Missions Teaching
16	Sunday service Family life Volunteers
17	Openness 10 Giving/Outreach programs 10 Pastor's teachings from the pulpit 10
18	Preaching. Leadership Youth and children.
20	1. Worship 2. Kids Programs 3. Local Missions
21	Our Pastors and church leadership
22	Messages, worship, childcare
23	Preaching on Sunday Morning Family Life Ministries Creative Team
24	Kids sermon and worship
25	First impressions (what people see and feel when they walk in the door) connection through life groups discipleship (growth track, alpha, etc..)
26	Outreach Pastoral Staff Honoring God through service and excellence
28	Message Hospitality Attempting to build community Special events promotion
29	Discipleship, Growth groups and Outreach
30	Prayer, foreign outreach projects, volunteer involvement
31	1. Being available to the community 2. Being receptive to ALL races 3. Being financial responsible and not pressuring people to give but giving them what the Bible says about it
34	Preaching Kids ministries Creative Arts
35	With so many changes taking place I would say no ministry is close to a ten. The level of commitment is close to a ten in most areas.
36	Children's Ministry Youth Ministry Teaching
37	Children's Ministry, Worship and Sermons

38	Older generation are ministered Preaching the Word Preschool
39	Mostly all
41	Worship, Prayer, Family atmosphere.. Outreach is close
42	Women's ministry Children's Torchbearers
43	Prayer Preaching Worship
44	1. Acceptance 2. Openness 3. Giving
45	Preaching and teaching General participation Children's
46	Discipleship, worship, preaching and God's word
48	Giving Serving Diversity
49	Family life (kids, youth, parenting) Worship and sermon experience Culture of engaging and onboarding people to be a part of the family...they feel the intentions and we retain
50	Worship pulpit content and delivery
51	Foundation of sound biblical teaching (teaching and preaching) Education on leadership (leadership development) Humbly living out the talk (in-church and community outreach and ministry) Worship team (the most humble group of talented musicians with whom I've worked)
52	Choir
53	Worship Preaching Lobby Action
54	Outreach
55	teaching new guest
56	Worship Women's Preaching
57	Weekly message, kids, young moms, Bible Studies Missions VIP room for 1st-time attendees.
58	New believers discipleship.
59	Preaching. Music-worship and special programs. Assimilation of new people.
60	No answer.

61

Teaching of lead pastor. Biblical teaching an application. Caregiver support is gaining ground. Children, Youth, women's ministry.

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