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**BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL
WORSHIP MINISTRY**

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by

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BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL
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Abstract

Although literature exists concerning family ministry in the local church, there is little research that gives explicit insight into music and worship ministry's role in helping to strengthen families. Since worship is one of the ultimate functions of both the church and the family, this study integrates family ministry methodology with worship ministry methodology to discover theological sound and practical ways to build up the family through corporate worship, structured music programs, and community involvement. Guided by biblical and historical foundational teachings on church and family, this qualitative research study identifies perspectives that have not yet been explored and documented concerning the worship ministry of the local church and its role in helping struggling families by exploring existing literature, examining church ministries, and conducting worship leader interviews. The twenty-first century's post-Christian worldview has impacted the church and family negatively. The subjectivity of autonomous individualism directly opposes the universal truth found in the Bible. The church and its various ministries must find ways to effectively engage a hostile culture that undermines God's design for the family. As worship ministries discover methods to connect the generations within the church, they will, as a result, unify the church, bring healing to the family, and counter the effects of secular culture.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Defining worship can be difficult. In the church today, many people hear the word *worship*, and they immediately think of music. If asked, it is safe to say that the typical churchgoer would either define *worship* as the music used in a weekly corporate gathering at the church or the gathering itself. If further questioned, these people might acknowledge that *worship* goes beyond this narrow definition, but they would be hard-pressed to put it into words. Compounding the problem, there is often confusion within the ranks of church leadership. Zach Neese suggests:

Worship is a fog. Even pastors and worship leaders don't really understand it. And, sadly, most seem to be OK with that. My question is, if even the leaders don't fully understand worship, how can they expect to teach people about it? And if they do not teach people about worship, how can they expect people to participate in it? And if people do not engage in worship, how can we expect to invite the presence of God into our churches? And if we do not invite the presence of God into the Church, how can we expect His power to operate in people's lives? And if His power is not operating in people's lives, how can we expect to have anything other than a lifeless church? And if a church is lifeless, how can it change the world?¹

Whether or not the situation is as grim as Neese paints it, it is still essential for the worship leader to have a solid grasp of worshipping God. When the church in North America is struggling to connect with secular culture, a culture where the nuclear family is in disarray, vibrant and relevant worship ministries can play a vital role in the body of Christ fulfilling the Great Commission. The twenty-first-century worship leader must look beyond simply planning and implementing the music for the weekly corporate worship service and adopt a holistic vision for the local church that involves every ministry and all age groups.

¹ Zach Neese, *How to Worship a King: Prepare Your Heart. Prepare Your World. Prepare the Way.* (Southlake, TX: Gateway Create Publishing, 2012), ix.

Although the Bible provides examples of how corporate worship was practiced in the Old Testament, it remains relatively silent about worship practices in the New Testament when the Early Church first began to assemble together. Further, history presents an ever-evolving record of ministry through worship. Each generation, building on the traditions of previous generations, found ways to join the new with the old to engage new cultures and contemporary times. Therefore, it is imperative that the modern-day worship leader study this history, examine contemporary culture, and apply biblical principles for establishing and developing a worship ministry rooted in Christian heritage that also looks to the future to fulfill the essential purpose of the local church.

Background of Topic

Both the family and the church are foundational communal groups established by God. At the time of Creation, God established the family as the building block for society. He created man in His own image², and from that man, He crafted a wife to accompany and compliment him.³ From this union between man and woman, God brought forth children.⁴ Though man had sinned through his own free will and had broken his relationship with God, the Bible clarifies that the family unit is God's design and an example of how his image-bearers would share the joys and pains that are ubiquitous patterns of life. George Scipione writes, "The family is both a means and model of redemption. God almost always uses the family to bring redemption to his

² Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7.

³ Genesis 2:18-23.

⁴ Genesis 4:1-2.

people."⁵ People find their identity and purpose through the family, learn cooperation and conflict management, and celebrate victory and share defeat.⁶

Understanding what it means to be created in the image of God, *imago Dei*, is the first step toward discovering one's identity, purpose, and biblical understanding of worship. A.W. Tozer beautifully explains,

God made man to be like Him so that man could give more pleasure to God than all the other creatures. Only in man, as created by God, can God admire Himself. Man is the mirror image in which God looks to see Himself. Man is the reflection of the glory of God, which was the purpose and intention of God originally. Man's supreme function through all eternity is to reflect God's highest glory, and that God might look into the mirror called man and see His glory shining there. Through man, God could reflect His glory to all creation.⁷

This intrinsic function of man, reflecting God's glory back to both God himself and his creation, will be developed into an understanding of worship that encompasses all of life. The only way a person can come to this knowledge is for it to be shown to him. God planned for this revelation of biblical purpose to occur at home through the family structure. God's people, the Israelites, understood their responsibility to teach these truths to their children. It is a recurring theme throughout the Old Testament, but it is through the Shema, considered to be the Hebrew confession of faith, that a template was given for the generational passing of faith:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your

⁵ George C. Scipione, *The Battle for the Biblical Family*, 2nd Edition (Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2018), 62.

⁶ Ross Parsley, *Messy Church: A Multigenerational Mission for God's Family*, New edition (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2012), 26.

⁷ A. W. Tozer, *The Purpose of Man: Designed to Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2009), 43.

hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, NIV).⁸

God had given the Shema, the Ten Commandments,⁹ and other laws in the Pentateuch, but by the time Jesus came to earth, rules had become an anchor around the neck of the Jews. Religious leaders and scholars had traded a contrite and submissive relationship with God for a prideful, self-deceiving religion of legalism. From God's teaching, these keepers of the Law had divided the Law into 613 separate laws, "248 affirmative laws, one for every part of the human body, as they supposed, and 365 negative laws, one for each day of the year."¹⁰ These biblical scholars were quite proud of their knowledge and spent much of their time debating the importance of each Law. This legalistic tone enveloped the Hebrew culture in Jesus' time. When challenged by one of these men, of the letter, as to which was the greatest of all the commands, Jesus replied, "' Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. Furthermore, the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40). Pointing back to the Shema, Jesus confirms that these guidelines followed by Hebrew families for generations are the biblical foundation for spiritual formation.¹¹

The Shema facilitates the passing of faith from one generation to the next, but it also gives a simple yet all-encompassing definition of worship. People worship God by loving Him and loving others – created in his image to reflect his glory back to him and reflect his glory to

⁸ All scripture references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

⁹ Exodus 20:2-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-17.

¹⁰ John F. MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 25-28* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 338.

¹¹ Brian Haynes, *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today* (Loveland, CO: Group Pub. Inc, 2009), 34.

others. It is easy to see the natural relationship between generational discipleship and worship through this. It should be evident to any worship leader that their ministry is a catalyst for this process, and it cannot be accomplished without intergenerational engagement.

Along with the family, God established his church to share His redeeming message of love to the world. In Matthew 16, Jesus asks who his disciple Peter thought he was:

"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. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'" (Matthew 16:16-20).

Some people see this as Jesus' establishment of his Church.¹² Others look to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the promised helper, the Holy Spirit, fell upon the disciples, and they began preaching the gospel in foreign tongues, winning 3,000 people to salvation. Whichever viewpoint is correct, there should be no doubt that through his ministry, Jesus was teaching the disciples how to be the church when he was gone.¹³ After his resurrection and before his ascension into heaven, Jesus revealed the purpose of the Church. "Then Jesus came to them and said, '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 the Son and 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'" (Matthew 28:18-20).

¹² Gerald Bray, *The Church: A Theological and Historical Account* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 24.

¹³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Loyal: Discover the Excitement of Knowing and Serving the King of Glory*, Be Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1980), 111.

The Great Commission is a blueprint for spiritual formation through the Church, much like the Shema is for the family. Revisiting Jesus' words to Peter in Matthew 16, there may also be a correlation to worship discovered. Peter was only able to recognize who Jesus was through divine revelation.¹⁴ The importance of Jesus' words demonstrates that a proper understanding of Christ comes only through divine revelation.¹⁵ Simply put, worship is revelation and response, and through the church, just like the family, spiritual formation and worship go hand-in-hand. Joseph Hellerman points out, "It is hardly accidental that the New Testament writers chose the concept of family as the central social metaphor to describe the kind of interpersonal relationships that were to characterize those early Christian communities."¹⁶ As Jesus modeled with his disciples, the church looks a lot like a family.

Problem Statement

In the twenty-first century, it is evident that American culture is becoming more secular. Society's guiding principles, norms, and more are moving further and further away from the teachings of the Bible. The founding of the United States by theists and deists, influenced by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, was built upon moral absolutes that acknowledged a Creator who endowed all men with equal rights. They assumed that personal sacrifice and responsibility to their neighbor were required to maintain those rights. Transitioning from the eighteenth to nineteenth century, attitudes and beliefs became less influenced by a premodern worldview,

¹⁴ Matthew 16:17.

¹⁵ David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, Christ-Centered Exposition (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2013), 215.

¹⁶ Joseph H. Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision for Authentic Christian Community* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 6.

where authority, both secular and religious, were largely unquestioned,¹⁷ to modernism, where mystery and religion were exchanged for a faith placed in rationality and empiricism and their application through science and technology.¹⁸ From the twentieth to the twenty-first century, the movement has been a postmodern way of thinking where all things are questioned. According to Dennis McCallum,

Postmodernists believe that truth is created, not discovered. They think things like reason, rationality, and confidence in science are cultural biases. They contend that those who trust reason-and things based on reason, like science, Western education, and governmental structures-unknowingly act out their European cultural conditioning. This conditioning seeks to keep power in the hands of the social elite.¹⁹

James Sires writes, "According to postmodernism, nothing we think we know can be checked against reality as such... All language is a human construct. We cannot determine the 'truthfulness' of the language, only the usefulness."²⁰ Although clear evidence exists that counters the postmodern worldview, American youths are raised in a society where everything is debated. Truth is relative, and tolerance is offered for all ideas and beliefs except those claiming universal absolutes. While it was customary for past American generations to have had at least a little understanding of the teachings of the Christian Church, even if they were not regular churchgoers, it is not unusual for young people today, even older people, to not even be familiar with the basic principles of the Christian faith. James Emery White states, "The most foundational understanding of the culture of our Western world and the future that it portends is

¹⁷ Kurt Struckmeyer, "The Postmodern World," *Following Jesus* (blog), March 14, 2016, <https://followingjesus.org/the-postmodern-world/>.

¹⁸ Dennis McCallum, ed., *The Death of Truth: What's Wrong with Multiculturalism, the Rejection of Reason and the New Postmodern Diversity* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), 13.

¹⁹ McCallum, ed., *The Death of Truth*, 20.

²⁰ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 5th ed (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 223.

that it is increasingly post-Christian. By post-Christian, I do not mean non-Christian. I do not mean anti-Christian. I mean, we live in a country that is increasingly losing any memory of what it means even to *be* Christian."²¹ This should break the heart of every Christian, especially those who have a leadership position in the church, because it demonstrates a complete failure in fulfilling the Great Commission.

A study conducted by Pew Research Center in 2018 and 2019 found that "65 [percent] of American adults describe themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, down 12 percentage points over the past decade," while those who described themselves as religiously unaffiliated was rose from 17 percent in 2009 to 26 percent.²² This growing "religiously unaffiliated" has been given the moniker *nones*. White divides the *nones* into three categories: 1) "those who were raised totally outside of organized religion;" 2) "those who became unhappy with religion and left;" and 3) "those who never really engaged with religion in the first place, even though they were raised in a religious household."²³ This data is reflected in church attendance. Church growth expert Thom Rainer observed, "Eight out of ten of approximately 400,000 churches in the United States are declining or have plateaued,"²⁴ and fifteen years later, the situation has only worsened.

Reggie McNeal describes the issue: "The American culture no longer props up the church the way it did, no longer automatically accepts the church as a player at the table in public life, and can be downright hostile to the church's presence. The collapse I am detailing also involves

²¹ James Emery White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis: 25 New Realities Facing Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 19.

²² "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace" (Pew Research Center, October 17, 2019), 3.

²³ James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 25.

²⁴ Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

the realization that values of classic Christianity no longer dominate the way Americans behave."²⁵ Although these statistics look grim, showing a downturn for Christianity and an uptick for the *nones*, there is hope for this generation to be reached. A recent Gallup poll indicated that 92 percent of Americans believe in God, and that number has wavered very little over the past 70 years.²⁶ This generation may reject the church, but they are open to spirituality and the idea of a deity, however vague and unorthodox.

Clearly, these cultural shifts toward secularism result from spiritual warfare in a fallen world, but that does not absolve the Church of any blame, nor does it allow it to abdicate its responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission. McNeal explains:

People may be turned off to the church, but they are not turned off to Jesus. Jesus is popular. He still makes the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek* every year (generally around Easter). As I write these lines he's just come out on the cover of a prominent scientific journal. Church people sometimes get excited by this but fail to understand that people in the nonchurch culture don't associate Jesus with the church. In their mind, the church is a club for religious people where club members can celebrate their traditions and hang out with others who share common thinking and lifestyles. They do not automatically think of the church as championing the cause of poor people or healing the sick or serving people. These things they associate with Jesus.²⁷

The gospel's message has not lost its power to change lives, so the Christian community is not without blame in this secular drift. The church must look upwardly and inwardly as it seeks to discover its role in the cultural disconnect and identify areas that need to change to be salt and light in their communities.²⁸ Some questions need to be asked. Are there things that the church is doing that are contrary to biblical precedent? Are there methods or activities of the

²⁵ Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003). 5.

²⁶“More Than 9 in 10 Americans Continue to Believe in God,” Gallup.com, accessed August 12, 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/147887/Americans-Continue-Believe-God.aspx>.

²⁷ McNeal, *The Present Future*, 12.

²⁸ Matthew 5:13-16.

church that encourage secular thinking, if even inadvertently? Are there actions or attitudes within the church that isolates it from the secular world in a way that makes it irrelevant?

These questions should be of concern for worship leaders in today's church. Worship ministries must look beyond designing music services that only appeal to homogenous groups. Worship ministries must focus on edifying the church through corporate worship that motivates the congregants to lead lives of worship – lives that reflect God's glory to him and their neighbors – the other six days of the week. Effective worship ministries will encourage input and participation from every worshiper of every age.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative research aims to examine biblical principles and historical praxis for worship and worship ministry and assess their theological and philosophical significance. This study will review existing literature on the subjects of intergenerational worship and church ministry collaboration to expose and fill gaps in that literature. Further, the study observes the worship ministries of local churches, both age-segregated and intergenerational, to assess each approach's effectiveness in the internal engagement and external mission. The study will also examine the ministry systems of local churches to assess the interaction and cooperation between staff members and various ministries to offer a practical application for contemporary worship ministry as it pertains to better facilitating greater intergenerational engagement.

Significance of the Study

This study is vital for the twenty-first-century church and worship leaders to develop ministry models that follow biblical patterns that will, in turn, bring unity to the church. Jesus said, "If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:25). Too often,

churches allow their ministries to become silos, where each staff member becomes focused on his or her ministry. This is detrimental to the church's overall health and its effectiveness in carrying out its mission. Bringing the ministries together must be a focus of the worship minister if the church and its worship service are to participate from all age groups. If the local church is divided, it becomes virtually impossible to fulfill its mission. Creating corporate worship services and ministries that strategically bring the entire body of Christ together is the first step to reaching the secular culture. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

The church is not responsible for society's move toward secularism. The church can only act on what it has the power to change. McNeal notes, "The world does not want what the typical North American church has to offer. We can keep trying to get them to want what we have or start offering what they need. The North American church is not spiritual enough to reach our culture."²⁹ The church should take an honest look at itself to determine how its methodologies may have contributed to the cultural disconnect. There are indications that the church has lost focus on its purpose for existence and mission to the world. While not comprehensive, it could be argued that two major factors have helped create an ineffectual church that has little to no influence within its surrounding communities: age-segregated ministries and consumerism. These have created a kind of self-centered faith where the Christian life becomes all about personal growth and fulfilling one's own spiritual needs rather than the outward-focused concern for others described in the Great Commandment.

Age-segregated worship essentially was birthed out of initiatives, such as the Church Growth Movement, to help churches reach more people. Instead of building the kingdom of God, many church leaders became obsessed with building bigger and bigger congregations on huge

²⁹ McNeal, *The Present Future*, 27.

campuses. There is nothing wrong with church growth, churches should grow, but when the focus turns to statistical growth only, it is easy to see how that can cause a church to become inwardly focused. It is effortless for a church to identify with a building rather than the body of Christ. Bryan Haynes illustrates:

Beginning in the 1950s the role of the pastor changed from shepherd to growth strategist. Pastors and church leaders attended dozens of conferences and read hundreds of books designed to get more people inside the church facility on Sunday morning. There's measurable value in this; when people come to our churches, we're able to influence them for Christ. But the definition of success in ministry changed from an emphasis on spiritual formation to an emphasis on numeric growth. The church chose events as the preferred vehicle for spiritual formation.³⁰

In the same way, there is nothing inherently wrong with age-segregated ministries. Jason Brian Santos remarks that in previous generations, "it made perfect sense to pull our children and youth away from the corporate worshiping body in order to focus on the particular needs of each stage of faith development."³¹ There are certainly advantages to learning and fellowshiping within homogenous age groups. The danger occurs when the ministry is exclusively segregated by age. Intergenerational ministry is difficult. A leader must engage people with different physical abilities, levels of knowledge, energy and attention spans, and personal tastes and preferences. It is easier and more convenient to work with a group where the above qualities are more uniform. When we only offer our children and youth opportunities geared for their age, "we [remove] them from the corporate life of the church to be formed primarily in the peer-oriented, largely fun-and-games, snack-filled programming."³² Convenience and ease should not be the basis for ministry. When the different generations are always divided for the purpose of

³⁰ Haynes, *Shift*, 37.

³¹ Jason Brian Santos, *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches Through Intergenerational Ministry*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 2018), 43.

³² *Ibid.*, 44.

so-called "age-appropriateness, multiple churches, in essence, are being created. David writes, "One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4). That is not happening when the different age groups never cross paths. It is impossible to follow the pattern laid out in the Shema when ministry is generationally divided.

To be attractional and appeal to as many people as possible, churches have sought to offer worship services geared toward specific musical styles. This effort to give people what they want smacks of consumerism. Consumerism is a product of the twenty-first-century culture, and its effects have carried over into the church. Lavon Gray writes, "...it has significantly affected how most churches perceive and understand worship."³³ In the church, a consumer-driven methodology is most often displayed through the style of music utilized in corporate worship. Often churches will offer multiple services, each with its unique style of music that appeals to a specific demographic. While not always true, musical preference is usually tied to a specific age group. Like with the age-segregated ministries described above, consumerism becomes an obstacle to the whole church coming together for a joint mission and purpose.

This study has significance because it will explore ways to bridge the ministry gaps that currently divide the generations. Philosophy and methodology will cooperate with other ministries in the local church, which will be faithful to the biblical pattern of worship, both corporate and personal, and spiritual formation. When worship leaders provide comprehensive ministries that are generationally inclusive, the local church will make a considerable step toward unity within, which will result in a more significant impact on their surrounding communities.

³³ Frank Page and Lavon Gray, *Hungry for Worship: Challenges and Solutions for Today's Church* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2014), 37.

Research Questions

The American church must reconnect with culture to fulfill its mission. In many ways, the church has lost focus on its mission by becoming too inwardly focused. As a result, society has dismissed the church as irrelevant and even hypocritical. To combat both the real and perceived image of the church, worship leaders need to teach and demonstrate that both worship and spiritual formation is intended to be relational. Both endeavors demand a vertical relationship with God and horizontal relationships with others.

The following research questions will be answered in this study:

RQ 1: In what ways can the worship leader work with other ministries in the church to create holistic opportunities for intergenerational engagement for strengthening the nuclear family?

RQ2: What issues must be considered when designing corporate worship services that are relevant for multiple generations?

Mike Harland writes:

Creating a healthy worship culture means setting the value of worship as a spiritual discipline above any and all music preferences. It means shepherding a group of people in such a way that they genuinely care about each other. It means developing spiritual maturity of the congregation so that they think beyond templates and music styles.

It takes all generations to foster a healthy, disciple-making, legacy-building community of faith. Music becomes a tool that facilitates this process, but it is not, nor could it ever be, the key to holding a community of believers together.³⁴

Answers to these research questions can help guide worship leaders seeking to bring unity to the church by developing corporate worship services and supporting generationally diverse and inclusive ministries. There are many ministries in the church. Some of these

³⁴ Mike Harland, *Worship Essentials: Growing a Healthy Worship Ministry without Starting a War* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 121.

ministries are rightfully age-specific, and others depend on specific gifts and talents. However, worship is an activity that every believer and church member is called to do. The worship leader must accept his or her responsibility to create a worship ministry that casts a broad net for maximum intergenerational involvement.

Hypotheses

The following are the working hypotheses:

H1: Worship leaders can work with other ministries in the church to create holistic opportunities for intergenerational engagement for strengthening the nuclear family by providing training, offering program support, and developing leadership.

An effective worship ministry for the twenty-first century should provide teaching on worship, musical training for every age and all levels of proficiency, and opportunities for everyone to use their gifts to worship the Lord. Further, to create such a comprehensive church-wide ministry, the worship leader must work with other staff members within the church to develop worshipers and worship leaders from within the ministries that those staff members lead. For instance, the worship leader should work with the student pastor to identify and train musicians from the student ministry so that those ministries have adequate and active worship leadership. Finally, no ministry can be entirely successful if it is not reproducible. Through their involvement in training worship leaders and musicians within the various ministry age groups, the modern-day worship leader can create a church-wide worship leadership pipeline that includes all the generations. This training will provide worship leadership for every ministry event, guaranteeing a continuous cycle of new worshipers and leaders, consequently investing in the church's future.

H2: Issues that must be considered when designing corporate worship services that are relevant for multiple generations include intergenerational inclusion in planning and implementation, relationship development, and contextual innovation.

When Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman at the well in the Gospel of John, he told her that the kind of worshipers that the Father desired would worship him in Spirit and truth.³⁵ While there is debate over what Jesus meant, many scholars believe this speaks about worship's objective and subjective aspects. Warren Wiersbe suggests that "in truth" describes the objective side of worship. "If we don't submit to some kind of objective revelation, some Word from God, then our worship is ignorant and probably false."³⁶ People worship based on what God has revealed to us about himself. They do not worship a God of our own making, and we do not worship Him on our terms. "In spirit" describes the subjective side of worship. "If we know the truth but merely go through the outward motions of worship, our worship will be hypocritical and empty."³⁷ Authentic worship is grounded in truth and driven by the Spirit.

When creating intergenerational corporate worship, it must be built on this "spirit and truth" principle. Accomplishing this can be difficult because theological truth must be taught. Worship rooted in the truth of God's Word is of utmost importance. It requires time and energy. The subjective part is also important because God wants worship to be meaningful to us. The call to love him with all heart, soul, and mind is not a tepid, stone-faced response. It should touch the worshiper to the core. This means the elements of worship should connect with the congregation.

³⁵ John 4:23-24.

³⁶ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Real Worship: Playground, Battleground, or Holy Ground?*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 23.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

Additionally, this must be taught, for worshipers must learn that worship is not about them and their preferences.

Core Concepts

When most people hear the word *worship*, they immediately think of music or the weekly gatherings each week. There are many reasons for this limited and myopic view of worship. Much of the blame falls on the church and those in leadership. To find worship's role in strengthening the family, we must better understand what is involved in public and private worship.

While music can be used for worship, it is so much more. The late Warren Wiersbe gives this definition:

Worship is the believer's response of all that they are – mind, emotions, will, and body – to what God is and says and does. This response has its mystical side and subjective experience and its practical side and objective obedience to God's revealed will. Worship is a loving response that's balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better.³⁸

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament make it clear that worship is an all-encompassing endeavor in the life of a Christian. Kevin Navarro explains, "Worship is initiated by God who has revealed himself. Theology is discovering God, not inventing religion. Revelation tells us three bits of information: There is a God, we have rebelled against this God, and we need to be redeemed."³⁹ Worship is a pattern of revelation and response. God initiates as He reveals Himself. We worship as we respond to that revelation. "Worship is our response to what God has revealed about himself."⁴⁰

³⁸ Wiersbe, *Real Worship*, 26.

³⁹ Kevin J. Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 49.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

Definitions of Terms

Moral Therapeutic Deism: "a belief system that embraces the existence of a god who demands little more than to be nice, with the central goal of life to be happy and feel good about oneself."⁴¹

Dominant-Generation Ministry Philosophy: a possibly unintended situation where church body is made up heavily of one particular age group. This results from the church "takes on the popular cultural context, characteristics, and worldview" of one particular generation.⁴²

Family-Based Ministry Philosophy: all ministries are designed with the family in mind. These churches cater to only two generations: parents and their children.⁴³

Multigenerational Ministry Philosophy: This is probably the most common pattern found in churches. Most generations are represented within the body, but each generation is engaged in their own specific meeting places and ministries.⁴⁴

Intergenerational Ministry Philosophy: like the Multigenerational Ministry Philosophy, all generations are represented in the local church body; however, there is an intentional effort to involve all age groups in the life and activities of the church.⁴⁵

Silent Generation: the generation born between 1928 and 1945, characterized by being practical, patient, and loyal. They lived through the Great Depression and World War II.⁴⁶

⁴¹ White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 47.

⁴² Peter Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church: Understanding Congregations from WWII to www.com* (Littleton, CO: Mt. Sage Publishing, 2010), 25

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

Baby Boomers: the generation born between 1946 and 1964. They lived through the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the Space Race and, as a generation, are generally optimistic, driven, competitive, involved, value social and political change, and are committed to personal growth. In 2017, this was the largest generation in the United States.⁴⁷

Generation X: the generation born between 1965 and 1980. This generation has been referred to as the Buster generation because of the dramatic decline in the number of babies that were born.⁴⁸ They are typically seen as skeptical, self-reliant, value balance in work and life, and committed to diversity. They lived through Roe v. Wade, the advancement of the digital age, AIDS epidemic, and Persian Gulf War.⁴⁹

Millennials: the generation born between 1981 and 1987. Having lived through 911, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Columbine, and the election of the first African American president, Barack Obama, they are characterized by optimism, ambition, confidence, civic-mindedness, impatience, and tolerance.⁵⁰

Generation Z: the generation born starting in 1998. They are considered entrepreneurial, self-directed, compassionate, resourceful, determined, and transparent. They are the most culturally diverse generation.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Meredith Gould, *Transcending Generations: A Field Guide to Collaboration in Church* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2017), 19.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁸ Thom S. Rainer and Jess W. Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2011), 11.

⁴⁹ Gould, *Transcending*, 19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

Chapter Summary

The twenty-first-century North American church is in trouble. As the cultural worldview transitions from modernism to postmodernism, the church is losing its place of influence in the community. For most people, the church has no relevance to their lives and is often viewed as a judgmental collection of hypocrites. The post-Christian environment generally has no authentic understanding of what it means to be Christian. In general, most are open to exploring spirituality and constructing eclectic belief systems determined by what makes sense in their own opinions. Society is dictated by individual autonomism in which every individual is his or her authority. In this climate, all truths are valid as long as they do not claim to be absolute and infringe on the beliefs of another.

This subjective morality environment has devastating effects on both the nuclear family and the local church. Through relational interaction, God established these two primary social institutions to learn about identity, purpose, and even worship. The church must offer support for the family as both institutions seek to restore the true meaning of worship and to help direct spiritual formation as God designed it. This is impossible without a family-like environment where people from every age group are present and engaged.

Today's worship leader must understand their vital role in making these things happen. Seeing his or her responsibility beyond the planning and performing the weekly corporate worship service, the worship leader should have a vision for the entire church as it concerns the mission and the collaboration of its various ministries. The worship leader must work with all ministries to create intergenerational engagement so that church unity can be accomplished and the acts of worship and spiritual formation will be reproducible. Only when the body of Christ comes together – every part of the body – can the church hope to become relevant again.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The issues facing the twenty-first-century church are complex. In order to fully address the research questions posed in this study, a thorough review of existing literature on a wide range of topics is needed. This review of the literature is broken down into six areas of examination. The first area of literature review provides a reasonable snapshot of the reality of the modern church and family. This section provides a historical perspective of the church leading up to now and indicates specific challenges today. The second section explores literature concerning people's physiological, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs that affect beliefs and actions. Understanding the generations is the focus of the third section. While defining the various generations as identified in current scholarship, this portion of the review delves deeper into nuances that shape the thought and behavior of various age groups. In the fourth section, biblical and theological considerations are reviewed, and a biblical model for both the family and the church will be established. The fifth topic covered in this review is investigating current models and methodologies of ministry to the various ministries in the local church. The sixth and final section of this review combines the information revealed in the previous sections to provide a summary of the current scholarship concerning practices of intergenerational ministry as it pertains explicitly to worship ministry and corporate worship services in the local church. This summary of the literature review points out what is not known while identifying the literature gap concerning intergenerational worship ministry.

Challenges Facing the Family and the Church

By researching ways in which worship ministries can help build healthy families. God establishes both, and both are important to him. "The undeniable connection between the church

and the family, as well as the need to address the tremendous cultural and spiritual challenges affecting home life today, calls for vigilance among the body of Christ and its leaders."⁵² Just a few minutes watching the news on television, listening to it on one's car radio, or skimming over the headlines in the newspaper, and society appears to be doomed. Church publications are not any more encouraging. Shelves of books are written for church leaders proclaiming the church's demise, the exodus of young people from church life, the destruction of the nuclear family, and the collapse of society as a whole. Are things as bad as they seem? Is the twenty-first-century global culture the most godless civilization in history? Is there any hope at all?

Pondering these questions certainly takes on a different perspective in light of 2020. This year could undoubtedly earn the title "The Year of Murphy's Law" – where anything that could go wrong will. At the writing of the paper, the world is still facing the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, with nearly 1.5 million deaths⁵³ and economic devastation worldwide. Black Lives Matters demonstrations protesting police brutality against African Americans have, in many instances, spiraled into violent rioting and unlawful looting in several cities, causing civil unrest and division within the United States. Millions of acres have been destroyed by wildfires on the West Coast of the United States, destroying the homes of hundreds of thousands of people.⁵⁴ By the middle of November, the Atlantic Ocean produced its record-breaking twenty-ninth named storm of the 2020 hurricane season.⁵⁵ The United States also just completed

⁵² Chris Shirley, ed., *Family Ministry and the Church: A Leader's Guide for Ministry through Families* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2018), 9.

⁵³ "WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard," accessed November 24, 2020, <https://covid19.who.int>.

⁵⁴ Jackie Salo, "2020 Events so Far: Yep, These Major World Events All Happened This Year," *New York Post* (blog), August 14, 2020, <https://nypost.com/list/major-2020-events/>.

arguably the most contentious presidential election in its history. More than one person has tried to relate the events of 2020 with the "birth pains" of Jesus' return. Furthermore, this list only scratches the surface. This year will undoubtedly present new challenges and methodologies for the church to engage with the mission field.

Statistics abound to testify to the demise of both the church and the family. Brian Haynes laments the sadness he feels "for the cause of Christ in Western civilization and a strong belief that we would do well as church leaders to discern the direction of culture and anticipate its future ramifications."⁵⁶ He lists the following statistics to demonstrate the reason for concern:

Families—The United States has the highest divorce rate among Western countries.⁵⁷ Although this rate has remained stable for the last decade, the marriage rate continues to fall.⁵⁸ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, of the 73.7 million children younger than 18 in the United States, 67.8 percent live with married parents, 2.9 percent live with two unmarried parents, 25.8 percent live with one parent, and 3.5 percent live with no parent present.⁵⁹

Violence—The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that an estimated 905,000 children were victims of abuse and maltreatment in 2006.⁶⁰ An estimated 1,530 child fatalities resulting from abuse or neglect occurred that year.⁶¹ By the time the average child graduates from elementary school, he or she will have watched

⁵⁵ Jonathan Erdman, "30 Storms in a Record Hurricane Season; Here's How Many More Could Form," The Weather Channel, November 15, 2020, <https://weather.com/storms/hurricane/news/2020-11-10-2020-atlantic-hurricane-season-30-storms-how-many-more>.

⁵⁶ Haynes, *Shift*, 28.

⁵⁷ Andrew J. Cherlin, "American Marriage in the Early Twenty-First Century," *Marriage and Child Well-Being* 15, no. 2 (Fall 2005).

⁵⁸ "Births, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths," *National Vital Statistics Reports* 56, no. 12 (June 2007).

⁵⁹ "Families and Living Arrangements: 2007," *2007 Current Population Survey*, U. S. Census Bureau.

⁶⁰ "Child Maltreatment 2006," Chapter 3: Children; U.S Department of Health and Human Services.

⁶¹ "Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities," Child Welfare Information Gateway, The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

more than 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 other violent acts on television (the numbers are even higher when homes have cable television).⁶²

Teenage Turmoil—Every year in the U.S. almost 750,000 young women ages 15 to 19 get pregnant—an estimated one-third of these pregnancies end in abortion.⁶³ A 2005 survey of high school students found that 10.8 percent of girls and 4.2 percent of boys, grades 9 to 12, were forced to have sexual intercourse at some time in their lives.⁶⁴ In 2004 teen suicides increased at the highest rate in 15 years.⁶⁵ By the time teenagers are high school seniors, 38 percent of them have experimented with illegal drugs.⁶⁶

So why are these things occurring? These statistics are the result of shifts in cultural norms and worldviews. The irony of these progressive cultural "improvements" is that they are self-defeating. Society is sending mixed and confusing messages. An illogical paradox occurs where one person can be "canceled" – publicly shamed and sometimes even lose a job – because they do not say or believe what the majority deems correct while promoting a message denouncing cyberbullying. The Western culture of the twenty-first century is full of cognitive dissonance where actions do not necessarily support spoken words and vice versa. The confusion is detrimental to the well-being of the family and the individual.

Worldviews

According to James Sires a world view is:

A commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about

⁶² B.J. Bushman and L.R. Huesmann, "Effects of Televised Violence on Aggression," in *Handbook of Children and the Media* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001).

⁶³ "U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics," Guttmacher Institute (updated 2006).

⁶⁴ "Sexual Violence," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Spring 2008).

⁶⁵ "Suicide Trends Among Youth and Young Adults Aged 10-24 Years," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007).

⁶⁶ "Trends in the Prevalence of Marijuana, Cocaine, and Other Illegal Drug Use," *Youth Risk Behavior*, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2007); Haynes, *Shift*, 28-29

the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.⁶⁷

Ronald Nash adds, "In its simplest terms, a worldview is a set of beliefs about the most important issues in life."⁶⁸ A worldview is a philosophy that informs the way a person interprets life.

Worldviews instill biases. Differing worldviews explain how two different people can observe the same event and interpret it entirely differently. While worldview involves the mind, they are more thoroughly matters of the heart and soul. A person's worldview is often based on presuppositions and assumptions which may or may not be entirely true.⁶⁹ With that understanding, one's worldview is mainly influenced by the environment they are raised in and their experiences and relationships. While an individual's worldview may be described as the foundation on which they live, often it lies within one's subconscious. Individuals often are not even aware of their worldview. One's words and actions most clearly reveal worldview.⁷⁰

It is essential to understand that Christianity is a worldview, as are all other world religions. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not *conform to the pattern of this world*, but be *transformed by the renewing of your mind*. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:1-2, emphasis mine). This appears to be a clash between two worldviews – the "pattern of this world" and the transformative power of "proper worship."

Michael Craven explains: "Instead of continuing to interpret the universe and everything in it

⁶⁷ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 20.

⁶⁸ Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 16.

⁶⁹ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 20-21.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

from within yourself or with yourself as the ultimate point of reference (and by this, I am speaking about every aspect of life: politics, economics, education, vocation, science, philosophy, as well as ethics and morality), you now have to reinterpret everything you have previously understood under the direction and authority of God, from His perspective exclusively."⁷¹

The Bible is clear, "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end, it leads to death" (Proverbs 14:12). Further, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah,

"Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:7-9).

It should come as no surprise that secular culture and the church have often been at odds throughout history. For most scholars, secular worldviews are divided into pre-modernism, modernism, and postmodernism.

Pre-Modernism

At the risk of being obvious, the pre-modern era can be understood as the time before the modern era, extending through the Middle Ages and into the Enlightenment. The pre-modern man unquestionably accepted what authorities told him, both religious and secular. Pre-modern society completely trusted religion "to provide the answers to life's mysteries."⁷² Things that man did not understand in the natural world were deemed to be explainable through the supernatural.

⁷¹ S. Michael Craven, *Uncompromised Faith: Overcoming Our Culturalized Christianity* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009), 35-36.

⁷² Kurt Struckmeyer, "The Postmodern World," *Following Jesus* (blog), March 14, 2016, <https://followingjesus.org/the-postmodern-world/>.

This was the age of kings. Sovereign leaders had authority because supreme being gave their authority. In the pre-modern era, both Judaism and Christianity were born, and both the Old and New Testaments were written and accepted as authoritative.

Modernism

Modernism was ushered in with the Enlightenment. Man began to question authority, traditions, and previously accepted beliefs. "Modernists view the world, including humans, as one gigantic machine, placing their faith in rationality (the ability of humans to understand their world), empiricism (the belief that knowledge can only be gained through our senses), and in the application of rationality and empiricism through science and technology."⁷³ At first, at least, modernism did not completely dismiss God. Francis Schaeffer points out that early scientists did not view man and God as part of the machine, but that God was "a reasonable God, who had created a reasonable universe, and thus man, by use of reason, could find out the universe's form."⁷⁴ This belief that God was encouraging scientific discovery gave way to a deist philosophy, where God was impersonal and uninvolved with his creation. Sire writes, "Deism developed, some say, as an attempt to bring unity out of a chaos of theological and philosophical discussion which in the seventeenth century became bogged down in interminable quarrels over what began to seem even to the disputants like trivial questions."⁷⁵ In short, empiricism could not prove the existence of God, and supernatural revelation did not align with the modernist philosophy.

⁷³ McCallum, *The Death of Truth*, 13.

⁷⁴ Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1968), 42.

⁷⁵ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 47.

Postmodernism

The current worldview of Western culture is defined as postmodernism. "According to postmodernism, nothing we think we know can be checked against reality as such."⁷⁶ The individual determines truth and knowledge. What is "true" for one person may not be "true" for another. In essence, all "truths" are equally valid as long as they do not infringe upon the ability of another person's view of truth. According to Jim Leffel and Dennis McCallum, there are two cardinal sins in postmodern thinking: intolerance and objectivity. There is, of course, one exception to the first cardinal sin. The only thing that is not to be tolerated is fundamentalism. No one can make claim to absolute truths.⁷⁷ This obviously creates a problem for Christianity in today's postmodern culture.

A Brief Historical Review of the Church and Culture

In order to address the question posed earlier: "Is the twenty-first-century global culture the most godless civilization in history?" there must be an examination of the history of church engagement with the culture. Two particular periods are explored, the Early Church and the Reformation, because of the cultural pertinence to the research of this dissertation. Only in witnessing how the church existed and even thrived in its contemporaneous culture can an educated comparison be made with the modern-day church.

The Jewish culture that Jesus entered into was shaped by religious legalism and political oppression. There had been no authentic prophetic voice to the Jews between the prophet Malachi and the ministry of John the Baptist. This period from approximately 400 BC to the

⁷⁶ Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 223.

⁷⁷ McCallum, *The Death of Truth*, 200-201.

birth of Christ is often labeled the "silent years."⁷⁸ As Jesus began his ministry, he primarily faced opposition from religious sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees, Jesus' primary antagonists, were lay leaders who observed a complex system of rules in order to deem themselves righteous in the eyes of God. They were diligent in obeying the law and looked down on others whom they deemed lacking in the observance of their rules. They were the "power brokers" between the people and the ruling class. The Sadducees were part of the aristocracy in Jerusalem. Their origin and religious practices were a little more mysterious than the Pharisees. They only accepted the Pentateuch as authoritative Scripture. Above all, the Sadducees preferred the status quo. They were no ally to the Pharisees except when it came to having Jesus crucified.⁷⁹

These two groups represented the morally self-righteous, the politically powerful, and the financially secure. The Pharisees depended on their ritual, while the Sadducees trusted in their connections and riches. Neither truly trusted God. Jesus challenged the foundations on which they had built their lives. As Andy Stanley explains, "...new brands rarely sit well with those whose fortunes are tied to the old ones. Those who profit most from the status quo are least inclined to let it go."⁸⁰ It is easy to understand how Jesus presented a significant problem for these people.

Allen Ross writes, "Into the middle of this spiritual confusion stepped Jesus. Moreover, like the prophets of old, he rebuked false and hypocritical worship from the top down. He charged that many religious leaders had missed the spirit and purpose of worship and had

⁷⁸ Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd edition (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2016), chap. 2, sec. 1, Kindle.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, sec. 2.

⁸⁰ Andy Stanley, *Irresistible: Reclaiming the New That Jesus Unleashed for the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 22.

perverted it."⁸¹ As established in the introductory chapter of this research, it may be argued when the Christian church officially began, but there should be no debate that Jesus' life and ministry modeled how the church should worship and serve and engage with the culture. What Jesus taught and did was at odds with the religious establishment and the culture, but he handled them differently. He did not tread lightly when dealing with self-righteous and hypocritical rituals and those who practiced them, but he was loving and accepting of lowly sinners.

The average person of this day was trapped. They were oppressed by the Roman government and unable to live up to the moral expectations laid out by the religious leaders. He did not conform to the culture: He sought to transform it by confronting sin with love and offering hope to overcome through salvation. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:17). Jesus offered a new covenant that would "fulfill and replace the behavioral, sacrifice-based systems reflected in just about every religion of the ancient world."⁸² His movement and messages were perplexing and frustrating for the establishment in Jerusalem. "But it was not just his *new* message that made Jesus irresistible. It was Jesus himself. People who were nothing *like* him *liked* him. Furthermore, Jesus *liked* people who were nothing *like* him. Jesus invited unbelieving, misbehaving, troublemaking men and women to follow him and embrace something new - and they accepted his invitation."⁸³ These were the men and women into whom Jesus invested his ministry. They were witnesses of both the crucifixion and the resurrection. God instituted the Christian church through these early followers.

⁸¹ Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2006), 373.

⁸² Stanley, *Irresistible*, 23.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 21.

A miraculous event took place in the second chapter of Acts on the day of Pentecost. There is debate about whether this was when the church began, but it is generally agreed that this is the coming of the church age.⁸⁴ Jesus left his disciples in the previous chapter and returned to heaven. However, he promised that they would not be alone in continuing his work because he sent help through the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵ Jesus had been preparing them for the coming of the Holy Spirit⁸⁶, but until this event, Jesus' followers had not experienced the power of the Holy Spirit.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? (Acts 2:1-8)

There were Jews from every nation of the known world whose ancestors had been displaced over the previous centuries in Jerusalem to observe Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit fell on them, the disciples preached the gospel message, and the people heard these words in their language. Peter preached the Bible, and about three thousand believed and were baptized.⁸⁷ The church now expanded past Jerusalem as these Diaspora Jews returned to their own countries and shared Jesus' message and how they had been changed.

In the beginning, Christianity had a very Jewish feel. Early Christians in Jerusalem continued to observe the Jewish Festivals and worship in the temple and synagogues as this

⁸⁴ Elmer L. Towns and Vernon M. Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages: How the Great Awakenings Shape Evangelical Worship* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 47.

⁸⁵ see Acts 1:4-8. Jesus' words to his disciples before his ascension are a reminder of the charge he gave them in Matthew 28:18-20.

⁸⁶ See John 14:16-17.

⁸⁷ See Acts 2:40-41.

followed the pattern Jesus had modeled for them. They also met in homes and other places to worship as they observed new Christian rituals like communion and baptism. Soon, the disagreement over Jesus' claims made it impossible for the Christian Jews to worship with orthodox Jews.⁸⁸ These changes occurred in Jerusalem and the rest of the Roman Empire. Christianity spread from Diaspora Jews to the Gentiles. While the church was carried to the world by the Jews, by the time of the second century, very few Jews were still being converted. Add to that the hostility developed between Christianity and the synagogue; the church had become primarily Gentile.⁸⁹

Over its first three centuries of existence, the church's growth is hard to explain, naturally speaking. The Roman Empire persecuted Christians; the Jews did not Christians; communities in which Christians lived thought them peculiar, and the early church had no official Scripture to support their new faith. Karen Armstrong writes that in ways that confound historians, Christianity had become a powerful force in the culture by the third century in the face of incredible opposition.⁹⁰ Many scholars throughout history have tried to nail down how the church grew with no success. Undoubtedly, there was something about the faith of these Christians that made it compelling.⁹¹ Earle Cairns explains:

The rapid spread of Christianity, even during the periods of heaviest persecution, prove that indeed the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. During the apostolic period Christianity had been largely an urban movement. The number of active believers in Jerusalem after the Resurrection was estimated at approximately five hundred by Paul (1 Cor. 15:6). Pliny's letter proved that Christianity was strong in Asia Minor shortly after the beginning of the second century. During the first century it had been confined largely to the eastern section of the empire, with the Jews being given the first chance to accept

⁸⁸ Towns and Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 63-66.

⁸⁹ Bray, *The Church*, 70-71.

⁹⁰ Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*, Reprint edition (Anchor, 2015), 149.

⁹¹ Stanley, *Irresistible*, 20

Christianity as the gospel reached new cities. During the second century, expansion was rapid among the Greek-speaking Gentile population of the empire. The church in Alexandria became the chief Church of Egypt. Christians could be found in all parts of the empire by 200. The emphasis during the third century was on the spread of the gospel to the Latins of the western section of the empire. A powerful church with Carthage as its intellectual center grew up in North Africa. Estimates of the size of the church by 300 vary between 5 and 15 percent of the population of the empire, which was between 50 million and 75 million.⁹²

Religion was ubiquitous, salient, and diverse in the Roman Empire. Every aspect of life was connected to religion in some form in Greco-Roman culture. It was prevalent in the private lives of citizens during birth, death, marriage, and in the public spheres of politics and religion. Everywhere people went, something reminded them of some particular god that some characteristic or behavior was attributed. Furthermore, different countries and regions worshiped different gods. It was common practice that people would pay homage to gods of different areas without fidelity to their god. The idea of religious exclusivism, monotheism practiced by Jews and Christians was viewed as odd, if not ridiculous. It is also important to note that while religion was a significant part of this culture, many were skeptical of religion. Most often, these were the well-educated cultural elite.⁹³

Christians were often seen as aloof, secretive, and foreign, so people in these communities often believed the worst, especially when difficult times. Often, people blamed Christians when disasters or calamities happened because they refused to worship the various gods of the cultural tradition. Jews often stirred the pot by pointing out the differences between

⁹² Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1981), 93-94.

⁹³ Larry W. Hurtado, *At the Origins of Christian Worship: The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 8-19.

Jews and Christians and shedding doubt on Christians' loyalty to the government and community, which added to their status as a social pariah and increased persecution.⁹⁴

In 312, the Roman Emperor, Constantine, converted to Christianity. This event transformed the relationship between the state and the church. The legalization of Christianity in February 313 was an event that had profound implications for the church and world history. There was no reason why it should have made any difference to the church in purely theological terms. The church did not suddenly acquire a new doctrine, nor did it have to alter its structure or pattern of worship. The same beliefs, the same bishops, and the same patterns of devotion continued as before. The changes were a different order altogether, but their cumulative effect transformed. By the time they took root, the public face of Christianity had been altered beyond recognition, and whether we like it or not, the consequences of that transformation are with us to this day.⁹⁵

Historians and Bible scholars disagree on the sincerity of Constantine's conversion, as he maintained the title Pontifex Maximus, continued celebrating pagan rites, and continued his conspiratorial and murderous ways. While not making Christianity the empire's official religion, he did publicly favor it. He granted Christian clergy the same tax-exempt status as the pagan priest, did away with Christian executions by crucifixion and gladiator battles, invested a large amount of money in constructing church buildings, and made Sunday a public holiday in 321.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Everett Ferguson, *Church History: The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context*, Second edition, vol. Volume One: From Christ to the Pre-Reformation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 65.

⁹⁵ Bray, *The Church*, 91.

⁹⁶ Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, Third Edition (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 94.

"By 380, rewards for Christians had given way to penalties for non-Christians."⁹⁷ While Constantine did not make Christianity the state's official religion, the emperor Theodosius I did on February 28, 380. There were two generations in which Christianity and other religions and pagan practices had coexisted. However, after Theodosius issued his decree, pagan cults and temples were shunned and suppressed by the government. Even the Olympic Games were stopped.⁹⁸ Christians were now free to worship in the Roman Empire without the fear of persecution, but the church would forever be changed with its new preferred status and even compulsory standing. "As a result, the church grew more powerful politically, but weaker spiritually."⁹⁹

From about 500 to 1500, the church experienced its most significant growth for one thousand years. It is undoubtedly a good thing that the church grew, but was all the growth profitable growth? During this period, Islam was founded, leading to many conflicts between the two faiths and the division between the Western and Eastern Christian churches. Islam gained more power in the world, but so did the church. As often happens with power, corruption follows. The Middle Ages presented a "struggle between forces of evil that corrupted Christianity and forces of good that spread revival. Throughout the Middle Ages, the gospel was darkened in local churches, and the brightest lights shined in the monasteries of Europe."¹⁰⁰ One of these "bright lights" was Martin Luther.

For centuries, the Catholic Church had, in essence, controlled the people. In much of Europe, the government and the church supported and protected each other. The corporate

⁹⁷ Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 96.

⁹⁸ Bray, *The Church*, 91

⁹⁹ Towns and Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 86.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 83.

worship service, the mass, was not participatory but more of a performance. The Bible, and consequently the words, were spoken in Latin, which most of the population did not understand. For most of the Middle Ages, the songs of the mass utilized Latin lyrics and were performed by professional musicians. Before Martin Luther, there were men like John Wycliffe and John Hus who criticized the practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church. Both men and others like them were persecuted and eventually martyred by the church.¹⁰¹

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther publicly challenged the Catholic Church and the pope when he posted his ninety-five theses on the church's door in Wittenberg, Germany. While Protestant Christians celebrate this date as Reformation Day, there have been stirrings and cries of reform throughout Europe. Men like Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin in Switzerland and John Knox in Scotland were instrumental in bringing reform to the church and, as a result, worship.¹⁰² The Reformers rejected papal authority and the abuse of the Catholic Church and how it had perverted the teachings of the Bible. They were not interested in creating a new theology but wanted to develop a theology that resembled the teaching of the Early Church. That could not happen while the church, not the Bible, was the final authority. While there were distinct differences between the theology and philosophy of the various Reformers, they tended to agree on three fundamental principles: the absolute supremacy of the Divine Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice; justification by free grace through faith; the general priesthood of the laity."¹⁰³

In a way, the Reformation can be viewed as spiritual emancipation from the church's authority as men like Luther translated the Word of God into the vernacular for the common man. However, there were other changes to come through the sixteenth century. The

¹⁰¹ Towns and Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 90-91.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 103-105.

¹⁰³ Cairns, *Christianity through the Centuries*, 276.

geographical world changed as Columbus had discovered the New World just twenty-five years before Luther had taken his stand. Political changes took place, moving away from the universal state like the Roman Empire to smaller, more centralized nation-states. Social and economic shifts occurred as a growing class of capitalistic merchants replaced the medieval feudal noble.¹⁰⁴ The Reformation gave way to the Age of Enlightenment and the modern era.

As previously established, three predominant historical worldviews in history helped shape the thinking and behavior of people and the culture: pre-modernism, modernism, and postmodernism. All history before Jesus, the founding of his church, and through the Middle Ages may be viewed as pre-modern. Moving into the Age of Enlightenment, the Reformation is viewed as the modern era. These worldviews change at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Twenty-First-Century Culture

Reggie McNeal proclaims in his book, *The Present Future*, that the "world has ended:"

We are entering a new epoch of human history called the postmodern age. The postmodern world will demand a new church expression, just as did the rise of the modern world. The church took years to accommodate itself to the modern world that adopted Galileo's and Copernicus's view of the universe (deposing God from his fixed, top-of-the-heap position) and embraced Cartesian logic (pushing God to a diminishing domain of what could not be explained away by reasoning). The modern world assaulted God, shoving him further and further into the corner with its determination to drain all the mystery out of life and the universe. Everything that could be explained scientifically further diminished the realm of the spiritual.¹⁰⁵

It can be challenging to define the postmodern worldview today. It could be said that the postmodernist believes nothing and, at the same time, believes everything. For the twenty-first-century citizen, truth and knowledge are relative to the individual.

¹⁰⁴ Cairns, *Christianity through the Centuries*, 273-275.

¹⁰⁵ McNeal, *The Present Future*, 5-6.

The modern world separated religion from serious discussion. Things of science and religion must not be viewed as equal paths to the truth because only things that can be tested empirically can be considered absolute. Naturalism claims that nature is all there is. James Emery White separates *reductive naturalism* and *philosophical naturalism*. Because reality only consists of what can be tested, reductive naturalism eliminates the supernatural from what can be known.¹⁰⁶ Since the supernatural falls into the realm of opinion, it cannot be considered an authentic explanation of natural events. Philosophical naturalism rules out anything that is not encompassed by natural causes or laws. Therefore, nothing beyond what we observe brings order or reason to our existence. Life is accidental.¹⁰⁷ White rightly argues, "those who say science is concerned with facts while religion is simply a matter of opinion make the mistake of assuming scientific facts are not, themselves, interpreted."¹⁰⁸ Both science and religion are attempts to discover the truth.

Postmodernism further confuses truth and knowledge through the concept of *constructivism*. Constructivism states that knowledge is not discovered but instead invented or constructed by the individual. No one has the ultimate word on what is true. Truth is subjective; therefore, no person's truth is more significant than another person's truth. By itself, the constructivism philosophy is problematic but becomes worse when those in power can push their version of the truth, whether it has empirical evidence to support it.¹⁰⁹ Constructivism appears to be tolerant and open-minded yet closes the possibility of viewpoints that oppose this thinking.

¹⁰⁶ White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 40.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁰⁹ McCallum, ed., *The Death of Truth*, 99-100.

Technology

Few things have impacted the way twenty-first-century people live and think than the advancement of technology. The advent of radio and television forever changed how the world communicated and interacted. The twentieth-century philosopher and media guru observed and theorized about the impact of these new media. Even in the 1950s and 1960s, he had a firm grasp of its power and seemingly predicted communication technology's path. In 1964 he told an audience in New York: "There might come a day when we [will]...all have portable computers, about the size of a hearing aid, to help us mesh our personal experience with the experience of the great wired brain of the outer world."¹¹⁰ McLuhan spoke of a world marked by electronic interdependence, which he called the global village.¹¹¹

McLuhan's vision was accurate over half a century before the invention of the smartphone. In this new environment of global connectivity created by new electronic means, McLuhan astutely observed the changes new technologies have on society. Arthur Hunt explains: "We shape our technologies, and they shape us. [McLuhan] asserted that all technological innovations are extensions of our bodies." The advancement of technology has dramatically enhanced life around the world. However, in many areas, McLuhan's warnings have gone unheeded. Technology has, in many instances, become harmful because people have allowed it to shape their behavior too much. The devices have become the master, and the users have become the enslaved. As McLuhan foretold, man's electronic devices have become extensions of their bodies.

¹¹⁰ Philip Marchand, *Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and the Messenger* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), 180.

¹¹¹ Arthur W Hunt, *Surviving Technopolis: Essays on Finding Balance in Our New Man-Made Environments*, 2013, 1.

Technology influences how people think, believe, act, relate, and interact with other people. These conduits of electronic communication and engagement are twenty-four-hour, seven-day-per-week presence in the lives of twenty-first-century men. James Emery White calls this immersion in continual electronic communication supersaturation. Referencing a 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, he writes, "The average child between the age of eight to eighteen now spends practically every waking minute—except for the time in school—using a smartphone, computer, television or other electronic devices."¹¹² The first problem is that the message being sent out is biased and often untrue. This slanted information most often is wholeheartedly accepted as fact and goes unchecked. These messages are designed to shape individual thought and societal behavior as a whole, and these messages, aside from being untrue, are often immoral and ungodly.

Nevertheless, White also points out a second problem. He writes, "It is not that the communications we live with deceiving, broadcast a limiting ideology, emphasize sex and violence, convey diminished images of the good, the true, and the normal, corrode the quality of art, or reduce language—all of which they do. It is that they saturate our lives with the promise of meaning."¹¹³ It is meaning in life about which the church should most be concerned. The inability to have the discipline to be the master of this electronic domain leads to other issues. People are distracted. Phil Bowdle says that a person's average attention span is 8 seconds. Citing an article from the American Marketing Association, he writes, "The average person you communicate with is already seeing up to 10,000 branded messages every single day."¹¹⁴ The

¹¹² White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 135.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹¹⁴ Phil Bowdle, *Rethink Communication: A Playbook to Clarify and Communicate Everything in Your Church* (Los Angeles: Center for Church Communication, 2019), 49.

human mind cannot possibly process all of this information. This perpetual state of distraction keeps people from giving attention to things too critical. However, often this is not just a side effect of this information overload. It is on purpose.

Tony Reinke says we are addicted to our digital distractions. He says the more addicted people become to their digital devices like their phones, the less able they are to concentrate on work and the more susceptible to depression and anxiety. He writes that these distractions lure people into three areas of life. First, they help distract people from work and other pressures in life. Second, people use digital distractions to distance themselves from people. Indeed, devices like smartphones are a means of connection between people, but they can also serve as a wall to engage in the messiness of real-life interaction. Third, these digital distractions keep the mind constantly preoccupied to avoid silence and solitude, often leading to thoughts of eternity.¹¹⁵

Maggie Jackson writes:

The way we live is eroding our capacity for deep, sustained, perceptive attention—the building block of intimacy, wisdom, and cultural progress. Moreover, this disintegration may come at great cost to ourselves and to society. Put most simply, attention defines us and is the bedrock of society. Attention "is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought," wrote psychologist and philosopher William James in 1890.¹¹⁶

Tim Challies shows how dangerous this is: "With the ever-present distractions in our lives, we are quickly becoming a people of shallow thoughts, and shallow thoughts will lead to shallow living."¹¹⁷ Deep relationships and healthy relationships require deep thought, which requires the ability to focus. "We have become scanners rather than engagers, skimmers in place

¹¹⁵ Tony Reinke, *12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 41-45.

¹¹⁶ Maggie Jackson, *Distracted: Reclaiming Our Focus in a World of Lost Attention*, Reprint edition (Amherst, New York: Prometheus, 2018), 21.

¹¹⁷ Tim Challies, *The Next Story: Faith, Friends, Family, and the Digital World*, Expanded, Updated edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2015), 117.

of readers."¹¹⁸ These digital distractions bring isolation, and isolation diminishes the ability to relate to others in healthy ways. People can hide behind the screens and keyboards of their electronic devices, often in anonymity, and lose all sense of civility.

This supersaturation of technology affects how people relate to others; it also impacts the way individuals relate to themselves. White explains:

We tend to evaluate ourselves by how many fans we have on Facebook, how many followers we have on Twitter, and how much traffic we have for our blog. It is as though a new layer has been built between us and others—a new area that demonstrates our worth and standing. There is no longer just me and you and our families, schools, sports, or arts. There is now an online identity and presence that is as decisive to our sense of well-being as clothes, appearance, and wealth.¹¹⁹

Paradoxically, the same technology that brings the global village together through instantaneous communication also creates an environment for isolation. Combine personal isolation with moral relativism, and it should not come as no surprise that people no longer admire, respect, or fear authority. The deterioration of authority's place in society arises from a culture of autonomous individualism. "The value system of autonomous individualism maintains that each person is independent in terms of destiny and accountability. Ultimate moral authority is self-generated. In the end, we answer to no one but ourselves, for we are truly our own."¹²⁰ It is impossible to have vibrant relationships when it is acceptable for each individual to create their own rules based on what is right in their own eyes.

Family and Relationships

Twenty-first-century culture has had devastating effects on families. Unhealthy and broken families produce unhealthy and broken people. No relationship can be sustained and

¹¹⁸ Tim Challies, *The Next Story*, 127.

¹¹⁹ White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 143-44.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

nourished when the individuals engaged approach it with their own set of rules. This is true for families. Ross Parsley writes:

The family is where we are supposed to learn how to love deeply, fight fairly, share justly, work willingly, and survive during tough times. In families we are given our best opportunity to discover the basic building blocks of identity, history, heritage, meaning, and purpose. In a family we learn how to work hard, sort out injustice with siblings, and wrestle through disappointment with our parents. We learn expressions of love, humor, manners, and humility, all within the family context.¹²¹

The institution of marriage has lost its standing in society. Divorce has lost its social stigma and has become a normalized and accepted reality of the culture. With that said, divorce rates, which had soared in previous decades, have dropped in recent decades.¹²² At face value, this might seem encouraging, but the truth behind these lower figures is that people opt out of marriage. Cohabitation rates in the United States have almost doubled since 1990. Those who eventually marry are waiting much later in life than earlier generations to get married. As a result, families look different from the traditional nuclear family. Children not only live in single-parent homes, but they are more likely to have parents that are not married than they are parents who are divorced.¹²³

Not only has marriage lost its esteemed place in society, but it has lost its meaning. With the rapid push to the mainstream, homosexuality has come the move to extend marriage to same-sex couples. Throughout history, marriage has been defined in civilizations as "an exclusive, permanent union of a man and a woman," but now it has been broadened to the point that it has

¹²¹ Parsley, *Messy Church*, 26.

¹²² US Census Bureau, "U.S. Marriage and Divorce Rates by State: 2008 & 2018," The United States Census Bureau, accessed November 24, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/marriage-divorce-rates-by-state.html>.

¹²³ White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 93-95.

cheapened its sanctity and most certainly will have further adverse effects on our culture.¹²⁴ "The guiding motif of the modern world when it comes to marriage is why *not*. Marriage is increasingly seen as a mere social construct, and thus plastic."¹²⁵ Marriage, which God had ordained, has been turned asunder.

The distinction between men and women is blurred as marriage's definition is diminished but is threatened even further by today's debate regarding gender. It does not matter what physical body someone was born with; boys can decide they are girls, and girls can decide they are boys, or they can decide they are neither or even make up their gender. Instead of searching and embracing the identity the Creator has given man, he runs to create his own identity. If there is a god, he not only has been cruel by giving man unnatural sexual desires, but he is hateful enough to put him in the wrong body. Today, sex and gender are not the same. Sex is physical, while gender consists of "behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex."

The battle over the roles of the sexes is yet another issue that has added to the deconstruction the differences between men and women. God created man and women with equal value and equal dignity. However, the Bible teaches that they have differing roles. Men are not superior to women. However, God purposed men to take leadership in the home. This is evidenced in the order of creation,¹²⁶ man naming woman,¹²⁷ God holding Adam accountable for the original sin in his home,¹²⁸ and God's stated purpose for creating woman as a helper.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ David Platt, *Counter Culture* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 132.

¹²⁵ White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 95.

¹²⁶ See Genesis 2:7, 18-23.

¹²⁷ See Genesis 2:23.

¹²⁸ See Genesis 3:19

Further, Paul is more specific in his Epistles: Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Ephesians 5:21-26).

Additionally, in Colossians, Paul speaks of the nature of the husband/wife relationship. “Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them” (Colossians 3:18-19). The feminist movement, beginning in the 1960s, denied the differences ordained by God in these roles, explicitly searching for equality of the sexes on all levels. The blame cannot solely be placed on women alone. Men often lack the understanding that their role is not just to provide for their wife’s physical needs but also for her spiritual, emotional, and relational needs.¹³⁰ Instead of adhering to the biblical ideal, men and women err on the side of passivity or aggressiveness. Passive men become wimps, while passive women become doormats. Aggression is expressed as the tyrant for men and the usurper for women.¹³¹

God created us for relationships. However, modern culture has put the individual on a proverbial island. Postmodernism says there is no authority for absolute truth. Broken homes with uncertain familial roles further erase the existence of authority. James Emery White describes the result:

¹²⁹ See Genesis 2:18.

¹³⁰ Platt, *Counter Culture*, 144-145.

¹³¹ Grudem, *Countering the Claims of Evangelical*, 25.

The displacement of authority's role in culture flows from an increasing autonomous individualism. To be *autonomous* is to be independent. The value system of *autonomous individualism* maintains that each person is independent in terms of destiny and accountability. Ultimate moral authority is *self-generated*. In the end, we answer to no one but ourselves, for we are truly on our own. Our choices are solely ours, determined by our personal pleasure and not by any higher moral authority.¹³²

Joseph Hellerman contends that the individualism of American culture is very different from other global societies. He looks to modern psychotherapy in America and finds its methodology lacking. He observes: "In contrast to traditional forms of healing, modern psychiatry isolates the troubled person from his or her network of real-life relationships and tries to deal with emotional dysfunction in the artificial setting of professional patient-client relationship. Think about it. We detach hurting people *from* community in order to help them better function *in* community."¹³³ This certainly appears to be counterproductive.

Autonomous individualism is contrary to scriptural teaching. When people are conditioned to believe that life is all about them, it is difficult to avoid the materialistic mindset of consumerism. However, this is the culture in which the twenty-first-century church finds itself. It is challenging to get autonomous people to commit to any group, much less a church. The task is daunting, but Jesus charged the modern-day church, just as generations of believers that have gone before, to reach the community in which they live.¹³⁴

Needs of Individuals and Families

God's place in the twenty-first-century world appears shaky as society turns its back on him, but he is still working, and he still has a plan for his church to reach lost souls and broken

¹³² White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 82...

¹³³ Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family*, 29-30.

¹³⁴ Jimmy Myers, *Recalibrate: A New Measure for Family Ministry*, ed. Ron Hunter, Jr. (S.I.: Randall House, 2019), 76.

families. Many question the message of the gospel and the relevance of the church in their lives. The church must work to connect with the people and families in their communities and look for ways to meet their needs. Undoubtedly, the ultimate need is spiritual, but the church should not ignore other needs. Anne Graham Lotz writes:

From time to time within the church, a heated debate surfaces that on occasion has caused great division. In the words of Dr. E. V. Hill, the great pastor from Watts in Los Angeles, the debate can be summarized as, "Win 'em or feed 'em, feed 'em or win 'em?" In other words, what has priority within the church? Social activism or evangelism? Dr. Hill has elaborated from his personal experience that no meal in the world could ever have satisfied the starvation of his soul.¹³⁵

Jesus modeled a ministry that met physical needs as well as spiritual needs. When people are hungry or thirsty, in pain or sad, it can be difficult not to focus on their relief as the most pressing need. Other needs, possibly even more critical needs, may not even be considered. Many times, Jesus caused the blind to see or cure the leper before he addressed the sin. He fed the five thousand before he delivered the sermon. As Jesus healed the sick and preached the good news, many began to follow him. So much so that it became a problem for Jesus and his disciples at times. While he knew that most people were following him for selfish motives, he still had compassion for them.¹³⁶ Like Jesus, the church can meet community needs that open the door to engaging in conversations about eternity.

Broken families create broken people, but even families that attend church feel the impact of modern culture. These may be families that look like the traditional, biblical family, yet they suffer from the same pressures of families that do not necessarily have a connection to a local church. Philip Nation outlines some unhealthy patterns found in these homes. The first pattern is

¹³⁵ Anne Graham Lotz, *Just Give Me Jesus* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 137.

¹³⁶ Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: John*, vol. 4 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2014), 136.

Absentia. “Family members live with each other, but meaningful relationships are missing.”¹³⁷

Calendars filled with constant activities lead to parents and children rarely being in the same room physically. The lack of substantial time for meaningful emotional connection contributes to relational barriers within the family. As harmful as the physical and emotional absenteeism is, parents, abdicate the responsibility of discipleship to church leaders.¹³⁸

Hobbyism is the second pattern. Hobbyism is the practice of parental emphasis on excellence in academics, sports, or some other external activity. These families’ calendars witness this priority. These parents “create the worst kind of church attender – a consumer of religious goods and services rather than a servant of Christ and His mission.”¹³⁹ Hobbyism leads to Subjective Subject Syndrome. Because of overfilled schedules, there is never really any time to unwind. On the rare occasions when time allows families to have meaningful family dialogue, the conversation is typically kept to easy, surface subjects rather than deep, meaningful topics. Therefore, discussions about what is happening in the world or changing social norms in society are put off to a better time that never comes. Nothing of any substance, much less spiritual truth, is ever passed from parent to child.¹⁴⁰ “The world screams for the attention of undisciplined teenagers, and parents inadvertently teach kids to take the path of least resistance.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Philip Nation, *Recalibrate: A New Measure for Family Ministry*, ed. Ron Hunter, Jr. (Nashville, TN: Randall House, 2019), 8.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

The Needs of Individuals

When man lived in the garden, God provided for his every need. Food was abundant, and protection was constant. Most importantly, God provided His presence. There was nothing man lacked. There was nothing to distract him from God.¹⁴² It could be argued that man was not even aware of his needs. However, sin immediately revealed man's neediness. The first thing they realized was the fact that they were naked and needed clothes.¹⁴³ Immediate needs like food which God had given abundantly, now required hard work to fulfill.¹⁴⁴ Even worse, man's sin created a barrier to fulfilling their need for the Creator's presence as God banished them from the garden.¹⁴⁵

All men are needy. The problem is that men are most concerned about their physical needs like food or living. These legitimate needs must be met, but the further man moves away from the garden, the more he forgets his need for God. Nothing matters if the spiritual divide is not filled. However, meeting the needs that people find most pressing can eliminate the distraction that many have for their need for God.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow is considered to be psychology's ultimate authority on human motivation and potential. Maslow described a five-stage, on-going process in which people are first driven to meet their own basic, primal needs. He labeled these basic needs as Level I and Level II needs. Level I needs are physiological needs like food, water, and oxygen while level II

¹⁴² Vernon Whaley, *Called to Worship: The Biblical Foundations of Our Response to God's Call* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 20.

¹⁴³ Genesis 3:7.

¹⁴⁴ Genesis 3:17-19.

¹⁴⁵ Genesis 3:23-24.

needs concern safety and security like stability, certainty, freedom from threat, and routine. Once these basic needs are met people become motivated to fulfill psychosocial needs. Maslow labeled these psychosocial needs as Level III and Level IV needs. Social needs like love, belonging, acceptance are included in Level III while he divides esteem needs like respect, independence, and mastery into the fourth category. Finally, according to Maslow, people can only be motivated to achieve self-actualization through meeting Level V needs only after psychosocial needs are met.¹⁴⁶

Maslow wrote, "If all the needs are unsatisfied, and the physiological needs then dominate the organism, all other needs may become simply non-existent or be pushed into the background."¹⁴⁷ Given Jesus' actions in ministry, Maslow's observations are credible. The church should be concerned with helping individuals meet low-level needs, as Jesus did, so it can open the doors to helping them meet their most essential need – a relationship with Jesus. In fact, given all that has been discovered here, the church should have a great deal to say about the needs of identity, purpose, and belonging.

The Three Big Questions

In their book, *3 Big Questions that Change Every Teenager*, Kara Powell and Brad Griffin explain that churches today often try to answer questions the young people are not asking. Instead, they believe all questions teenagers are asking are intrinsically grounded in three basic questions: "Who am I, where do I fit, and what difference can I make?"¹⁴⁸ While this is especially true for young people, these are the same questions for which every man, woman, and

¹⁴⁶ Gould, *Transcending Generations*, 43-44.

¹⁴⁷ Abraham H. Maslow, *A Theory of Human Motivation* (Wilder Publications, 2018), 6.

¹⁴⁸ Kara Powell and Brad M. Griffin, *3 Big Questions That Change Every Teenager: Making the Most of Your Conversations and Connections* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2021), 35.

child has been born long to find the answer. The quest for identity (Who am I?), belonging (Where do I fit?), and purpose (What difference can I make?) are the issues for which the church has answers.

Remembering the creation of man discussed in the first chapter of this study, man was made in the image of God. Man's identity should be aligned with the truth that he is made in the likeness of God, first and foremost. Further, man's created purpose is also established in this account: to reflect God's glory to himself and others. However, in this fallen world, the spiritual battle exists as man strives to find his identity and purpose in every way but through God. Chasing identity through a career, relationships, money, possessions, hobbies, or several ways other than the Creator is an act of worship and the definition of idolatry.¹⁴⁹

Psychologists and sociologists study the impact of social interaction on the process of discovering identity. Many divide this into social identity and personal identity. Social identity consists of ascribed identity, like race and ethnicity and achieved identity, aspects of identity that are acquired due to behaviors or actions like becoming a parent or having a job title. Personal identity is defined as the conglomeration of all the traits that make up the individual self, like values, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and personality. The twenty-first-century world is bombarded with cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance occurs when the perceptions of self and reality collide. As a result, developing a secure and authentic view of self is hard to find.

In contrast, God offers a clear path to identity which is authentic. Eric Geiger writes:

While careers, relationships, possessions, and hobbies are important aspects of our daily lives, they do not last forever. While God breathes purpose and meaning into the details of our lives, when we seek our identity in places other than Christ, we find ourselves empty.

¹⁴⁹ G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 16-17.

So we have a choice. We can bounce from relationship to relationship, possession to possession, or career to career in a frustrating quest for our identity. Or we can embrace God's invitation to lose our lives and find our identity in Him.¹⁵⁰

The identity that man had lost sight of through original sin is brought back into focus through the work of Jesus Christ. Paul proclaims, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) However, man spends his life trying to find his identity in the things of this world by fulfilling his wants and needs with temporary things. Jesus said, "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul" (Mark 8:35-36)? The pursuit of identity and purpose should be a focal point of the church.

Twenty-first-century culture's assault on individuals and families has birthed what John Sowers terms a "fatherless generation." He expounds:

We are a rejected generation, left behind to pick up the fragile pieces of our broken existence. Confused, we grope in the dark for meaning, purpose, and hope. Alone, we hide behind machine and computer screen, projecting voiceless signals out into the oblivion. We grasp for anything that feels like acceptance but are too afraid to open our hearts and embrace it for it ourselves. We are a generation displaced. A refugee generation, shuffling from one shelter to the next in search of belonging. We are a generation that desperately wants to be found, a generation that desperately wants to be home.¹⁵¹

God designed humanity for relationships. People have an innate desire to feel like they belong somewhere or to something outside themselves. Because of this, "belongingness drives us to seek new relationships when existing ones end."¹⁵² In order to fully satisfy this need for belonging, interactions need to be pleasant or positive, personal and meaningful, provide mutual

¹⁵⁰ Eric Geiger, *Identity: Who You Are in Christ* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2008), 8.

¹⁵¹ John Sowers, *Fatherless Generation: Redeeming the Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 22-23.

¹⁵² Gould, *Transcending Generations*, 53.

care, concern, and validation. For an individual to feel like they truly belong in a group or community, he or she must be able to establish a connection with that group or community, feel accepted by that group or community, and feel like they can participate as a valuable and contributing member of that group or community.¹⁵³

The church can and should be a vehicle for creating a sense of belonging for people. Ross Parsley explains that the church cannot be a place where we feel like visitors, or somewhere we are afraid to allow others to see our messes. It is got to feel like home."¹⁵⁴ Perfection is not a requirement for creating a sense of belonging. Just as families are imperfect, so are churches. It is not only useless to pretend to be perfect but counterproductive. People do not want to be a part of something manufactured or inauthentic. "Openness and honesty are what is required if the church is to be viable for the next generation. Furthermore, make no mistake, they are watching, listening, and helping for the kind of vulnerability and acceptance that will challenge them to be part of an imperfect yet loving church family."¹⁵⁵ The church, as Jesus intended, is a place where the need for belonging can be met.

However, even more important than belonging to a family of believers in a local church is the church's ability to point the way to God the Father. People need to know that even though earthly fathers are imperfect and make mistakes, and though earthly fathers will disappoint and maybe abandon, a perfect Father is always there. "The Bible clarifies that there is one who hears

¹⁵³ Ibid., 55.

¹⁵⁴ Parsley, *Messy Church*, 30.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 31.

and acts on behalf of those who have been abandoned, a Father who longs to father a rejected generation."¹⁵⁶ Man does not have to live like an orphan. God is the perfect Father.

Defining Generations

God's design for the church and the family was to be multigenerational in composition and intergenerational in function. This has always been a challenge for churches throughout history as generations pass and new generations come of age over time. New generations often experience a world that is much different from previous generations. Progress brings expansion of knowledge, advancement in technology, and new expressions of creativity in art, which influence how new generations think and act. If the church is effective in ministering intergenerationally, it is vital to understand the behavior and think of the different generations it is serving.

Many churches often think that if they offer ministries or activities for every age group, they are intergenerational. "However, hosting multiple generations under one roof is not the same as being intentionally intergenerational and finding unity and purpose in the body of Christ."¹⁵⁷ Intergenerational ministry can only happen through careful, deliberate efforts to motivate and provide opportunities for all generations to engage with one another.

Generational Cohorts

To better understand the different generations, social scientists look to generational theory, based on the work of William Strauss and Neil Howe, which divides people into age groups called generational cohorts. Members within each cohort tend to exhibit the same general

¹⁵⁶ Sowers, *Fatherless Generation*, 82.

¹⁵⁷ Lynn Barger Elliott, *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches Through Intergenerational Ministry*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 2018), 74.

attributes and characteristics, or “peer personality,”¹⁵⁸ which produce similar beliefs and behaviors. Generational cohorts are identified by the year they were born and grouped with others born within about twenty years.¹⁵⁹ As a theory, defining these generations can be more of an art than a science.¹⁶⁰ While there is general agreement on the defining qualities of each generational cohort, there are minor differences in the year generations begin and end, depending on the study. Further, with the latest generations, like Millennials and Generation Z, there is a further discrepancy in how researchers define their birth ranges.¹⁶¹ Obviously, the newer the generation, the less time researchers have had to observe defining characteristics and the more room for speculation.

The environment shapes personal development. "The world into which one comes of age shapes hopes and expectations." Individuals of every generation are influenced by the events they experienced and the innovations that came about during their youth.¹⁶² Clearly, not every individual exhibits the characteristic of the generational cohort in which they are grouped. One must use caution in relying too heavily on stereotypes. However, understanding each generational cohort's general tendencies and characteristics can be beneficial. Church leaders desiring to engage their congregations intergenerationally can benefit from this data. In most multigenerational churches today, it is safe to state that there are six generations represented

¹⁵⁸ William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 63-64.

¹⁵⁹ Gould, *Transcending Generations*, 18.

¹⁶⁰ Elliot, *InterGenerate*, 76.

¹⁶¹ Gould, *Transcending Generations*, 18.

¹⁶² Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 76.

without opposition: the Greatest Generation, the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z.¹⁶³

Greatest Generation

Born between 1901 and 1924 and consisting of 63 million members,¹⁶⁴ this generation is slowly passing away. Also referred to as the G.I. Generation, the oldest members of this generation were children during World War I. This generation witnessed dramatic change as the prosperity of the Roaring Twenties gave way to the Great Depression in 1929. There were no government welfare programs, and millions of people struggled to feed their families. These experiences left the entire generation "cautious, thrifty, and focused on saving."¹⁶⁵

Those born in the latter part of this cohort came of age just in time to serve in World War II.¹⁶⁶ The lessons of patience and sacrifice learned during the Great Depression would serve the Greatest Generation well as they fought the war.¹⁶⁷ Elliot writes, "These men and women fought not for fame or recognition, but because it was 'the right thing to do.'"¹⁶⁸ Defeating evil in the world, such as Nazi Germany, became a unifying purpose for this generation, and victory in the war produced optimism in the future and confidence in the government, which not only

¹⁶³ This study uses the Strauss and Howe generational birth ranges. See William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991).

¹⁶⁴ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 33.

¹⁶⁵ Haydn Shaw, *Generational IQ: Christianity Isn't Dying, Millennials Aren't the Problem, And the Future Is Bright* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 27.

¹⁶⁶ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 77.

¹⁶⁷ Shaw, *Generational IQ*, 28.

¹⁶⁸ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 77

conducted a successful war plan but took care of those who fought in the war as it rebuilt the economy.¹⁶⁹

The local community was essential to the Greatest Generation. “It was the source of strength, inspiration, affirmation, and a place worthy of time and investment. This strong sense of community translated into a positive view toward the institutional church.”¹⁷⁰ The church reinforced the values of the generation. People joined the church because it was the “right thing to do.” The church was seen as an integral part of the community.

Technologically speaking, inventions like the automobile and the airplane changed the way the Greatest Generations viewed the concept of speed and travel locally and globally.¹⁷¹ Baseball was the national pastime, while silent movies added sound to become “talkies.” However, this was the Golden Age of radio, and radio was king. Listeners engaged their imagination as families gathered around the radio to listen to adventure, comedy, and suspense programs in their living rooms.

Silent Generation

The next generation was born between 1925 and 1942. Smaller than the previous generation, it has just under 50 million members.¹⁷² Born during or shortly after the Great Depression, this generation is characterized by loyalty, patriotism, and hard work. Because this generation came to age in a time of prosperity, some have called them the Builder Generation.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 77.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Menconi, *Intergenerational Church*, 35.

¹⁷² Ibid., 44.

¹⁷³ Gould, *Transcending Generations*, 20.

However, seemingly living in the shadow of the previous generation, the moniker silent has stuck. It is interesting to note that no member of this generation served as President of the United States.¹⁷⁴

Like the Greatest Generation before, the Silent Generation shared a value for the community. Their loyalty and work ethic gave way to volunteerism. They found comfort in the status quo, which led to little motivation to change the way things were. This generation also generally has a positive view of the local church.¹⁷⁵ These shared values are why Hayden Shaw groups the Greatest Generation and the Silent Generation together as Traditionalists.¹⁷⁶

“As the Silent Generation was coming of age, technology began to change the way Americans lived. In addition to TV, transistor radios helped to transform the lives of Silents. Now their music became portable and personal.”¹⁷⁷ Rock and Roll was born from this generation, which would change the world of music for generations to come.¹⁷⁸

Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomer Generation, born between 1943 and 1960, exploded on the American scene, boasting 78 million members.¹⁷⁹ “Most Boomers grew up during the optimistic postwar years of the 1950s and early 1960s as America was on a roll. The economy was growing; there was little unemployment; America was becoming a superpower; family life was generally happy

¹⁷⁴ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 78.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Shaw, *Generational IQ*, 25-42.

¹⁷⁷ Menconi, *Intergenerational Church*, 46.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 47.

¹⁷⁹ Menconi, *Intergenerational Church*., 57.

and simple.”¹⁸⁰ However, as this generation came of age, this positive outlook shifted as the nation witnessed the assassination of its president, John F. Kennedy, the upheaval of the Civil Rights Movement, and the forced participation in the seemingly misguided and unpopular Vietnam War. The Boomers lost faith in their cultural institutions.

The idea of a community also changed for Boomers. Boomers desired experiences. They no longer saw community as a location and the people in its vicinity, but community became any group of people who sought to share the same type of experiences they desired.¹⁸¹ Shaw calls this a “shift from sacrifice to self.”¹⁸² This thinking impacted the way Boomers saw the church. The church became another commodity to “shopped” for that would offer the experience they desired. The lack of trust in institutions resulted in a decline in commitment to the church and, therefore, church membership.¹⁸³

The Boomer Generation was probably most impacted by television. It would be difficult to find a Boomer who remembers the world without television.¹⁸⁴ As children, Boomers were met on TV with Howdy Doody, Captain Kangaroo, the Mickey Mouse Club, and the Mouseketeers. The ideal family was displayed on their sets through shows such as Father Knows Best, I Love Lucy, or Leave It to Beaver. Further, world events would be brought into their homes through news broadcasts.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Menconi, *Intergenerational Church*, 58.

¹⁸¹ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 79.

¹⁸² Shaw, *Generational IQ*, 48.

¹⁸³ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 79.

¹⁸⁴ Menconi, *Intergenerational Church*, 68.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

Generation X

Consisting of roughly 56 million members, Generation X was born between 1961 and 1981. Shaw points to the name, Generation X, to illustrate that this generation does not like titles.¹⁸⁶ Because of the decline in fertility rates and a more pessimistic outlook on the future, this generation was initially called the “baby busters.”¹⁸⁷ As Generation X entered the world, America was not a very happy place. “The Vietnam War, Watergate, and other traumas played a major role in shaping the attitudes of distrust and disinterest that many Gen Xers have toward government, politics, and politicians.”¹⁸⁸ Being the first “latchkey kids” who came home from school to empty houses because both parents worked. Indeed, their skepticism grew as they watched their parents devote their lives to their work, only to be laid off by these companies when economic times became difficult. Even more, this generation saw their families sacrificed as the children of this generation experienced the peak of divorce rates in American history¹⁸⁹

This generation has chosen to find a better balance between work and family than their parents. Their distrust of institutions impacts the way Generation X views community and church. All activities are measured on the perceived value of the experience versus the time taken away from family life. All membership is approached with caution. “Not only does a church need to meet the criteria for the desired experience, but it also needs to demonstrate value for family involvement.”¹⁹⁰ Churches wishing to engage with Gen Xers must provide flexibility.

¹⁸⁶ Shaw, *Generational IQ*, 63.

¹⁸⁷ Allen, *InterGenerate*, 79.

¹⁸⁸ Menconi, *Intergenerational Church*, 88.

¹⁸⁹ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 79.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

Generation X is intrinsically tied to pop culture. Television and music came together when MTV (Music Television) began airing in 1981 as many Gen Xers were coming of age. As a result of being latchkey kids, the television became the “electronic babysitter” that filled the time when the children came home from school and their parents came home from work. Popular music and the message in the lyrics now had visual support and forever changed the world of this generation and the ones to follow.¹⁹¹

Millennials

While names like Generation Y, Trophy Generation, and Bridge Generation, among others, have been used, Millennial, introduced by Strauss and Howe, has become commonly used as this generation came to age at the start of the new millennium. Born between 1982 and 2004, it is larger than the Baby Boomer Generation, consisting of over 80 million members. Being the largest generation in American history, Millennials currently represent one-quarter of the United States population and are the most racially and ethnically diverse to date.¹⁹²

“Millennials and their parents have a mutual affection and admiration.” the parents of Millennials are most often Generation Xers. Compared to the disconnect latchkey, Gen Xers felt with their parents, and Millennials are a “wanted” generation.¹⁹³ Not only do their parents want to be involved in their lives, but Millennials want their parents involved and frequently seek their

¹⁹¹ Menconi, *Intergenerational Church*, 102-103.

¹⁹² “American Generation Fast Facts,” CNN, November 6, 2013, <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/06/us/baby-boomer-generation-fast-facts/index.html>.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 83.

advice.¹⁹⁴ Millennials have the confidence to believe they can accomplish anything they want because of the positive reinforcement of their parents and teachers.¹⁹⁵

Advancements in technology such as the internet and cell phones have made Millennials self-sufficient. Anything they need can be accessed immediately with the tap of a button. Because of this technology, their concept of community differs significantly from the generations before them. “Proximity in time or space is no longer a necessity.”¹⁹⁶ One can connect with anybody to establish a close relationship with people from anywhere in the world.

The idea of the physical church, with fixed schedules, conflicts with the Millennials' more dynamic and constant access to the community. Those who attend church are looking for purpose and authenticity, and they want to be involved in making their world a better place rather than being prepared to lead in the future. Issues like poverty and inequality are essential to Millennials, and they often feel the church is not addressing these problems. Often, they will seek spiritual pursuits outside of the traditional church.¹⁹⁷

Generation Z

Elliot marks the birth ranges of Generation Z between 2005 and 2025, but as she points out, the generation cannot really be characterized because “some are not yet born and none have come of age.”¹⁹⁸ Some rightly argue that the generation has not yet been named, and Shaw even says giving it a name like Generation Z at this point is a bad idea.¹⁹⁹ Further, it may be said that

¹⁹⁴ Rainer and Rainer, *The Millennials*, 57.

¹⁹⁵ Shaw, *Generational IQ*, 83.

¹⁹⁶ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 81.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

researchers are still focused on Millennials and have not entirely finalized research on Millennials.

Generation Z is even more ethnically and racially diverse than the Millennials. Like their parents, Generation Z are “digital natives.” They have not lived without the internet, smartphones, or social media. Elliot contends that Generation Z is already creating observable patterns and that this new generation has seen the Millennials' mistakes and is more responsible in their online conduct.²⁰⁰

Generation Z were born after 9/11 and into the war on terror. While Millennials were raised during great economic prosperity and relative world peace, Generation Z was marked by the Great Recession, which began in 2007 and is considered the worst economic downturn since World War II.”²⁰¹ At the writing of this paper, it is clear that the most significant impact on Generation Z, or whatever name social scientists finally label this new generation, will be the world’s battle with the COVID-19 virus. The implications of lockdowns, quarantines, and mask-wearing are yet to be seen.

Other Influences that Shape Beliefs and Behavior

Understanding the characteristics of the various generational cohorts can be a great aid in helping multiple generations come together within the local church. However, generalizations about age groups can be too broad, and stereotyping should be avoided.²⁰² There are always nuances and outliers when attempting to categorize people. First, where an individual grew up

¹⁹⁹ Shaw, *Generational IQ*, 85.

²⁰⁰ Elliott, *InterGenerate*, 81-82.

²⁰¹ James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 39.

²⁰² Gould, *Transcending Generations*, 20.

will affect how one thinks or behaves. A person who grew up on a farm would have life experiences that differ from those in New York City. Second, there may be nuances in the way men and women perceive the world. Third, race or ethnicity may contribute to different attitudes and perceptions within the same generational cohort. Socioeconomics and education may create variations in thinking between people in the same generation.²⁰³

Biblical and Theological Foundations for Intergenerational Engagement

The repeating theological theme in this study is that God created us for relationships. This is evident when God created Eve: “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’” (Genesis 2:18). Significantly, God had only made proclamations of what was good until this point in the Creation story. God made man in his image and gave him the mandate to progenerate and fill the earth.²⁰⁴ The family is the primary social structure of humanity. What occurs within the nuclear family significantly impacts society as a whole. The family unit's health affects the beliefs and behavior of the culture within which it exists, for better or for worse. “When God created the first family, He intended for them to exemplify His relational nature.”²⁰⁵ If the family is to fulfill its God-given mission, it must be intent on clearly expressing what and in whom they believe to those that are around them.²⁰⁶

Allan Harkness offers three theological perspectives which support efforts to increase intergenerational engagement in the local church. First, intergenerational engagement is an

²⁰³ Menconi, *Intergenerational Church*, Introduction.

²⁰⁴ See Genesis 1:28.

²⁰⁵ Chris Shirley, ed., *Family Ministry and the Church: A Leader's Guide for Ministry through Families* (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2018), 36.

²⁰⁶ Jerry Pipes and Victor Lee, *Family to Family: Leaving a Lasting Legacy* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1999), 10.

expression of who God is. Expressions of the community reflect the relational nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.²⁰⁷ Second, intergenerational engagement is normative for the local church. Harkness writes, “Intergenerationality was a distinctive feature of the faith communities in both the Old and New Testament eras.”²⁰⁸ New Testament Churches followed the Old Testament intergenerational model pattern, which depended on the inclusion of people of all ages. Last, personal faith development necessitates intergenerational processes. Spiritual formation is virtually impossible in isolation. “Faith development is linked closely to the quality of relationships one has, especially with people for whom the key commonality is seeking ‘to do God’s will’”²⁰⁹ Further, intergenerational interaction supports the lifelong journey of discipleship.

Old Testament

In God’s covenant with Abraham, God establishes a plan for redemption:

The Lord said to Abram: Go from your land, your relatives, and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:1-3, CSB).

Although the plan was not clear to Abraham, the pattern for a life of faith is clear: leave what is known behind and follow God in a new and unknown direction. This is faith²¹⁰ and foundational to Paul’s argument for justification by grace through faith.²¹¹ Paul’s reference to

²⁰⁷ Allan G. Harkness, "Intergenerationality: Biblical and Theological Foundations." *Christian Education Journal* 9, no. 1 (Spring, 2012): 126.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 127.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 130.

²¹⁰ See Hebrews 11:1.

²¹¹ See Galatians 3:6-9

Genesis 12:3 and Genesis 15:6 highlight two prominent thoughts on God’s plan for redemption. First, salvation comes through faith due to God’s grace. Second, the gospel is for all people.²¹² Further, there may be another implication from Genesis 12:3 that is relevant to this study. Although the Christian Standard Bible uses the word “peoples” in verse, most translations use the word “families.” There are many Hebrew words for people, but the writer used the word *mishpachah* (מִשְׁפָּחָה), which seems to have a relational connotation to it. It is most often translated to *families, kind, kindred, or relatives*.

God gave Moses his plan for the passing of the faith to the next generation in the form of the Shema, found in Deuteronomy 6:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Brian Haynes calls this God’s blueprint for spiritual formation. “Parents teach their children how to love God by loving God in front of them.”²¹³ Worship and discipleship were not reserved for a specific day or a particular time. It was consistently occurring throughout each day as families lived life together.

A similar theme can be observed in Deuteronomy 4:

Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you. You saw with your own eyes what the LORD did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, but all of you who held fast to the LORD your

²¹² James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary*, vol. 2: Genesis 12:1-36:43, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 23.

²¹³ Haynes, *Shift*, 34.

God are still alive today. See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them (Deuteronomy 4:1-9).

Throughout the Old Testament, God reminds Israel of his faithfulness by identifying himself as the God of their fathers, which reinforces their faith's intergenerational transference.

God commands Israel to remember what he has done and retell it to their children and their children.²¹⁴ This is the first time the Bible mentions the descriptive role of the grandparent.²¹⁵

The theme of intergenerational engagement is found in the songs the Israelites sang. There are several examples in the Psalms, the ancient “hymnal”²¹⁶ of Israel, where the psalm writer recounts the goodness of God and his great acts of power and faithfulness.²¹⁷ In Psalm 78, Asaph reminds Israel of God’s faithfulness, even when the people of Israel were not faithful to Him:

My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation,

²¹⁴ See Deuteronomy 4:9.

²¹⁵ Jim Wideman, *Recalibrate: A New Measure for Family Ministry*, ed. Ron Hunter, Jr. (Nashville, TN: Randall House, 2019), 94.

²¹⁶ Don Wyrzten, *A Musician Looks at the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 13.

²¹⁷ See Psalm 71:15-18; 102:12-22; 145:1-7

whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him (Psalm 78:1-8).

The lesson for future generations from this Psalm is two-fold. First, it serves as a warning not to repeat the sins of their ancestors and instead wholly trust God and obey his commands. The second message to glean is the amazing faithfulness of God to intervene in the affairs of his people miraculously. God's actions exhibit "abundant grace and undeserved loving-kindness" despite their forefathers' faithlessness.²¹⁸

Unfortunately, it seems that today's families and churches look very much like the Israelites after entering the promised land: "That whole generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another generation rose up who did not know the LORD or the works he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10, CSB). Just as the tribes, clans, and families of Israel failed in their responsibilities to the following generation, the modern church and family are not fulfilling the important task of engaging the next generation. The church as a larger faith community should be a place where the church and parents can work together to share mutual responsibility and accountability for teaching the next generation who God is and what it means to live a life of pure faith.²¹⁹

New Testament

As Jesus called his first four disciples at the start of his ministry, one may recall the beginnings of Abraham's faith journey. Jesus' call to Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow him elicited the response of leaving the known to pursue the unknown.²²⁰ It is unclear

²¹⁸ Steven J. Lawson, *Holman Old Testament Commentary - Psalms 76-150*, ed. Max Anders, vol. 12 (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2006), 14-15.

²¹⁹ Darwin K. Glassford, *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches Through Intergenerational Ministry*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 2018), 68.

why they followed him. Although this calling occurs a few verses after the start of Jesus' preaching ministry, there is no indication of how much time has passed. It is possible that they had heard his message and were curious. This seems unlikely. Regardless, they "left behind everything that was familiar and natural for them. They exchanged comfort for uncertainty."²²¹ They did not know where they were going. They needed faith. Likewise, it is uncertain why Jesus called these men. Warren Wiersbe argues that he picked them because fishermen are hardworking people that stay busy. They are accustomed to depending on faith that nets will be full when they retrieve them because they cannot depend on faith.²²² This may or not be true, but God typically uses unlikely vessels to accomplish his work.²²³ God is omnipotent, so he does not need man to do his will. He chooses to use man because he wants to reveal himself to us.

Arguably the most robust metaphor for intergenerational engagement in the local evangelical church is the concept of the church as a family. Wayne Grudem explains this perspective equates the church's work to "family work." All family members work together to help, exhort, and encourage each other without competition or creating undue hindrance to other members of the family—as members of God's family, working with adoptive brothers and sisters should promote fellowship and joy because all are working for the common good of the family in a manner that honors God.²²⁴

²²⁰ See Matthew 4:19 and Mark 1:17. These are parallel stories of the same account. When Jesus invited these fishermen to follow him and become "fishers of men," they immediately dropped what they were doing and followed him.

²²¹ David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew*, 81.

²²² Wiersbe, *Be Loyal*, 31.

²²³ See 1 Corinthians 1:27

²²⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 741.

Joseph Hellerman breaks down the familial imagery displayed in Paul's Epistles into four categories: practical solidarity, family unity, material solidarity, and family loyalty.²²⁵ Affective solidarity describes the affection and emotional bond Paul had with his spiritual brothers and sisters in the churches in which he ministered. According to Hellerman, in Mediterranean families of that time, the emotional bond between siblings that share the same father was more intense than that of married spouses.²²⁶ Further, it would be difficult to find a more united front during that time than the unity shared between blood brothers and sisters.²²⁷ A family cannot be truly healthy if it is not unified. A house divided against itself cannot stand.²²⁸ The value of material solidarity speaks of sharing resources such as food, clothing, and shelter.²²⁹ When a family member needs, the rest of the family must work to fulfill that need. This is the message Paul illustrates in 1 Corinthians 12. The church as a body is one and works together for each other and the unified mission. God has given every local church everything it needs to accomplish His mission.²³⁰ The key is working together. Finally, considering family loyalty, Paul's view of loyalty toward his brothers and sisters in the church mirrored that of contemporary Mediterranean thinking – blood relations came before spouses.²³¹

The New Testament is replete with “one another” statements. Unquestionably, the life God intends for his image-bearers to live should be in community with others. While the New

²²⁵ Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family*, 78-79.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 79-81.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

²²⁸ See Matthew 12:25 and Mark 3:25.

²²⁹ Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family* 85.

²³⁰ John F. MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1984), 322.

²³¹ Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family.*, 91-94.

Testament is not specific on how corporate worship should be conducted in the local church, church leaders may use two of these “one another” verses as a foundation upon which to build worship services and worship ministries. First, Ephesians 5:18-19 says, “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.” Second and similarly, Colossians 3:16 states, “Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts” (CSB).

Together, these two verses complement Jesus’ message to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. True worship must be “in spirit and in truth.” John MacArthur explains: To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by His Word. To have the Word dwelling richly is to be controlled by His Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is the author and the power of the Word, the expressions are interchangeable.”²³² While authentic worship is built upon information – God’s Word, it also awakens an emotional response. However, that emotion should be driven by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps that is why Paul contrasts the controlled emotion of worship with the out-of-control emotion of drunkenness.

Corporate worship has both an internal and external aspect. It should be personal but also relational. Gathering as a church family for worship is for God first. While the individual may benefit as a result of worship, the service is for the entire church body. “If your Christianity is making you more of a recluse, it’s not true Christianity; it’s selfishness. If what you call the Christian life is pulling you further and further away from others, you need to go back to the

²³² John F. MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Colossians & Philemon* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 159.

basics of Christian Living 101.” Ignoring these “one-another” statements penalizes the individual while depriving the church.

Modern Church Ministry and the Generation Engagement

It is easy to see and point out problems. Often, identifying the causes for the problem is not difficult either. The real challenge is developing solutions to those issues and implementing them. How can the local church, and more specifically, the worship ministry of the local church, help build healthy families? How can these faith families reconnect with their communities and establish relevance again? How can the church meet the needs of people in their surrounding neighborhoods, towns, and cities without falling into the trap of consumerism? There is a danger is compromising biblical values; however, a balance must be found to reach the lost and the hurting effectively. Jesus said,

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. 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 (Matthew 5:13-16).

Church Meets Culture

Western culture has rejected the church. In this setting, the local church is losing its young people, putting the church's future in question.²³³ As devastating as that is for the prospects for the church in its current cultural context, it should be heartbreaking for Christians with children and those who love the church's mission. “The situation is lose-lose (*sic*): we are

²³³ MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Colossians & Philemon*, 41.

not reaching the world for Christ, and we are losing our own children.”²³⁴ The authors of *11*

Innovations in the Local Church write:

Most churches need to change because they’re showing little or no statistical growth (numerical, spiritual or otherwise) and minimal impact on the surrounding culture. Too many are struggling just to keep their doors open, and yet they tend to keep replaying what they did “last year.”²³⁵

The existence of a problem should be evident to church pastors. Observation of declining attendance and dwindling participation in the church's life should prompt church leadership to change; however, many seem paralyzed in addressing the issue. Either they do not know what to do²³⁶ or they do not care enough to try.²³⁷ Many churches attempt to address the problem by revamping programs they are already doing. Although these adjustments may bring temporary change, Reggie McNeal argues that the obsession with “fixing the church” is the real problem. This happens, according to McNeal, because churches spend all their energy and resources on trying to win people to their church instead of winning them to the Kingdom of God. In many instances, church leaders, and consequently the members, view the church and the kingdom as synonymous, thereby straying from their God-given mission.²³⁸

Too often, good-intentioned Christians fall in love with their church. They approve of the preaching, like the music, and enjoy the people who attend. Their church meets their spiritual needs and makes them comfortable. They want new people to join so they can come to know Jesus and learn how to be a Christian, but if they do not come or do not like their church, they

²³⁴ Page and Gray, *Hungry for Worship*, 38.

²³⁵ Towns, Stetzer, and Bird, *11 Innovations*, 14.

²³⁶ McNeal, *The Present Future*, 7.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

²³⁸ Reggie McNeal, *Kingdom Come: Why We Must Give Up Our Obsession with Fixing the Church--and What We Should Do Instead* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2015), xii-xiv.

blame the spiritual decline in culture.²³⁹ As a result of equating the church with the kingdom, many Christians see the rejection of church as a rejection of Jesus. McNeal laments, “In North America, the invitation to become a Christian has become largely an invitation to convert to the church.”²⁴⁰ There is nothing wrong with loving one’s church, and Christians should be inviting the lost to come, but they must realize that the church’s mission is not to win people to a church but to a Living Savior.

For Christians and church leaders the crisis should be evident. However, the realization that children from Christian homes, who have grown up in the church, are now connecting more with the postmodern worldview than they are with the faith of their parents must raise an alarm. This generation is aligning with a culture that has turned its back on the institutional church, resulting in devastating eternal consequences for them and the generations to follow. Western culture rejects the church, but McNeal opines, “the church in America abandoned the culture long before the culture abandoned the church.”²⁴¹ If the church is to fulfill its mission, it must find a way to reach and engage the culture.

God did not place a church within a community just so Christians could have a place to meet, sing songs they like, and spend time with friends that share their same beliefs and values. He put the church there because he wants that church to engage with the people of its surrounding community and bring them into a relationship with him.²⁴² While all churches have the shared mission to reach the world for Christ, each local church is unique. The history, location, and customs of the community surrounding the church create opportunities and

²³⁹ McNeal, *The Present Future*, 11.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ McNeal, *Kingdom Come*, 15.

²⁴² Ibid., 90.

challenges particular to that community. Further, every church differs in leadership style, talents and gifting of the people, and heritage and traditions that make it like no other church. God has equipped each church with what it needs to reach the community, and he expects it to use those special to show that community who he is in a way they can relate.²⁴³

Generational Engagement Models

He has given his followers and the local church the charge to be salt and light to the world. In this section, literature is reviewed concerning how local churches and specific ministries are attempting to meet the needs of their communities and fulfill the Great Commission. It is crucial to remember that some of what is seen as a model or method is simply the natural result of habit. Other models and methods are intentional efforts to combat ineffectiveness and inefficiencies. These models can be divided into four categories: dominant-generation, family-based, multigenerational, and intergenerational. Most often, there can be an example of each in the local church.

Dominant-Generation

Despite its name, the dominant-generation model not necessarily generationally homogenous. These churches can and usually will have members from various age groups; however, their ministry programming is dominated by the preferences of a specific generation. If the dominant generation is the Silent Generation, then worship will be more traditional stylistically with an educational model built of age-specific Sunday School classes led by a lecturing teacher. On the other hand, a Boomer-focused church may have a more contemporary style of worship. Small groups are more about interaction and fellowship than sitting through a

²⁴³ Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 5-9.

classroom lecture.²⁴⁴ Churches that adopt any type of attractional method for reaching people run the risk of becoming this type of church because similar types of people are attracted to the same kinds of things.²⁴⁵ Focusing on trying to reach a specific demographic can be extremely effective for evangelism, but it is a weak model for a thriving church that lasts.²⁴⁶

Family-Based

In the family-based church, the ministries are planned around the family. Children typically attend the corporate worship service with their parents, including a feature that appeals to them. Ministries for youth and children are typically designed with the family in mind, and parents are encouraged to participate. This model is characteristic of the house church or the cell church and usually reaches just two generations.²⁴⁷ While this model can help build up the family relationally, modern house churches tend to be more inward-focused and disconnected from the community, therefore they tend not to be very evangelistic.²⁴⁸ Further, because they are not led by people with formal education in theology, doctrinal problems may arise.²⁴⁹

Multigeneration

Much of the latest literature on the issue of generational engagement within the church today emphasizes demonstrating the difference between the meaning of multigenerational and intergenerational concerning church ministry. It is more than semantics, and the distinction is

²⁴⁴ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 25-26.

²⁴⁵ Elmer L. Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 233.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

²⁴⁷ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 27.

²⁴⁸ Towns, Stetzer, and Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church*, 48.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

essential. The prefix *multi-* means *many* or *multiple* (www.thefreedictionary.com/multi-), while the prefix *inter-* means *between* or *among* (www.thefreedictionary.com/inter-). Intergenerational conveys the interactive, relational aspect instead of the inclusion of more than one. Most churches are multigenerational, consisting of different generations, but are still segregated into age-specific groups in ministry.²⁵⁰ They may offer corporate worship services where all age groups are invited, but there is very little interaction between the generations during other church activities. “A church that describes itself as multigenerational will most likely provide ministries for children, youth, young adults, middle adults, and older adults while offering few opportunities for cross-generational contact.”²⁵¹ Because these churches may have representation from several generations, they seem “healthy on the surface; in reality, the generations act like ships in the night that pass by one another but rarely have meaningful contact and interaction.”²⁵² Intergenerational experiences may be tolerated or even desired, but there is very little intentionality in creating these occurrences between the generations by the leadership or laity.²⁵³

Intergenerational

“An intergenerational philosophy differs from a multigenerational philosophy by intentionally involving as many generations as possible in the life and activities of the church.”²⁵⁴ That does not mean that every generation must be involved in every activity. James W. White defines intergenerational religious experiences as “two or more different age groups of

²⁵⁰ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 27-28.

²⁵¹ Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 19.

²⁵² Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 13.

²⁵³ Chris Barnett, *Engage All Generations: A Strategic Toolkit for Creating Intergenerational Faith Communities*, ed. Corey Seibel (Abilene, Texas: Abilene Christian University Press, 2021), 216.

²⁵⁴ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 28.

people in a religious community together learning/growing/living in faith through in-common experiences, parallel learning, contributive occasions, and interactive sharing.”²⁵⁵ The defining characteristic of the intergenerational model is that there is intentionality in having different generations to interact with each other, not simply be together in the same space. According to Allan Harkness, “Intentional intergenerational strategies are those in which an integral part of the process of faith communities encourages interpersonal interactions across generational boundaries, and in which a sense of mutuality and equality is encouraged between the participants.”²⁵⁶ With the intergenerational model, every age group contributes and has value.

The Reality of Generational Engagement

An abundance of contemporary research points to the lack of intergenerational engagement as a significant factor in the church’s decline. Throughout most of Christian history, from the first-century house church continuing to the early twentieth-century community church, all generations were present together and engaged.²⁵⁷ That is no longer the standard practice in most churches. Reasons for this paradigm shift are varied. Churches and Christians have always tended to reflect the culture in which they exist. Over the last century, churches have followed the path of American culture, which has become more and more generational segregated in nearly every area of social life.²⁵⁸

One factor toward generational disengagement in the local church is the transition from the single pastor model to a multiple-staff model that began at the end of World War II due to

²⁵⁵ James W. White, *Intergenerational Religious Education: Models, Theory, and Prescription for Interage Life and Learning in the Faith Community* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1988), 18.

²⁵⁶ Allan G. Harkness, “Intergenerational and Homogeneous-Age Education: Mutually Exclusive Strategies for Faith Communities?” *Religious Education* 95, no. 1 (2000): 52.

²⁵⁷ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation.*, 35.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

increased church attendance. Churches hired staff that offered areas of specialization, often in the area of age-specific spiritual education or ministry. Age segregation within the church continued to expand over the years by focusing on various church growth strategies. Over the decades, the perceived success of dynamic youth ministries was emulated in children and preschool ministries motivated by the desire to bring more young families into the church. The unintended consequence of these church-growth strategies has been further dividing the generations into small homogenous groups.²⁵⁹ The existence of these age-specific classes or ministries is not the problem. The shortcomings are exposed when churches fail to create an organic connection between these steps in church life. “There is tremendous value in working with seasons of life, but spiritual life does not end when segueing to the next season.”²⁶⁰ When it comes to entering a new stage of church life, many young people are simply leaving the church.

Consumerism is another attribute of western culture that has influenced the local church. Attempting to reach people, churches began to offer programs and events to hopefully attract as many people as possible. Getting people to come to church is a good thing, but if they learn the gospel and connect with the church's mission, they will eventually leave or go to the next church that offers something appealing to them.²⁶¹ While catering to people's personal preferences extends to all areas of ministry within the church, it has had a significant impact on corporate worship.²⁶² Many churches offer multiple worship gatherings to appeal to more people, each with a different musical style. The natural outcome is a further separation of the generations. Older church members will gravitate to the traditional service while the younger ones attend the

²⁵⁹ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation.*, 40-41.

²⁶⁰ Ron Hunter, Jr., *The DNA of D6: Building Blocks of Generational Discipleship* (Nashville, TN: Random House, 2015), 38.

²⁶¹ Towns, Stetzer, and Bird, *11 Innovations*, 230-233.

²⁶² Page and Gray, *Hungry for Worship*, 36-37.

contemporary service. Designing corporate worship services geared toward people's personal preferences places too much importance on music while giving all generations a warped view of worship.

The distinction between multigenerational and intergenerational is seen clearly. A church can be multigenerational but completely disconnected generationally. Brad Tate illustrates a Sunday morning for the typical family: "Family members immediately part ways and go to their assigned ministry. They often hear three different messages that each would be hard-pressed to recall on Tuesday I think in the church's attempt to minister to individual age groups, it often drives a wedge in the family unit."²⁶³ By programing only age-specific classes combined with the offering of worship services to suit the taste of every member, churches create isolated cells. Therefore, spiritual formation takes place independent of the other cells in the church. Stuart Cummings-Bond creatively illustrates this phenomenon through the "Van Gogh Mickey Mouse," where the face represents the entire body of the church, and the ear represents the youth ministry (see Figure. 1).²⁶⁴

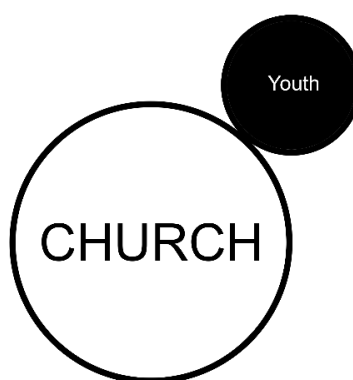


Figure 1: One-Eared Mickey Mouse

²⁶³ Michael Chanley, *Collaborate: Family + Church* (Louisville, KY: Ministers Label Publishing, 2010), 20.

²⁶⁴ Stuart Cummings-Bond, "The One-Eared Mickey Mouse," *Youth Worker Journal* 6 (Fall 1989):76 cited in Allen, *Intergenerate*, 44.

Santos argues that the generational divide “are the effects of an increasingly individualistic, peer-oriented society that celebrates personal experience and self-fulfillment over a communal ethos and ethic.”²⁶⁵ While the intentions behind these age-specific methodologies may have been well-intentioned over the past several decades, even practical for a time, they now appear to be pernicious for the church and family. Thousands of hours of training and millions of dollars have been invested in buildings and ministries that have become counterproductive and ineffective. “How is that the local church has the greatest children’s and youth ministries in the history of western civilization and yet produces a generation of young adults who ‘compartmentalize’ their faith in Christ at best?”²⁶⁶ Applying Cummings-Bond’s visual to the entire church (see Figure 2), compartmentalization mirrors the ministry of most contemporary churches. “We built magnificent organizations, but we produced a version of Christianity that is compartmentalized and humanistic. Our culture is now paying the price for ‘our version’ of Christianity.”²⁶⁷ It is critical for churches to reevaluate their methodology now.

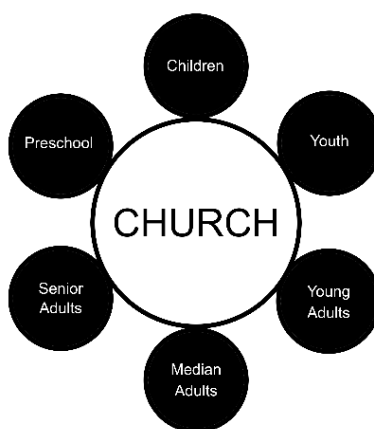


Figure 2: Age-segregated multigenerational church

²⁶⁵ Santos, *Intergenerate*, 41.

²⁶⁶ Chanley, *Collaborate: Family + Church*, 23.

²⁶⁷ Haynes, *Shift*, 37.

Chapter Summary

The first section of this chapter reviews an ever-growing body of literature, giving a clear picture of the status of both the church and the family in the twenty-first century. First, literature covering the postmodern worldview and advancements in technology is examined for their impact on the church's current condition, revealing that many churches are not effectively engaging the culture to fulfill the Great Commission. Second, a study of worldviews is conducted to shed light on how various thinking affects people's beliefs and how they respond, both relationally and spiritually. Differences between attitudes toward authority and truth in premodern, modern, and postmodern worldviews are explained. The postmodern culture of the twenty-first century is exceptionally open to spiritual matters but equally opposed to claims of absolute truth which poses an obvious challenge for the Church. Third, a brief review of the history of the Christian Church provides examples of how the church has engaged with contemporary culture as it has changed. This body of literature demonstrates that the Church has been able to adapt to cultural changes effectively and shows that the culture faced by the early church is not so different from the culture faced by the Church today. Finally, literature concerning the impact of postmodern thought on the family, such as individual autonomy, along with advancements in technologies that provide twenty-four-hour-per-day information, media, and entertainment, are having devastating effects on the family, for both interpersonal relationships and the overall well-being of its individual members.

The body of literature concerning the needs of individuals and families is examined in the next section of this chapter. Modern social scientists look to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as the standard for human motivation and potential. These needs are broken down into physiological, safety, and security needs; psychological and social needs; emotional needs like esteem and

identity; and self-actualization needs like purpose and calling. While the church can help people with all these needs, the church that understands its mission and can effectively carry it out can be especially beneficial in helping individuals address needs of identity, purpose, and belonging.

This chapter's third area of review delves into the ever-growing body of literature involving research on age groups and generational cohorts. The information revealed in this part of the research tends to be the most theoretical because time continues to pass, an older generational cohort begins to die off, and a new generation is born and comes of age. Consensus among social scientists is that there are six distinguishable generations today. This section describes the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the Greatest Generation, the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Further. Literature shows the reasons behind these attitudes and behaviors and insights into relational engagement with each.

Biblical and theological foundations concerning generational engagement within families and faith communities are the subject of research in the fourth part of this review. Looking first at the Old Testament, the Shema in Deuteronomy 6 clarifies that both discipleship and passing of faith begins in the home. Many other Scriptures, including the songs found in Psalms, make clear that faith is intended to be passed from generation to generation. Other biblical passages demonstrate the negative effect on families and society when a generation fails to pass the faith to the next, such as found in Psalm 78 and Judges 2:10. The New Testament is full of “one another” commands that exemplify worship's relational nature and living a life of faith. Paul speaks of the church interacting as a family. Finally, the nature of the faith journey is shown in God’s call and covenant with Abraham. This is paralleled in Jesus’ calling to his disciples in the

New Testament. Leave the old, the known, the comfortable, and follow by faith into a life that is meant to be a blessing to all people, all families, and all nations.

The body of literature reviewed in the final section of this chapter examines an increasing library of work addressing generational engagement within the local church today. The importance of this research shows the weakness of the term *multigenerational*. Nearly every church can be said to be multigenerational by definition. Most churches consist of attendees from more than one generation. However, this does not mean that generational interaction occurs as demonstrated by the biblical and theological literature. Intergenerational discipleship and worship must be intentionally planned if it is to prescribe to God's design for spiritual formation.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The twenty-first-century church in America is failing too often in reaching the broken people and fractured families within their realms of influence. The church should be a family, and it should be a model to the world of how a healthy family should look. This qualitative historical study aimed to explore current functional problems in the church, the family, and modern culture and investigate biblical models for the church and the family. Church leaders need to understand better how each ministry works together to support the church's mission, which is not just multigenerational but intergenerational. Such a strategy would be inclusive, bringing the generations together with a sense of purpose and belonging.

Further, as a church leader, the worship leader is responsible for engaging all ages through corporate worship and collectively and individually through spiritual and musical training. This chapter aims to explain the methodology used in performing this qualitative historical study. This chapter covers research design, collecting data, and data analysis. This methodology is beneficial for the effort to answer the research questions and support the hypotheses of this research.

Research Design

A qualitative historical research design was used to explore challenges that currently face the twenty-first-century church and family, review the history of the church's relationship in culture, identify the needs of individuals and families, develop an understanding of the unique characteristics of the six generational cohorts, and examine biblical teaching on these topics. This research design is appropriate because, first, this study seeks to understand what is seen as a

social and human problem in a way consistent with the inductive style.²⁶⁸ The qualitative historical research design is also appropriate because the documents selected were done purposefully to understand the problems and address the research questions.²⁶⁹ Lastly, this qualitative historical research design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to interpret the data theoretically, which calls for reform or change.²⁷⁰

In conducting this qualitative historical study, the first step started by identifying and stating the research problem. After identifying the problem, research questions were created along with corresponding hypotheses for these questions. Next, data applicable to the study was gathered, reviewed, and analyzed for validity and reliability.²⁷¹ Upon completing this research, conclusions and recommendations were formulated regarding the research questions.²⁷² Finally, the weaknesses and limitations of this study were determined.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are:

RQ 1: In what ways can the worship leader work with other ministries in the church to create holistic opportunities for intergenerational engagement for strengthening the nuclear family?

RQ2: What issues must be considered when designing corporate worship services that are relevant for multiple generations.

²⁶⁸ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Fifth edition (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018), 4.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 199.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 192-202

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 193-199.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study are:

H1: Worship leaders can work with other ministries in the church to create holistic opportunities for intergenerational engagement for strengthening the nuclear family by providing training, offering program support, and developing leadership.

H2: Issues that must be considered when designing corporate worship services that are relevant for multiple generations include intergenerational inclusion in planning and implementation, relationship development, and contextual innovation.

Process of Collecting Data

Collecting data for this qualitative historical study began by identifying and reviewing sources, including books, journal and magazine articles, dissertations and thesis, and other professional research studies that address the diminishing impact of the twenty-first-century church upon modern-day North American culture. Sources found to be relevant to the study were selected. Within the framework of this part of the literature review, the distinct focus was given to culture's effect on the church, culture's effect on the family, and the church's effort to engage families and culture. The second part of this review revolved around the church's history and its engagement with contemporary culture. Particular emphasis was given to historical worldviews and how ordinary cultural thought impacted families and their actions and beliefs regarding religion.

After a rigorous review of the above literature, sources were gathered and explicitly reviewed regarding contemporary culture. This part of the review examined reality from the postmodern worldview, how technological advances have changed society positively and negatively, and shifting viewpoints on sexuality, gender, and family relationships. The

importance of this part of the literature review is to examine how the church has fulfilled its mission through constant change historically to discover if it would give insight for any recommendations for cultural engagement today and moving into the future.

The next part of the data collection process was gathering and reviewing resources about the needs of people, including physiological, emotional, and spiritual needs. Both secular and religious literature was reviewed. The valued information collected in this project sheds light on the functions of both the nuclear family and church in meeting the needs of the individual. This data gives insight into possible strategies for the church to help individuals and families relate healthily.

Next, sources were gathered and reviewed that deal with the theme generations. The sources that were explicitly selected address the generally agreed upon six living generations that can be found in most multigenerational churches, including the Greatest Generation, the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. This literature provided information regarding birth ranges, impactful historical events, and general attitudes and characteristics of each of these generations.

The last step in the data collection process was gathering and reviewing the literature concerning biblical and theological principles. This review primarily focused on Bible teachings specific to the purpose and function of both the family and the church. Although the Bible is the primary source for this data, other scholastic theological studies and commentaries were incorporated in this part of the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The result of practical data analysis by the researcher is to "make sense out of text and image data."²⁷³ The sheer quantity of sources reviewed and the amount of data collected were overwhelming. Creswell suggests a systematic method to help make analysis more efficient and effective. First, the data was organized and prepared to be analyzed by cataloging and categorizing information. Next, the data was read to reflect its meaning and general themes. The data was then coded into these themes. After the data was analyzed thematically, narratives for the individual themes were written to develop the findings revealed in the next chapter.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Creswell, *Research Design*, 190.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 193-198.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings conducted to explore and appraise the measure of generational engagement and interaction within twenty-first-century churches are presented in this chapter. The first research question and hypothesis are addressed by offering findings concerning the development of worship ministries that collaborate with and support other ministries that create a holistic, church-wide approach for encouraging engagement with and between multiple generations. Findings to the second research question and hypothesis are discussed by exploring issues that contribute to designing corporate worship services in the local church that are meaningful for every generation. Applicable findings from the research to both research questions and hypotheses are presented on the following pages.

The State of Generational Engagement within the Twenty-First Century Church

Based on the truth of declining local church attendance and the ideal of the traditional family is eroding, literature was chosen for this research with an intentional focus on the correlation between the church and the family. The research questions and hypotheses assume, based on the evidence, that the church can influence the family and vice versa. Chris Shirley writes, “The undeniable connection between the church and the family, as well as the need to address the tremendous cultural and spiritual challenges affecting the home life today, calls for vigilance among the body of Christ and its leaders.”²⁷⁵ When a family becomes part of a local church, the church becomes an extension of their home, exposing the family to new relationships with people from every generation and walk of life. “The church is a place where the family learns how to be a family.”²⁷⁶ The research points to a symbiotic relationship between family and

²⁷⁵ Chris Shirley, *Family Ministry and the Church: A Leader’s Guide for Ministry through Families*, ed. Chris Shirley (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2018), 9.

church. “Without long-term family involvement, the church would lose the intergenerational relationships that enrich the community and maintain a heritage of faithfulness.”²⁷⁷ Therefore, evidence supports the conclusion that the church needs the family, and the family needs the church.

Unfortunately, the research confirms that both the family and the church are struggling. The literature suggests that much of what ails these institutions is caused by a degeneration of relational engagement. The postmodern worldview gives the individual precedence over the collective. This secular perspective guides Twenty-first-century culture. It distrusts organized religion and authority; embraces pluralism²⁷⁸ and moral relativism while rejects absolute truth;²⁷⁹ and celebrates consumerism, materialism, and hedonism.²⁸⁰ A belief in the individual's autonomy makes way to a society brimming with self-centered people whose decisions are solely directed by what seems right for them.²⁸¹ It is of little wonder that they cannot engage in healthy, lasting relationships.

Advancements in technology promise to improve the quality of life but have had a negative impact on modern culture in many ways. Personal computers, cell phones, and television have created a culture of supersaturation. People can hold instant access to all the knowledge of the history of the world, which they can instantly access at any time. On-demand entertainment such as television shows, movies, and music is available twenty-four hours a day.

²⁷⁶ Shirley, *Family Ministry and the Church.*, 41.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁷⁸ White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 55-56.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 17-23.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 70-76.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

Media offerings are often highly biased, agenda-driven programming intended to control how society thinks and behaves.²⁸² Constant stimulation through these technological devices results in short attention spans while further isolating people from a relationship, stunting the development of basic interpersonal skills. This subsequent lack of focus has developed a generation of surface skimmers who cannot multitask.²⁸³ In addition, the free and easy accessibility of pornography has perverted the beauty of sex, diminished sexual intimacy within the context of a loving marital relationship, and stolen the innocence of young people.²⁸⁴

Millennials are arguably the most studied generational cohort to this point. This cohort is important for ecclesiastical considerations because they are the introductory members of the *nones* and give insight into the mindset of younger generations. Self-described as “spiritual, but not religious,” the *nones* have expressed their distaste for organized religion through their absence.²⁸⁵ Studies have shown that millennials, even those raised in a Christian home, lack knowledge of foundational Christian theology and cannot answer questions about fundamental doctrinal beliefs.²⁸⁶ Researchers have labeled the version of faith that has been passed down to the current generation as Moral Therapeutic Deism. With this “spiritual narcissism,”²⁸⁷ God provides a set of rules; however, they are merely guidelines or best practices for living. God is

²⁸² White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis*, 131-137.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 138-140.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 100-106.

²⁸⁵ Santos, *Intergenerate*, 42.

²⁸⁶ Page and Gray, *Hungry for Worship*, 40-41.

²⁸⁷ White, *The Rise of the Nones*, 79.

uninvolved, allowing people to live however they choose. The purpose of life is to chase happiness while feeling good about who you are.²⁸⁸

Society, the family, and the church are fractured. This research indicates that most churches reflect the mindset of today's culture and often reinforce it. Compartmentalizing the generations has contributed to this generation's compartmentalizing of their faith. Reflecting on Cummings-Bond's One-Eared Mickey Mouse, the church's priority in the life of the average millennial is analogous to the typical youth ministry's association with the overall life of the church (see Figure 3).²⁸⁹

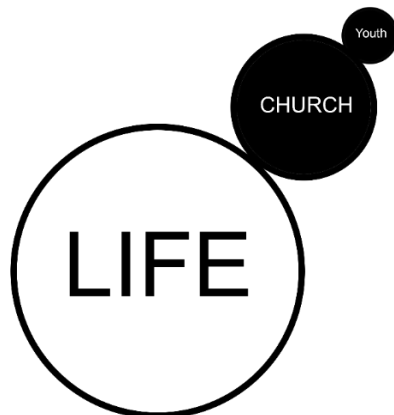


Figure 3: Compartmentalization of Church in Life.

The methodologies for reaching the lost and discipling the converts of the past several decades are no longer effective. The practice of age-segregated spiritual education and worship supports the narcissistic mindset of the secular culture and is ineffective for instilling a lasting, vibrant faith. Further, the church's pattern for spiritual formation has drifted from God's biblical blueprint, which is relational and intergenerational. It is time to rethink everything about the church. James Emery White says it is not simply about looking at successful or trending

²⁸⁸ Santos, *Intergenerate*, 43.

²⁸⁹ Hunter, *The DNA of D6*, 40.

churches to find a one-size-fits-all approach, but it is about every individual church seeking God's direction to change to engage the world better around.²⁹⁰

No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.³⁹ And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better' (Luke 5:35-38).

The review of literature concerning the church's history demonstrates how the church has constantly adapted its methods to meet a changing culture. The church today must innovate to connect to the culture. In doing so, the church takes the same mindset as a foreign missionary, studying the culture of the mission field to attempt to contextualize the gospel message in a way that is relevant to that culture. However, in this process, great care needs to be taken to avoid syncretism by remembering that principles are static.²⁹¹ Methods can and often should be adjusted, but principles never change.²⁹² Towns, Stetzer, and Bird point out that appropriate and effective methods always apply biblical principles to culture.²⁹³

Creating Holistic Worship Ministries That Impact the Future

The topic of intergenerational engagement within the local church context is one of increased interest. Most literature dealing with intergenerational worship or music in existence is either theoretical in nature or broadly generalized. However, a vast amount of the literature

²⁹⁰ James Emery White, *Rethinking the Church: A Challenge to Creative Redesign in an Age of Transition*, Revised edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 25-26.

²⁹¹ Eunhye Chang et al., "Paul G. Hiebert and Critical Contextualization," *Trinity Journal; Deerfield* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 202. Paul Hiebert coined the term critical contextualization to emphasize the importance of not compromising the integrity of the gospel in the attempt to make it relevant. "This process neither rejects nor accepts the old but critically evaluates cultural issues in relation to function and meaning in society and coherence with biblical norms."

²⁹² Town, Stetzer, and Bird, *11 Innovations*, 15.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 241.

focuses primarily on intergenerational engagement with children, youth, or the discipline of family ministry. Therefore, research was conducted in an effort to identify practical ways in which worship leaders can work with other ministry leaders to create a holistic worship ministry that encourages intergenerational engagement. The research findings show that a holistic intergenerational ministry can be accomplished by providing training, offering program support for other ministries, and through leadership development, affirming hypothesis 1.

Recalling the words of Allan Harkness, intergenerational engagement requires intentionality.²⁹⁴ Moving a church's age-segregated worship ministry model toward an intergenerational one will be difficult and require a leader with strong communication, collaboration, and administration skills. The worship leader of this type of worship ministry must have the support and understanding of the church body and the cooperation of other staff members to accomplish the task effectively.²⁹⁵ This difficult task will require the help of many people. This undertaking must be approached by a worship leader who looks first to the church's mission as a whole and determines how his or her ministry works with the other ministries in the church to accomplish that mission.

Worship Training for All

Although the title worship leader is not named explicitly in Paul's leadership list for the church, it should be safe to assume that the role of the worship leader is first and foremost for the building up of the church body. "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:11-12). The worship leader is not there simply to sing

²⁹⁴ Harkness, *Intergenerational and Homogeneous-Age Education*, 52.

²⁹⁵ Jessica Stollings, *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches Through Intergenerational Ministry*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 2018), 112-118.

songs and *do* worship for the congregation but to teach about worship and model what worship looks like in all of life.²⁹⁶ By informing the congregation on the characteristics of authentic worship, he or she is naturally enabling true worshipers and potentially producing new worship leaders.

At Liberty University, the curricula for worship leadership education are built on the belief that authentic worship is formational, transformational, relational, missional, and reproducible.²⁹⁷ With this mindset, the worship leader must approach his or her role to provide training in the local church. If the next generation leaves the church, from where will the future worshipers and worship leaders come? There must be strategies to reach them and draw them into the overall life of the church and its mission.

Looking at most churches' music and worship ministry, one may find a children's choir, an adult choir, an orchestra or band, and on the rare occasion, a youth. These musical groups are often autonomous entities that operate independently of each other. The leadership may not communicate beyond scheduling performances and may have no common shared mission or goal. In such a case, the outcome is a relational activity that may be enjoyable but does not contribute to the formation, transformation, or mission, and it indeed does not reproduce authentic worshiper.

An intergenerational worship ministry should have an integrated system that provides a unified curriculum for theological and artistic training and instruction on the philosophy and praxis of worship. The need for separate age-specific choirs or creative arts groups still exists because of differences in the mental and physical development of the different age groups.

²⁹⁶ Stephen Miller, *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 58-60.

²⁹⁷ David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism*, Original edition (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 2011), 49.

However, while the curriculum is contextually age-appropriate, it progresses as one moves from one age group to another. From the youngest to the oldest, every individual is learning what it means to be a worshiper while discovering their individual significance in the body of Christ. Regular opportunities to lead worship with the other groups reinforce the latter. This process creates a feeder system that becomes a cycle for developing new, informed, reproducible worshipers.

Research indicates that participation in arts education has diminished considerably over the past couple of decades – “only 49.5 percent of people received any arts education in childhood in 2008, compared with 64.6 percent in 1982, and that proportion continues to decline.”²⁹⁸ For the worship leader with a passion for the generations and the future of corporate worship in the church, there should be a plan to counter this trend's results. However, training musicians who have the skill to lead in worship can be a daunting prospect. Local church bodies consist of people of different ages and various musical skill levels. Providing training for everyone which is both age-appropriate and suitable for their skill level is a monumental challenge.

Some churches offer fine arts academies for musical training. Typically, church music ministries provide musical instruction through private lessons in these academies. The strength of this platform is that students generally receive sound instruction in voice and a variety of different instruments. Additionally, because most of these fine arts academies are open to the public, it can be a great outreach program to bring people into the church. A downside to these kinds of programs is that often instruction is limited to a limited selection of instruments, and

²⁹⁸ Nick Rabkin and E.C. Hedberg, *Arts Education in America: What the Declines Mean for Arts Participation*, National Endowment for the Arts, February 2011 cited in Christos A. Makridis and Parassidis, “Reclaiming Arts and Culture in Education: The Fundamental Importance of the Fine Arts,” *American Enterprise Institute Research Papers*, 2021, 1.

often these instruments are not ones that the church regularly utilizes in corporate worship. Combining this with the fact that many of the students are not involved in the church in the first place means that the process may not guarantee new musicians in that church.

Another approach to providing musical training is more self-directed. Today there are many online resources where people can learn how to play instruments or even how to play specific worship songs.²⁹⁹ The resourceful worship leader could design a curriculum utilizing these resources to develop musicians, but this requires much time. The self-guided nature means that the student does not have instruction to correct unrealized mistakes, and it is difficult to track progress and skill mastery. Also absent is the relational element of a student-to-teacher interaction which supports the concept of intergenerational ministry.

A third method is a hybrid model of the previous two developed by Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas. With this method, the worship leader would invite people interested in being involved in the worship ministry to one of two semiannual interest meetings. In these meetings, the church's worship ministry philosophy is discussed. People interested in taking the next step would then schedule an audition. The purpose of these auditions is to evaluate each individual's musical skill and then place them in one of four proficiency-based learning tracks. Each skill level has training for keyboards, electric bass, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, drums, and vocals. The instruction commences when every student is given access to online training where each would learn how to play the same song using the instrument on which they were evaluated. All students learn one song per week suitable for their skill level and then attend class at the church where they would receive instruction from worship team members in their applied instrument, after which all students would be grouped in ensembles where they would then perform the song

²⁹⁹ A list of online musical instruction geared toward worship ministry is provided in Appendix A.

with the other instruments.³⁰⁰ This training method strongly supports the relational aspect of intergenerational engagement. It provides an onramp for individuals of any age and any skill level. The drawbacks are, first, it can be resource-intensive, especially when building such a program from nothing, and second, it possibly creates song mimickers instead of skilled musicians.

Ministry Collaboration and Mutual Support

To create a music and worship ministry that is intergenerationally focused and inclusive, all staff members and ministry leaders must be of a like mind, viewing each individual ministry within the umbrella of the overall church mission. To move away from the compartmentalized, age-segregated multigenerational church (see Figure 2)³⁰¹ to an intergenerationally inclusive one where all ministries support and work with one another to achieve the church's mission (see Figure 4) requires cooperation and collaboration.

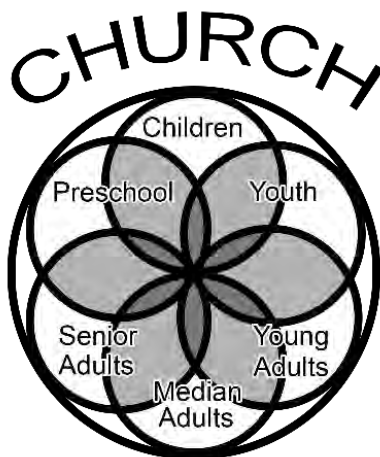


Figure 4: Intergenerational Church

³⁰⁰ Aaron Crider, “Training Worshiping Musicians” (lecture, Gateway Conference, Southlake, Texas, October 5, 2014).

³⁰¹ Adapted from “All Ears Inside the Church” illustration in Hunter, *The DNA of D6*, 38.

Focusing on a shared mission and goals reduces the chance of the development of silos, “the barriers that exist between departments within an organization causing people who are supposed to be on the same team to work against one another.”³⁰² Lance Witt writes, “The best teams are both healthy and high performing. They get along well, and they get stuff done. They have a life-giving culture and a result-producing outcome. They have minimal dysfunction and maximum production. They focus on relationship *and* results.”³⁰³ Working together as a team brings a synergy that opens the church up to exponentially greater possibilities than what can be accomplished by the individual. Most importantly, if the worship leader does not have the blessing and permission of the other ministry leaders, access to those ministries is difficult, if not impossible. The holistic nature of the intergenerational worship ministry is unattainable if the ministry area is absent.

The value of collaboration is understood with a shared, common goal, realizing that that goal cannot be reached without shared resources.³⁰⁴ The most effective way to promote cooperation with other ministries is to invest in them. When other ministries like men’s ministry or women’s ministry have events, the worship ministry can support these ministries by providing musicians and singers to lead worship. Events like these and children’s worship or youth worship can provide valuable experiences for musicians to train their worship leading skills. The goal of mutual support between the various ministries in the church is to allow the worship ministry to become the glue that ties them all together (see figure 5).

³⁰² Patrick Lencioni, *The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate the Three Essential Virtues* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 126.

³⁰³ Lance Witt, *High Impact Teams: Where Healthy Meets High Performance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2018), 28.

³⁰⁴ Tim Sharp, *Collaboration in the Ensemble Arts: Working and Playing Well with Others* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2014), 48.



Figure 5: *Worship Ministry of the Intergenerational Church*

Leadership Development

Creating a fully generationally integrated worship ministry is a monumental undertaking. Implementing a ministry connecting preschoolers, children, youth, and adults under a comprehensive curriculum and common vision cannot be accomplished by a single person. Constructing a worship ministry focused on intergenerational engagement necessitates expansion in its leadership base. It is not practical for the worship leader to lead the teaching and rehearsal of every age group. People's schedules combined with the church's programming create a limited time window for all the groups to meet. One leader obviously cannot be at all places simultaneously, and if they could, the result would undoubtedly be burnout.

The effective intergenerational worship leader must recruit more leaders and develop them to meet the needs of this ministry model.³⁰⁵ According to Mac Lake, creating a culture of leadership development requires an intentional structure, a systematic approach, and purposeful content.³⁰⁶ Instilling a leadership development mindset begins with the ability to communicate

³⁰⁵ Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 25.

the *why*. Identifying the why includes defining the current reality of the church and worship ministry and a vision for a better reality.³⁰⁷ The *whats* (strategies and methods) are essential, but the *why* gives context to everything you do.³⁰⁸ After establishing the why, goals need to be set to serve as milestones, and when met, these need to be celebrated. Talking about the wins reinforces the vision and motivates to keep pushing forward.³⁰⁹

Next, the worship leader must create a structure that gives proper support and alignment within all areas of ministry. The ministry should develop a leadership pipeline, and an organization chart to better facilitate this. The leadership pipeline is a plan that identifies stages in leadership development. Lake provides a generic model that includes five stages: lead self, lead others, lead leaders, lead a ministry area, and lead the church.³¹⁰ A leadership pipeline may be developed for various leadership development roles within the church (see Figure 6.) Organizational charts (org charts) are valuable for establishing lines of communication and identifying leadership gaps within the ministry structure. When creating an org chart, start with what is already in place, list positions and not specific people.³¹¹ Develop your structure anticipating growth, guided by the vision rather than immediate needs.³¹² Examples of an org

³⁰⁶ Mac Lake, *The Multiplication Effect: Building a Leadership Pipeline That Solves Your Leadership Shortage*, Next Leadership Network (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2020), 8-11.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁰⁸ Simon Sinek, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* (New York, NY: Portfolio, 2011), 69-70.

³⁰⁹ Lake, *The Multiplication Effect*, 41.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 67.

³¹¹ Michael Lukaszewski, *Streamline: How to Create Healthy Church Systems* (Caufield & Finch Publishing, 2016), 89-91.

³¹² Lake, *The Multiplication Effect*, 81.

chart and a developmental chart (pipeline) in a church worship ministry striving to be intergenerational can be found on page 79 or the ministry manual in Appendix B.

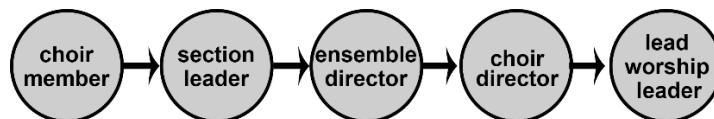


Figure 6: Example of a leadership pipeline.

Designing Corporate Worship Services for the Whole Family

Healthy families are built through time spent together. Research shows a relationship between strong families and the frequency of shared meals. Families who ate dinner together at least five times per week were less likely to have troubled children. The implications of the research were not really about the meal but rather parental involvement in the life of their children.³¹³ Without realizing it, churches sometimes undermine this critical family bonding with church activities. Striving to create intergenerational ministry does not mean that the church should add more things to its ministry calendar. Most families already have too many things in their lives that rob them of precious time together. Instead of adding more to their plate, the church should look to provide programming that brings everyone together.³¹⁴ Fortunately, the church already has one recurring event built into its schedule where families can share time together – the corporate worship service.

Many worship leaders use one analogy for corporate worship: the family dinner table, where grandparents, parents, and children all come together to eat, talk and enjoy fellowship. Some may help prepare the food, others set the table, and others may just sit and eat.

³¹³ Pipes and Lee, *Family to Family*, 11.

³¹⁴ Melissa Cooper, *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches Through Intergenerational Ministry*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 2018), 27.

Nevertheless, everyone has value, and the meal would be incomplete if even one were missing. Expanding on this word picture, Ross Parsley writes, “On Sunday mornings, people should feel as comfortable at church as they might be at Grandma’s house.”³¹⁵ Understanding that the corporate worship service is potentially the most organic way to build healthy families through intergenerational engagement, factors that enhance and impede generational inclusion were researched. The findings indicate that components that positively influence the development of meaningful corporate worship services for multiple generations include intergenerational planning and implementation, relational development, and contextual innovation, affirming hypothesis 2.

Intergenerational Planning and Implementation

Intergenerational worship is not simply gathering people of different ages together in the same room. Intergenerational worship happens when people of every age are engaged, valued for their contribution, and seen to be equally important.³¹⁶ Because it goes against secular culture’s tendency to divide the generations, intergenerational worship is decidedly countercultural.³¹⁷ Although there is biblical support and understood benefits for intergenerational worship, tensions can arise due to differing values between the various generational cohorts. These differing and sometimes conflicting values lead to each cohort's conclusion that their way of doing things is the “right” way to do them.³¹⁸ The intergenerational worship leader must be able to help each

³¹⁵ Parsley, *Messy Church*, 65.

³¹⁶ Howard A. Vanderwell, *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together*, ed. Howard A. Vanderwell (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 11.

³¹⁷ Darwin Glassford, *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together*, ed. Howard A. Vanderwell (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 71.

³¹⁸ Gil Rendle, *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together*, ed. Howard A. Vanderwell (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 56-58.

age group understand the differences between orthodoxy and personal perspective or preference.³¹⁹

Revisiting the family dinner table analogy, Parsley indicates that many churches find it easier to send their children to the “kid’s table.” As with the literal family dinner, it often creates more work when children are involved. Children make messes and create awkwardness that encroaches on the comfort of other family members.³²⁰ Parsley explains,

A meal is a multisensory encounter with many complementary tastes, smells, textures, and dialogues. Many of our churches have opted for a perfect regurgitation of information instead of a messy encounter that actually results in transformation. The family meal is interactive, communal, and provides the perfect illustration of God’s family of believers.³²¹

Looking at the family dinner table, Parsley believes that the children actually establish the culture at the table for the simple reason of being there.³²² He argues that many churches handle their young people like the parent who forces their child to eat a food they do not like:

They treat their children and teenagers with the harshness and authority that crush them, kill their imaginations, smother their sense of wonder, and most damaging leak, cause them to hate dinner with the family. Then they'll find any excuse they can to eat at a friend’s house – anything not to have to endure the family meal...They may give young people a place at the table, but then they make sure the young people know who is in charge. The church leaders want them to be quiet and not make too much noise. "Don't ruin the carpet, and don't use our stuff because you'll destroy it," they say. These adults don't invite them as much as tolerate them at the table. Then they wonder where the young people go as they grow up.³²³

³¹⁹ Ibid., 61

³²⁰ Parsley, *Messy Church*, 66.

³²¹ Ibid., 67.

³²² Ibid., 73.

³²³ Ibid., 75.

Ageism is “a process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old...[they] are categorized as senile, rigid in thought and manner, old-fashioned in morality and skills.” This is a terrible, devaluing message to send to the next generation in the church and needs to change. However, in a discussion about generational inclusion in corporate worship, it is not only the young people that can feel marginalized. Both the young and the old have essential, if not critical, contributions to offer the other. Diane Shallue explains, “Older adults possess a foundation of faith with deep connections to God and a strong sense of spirituality. They can teach others about the finality of life, the value of contemplation, and the joy of relationships.”³²⁴ Numerous research studies show that older people benefit significantly from intergenerational engagement in areas like self-worth, dignity³²⁵, and renewed vibrancy. Young people need the wisdom, knowledge, and deep faith of older generations, and older people need to energy, creativity, and enthusiasm of youth.³²⁶

The worship leader who wishes to design worship services that are genuinely intergenerational needs to understand the differences in perspective and preference between the generations and help others comprehend this reality. Wise leaders understand that the key is “getting the right people around a safe table for the conversations needed” with the purpose of helping others see beyond their own “generational lens.”³²⁷ Creating intergenerational corporate worship services as defined above requires the young and old input in the planning process.³²⁸

³²⁴ Diane E. Shallue, *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches Through Intergenerational Ministry*, ed. Holly Catterton Allen (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 2018), 200.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* 199.

³²⁶ Parsley, *Messy Church*, 80.

³²⁷ Rendle, *The Church of All Ages*, 61-65.

Additionally, it is crucial that the speakers, musicians, and other leaders that implement the worship plan model how intergenerational worship should look. There should be representation from every age group as each is given meaningful roles within the service.³²⁹ The worship leaders on the platform should reflect the desired generational composition of the congregation. By doing so, worship leaders empower every generation by giving children, youth, and all adults ownership in the worship service.

Relational Development

“But those who bemoan the next generation’s shortcomings grow more and more bitter, angry, disappointed, and cynical. On the other hand, those who bless not only grow old with grace and joy, they have a disproportionate influence on the generation that follows.”³³⁰ As established previously, an essential element in creating intergenerational worship that is relevant to every generation is expanding the base of worship leaders³³¹ At times, this can be a difficult transition for people who have been serving in a position and are unsure what these changes mean for their service going forward. Sometimes because of insecurities, these people can become territorial.³³² The first step toward motivating musicians to become mentors is helping them understand the benefits of shifting from an identity as performers to a focus on generativity, investing in the next generation and the church's future.³³³

³²⁸ The Worship Vision Team described in Appendix B, page 77 is an example of a intergenerational planning group.

³²⁹ Tori Smit, “Intergenerational Worship,” *The Presbyterian Record*, November 2016, 34.

³³⁰ Gordon T. Smith, *Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential*, Revised and Expanded edition (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Books, 2011), 71.

³³¹ For the purpose of this paper, a worship leader is anyone who is involved in the execution of the worship service.

³³² Tim Sharp, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts: Helping Others Find Their Voice* (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2011), 143-144.

Because mentoring relationships typically consist of an older teacher and a younger protégé, it is especially suited for intergenerational engagement.³³⁴ The mentoring process promotes the desired culture of selflessness necessary for intergenerational worship. Stepping to the role of a worship leader can be frightening and uncomfortable. Mentoring makes that process go more smoothly. By taking the time to invest in another person, the mentor sends the message that the protégé is important and valuable. It helps facilitate the sense of belonging that church leaders seek through intergenerational worship.

Contextual Innovation

Much of the time, when attracting young people to the church, the conversation turns to music. For many, utilizing a modern contemporary style in their worship services is the silver bullet answer for bringing in the next generation. Unfortunately, studies show that church leaders who depend on music style to bring young people into their church are likely to be disappointed. In his research on the formerly unchurched church growth specialist, Thom Rainer reports³³⁵ that music style ranked next to last among 13 factors that contributed to choosing a church. Conversely, “pastor/preaching” and “doctrine” was close first and second-ranked responses, both nearly doubling the third factor, “friendliness of members.”³³⁶ Similarly, researcher Michael Hakmin Lee discovered that there is only a modest association between innovation in music style and growth. He writes, “Perhaps what makes worship music meaningful and impactful is not

³³³ Ibid., 69.

³³⁴ Sharp, *Mentoring in the Ensemble Arts*, 27.

³³⁵ Rainer calls his study The Formerly Unchurched Project. The formerly unchurched are people who were not involved in church in the past but are now regular attenders of church. Rainer believes the data received from this group is a better indicator for how to reach unchurched people than blindly surveying people who do not go to church and have a high probability of never going to church.

³³⁶ Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched - Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 21.

simply its novel, contemporary flavor, which is inherently fickle and changing, but its ability to effectively facilitate divine encounters.”³³⁷

Confirming the observations above, the authors of *Growing Young* identify contemporary worship music as a distraction from more relevant issues toward bringing young people into the local church: “Our data indicated that while many young people are drawn to ‘casual and contemporary worship, others are drawn to ‘smells and bells’ high-church liturgy and everything in between.”³³⁸ Indeed, music is an essential aspect of intergenerational worship, but there are many other elements to consider for contextualizing the gospel message for intergenerational worship. The real challenge lies in the fact that when the generations come together in one service, many cultures are represented, and trying to achieve relevance for all creates tension that often causes church leaders to be hesitant in making decisions.

Some have attempted to address this by blending worship styles, an effort that provoked this quip: “Effective intergenerational worship would be a congregation of diverse ages sitting through a service of mixed styles that displeases everyone equally.”³³⁹ Mike Harland is critical of the blended model as well. He claims that trying to offer “something for everyone” the worship order is reduced to a static, predictable, and lifeless template that is nothing more than a scorekeeping checklist.³⁴⁰ His alternative:

Creating a healthy worship culture means setting the value of worship as a spiritual discipline above any and all music preferences. It means shepherding a group of people in such a way that they genuinely care about each other. It means

³³⁷ Michael Hakmin Lee, “Worship Style and Congregational Growth,” *The Choral Journal* 58, no. 4 (November 2017): 71.

³³⁸ Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin, *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 27.

³³⁹ John Ortberg, “The Gap: The Fractured World of Multigenerational Church Leadership,” *Leadership* 30 (Summer 2009), 50 cited in *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 196.

³⁴⁰ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 120-121.

developing the spiritual maturity of the congregation so that they think beyond templates and musical styles.³⁴¹

One way of looking at this dilemma is to borrow from the field of ethnodoxology.

Applying the language of the Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture³⁴² to intergenerational worship:

- It is **transgenerational**, the same substance for everyone everywhere, beyond generational boundaries.
- It is **contextual**, varying according to the local situation (both nature and generation).
- It is **counter-cultural**, challenging what is contrary to the Gospel in a given culture or generational value.
- It is **cross-generational**, making possible sharing between different generations.

Each of these adaptations for worship could be used to educate and persuade congregations toward intergenerationally inclusive worship. God purposes every generation to worship; therefore, it is transgenerational. Worship has meaning specific to every generation; therefore, it is contextual. Worship is counter-cultural as it goes against a belief system contrary to biblical truth. Worship is cross-generational and intended to be experienced with people of every age.

Returning to the picture of the church as a family demonstrates the counter-cultural quality of worship. In a modern culture steeped in consumerism, the church needs to decide in corporate worship to be counter-cultural. Evaluating worship services as a consumer creates critiques of performances. On the other hand, seeing the worship service in terms of family, things are seen through the eyes of love. Parsley explains:

When you size up a church as a consumer and base your assessment on what the church can offer you, it creates an unhealthy frame of reference. This consumer paradigm forces us to conduct an analysis of the benefits, while the family

³⁴¹ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 121.

³⁴² “Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture,” Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, accessed May 22, 2018, <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/nairobi-statement-on-worship-and-culture-full-text>.

paradigm fosters a sense of belonging. One paradigm is focused on you, and the other paradigm is focused on others.³⁴³

Contextual innovation for intergenerational worship should be done in areas beyond music. Shortening sermon length and offering supporting structure like video illustrations, drama sketches, Scripture reading, prayers, storytelling, and testimonies or personal stories featuring people from various ages are steps toward contextualizing the service for multiple generations.³⁴⁴ Allowing children and youth to serve in roles as greeters or passing the offering plate also affects ways to connect all generations to the worship service.

³⁴³ Parsley, *Messy Church*, 37.

³⁴⁴ Powell, Mulder, Griffin, *Growing Young*, 184.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the research. Limitations of the study are presented with accompanying detail. Next, results impacting worship ministry are described. Finally, recommendations for further study are presented.

Summary of the Findings

This study was conducted under the premise that the church is in decline and a traditional view of the family is crumbling due to the influence of the contemporary culture. Twenty-first-century culture assumes a postmodern worldview that subscribes to moral relativism and individual autonomy concepts. These beliefs lead people to emphasize the individual over the collective. Further, the denial of absolute truth instills a distrust of all authority.

Social scientists label a group of people who describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious” as the *nones*. This mindset is becoming more and more prevalent in modern society. This group holds special significance for ecclesiological considerations because the generational cohorts known as the millennials are charter members of the *nones*. This generation has lost faith in the local church and has stopped attending for the most part. This disconnect between this generation and those that follow is considered the primary contributor to the decline in attendance and participation in the local church in North America.

The postmodern worldview contributes to society’s relational dysfunction; however, the church carries much to blame for this condition. As a result of church growth initiatives over the past 70 years, churches have gravitated toward specialized, age-specific ministries and education structures. Moreover, in the last couple of decades, the church leaders have offered worship services offering musical styles tailored to personal preference. The findings indicate that these two current realities are primary factors in the fractured church and home.

The Bible prescribes a spiritual formation model that involves passing the faith principles from parent to child, and over a broader scale, from generation to generation. Further, the Bible also offers a picture of what happens when this pattern is not followed: societal breakdown, spiritual emptiness, and dysfunctional families. Thankfully, the Bible also offers multiple redemption models for those that return to the biblical model. The understood solution to the problem is for the church to find ways to reconnect the generations in the church setting, including corporate worship, and help parents rediscover their roles as the primary figure in the spiritual development of their children.

Each generational cohort develops values that define what they define as worthy or correct. These values are not necessarily rooted in true and false choices but rather in perspective. When different cohorts are brought together, their values often collide. Combined with the pervasive consumeristic bent of Western culture, it can be challenging for people to sacrifice their personal preferences in favor of others.

The challenge for modern church leaders, including worship leaders, is to find ways to overcome this tension. In order to successfully navigate the difficulties inherent in bringing the generations together in worship, the worship leader must have strong relational skills, communication skills, and administration skills.

Under the research-supported premise that the church's health and the family's health are related, the study sought to explore ways to build church worship ministries that help facilitate intergenerational engagement and ways to develop worship services with which all age groups could relate. In the first endeavor, the research first revealed that effective intergenerational worship ministries could be developed through training that offered theological and musical training and practical instruction. Next, the research found that intergenerational worship

ministries needed to collaborate and support other church ministries. The third and final finding concerning intergenerational worship ministries was the need for a leadership development process.

The research conducted to determine considerations for creating mutually engaging intergenerationally worship services found that all generations feel more connected to the worship service when they feel that they are essential and belong. The best way to accomplish this is through participation in the planning and implementation processes. Next, relational development in mentorships is crucial to intergenerational corporate worship service that effectively engages all generations. By pouring into the life of another, the mentor starts loosening their grip on the ministry and passing the baton to the next generation. Last, intergenerational corporate worship services require contextual innovation. This is possibly the most challenging concept in the study. Working with multiple generations involves a contextualization process that must consider many cultures.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to this study. Conclusions should be made regarding these findings with the acknowledgment of the following limitations:

1. Intergenerational engagement in the local church body has become a popular subject today. The body of literature regarding the subject continues to grow. Most of the writings available focus on intergenerational engagement with children or youth in a Christian education setting or specifically family ministry. The breadth of research explicitly addressing intergenerational worship ministry is limited. Although more continues to be written, most, if not all, centers on ideas for worship elements that engage children, youth, or young adults. In a search for literature dealing with

- recruitment and training of musicians, no literature was found regarding beginning-level musical instruction.
2. At the beginning of this research process, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. At that time, most areas shut down businesses, including churches. Any active observation or research essentially came to a stop. Arguably, churches lost a year to a year and a half of ministry experience due to these shutdowns and the relatively slow return to regular church engagement. The fact remains that most churches have not returned to the way they were before the pandemic. The shutdowns have, without question, impacted every church, and because the long-term impact is not known yet, the findings in this study may not be helpful.

Practical Application

As churches strive to create more intergeneration opportunities within their churches, it needs to be considered that there are advantages to continuing to offer some age-segregated opportunities. Intergeneration engagement might not be practical or even the best option in some cases. As discussed in the findings, there are some developmental considerations to weigh when offering musical training for preschool, children, youth, and adults.

Corporate worship services and special services like a Christmas concert are prime opportunities to bring all the ages together. Bringing all aged choirs together in a shared worship experience of performance demonstrates the idea of the family worship philosophy more than any lecture on the subject.

The worship leader wishing to create an effective training process open to all ages of all skill levels will need to recruit and mentor new leaders. This model will require help from many

qualified leaders who fully embrace and understand the vision, Combine the training structure with a systematic approach to personal mentoring and become a large undertaking.

Recommendations for Future Study

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, the following recommendations for future studies are suggested:

1. A study comparing the spiritual growth for each generational cohort in the setting of intergenerational corporate worship and an age-segregated one.
2. A comparative study of church music ministries education programs in terms of training in music, spiritual development, worship philosophy, relational engagement, and performance platforms.

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Appendix A

Sample of online resources perfect for intergenerational worship ministries.

Worship Workshop (www.worshipworkshop.com)

This is a progressive training program for the church worship team created by Jon Nicol. The subscription service is an extensive four-tiered approach that focuses on team building and relationship dynamics and worship philosophy and theology. Included with the subscription is a skills library for instrumentalists, vocalist, and tech teams.

Musicademy (www.musicademy.com)

Musicademy has a large, in-depth catalog of video training courses for instruments used in the typical praise band. There is also training for worship leading. Content is available through streaming subscription and the purchase of DVDs.

Worship Artistry (www.worshipartistry.com)

Worship Artistry is a subscription service which provides song-specific training for electric guitar, acoustic guitar, electric bass, keyboard, drums, and vocals. Video lessons demonstrate how to perform the song like the artists in the recording.

Worship Online (www.worshiponline.com)

Worship Online is a subscription service that provides training in a manner very similar to Worship Artistry.

Worship Training (www.worshiptraining.com)

Dan Wilt's Worship Training is an extensive library of video-based training in areas of worship theology, worship philosophy, worship methodology, and instrumental training. A subscription is required.

Praise Charts (www.praisecharts.com)

Praise Charts is the go-to website to find arrangements for nearly every popular worship song. Most arrangements include instrumentation for bands, vocal teams, choirs, and orchestras. Arrangements may be purchased directly or by subscription credits.

Planning Center Online (www.planningcenteronline.com)

Planning Center is by far the most complete music ministry management system available. Cloud-based, planning center helps leaders with communication and scheduling as well as creating sharable service orders. Because files can be attached to the order, people in the ministry have access to music for personal preparation. PCO's Music Stand app serves as a digital music stand on phones and tablets and automatically updates the music. No need to copy or pull music.

MultiTracks (www.multitracks.com)

MultiTracks offers resources like click tracks and multitracks of recordings of original artists. Their Playback app serves as an editable multitrack player and can sync with the Chart Builder app to provide interactive chord charts for musicians. The RehearsalMix service can be

connected to ChartBuilder and Planning Center accounts so musicians can hear their part and practice more effectively.

Loop Community (loopcommunity.com)

Loop Community is a multitrack service much like MultiTracks. Their multitrack playback app is called Prime and they have created pedals specifically to make their products easier to use for worship leaders.

Appendix B

Example of ministry manual for a church attempting to be intergenerational.



Ministry Manual 2020

“It is true that subtle dangers lie in organization, for if it is overzealous it can be an unsatisfactory substitute for the working of the Holy Spirit. But lack of method and failure to organize have spelled doom for many promising ministries.”

- J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*

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Introduction

Communication is the starting point for everything God has called the church to do.

As a Christian leader I desire to effectively communicate the necessary information to help our ministry run efficiently and effectively. Sending out information is not enough. Good communication is heard, understood, and provides a response to the sender.

We live in a time of **information overload**. Communication expert Phil Bowdle explains that the average person is bombarded with 10,000 branded messages every day. We aren't equipped to handle that much data at one time. We simply cannot process it all at once. It may sound horrible, but the natural human reaction is to use the filter of "what's in it for me" to determine whether the message is something worth giving our attention.

According to Bowdle, our attention spans are only about 8 seconds...ahem, wake up!

Keeping the above reality in mind, **I want everyone to know the information that is contained in the following pages**, but I realize that this amount of information is too much to absorb at one time. Some people may read it from cover-to-cover, others may use it as a reference for their specific area of interest, and still others might not even read it all.

The purpose of this manual is to help ALL of us move forward together in our mission while maintaining accountability. Through it, I want to give a *thorough* picture of WHAT we do, WHY we do it, HOW we do it, and WHERE we are going. You will find some information repeated throughout the various sections of this manual. In those cases, it can be assumed that these are things that are important to know. I hope that it shines light on areas that may be somewhat dark for some of us.

I believe God has placed the responsibility for building up the body on leadership (see Ephesians 4:12). If people are not responding in the right way, it is a leadership problem. Part of edifying and building up the body is helping other people take responsibility for themselves and embrace new leadership roles.

Use this manual how you will. You are responsible for knowing its contents. There won't be a test. But this is designed to answer all of your questions. Hopefully you will even find some of it to be interesting.

Serving Him,

Frank

Our Mission

The mission of our Music & Worship Ministry is the same as the mission of Ephesus Baptist Church:

Helping people come together to live out the love of Jesus.

God has placed Ephesus Baptist Church in this community at this time in history to fulfill His unique purpose. We call the physical building we meet in the *church*, but we must realize that the *church* is actually the people who gather at this location. This is more than simply semantics. It is crucial to understanding our mission as the church. If we view the church as an *organization*, the church becomes little more than a clubhouse where people who look alike, think alike, and do the same things come together to meet our own needs and wants. However, if we see the church as an *organism*, we realize that the church is still the church even when we are not gathered together in a physical building.

When we think of the church as an organization, we get the “come together” part of our mission but miss the “live out” part. When we understand that the church continues to be the church in our community and our world because we are a living organism, we are able to synthesize the “come together” with the “live out.” If our “come together” doesn’t produce a “live out” in our workplaces, in our homes, at our schools, in our neighborhoods – the places we actually live, we are not fulfilling God’s purpose for Ephesus Baptist Church.

Jesus expects every person who has experienced His love and grace to share that love and grace to the people they come in contact with. Jesus’ message is the answer to the need of every person. We know the answer life’s biggest problem – *how can I avoid death and eternal separation from God and gain everlasting life?* If we have the answer, how cruel and unloving is it if we do not share that with others?

Then Jesus came to them and said, “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” (Matthew 28:18-20, NIV).

We know this passage as the Great Commission and every person who calls themselves a follower of Christ has a mandate to fulfill it. The purpose of the church is to help believers work together to fulfill the Great Commission. The church certainly has a responsibility to minister within itself, but Jesus didn’t establish the church so we could have a place to withdraw from the world. He created it to be a powerful force in the world: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18, ESV). The church doesn’t exist for itself - it exists for the Kingdom of God. We must make sure that after we “come together” that we always “live out” the love that we have experienced through the work of Jesus.

If you look around our community, we see dozens of other churches. Every single church has the responsibility of fulfilling the Great Commission. Just as He has given Ephesus a distinctive purpose, He has placed every other church where it is to fulfill His purpose. Every church is unique and should strive to know and achieve God's unique purpose for their church body. We are not in competition with our sister churches, nor should we seek to copy their methods for achieving God's purpose. We are different and we should embrace that. If we can remember this, we can freely cooperate with other churches to build God's Kingdom for His glory.

Finally, it is important that the mission of the Music & Worship Ministry not stray from the mission of the church. This ministry exists to help achieve the mission of the church. Ministries within the church must be in alignment with the mission, strategies, values, and vision of the church or they should not exist. Just as lack of unity within the body is counterproductive, ministries operating in a vacuum prevent the church from fully realizing God's purpose and keeps the church stagnant.

Our Strategy

Strategy of Our Church

Everything we do within the Music & Worship Ministry is designed to support the mission of Ephesus Baptist Church. This ministry operates within the strategy of our church to **GATHER**, **CONNECT**, and **LIVE OUT**.



GATHER in Worship

The Music & Worship Ministry is an integral part of the **GATHER** strategy. Most of what we do is in preparation to facilitate authentic corporate worship when we gather each week as a church ministry. We research and purchase music, graphics, instruments, audio equipment, video equipment, lighting equipment, and other elements to use in corporate worship. We communicate and provide resources for our people to learn music and other skills to enhance our corporate worship. We plan services around the preaching of the Bible and choose music to help people engage with God in our worship services. We rehearse our music so that we can skillfully lead our congregation in worship.

CONNECT in Groups

The church's **CONNECT** strategy is focused on getting people involved with LifeGroups for community and D-Groups for discipleship. While the Music and Worship Ministry isn't expressly listed as part of the **CONNECT** strategy, the spirit of the **CONNECT** strategy still exists. Our teams such as the Worship Choir, Praise Team, Praise Band and Tech Team are relational. Because we are a team, community is built and a measure of discipleship should take place. However, as a member of Ephesus Baptist Church, if we want to be fully involved in the strategy of our church, we should be personally engaged in the strategy of the church. Serving on a Music & Worship Ministry Team doesn't replace the connection that takes place in a LifeGroup or D-Group. These are things that are beneficial for each of us individually as well as the church to fulfill our mission.

LIVE OUT the Mission

The Music & Worship Ministry also plays a large role in accomplishing our **LIVE OUT** strategy. First, this ministry is a place of service. Teams like the Worship Choir or the Tech Team are on-ramps for serving on a team in the Music & Worship Ministry. These are ways we can serve the Lord first, as well as serve other people.

Second, our ministry exists to inspire others to **LIVE OUT** the mission. We carefully plan our corporate worship services in a way to help people come together and experience the presence of God each week. As we seek to carry out our plans with excellence, we hope that this experience will move people to worship God through the week that follows.

Strategy of Our Ministry

While the Music & Worship Ministry fulfills a role in the overall strategy of the church, we have a three-fold strategy to accomplish that role: *Produce God-focused Corporate Worship, Raise Up Authentic Worshipers, Develop Worship Leaders*. Each of these strategies are supported by systems and processes with the goal of creating consistency in implementing these strategies more effectively and efficiently. A *system* is simply a combination of processes or parts. It is a methodical way of getting things done. *Processes* are the related activities inside the system that work together to make it function.

Produce God-focused Corporate Worship

We believe we are responsible for producing worship services that focus on pleasing God. These services should be engaging and meaningful to those who attend them.

Hallelujah!
Praise God in his sanctuary.
Praise him in his mighty expanse.
Praise him for his powerful acts;
praise him for his abundant greatness.

Praise him with trumpet blast;
praise him with harp and lyre.
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and flute.
Praise him with resounding cymbals;
praise him with clashing cymbals.

Let everything that breathes praise the LORD.
Hallelujah!

Psalm 150

The first strategy for our church is to **GATHER in Worship**. It could be argued that our weekly corporate worship services are the most important thing we do as a church body. Our worship service is typically the first engagement visitors have with our church. Further, every other ministry flows out of worship of God. We want our corporate worship services to be a catalyst for transforming lives and we want them to inspire the people who attend to live a life of worship the rest of the week that will testify of the goodness of God. We want people to enjoy our worship services. If people miss the service, we want them to believe they are missing something special. We hope they will be moved to invite their friends. However, the aim is not to entertain. Attendance does give us a measure as to whether or not we are offering something of value, but our goal is not to grow our own "Christian Clubhouse." Our desire is to grow the Kingdom of God, not the kingdom of Ephesus.

Raise Up Authentic Worshipers

We believe we are responsible for raising up the kind of worshipers that God is seeking by teaching and demonstrating a biblical model for worship.

But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth.

John 4:23-24

Corporate worship is an activity in which the church body comes together in unity to lift up the name of Jesus. We come together to praise Him and to remember and celebrate His sacrificial death on the cross and His victory over sin and death. Corporate worship is also a time where we share His love with one another, fellowship with one another, and encourage one another. Yet, corporate worship can be a source of division and conflict if we allow ourselves to focus on the wrong things.

Worship is something initiated by God. Our worship is for God. Worship is not about what we can “get out of it.” Worship is not about being entertained. Worship is not about whether or not what we do suits our interests, needs, preferences, or tastes. When we allow ourselves to become focused on these things, worship loses its power and purpose.

I would argue strongly that any modern-day church would find the worship practices of the early church to be strange. The Bible does not give a prescribed method for worship and it seems this is the way God intended it. God wants our worship to be heartfelt and sincere more than anything, and He understands that in order for that to happen, we must offer up to Him worship that connects deeply with the things we value. Methods change and always have changed based on the culture in which the people live. It is difficult, if not impossible, for someone to worship using rituals which they do not understand or value. Following a rote ceremony with no passion or understanding is not worship at all. The Jewish people often fell into this pattern of idolatry. They had excellent worship services, but they weren’t engaged with God and He despised these ceremonies. “These people approach me with their speeches to honor me with lip-service — yet their hearts are far from me, and human rules direct their worship of me” (Isaiah 29:13).

Not having a biblically mandated order of worship can make corporate worship difficult when our focus locks in on the wrong things. That is why our worship must be grounded in scriptural truths and principles. Those who plan and lead worship must have a firm grasp on what the Bible says and does not say about worship. Our songs and words must speak things that are true. As the ultimate Creator, God has allowed us to be creative in our worship of Him so that we can worship from our innermost being in ways that are meaningful and valuable to us. He wants us to be engaged with our mind, body, and emotions.

Developing Worshiper Leaders

We believe we are responsible for the vitality and prosperity of the church moving into the future as we wait for Jesus to return. We will invest ourselves into the people who follow us and will continue to build the Kingdom when we are gone.

What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,
commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2

Earlier we established that the church is an organism rather than an organization. All healthy organisms reproduce or they become extinct. This is true of the Music & Worship Ministry as well. We should continually be looking for potential leaders and investing in them to carry on the role of worship leading.

Our works and ministries are meant to benefit and edify others. God did not gift us with abilities simply to satisfy and build ourselves up. He gave them to us to give them away. We may think we are the greatest singer, the most talented instrumentalist, or the most gifted teacher, but if we are not willing to release our grip from these things and give them away, it will go into the ground with us when this life is over. If we truly want to honor God with our gifts and talents, we will pour them into others, so that hopefully the people we invest in will also invest in other people.

We can complain about the future and direction of the church, but if we are not giving ourselves away to the next generation, we have no grounds to protest. Mentoring and allowing the next generation to hone their ministry is the way of creating a legacy that ensures that we do have a say in what the church will look like when we are gone, as we wait for the Lord's return.

Our Values

Values of Our Ministry

1. We value **God-honoring corporate worship** – When we gather to worship God as a church family, we strive to honor God. God is the object of worship. Worship is not about us and our desires and preferences. We gather because of God; worship is for Him.
2. We value **life-changing corporate worship** – The person who encounters the presence and power of the Living God will be changed. Our corporate worship experience on Sunday should impact how we live our lives the rest of the week. Our corporate worship should compel us to glorify God through our lives by being better Christians in obedience, service, and love.
3. We value **theological integrity in corporate worship** – The Bible is God’s primary method of revealing Himself to man. As God’s Word, the Bible is consistent from Genesis to Revelation and is full of absolute truth. We believe that our response of worship should be in line with His revelation. Nothing we use in corporate worship should contradict scriptural teaching, and the songs we sing should be grounded in sound biblical doctrine, creating a true picture of Who God is.
4. We value **full and complete participation in corporate worship** – We believe that God is pleased when all His people come together to worship Him. What we do corporately is a larger-scale version of what the individual worshiper should be doing privately throughout the week. It is our goal that everything we do would encourage participation by all who gather.
5. We value **multigenerational inclusion in corporate worship** – We believe that God’s truth extends to all people in every stage of life. We believe that God desires all generations to come together to worship Him as one church body so that we may encourage, teach, respect, and love one another.
6. We value **excellence in all areas of our ministry** – God deserves the best of everything we have, not our leftovers. He has not called us to be perfect, but to do the best we can with what He has blessed us with. Excellence strives to keep all attention on God, the proper Object of our worship.
7. We value **worship development and the multiplication of authentic worshipers** – Mature Christians and authentic worshipers have the responsibility of reproducing authentic worshipers. We believe that God has not gifted us for our own benefit, but rather to give it away to others. It is our responsibility to educate and train others both in what it means to be a true worshiper as well as developing skills to help them worship more accurately and effectively.
8. We value **an atmosphere of deference** – When we truly love one another, we are willing to surrender our own personal comfort and preferences for the benefit of others. In doing so, we show we love others as ourselves. Deference is what true servant leadership is all about.

Our Philosophy and Theology of Worship

Our values are not the only WHY behind what we do. In fact, most of our values are formulated from our philosophy and theology of worship based on biblical teaching and historical precedence.

What Is Worship?

Worship is a fog. Even pastors and worship leaders don't really understand it. And, sadly, most seem to be OK with that.

My question is, if even the leaders don't fully understand worship, how can they expect to teach people about it? And if they do not teach people about worship, how can they expect people to participate in it? And if people don't engage in worship, how can we expect to invite the presence of God into our churches? And if we do not invite the presence of God into the Church, how can we expect His power to operate in people's lives? And if His power is not operating in people's lives, how can we expect to have anything other than a lifeless church?

And if the church is lifeless, how can it change the world?

Zach Neese, How to Worship a King

Worship is a word we use a lot but sometimes have a hard time defining. Some people understand worship as singing songs. Others view worship as that event we do when the church gathers on Sunday morning. Others may tell you that worship is a lifestyle. And while there is some truth in each of these 'definitions' of worship, none of them completely cover what the Bible has to teach us about worship.

As we dig into our philosophy and theology of worship, I believe we will find this definition, while not easy to recite, helpful in describing true, biblical worship:

Worship is the believer's response of all that they are – mind, emotions, will, and body – to what God is and says and does. This response has its mystical side and subjective experience and its practical side and objective obedience to God's revealed will. Worship is a loving response that's balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better.

Warren Wiersbe, Real Worship

Who Do We Worship?

The Bible teaches us that God is *omnipotent*, *omniscient*, and *omnipresent*. He is *omnipotent*, meaning He is all-powerful. Nothing is beyond His grasp or control. He has no equal and nothing or no one can stand against Him. He is *omniscient*, meaning that He is all-knowing. There is nothing He does not know. Nothing happens that He is not aware of. He is *omnipresent*, meaning He is everywhere at all times. There is nowhere a person can go that God is not also there.

The Bible uses many adjectives to describe God. He is almighty, amazing, awesome, blessed, benevolent, consuming, creative, excellent, forgiving, good, incorruptible, just, jealous, loving, merciful, perfect... the list goes on and on. The English language combined with the roughly 6,700 other languages in the world do not contain enough words to describe Him completely.

You will find many names in the Bible used to identify the God of Judaism and Christianity. These names have been used by people to better describe what they came to understand about His identity and His character as they experienced Him through revelation. *Elohim* means "Strong One." *El Shaddai* is "God Almighty." *El Elyon* is "The Most High God." *El Olam* is "The Everlasting God." He is the *Ancient of Days*. He is *Jehovah Jireh*, God my Provider. He is *Jehovah Shammah*, the God who is there. And these are just a few of His names.

This powerful God is also a loving God. He is both *transcendent* and *immanent*. He is transcendent because He is beyond comprehension. To know Him completely is beyond our capacity. He is infinite. He is a mystery to us. But this unknowable God is also *immanent*. He is involved in our lives and He cares about every little and every big thing we go through. Because of His immanence, He chooses to reveal Himself to us and make Himself known to us.

This God, who lacks nothing and needs nothing, desires to have a relationship with man – me and you. If that doesn't overwhelm you, your view of God is too small. God is not whimsical or capricious. Everything He does has a purpose. Everything He created has a purpose. This is why He created us, so that we would worship Him.

The Identity of Man

Genesis 1:26-27 tells us that God created man in His own image. What exactly does this mean? While we cannot completely explain this concept, we can understand that when God looked at man, He saw something of Himself in him. Like any artwork, the creation reveals the creator. It also tells us that there is something about man that makes him greater than the rest of Creation. No other thing God created was made in God's image.

Theologian A.W. Tozer calls man "the darling of the universe, the centerpiece of God's affection." He compares man to a mirror which reflects the glory of God back to Him.

When a little baby is born into the world, the father searches intensely to see if the baby looks like him. He may be too tough to

say it, but every father looks earnestly into the wrinkled face to see whether it looks like him or not. We want things to look like us, and if they are not born to us, we go out and make them. We paint pictures; we write music; we do something, because we want to create. Everything we create is a reflection of our personality. In the world of art, a Monet is easily distinguished from a Rembrandt. Each painting reflects the personality of the artist.

God made man to be like Him so that man could give more pleasure to God than all the other creatures. Only in man, as created by God, can God admire Himself. Man is the mirror image in which God looks to see Himself. Man is the reflection of the glory of God, which was the purpose and intention of God originally. Man's supreme function through all eternity is to reflect God's highest glory, and that God might look into the mirror called man and see His own glory shining there. Through man, God could reflect His glory to all creation (The Purpose of Man, p. 43).

Tragically, man chose to do the only thing that God told him not to do - he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3). As a result, man ceased to fulfill his created purpose - to reflect God's glory back to Him and the rest of creation. The mirror had been broken and God could no longer look at it, much less see Himself in it. Man not only lost His purpose, but forgot his identity. He no longer knew who he was. Fellowship with God was broken and authentic worship was hindered because of sin.

The Pattern of Worship

"Worship is initiated by God who has revealed Himself. Theology is discovering God, not inventing religion. Revelation tells us three bits of information: There is a God, we have rebelled against this God, and we need to be redeemed."

-Kevin Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader*

God created man with a free will to choose to worship Him or not. When man lived in the Garden of Eden, his relationship with God was pure and continual. When man sinned, man tried to hide from God. I find this interesting: while we live in this fallen world, God will allow us to run from Him. Just as this God who knows everything chooses to forgive and *forget* our sins, He will let us hide if we so desire. But one day, when this life is over, we will either go to heaven where His presence and glory is constantly with us, or we will go to hell, where His presence cannot be found. We do have a choice now. Our worship is the one thing that we can give God that He cannot give Himself.

Because of God's nature, He never turned His back on man. The Bible is a series of stories that flow together contribute to one larger, overarching story. The theme is unified and consistent – God loves us and wants us to love Him. The narrative of the Bible tells of a God who is different from the gods of every other religion. The God of the Bible is a God who chases after people. He longs for man to know Him and He freely reveals Himself to us. He reaches down to us. Every other religion in the world is the story of man trying to find a god - trying to reach out to a god – trying to gain acceptance from a god. Religion creates a god in the image of our limited imagination. This god becomes what we want or think he should be.

Through the accounts recorded in the Bible, we find a consistent pattern: God reveals Himself; man responds. Any relationship with God is initiated by Him. It is not our idea. We do not find the God of the Bible on our own initiative. He is the One who seeks us out. The good news is He is not hard to find because He chooses to reveal Himself. "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:16). So, this is the pattern of authentic biblical worship: revelation-response, revelation-response, revelation-response...

The Work of Jesus

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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3:16-17).

Because of sin, man was separated from fellowship with God. If we read the Old Testament, we observe that Jewish worship involved animal sacrifice. When Adam sinned, death was introduced into the world. In order for God to "look past" our sins and accept man's worship, a living sacrifice must take place. The Bible tells us, "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). The problem with the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, the covering of our sin (atonement), did not last. Later, another sacrifice would have to be made. And then another. And then another...

He humbled Himself and entered this world because He loved us and wanted to restore us to our originally created purpose. "The Word **became flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace **and** truth" (John 1:14).

In the person of Jesus, the Son, we have the perfect and ultimate sacrifice. He lived a perfect life and His blood became the final sacrifice needed to cover our sins. Through Him, although man may experience physical death, he may live forever in eternity with God, his Creator. Without the work of Jesus, man is condemned to die spiritually and share in the punishment of the deceiver, the one who tempted Adam and Eve and who still roams the earth seeking to steal from God the one thing He desires most – our worship.

This is God's grace: although we deserve condemnation and death, He has made a way for us to escape it. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Salvation is available to all men who are willing to receive it. It is not something we earn. It is something we are given. God reveals – we respond.

The first result of Jesus' work is salvation. Because of Jesus, those who receive salvation are now *capable* of fulfilling the purpose for which we were created. Man now has the ability to reflect back to God, and others, His glory. But even though Jesus has built this bridge, not all choose to reflect the glory of God. Not all who have received His great salvation will offer Him authentic worship.

I have heard it said that *salvation is unconditional, but worship is conditional.* Of course, man must choose to receive salvation, but salvation is something that is available to all men. However, not everyone who wants to offer worship to God is necessarily capable of offering worship that He will accept.

Principles of Authentic Worship

Authentic Worship Is Continual

True worship encompasses everything we do in life. It is offering everything we are to everything God is.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:1-2

Authentic Worship Is More About the Heart Than the Act

Acceptable worship is about repentance and surrender. God doesn't want our worship if it is not given from a pure heart. Worship that is acceptable to God requires brokenness and humility.

Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; you are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.

Psalms 51:15-17

Authentic Worship Reveals Who God Is and Who We Are

When we read of Isaiah's worship experience in Isaiah 6, we see that his worship revealed the perfection, righteousness, and holiness of God. Having encountered the presence of God, Isaiah is also confronted with the reality of who he was – a unclean and sinful man desperately in need of forgiveness.

Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Armies.

Isaiah 6:5

Authentic Worship Is Offered in "Spirit and Truth"

In His meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus reveals to her that worship is not confined to a specific location or time. We can and should worship God anytime and anywhere. Further, He states that the kind of worship God is seeking is worship that is offered in "spirit and truth." Authentic worship comes from our innermost being and is guided by God's truth.

But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth."

John 4:23-24

True worship has both objective and subjective aspects, and we must maintain this balance. Jesus may have had this in mind when He said, "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24 NIV). "In spirit" (note that the *s* is not capitalized) refers to the subjective side of worship; "in truth" refers to the objective side. If we don't submit to some kind of objective revelation, some Word from God, then our worship is ignorant and probably false. On the other hand, if we know the truth but merely go through the outward motions of worship, our worship will be hypocritical and empty.

Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship*

Authentic Worship Requires Our Entire Being

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was by the religious rule keepers of His day, He said that the highest level of obedience came through loving God completely.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Matthew 22:37

Worshiper vs. Worship Leader

Everyone is a worshiper. God created man with an innate need to worship. We all worship something. It may not be the proper object of worship, but we all have things that we place high value on which guide our attitudes and actions.

God is the proper object of worship. As the Music & Worship Ministry, we believe it our job to teach and model authentic worship both on and off the platform. That means that we are not only trying to create complete participation in corporate worship, but we want that corporate worship to inform the actions and attitudes of the congregation away from the physical church building. Understanding this, we want the way we live off the platform throughout the week to teach and model authentic worship.

Not everyone is a worship leader. However, the minister of music (or song leader or worship pastor or whatever title you use) is not the only worship leader. First, Jesus is our primary worship leader (see Hebrews 10:19-22). Second, the senior pastor is the lead worshiper in the local church, because he sets the overall tone for corporate worship. But worship leading is not simply reserved for the “professional” ministers. Every person involved in producing the worship service is a worship leader, from the choir to the band to the person praying for the offering to the person projecting the words on the screen. These are all acts of worship leading, and by definition, the people who do them are worship leaders. As worship leaders, we all have the responsibility to teach and model worship.

A Brief History of the Church and Corporate Worship

For us to truly understand why we do what we do when we gather as a church body to worship together, we must have a clear picture of what the Bible says about worship. However, it is also important to understand how those who went before us worshiped. A connection to the saints who have gone before us not only connects us to the first Christians but joins us with the Universal Church worldwide. We know that God continues to speak in new ways and in varying cultural contexts, but tradition and ritual are not bad things. We ritualize things that are important to us. The problem arises when the ritual becomes ritualism, thereby losing its meaning and significance. Vernon Whaley writes, “When focusing on the purpose of music in worship, it is

important to recognize the role of tradition... but tradition for the sake of tradition will not preserve the blessings from the past.” He goes further:

We should focus on the purpose of music in corporate worship because people will always express concern about preserving their musical and cultural heritage. Preserving heritage is not worship. And it is not the reason Christians join together for praise. We cease to worship when we make the preservation of our traditions and heritage the primary motive for singing and making music to God.

Vernon Whaley, *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship*

Finally, looking back over the use of music for worship in the history of the church we find that disagreements over musical style are not unique to us. God often poured out His greatest blessings when worship methods were adapted to meet people where they were in a meaningful way.

This is the same challenge that missionaries face when they go into different cultures. It isn't only a language barrier that they face, but a cultural divide. Missionaries have found out that simply translating western hymns into native languages rarely works. There are many reasons, but the main issue is the music is not culturally relevant. As a result, indigenous people see Christianity as an American or European religion. They do not see that God is for them. Missionaries who are truly able to connect the gospel message with the heart of indigenous people realize they must frame the message in their “heart language.” This process is called *contextualization*. The message doesn't change but the method changes.

In my mind, this brings up other possible questions: if worship is for God, *why does it matter if the music we use appeals to us? Aren't we supposed to surrender our preferences?* I would say this questioning is a correct way of thinking, but remember, God wants truly heartfelt worship. He cannot receive that if we do not have any connection to the songs we sing. The wise worship leader understands that he or she must start with the “heart language” of the people they are leading. There should be growth and a broadening of worship expression, but worship leaders cannot run too far ahead of their congregations or they run the risk of not connecting the people with God in a meaningful way.

Before the Creation

Before the creation of man, God had the angels. God gave the angels a choice to worship Him. This is evident because we know that Lucifer chose to try to make himself the object of worship. The Bible describes the beauty of Lucifer and it is often postulated that he was the lead worshiper in heaven. When he was cast out of heaven because of his rebellion, it is believed that a third of the angels who followed him were cast out with him (Revelation 12:4).

We incorrectly view Satan as some ugly, scary being, but I would argue that he is extremely attractive, wily, and cunning. His “heart” is repulsive, but on the outside, he is alluring. That is why he is hard to resist. It is he with the angels who were cast out of heaven who are the

“principalities” and “rulers of the dark world” mentioned in Ephesians 6:12, that we wrestle against. The enemy is constantly working to steal God’s worship by appealing to our own pride and turning our hearts toward idolatry.

Old Testament Worship

The Garden of Eden is the picture of perfect worship. God and man enjoyed unbroken fellowship. Man experienced the full presence of the Holy God. But after man sinned, man could not go directly into the presence of God because of His nature. When man sinned, we find that man is hiding from God. Yet God is omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipresent (ever-present). Can man truly hide from God?

Like the angels, God gave man free choice. Man can choose to worship God or not and man can seek to find God’s presence or not (Jeremiah 29:13). This all-knowing God also tells us that He is able to not only forgive our sins but *forget* them. How is this possible. If the omniscient God can choose to forget something, is it possible He can choose to not know where we are if that is our desire? We know that the Father turned away from His Son on the cross. It is a difficult question for our finite minds, but an idea that is important in our understanding of worship and a desire to enjoy God’s presence. We know that when we get to heaven, we will again be in perfect relationship with God. We will not be able to escape His presence. If we die and go to hell, it will be impossible to find His presence. Is it possible that while we live here on earth we can choose whether we find His presence?

Looking at worship, we read about Cain and Abel and how Abel’s offering was accepted and Cain’s was not. It was a heart issue (Genesis 4:1-15).

Music is first mentioned in the Bible with the brothers Jubal and Jabal (Genesis 4:20-21).

The first record of the Hebrew people singing praise is found in Exodus 15 after the children of God crossed the Red Sea and God drowned the Egyptian armies.

In all, the word *singing* is mentioned over 60 times in the Old Testament, *sing* over 120 times, *singer* or *singers* over 40, and *musical* or *musicians* over 50 times.¹

Hebrew worship revolved around a sacrificial system. There was animal sacrifice used for burnt offerings. “And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22). There were also sacrifices of praise through singing and the playing of musical instrument. There were many other kinds of offerings and sacrifices in the Jewish sacrificial tradition, but that would not make this a “brief history.”

¹ Vernon M. Whaley, *The History and Philosophy of Worship Workbook* (academx publishing service, 2013), 21.

With Moses, God introduced the tabernacle (Exodus 25-31; 35-40). In short, the tabernacle was a tent that was set up in the center of the Hebrew encampment as they wandered in the wilderness. The tabernacle was the central place of worship and represented God's presence with the Israelites. The tabernacle would be taken down and put up again as the people traveled. Within the tent was held the Ark of the Covenant. It was kept in a section called the Holy of Holies and no one could enter this area except the high priest, and this was done only once per year. With the tabernacle, God was very specific about its design and the elements held within it. He also gave precise instructions on how they were to offer their worship. Failure to follow these requirements exactly often ended in death. Worship was a serious activity.

Probably the most important Old Testament personality in regard to worship is King David. King David was a man after the heart of God (1 Samuel 13:14). David was the consummate artist. He was certainly the melancholy, sensitive type. David's contribution to corporate worship was great. He organized the priests and musicians for worship, assigning worship leaders for specific jobs and amassing large choirs and "orchestras." He is also the author of most of the Psalms. The Psalms in the Old Testament are the equivalent of the Hebrew hymnal.

David also desired to build a permanent "home" for God in the way of the temple. God did not want a temple. He knew the inclination of the Hebrew people's hearts toward idolatry and He didn't want them to see His presence as being confined to a specific place. Eventually, God did allow David's temple to be built, but He would not let David build it. David dreamed it and designed it, but it was David's son, Solomon, who built it. It was extravagant, built from only the finest materials from all over the known world.

Idolatry is simply worshiping something other than God. Idolatry takes place when we allow our affections to place something other than God in the highest position of our lives. Idolatry is a constant problem and it was something with which the Hebrew people always struggled with. The books of the prophets in the end of the Old Testament deal primarily with this problem. The prophets would warn the people of their idolatry. Unfortunately, most of the time, they were ignored. The Israelites were really good at ritualism, but often bad at genuine worship.

There is so much more that we can garner on the subject of worship in the Old Testament, but these are the highlights. It is important to note that from the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, until Gabriel tells Zechariah that His wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to John the Baptist, (Luke 1:5-24), about 500 years, God is virtually silent.

New Testament and Early Church Worship

Jesus worshiped as the Jews worshiped. He worshiped in the temple (not Solomon's temple, but the rebuilt temple) and in the synagogues. Synagogues are Jewish centers of worship. Synagogue worship focuses on the reading and teaching of Scripture. We find that it was Jesus' regular habit to worship in these places. We read of Him, even as a child, worshiping and even teaching Himself.

The New Testament is not specific on how corporate worship should be done. We know that after Jesus was crucified, raised from the dead, and returned to heaven that His early followers

continued to worship in the places the Jews did. But this eventually created a problem because of different beliefs about Jesus between the Jews and the Christians.

We didn't cover the Sabbath (which begins at sundown of Friday) in our brief review of the Old Testament, but it is not hard to see the importance that the Sabbath played in the Jewish ritual. While the early Christ followers were worshiping on the Sabbath in Jewish worship centers, they also began meeting and worshiping on Sunday because this is the day that Jesus rose from the dead. When Christians began to be forced out of the temple and the synagogues, Sunday became the primary day of worship for these new believers. There were no church buildings, so the first Christians mostly met in homes.

It may be argued that the church was officially birthed at the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the helper Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit, fell upon the apostles and other believers. God moved in a mighty way and about 3,000 people were saved and baptized. Jerusalem was a major hub that drew people from all over the known world. The crowd that day was filled with foreign people who heard the gospel message and believed and then returned home, taking the message of Jesus with them.

It is also important to note that the early church used the Old Testament alone as their sacred text because the books of the New Testament were being written. It was nearly 400 years before the 27 books of the New Testament, as we know it, was canonized. Yet the church saw some of her most rapid and exponential growth during this time. And even more remarkable is the fact that it grew in the face of extreme and cruel persecution, mainly by the Roman Empire.

The early church found itself planted in a very pluralistic and pagan culture. Every region had their own gods with monuments and temples built to worship them. What is more, the people of those regions were not faithful to their own gods. They had no qualms about worshiping the gods of other cultures. The idea of monotheism, the worship of one God, did not make sense in this culture. Yet, the church continued to grow in the face of persecution through the work of the Holy Spirit, the eyewitness accounts to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the godly lifestyle of believers... in the absence of the New Testament.

A huge turning point in the history of the Christian church happened when Roman Emperor Constantine became a Christian. In 313, Constantine made Christianity the "official" religion of the Roman Empire. There is much debate as to sincerity of Constantine's conversion. He didn't disassociate from other pagan religions. And although he embraced Christianity, he didn't outlaw other religions. The significance of Constantine's edict however is that it first greatly reduced widespread persecution of Christians. It became easier for Christians to openly worship Jesus and share their faith. Second, Constantine began to cozy up to church leaders. This gave church leaders some political power as well as financial support from the empire. During this time, the first church buildings began to be constructed.

Worship in the Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages or Dark Ages (500-1500), the church experienced its greatest growth. With the support of the Roman Empire, Christians were free to be open about their faith. The

church gained political power and even benefitted from the monetary support that accompanied such political power.

Christians also had the benefit of the New Testament added to the Old Testament for spiritual guidance. If we read much of Paul's writings, we see that with the rise of the church came many false teachers. These were people who played on the popularity of the Christian movement but were teaching false doctrine. The preaching wasn't the only issue with this apostasy. There were "hymns" being written by false teachers that also taught wrong theology. It had become a major problem.

Church leaders with pure motivation struggled with how to deal with these heretics and their false teachings. To combat this, clergy began to take a more prominent role in the planning and presentation of music. Over time, church leaders continued to take control of all aspects of worship. Eventually, worship services were performed solely by priests and professional musicians. Because the Bible used by the Church was only written in Latin, the mass spoken in Latin, and the lyrics sung in Latin, corporate worship service became non-participatory because no one understood what was going on.

Furthermore, as one might assume with the power and influence that comes with mixing politics and religion, the church became corrupt. Sincere people who were attending worship out of obedience were being controlled by church leaders who led worship services that did not connect the people with God and they abused their authority through acts like selling indulgences.

After Constantine, other Emperors made the Christian faith mandatory for citizenship. The church wielded even more power in communities all over the world. The church often had as much power if not more than local governments and made life extremely hard for people who did not support or adhere to its demands. The church grew more than it ever had during this time, but it was indeed the Dark Ages.

One more important issue regarding the church in the Middle Ages is the birth of Islam around 622. The Middle Ages also saw great conflict between Christians and Muslims. This was the time of the Crusades. The Christian Church had five major centers, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. As the Middle Ages were coming to a close, Islamic forces had taken control of all of these cities except Rome. This is the primary reason that the Roman Catholic Church had established such a stronghold in Europe.

The Protestant Reformation

Martin Luther was a monk of the Augustinian order who lived in Wittenberg, Germany. After years of Bible study, Luther became very angry with the way the Catholic Church was abusing its power. He took to heart the message that salvation came only by grace and the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ, not by following the demands of the church. He believed in the priesthood of every believer and knew in order for the believer to fulfill their role as a priest, he must be able to understand the Bible for himself.

On October 31, 1517, Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg. This date, for protestants, marks the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Among reformers of this time were Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland, John Calvin of Switzerland, and John Knox of Scotland. There is much more we could discuss about the works and ideas of these men and how their thinking influenced the beliefs of different protestant denominations. These men had theological differences, but they all fought against the corruption of the Catholic Church.

The most important development from this Christian movement is the fact that it returned corporate worship to a participatory event. Luther translated the Bible into German so that the everyday man could read it for himself and analyze its content. Furthermore, more than any other reformer, Luther believed in robust singing. He utilized tunes that were easy to sing and joined them with vernacular lyrics so that the common man would sing in worship. It is said that Martin Luther used bar tunes in many of his hymns, though there is no reliable evidence to support this. It is of note that the main purpose of Martin's hymns, and many hymns for that matter, was not to necessarily to produce praise, but rather to teach theology.

The Great Awakenings

As we move into this discussion about a few of the Great Awakenings, it is important to note that there is some disagreement as to what constitutes an awakening and specific dates of said awakenings. For our purposes, we'll say that a Great Awakening is a period of unusual and great spiritual renewal that has a tremendous impact on the worship practices of a significant geographical area and people. *Great Awakenings happen when God meets culture and turns people's hearts toward Him.* I want to focus on specific personalities and the influence their work has on how we worship corporately today.

The Awakening in Europe and America (1727-1790)

This first Great Awakening began before the Colonies declared their independence from Great Britain. Influenced by the theology of reformers like John Calvin, most churches used metrical psalter for music in their corporate worship. Calvin believed first that music used in worship should not be ornate so as not to take attention away from God. This meant the tunes were simple, sung in unison, and generally unaccompanied by instruments. Second, Calvin believed that the lyrics for such songs must come straight from scripture. Poetic expression was frowned upon.

This awakening was led by men like John Edwards, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, and Isaac Watts. It is during this time that hymns, as we would recognize them, began to be accepted. Prior to this time the use of hymns with their harmonies and poetic texts were seen as inappropriate for corporate worship and greatly resisted. Watts and the Wesleys really helped pave the way for the acceptance of this new musical form.

Isaac Watts was first a preacher and he wrote many hymns to support his sermons. As a young man returning from college, Watts viewed the singing in worship as boring and of poor quality. He first began creating hymns from the musical psalter and later moved to add more poetic

language carefully crafted to remain true to scripture. Watts wrote around 750 hymns. Among them are "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Joy to the World," and "When I Survey the Wonderous Cross."

John and Charles Wesley are credited with writing and translating more than 6,500 hymns between the two of them. John was primarily the preacher and Charles the composer. While Watts mostly wrote about God's transcendent power, the Wesleys wrote more of His immanence as our Loving Father. Among the hymns given to us by the Wesley brothers are "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," and, "O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing."

These men certainly were trailblazers in hymnody but there are many other hymns that we still sing today that come from this era: "How Firm a Foundation" (John Rippon), "Amazing Grace" (John Newton), "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood" (William Cowper), and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" (Edward Perronet) to name a few.

Another important innovation that came from this awakening is the establishment of singing schools in the colonies. In general, musicianship and singing were terrible in early America. These singing schools helped congregations learn how to read music. These schools also taught the early settlers doctrine and practical methods for leading worship.

The Camp Meeting Awakenings (1780-1820)

I don't know about you, but when I think about the birth of our nation - the Declaration of Independence and our improbable and miraculous victory, I have a romantic image of celebration and fireworks and of a nation praising God for His goodness. But war ravages the land on which it is carried out and the sacrifices made to wage such wars are costly.

In the years following the American Revolution, the United States experienced a long period of spiritual decline. Evidence of depravity was everywhere. The years of war took their toll in the church. The economy was in shambles. Church buildings had been burned. Farms were destroyed. Towns, by the scores, needed repair. Hundreds of clergy had died in battle, fighting the British alongside their congregants. While the new country won freedom from England, it lacked spiritual leadership.

These conditions were complicated by growing fascination of American intellectuals with European empiricism and rationalism. There was a rapid spread of secularism and deism among many. Deism denied the reality of God's intervention in the lives of people and rejected any notion of supernatural guidance or answers to prayer. Deists treated God as an "absentee landlord." Deism taught that the Bible was myth, mostly allegory, and full of fables. Inspired revelation from God was thought to be nonexistent or irrelevant. Human reason determined good and evil. Man was exalted and God

was ridiculed, mocked, denied, and scorned. Deism paid tribute to the supposed inherent goodness of man and incited lawlessness, self-indulgence, and immorality. At one point, conditions got so bad in America that the French infidel and atheist Voltaire said Christianity would be forgotten in the new nation within three decades.

America paid a price for its spiritual and moral decay. More than 15,000 of the 300,000 confirmed alcoholics in America died each year. Profanity was rampant, and women were afraid to go outdoors at night for fear of assault and rape. Bank robbery, fraud, infidelity, gambling, and licentiousness were commonplace.

Elmer Towns and Vernon Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*

Certainly, this isn't what I think of when I sing the "Star-Spangled Banner" or see the flag waving in the air. Yet, this is the backdrop in a new America in which God brought the second Great Awakening. The significance of this Great Awakening is the openness in which worshipers expressed their emotions with outward expressions of repentance and sorrow for sin.

This was a time of growth, expansion, and the unknown frontier. Americans were moving westward through the wilderness. It wasn't a time for the meek or timid. The awakening was marked by circuit-riding preachers, mostly Methodist and Baptist faith, who traveled the country holding outdoor revivals. These camp meetings were marked by enthusiastic singing and highly emotional responses to intense and fiery preaching. Stylistically, music at these meetings would be characterized as folk music and spirituals.

Sunday School and Charles Finney Revivals (1820-1850)

The American Sunday School Union was established in Philadelphia in 1817 to promote Christian education for children across the nation. Francis Scott Key, composer of our national anthem, was the president of the ASSU in 1830 when he called for 80 Sunday School missionaries to start Sunday schools in every town in the Midwest. Over the 50 years that followed, 61,297 Sunday schools were established, many of them later becoming Methodist or Baptist churches.

Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1876) was a lawyer from New York who had a reputation for his atheism and antagonism toward evangelical Christianity. After a conversion experience, Finney left his law practice and began to preach revival services across the nation. As a preacher, Finney used his persuasive skills as a lawyer to create compelling, well-reasoned appeals for the Gospel. Finney is among the first to have an altar call at the end of his sermons to allow people to come forward and pray and repent of their sins.

Finney's methods and music were very controversial in his time. Finney used music in worship in as a tool for evangelism. The music used was simple and typically devotionally-themed. Finney recruited Thomas Hastings, a leading musician of the day, to lead worship in his revivals.

Three aspects to Finney's worship should be noted: (1) Finney's "new measures" created a new, indigenous form of worship. He thoroughly contextualized worship and embraced musical and communication styles. (2) Finney's pragmatic approach to worship provided freedom over traditional practices by established denominations and conservative churches – particularly larger congregations in the Eastern American seaboard. (3) Finney almost single-handedly inverted worship and evangelism. Heretofore, pastors believed that worship was primary and evangelism was a by-product. Finney believed the exact reverse – everything is done for the singular purpose of evangelism.

Elmer Towns and Vernon Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*

Another person of note from this era is Lowell Mason, composer of "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" and friend of Thomas Hastings. Mason helped found Boston Academy of Music and along with Hastings and William Bradbury ("Jesus Loves Me," "Savior, Like A Shepherd," and "Sweet Hour of Prayer") developed the first music education programs for public schools.

The Layman's Prayer Revival (1857-1890)

This Great Awakening receives its name from a movement of concerted prayer. These prayer groups are seen as the catalyst for this mighty move of God.

Significant personalities from this awakening are evangelist Dwight L. Moody and his musical director, Ira D. Sankey. Music was important to Moody. Sankey served in Moody's church in Chicago as well as his revival campaigns. Sankey, referred to by many as the "father of gospel music," often accompanied himself with the organ as he introduced a new style of gospel hymn.

Moody was committed to contextualizing his evangelistic services around the culture. The music that Sankey used in these revivals were met with much criticism. These gospel songs were generally simpler poetically than accepted hymns of the day, limited in theological content and tended to be somewhat repetitive because of the addition of the repeated refrain.

Out of this period came many of our most loved hymns we sing today by songwriters such as Fanny Crosby, William H. Doane, Robert Lowry, and Philip Bliss.

The Revivalists and Great Evangelistic Campaigns (1890-1935)

Important people from this awakening include J. Wilbur Chapman, R.A. Torrey, and Billy Sunday. Billy Sunday was the most effective evangelist of the early twentieth century. He was flamboyant and charismatic and his musical director, Homer Rodeheaver was known for his enthusiastic singing of gospel songs and assembling large choirs for their revivals. Again, many people did not welcome the methods used in these evangelistic campaigns. Some said Sunday's revivals were more like a circus than a worship service.

It was from this awakening that Villa Rica's very own Thomas Dorsey became well-known. Thomas was born in Villa Rica on July 1, 1899. His father was an itinerant preacher. Trained in jazz music, he was inspired by the music from a Sunday-Rodeheaver revival held in Atlanta. He wrote the song "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," and is known as the "father of black gospel song."

Early Twentieth Century Campaigns (1935-1960)

Things were changing dramatically in the United States. The country had experienced World War I and was beginning to climb out of the Great Depression, moving toward World War II. Prohibition placed a ban on the production and sale of alcohol. Many evangelists preached about the evils of alcohol and often met with much opposition. One such preacher was the bold and fiery Mordecai Ham, a descendent of eight generations of Baptist preachers.

Ham was well-known for his own preaching, but it was arguably the greatest evangelist of all time who was saved at one of Ham's meetings – Billy Graham. It is Billy Graham and his musical evangelists, George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows, who are the face of twentieth century evangelistic crusades.

It is important to understand that many advances in technology, especially as it pertains to communication, were key factors in these spiritual awakenings. During this time, we have the advent of the radio and with it, religious programming. Television followed this pattern.

The position of full-time, professional ministers to serve as Ministers of Music came into existence after World War II as people began to consume professional quality music on media and desired to have it reproduced in their local church.

The Jesus Movement and the Praise Chorus (1965-1990)

The Jesus Movement came out of the Hippie-culture in California. In short, an expression of worship arose that appealed to the younger generation that was freer, utilizing the popular musical sound of the youth. Worship emphasized the immanence of God and focused on the experience of worship.

Christian music publishers like Maranatha! Music and Integrity Music began producing recordings of worship services in this new musical genre. These songs were termed "praise and worship" or simply "praise choruses." These songs were criticized by those who did not like them as repetitive and theologically shallow.

Seeker-Sensitive

It can be said that the seeker-sensitive movement began in 1975 with the founding of Willow Creek Church in Chicago by Bill Hybels. Hybels' vision for this church was like nothing ever done before. Hybels' Sunday services focused on creating an experience intended to attract people who would not attend a regular church. These services mostly contained secular songs led

by bands and a message which centered around good advice and self-help topics. The model was intended to get the unchurched in the door in hopes of getting them connected with their mid-week service geared more toward believers.

Out of this type of thinking, although the models are all different, are leaders like Andy Stanley and Louie Giglio who have created new models to reach those who may not attend the traditional church. The music presented in these events resembles a rock concert – played at high volume accompanied with lights and special effects intended to encourage participation from the congregants. With that said, the lyrical content is decidedly Christian. Sermons are focused on biblical teaching in creative ways which tend to appeal to reasoning to reach a skeptical generation who are still seeking some kind of truth and spiritual fulfillment.

This period is different from other periods because of the internet. The possibility for instantaneous communication from anywhere on the globe is possible. We have more information at our fingertips than we can ever consume. The American culture has become conditioned to be able to get what they want when they want it.

Conclusion

Many of these “new style” of churches have been very successful in reaching people who would not otherwise come to a traditional church. They have certainly contributed to fulfilling the Great Commission. Their existence has forced churches with more traditional formats to reevaluate and change how they do ministry, which in many ways have increased their effectiveness in ministry. However, I believe there have been some unintended consequences.

How much of it is the church’s fault and how much of it is due to cultural change is up to debate. Churches often try to make what they do attractional. We have become an “American Idol” society where everybody is a Simon Cowell with an opinion on what is good and what is not good. We live in a culture of “Have It Your Way” so we have tried to gear everything around making everybody happy. We offer age-specific spiritual education. We gear our worship services to play to the preference of a group of people, typically relating to their age. Church A has a contemporary worship service. Church B has a traditional service. Church C has a blended service. And Church D offers all three at three different times. Some churches have a separate worship service for children. Some have one for the youth. The adults are happy because they don’t have to worry whether their children are engaged or behaving, and we can have the kind of music that appeals to us in the “big church.” Then, when the children graduate from school and are able to make their own decisions about church, we wonder why they leave.

This is certainly a simplified version. There are many other factors that contribute to the decline of the church in North America in the twenty-first century. But in my opinion, this is what church looks like when we try to please everyone and play to their preferences. We lose focus on the big picture.

In my opinion, the issue isn’t musical style. This is the reason I believe a thorough understanding of biblical and historical worship is critical. Arguments over methods have always existed. The

real issue is the messy work of teaching, mentoring, discipling, including, and loving the next generation. This is hard work. This is time consuming. This requires the adults to be adults.

We have to be willing to change our methods as our culture changes if we want to reach our community and our world for Jesus. Changing the music isn't going to do it. Jesus showed us THIS is how it's done. He went to the people where they were. He didn't wait for them to come to Him. THIS is how it has been done throughout history in great moves of God.

Our Vision

The vision of Ephesus Baptist Church is:

...for our lives and our homes to be so transformed by the love of Jesus and so focused on living it out that we become rivers and not reservoirs of His love in our community and world.



Remembering that our *mission* is WHAT we do, our *strategy* is HOW we do it, our *values* are WHY we do it, we look to our *vision* as WHERE we are going. Vision is catalytic. Vision is what keeps movement and progress happening. Without it, people, organizations, churches, etc., become stagnant.

If the world is to hear the church's voice today, leaders are needed who are authoritative, spiritual, and sacrificial. Authoritative, because people desire reliable leaders who know where they are going and are confident of getting there. Spiritual, because without a strong relationship to God, even the most attractive and competent person cannot lead people to God. Sacrificial, because this trait follows the model of Jesus, who gave Himself for the whole world and who calls us to follow in His steps.

J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership

At Ephesus, we believe God is calling us to be rivers and not reservoirs of His love. Rivers are moving and life-giving. Reservoirs are still and lifeless.

What does that vision look like in terms of the Music & Worship Ministry? Our role is to connect people with God and others as we offer our praise to Jesus. We accomplish that in a few ways. First, we create transformational encounters with the Living God in corporate worship. Second, we teach our congregation what it means to be a worshiper both in corporate worship and in private worship. Third, we invest in the lives of future worship leaders.

Over the next few years, I believe our Music & Worship Ministry will look like:

- Worship Center filled with people fully participating in corporate worship.
- The platform will be filled with worshiper leaders from every stage of life.
- We will have a training and mentoring system to develop new musicians, artists, and technical people and provide them opportunities to use their gifts to lead others to worship God.
- Our church will become a center for creative expression of our love for God.

Our Systems

Our systems help us accomplish the strategies of our ministry. The term system sounds technical, but *systems are simply how we get things done*. Some systems are simple, some are complicated. If something consistently doesn't get done, it means there is a problem with our system. We can have as many systems as we want, but if the people who work within those systems don't follow them, they are useless. *A system is only as good as people's commitment to them.*

Systems to Produce God-focused Corporate Worship

SEEK RESOURCES

We believe God wants us to be fresh and creative in our worship services. Making the minister of music responsible for all inspiration puts an unnecessary limit on the work of the Holy Spirit and an unreasonable burden on the minister of music. We believe God is speaking to the hearts of every worship leader in our ministry. We want all of our people to have input into the resources we use in worship.

1. Listen to Christian music on the radio and other sources.
2. Read our Bibles, books, magazines, etc. to spur creativity.
3. Surf the internet for ideas blogs, resources, and other churches.
4. Visit other churches and observe what they are doing.
5. Send out an inquiry to ministry participants seeking input.

SCHEDULE WORSHIP LEADERS

In our scheduling, we create two documents once every quarter (January-March, April-June, July-August, and October-December). The first document is the *Worship Leader Scheduling Calendar* which tells all singers and instrumentalists the dates that they are scheduled to lead worship. The second document is the *Music Calendar*. This document is a schedule of the people who will sing special music for the offertory and the choir songs that will be sung during the quarter.

1. By the end of the *first week* of the *last month* of the current *Worship Leader Scheduling Calendar*, send out an inquiry asking about known dates of absence for the upcoming quarter. For example, if we are currently in the January-March quarter, the inquiry will be sent out by the end of the first week of March to find out what dates people know they will be out from April to June. (People can also access a calendar on Planning Center Online and block out dates they know they will be gone)

2. By the end of the *second week* of the *last month* of the current *Worship Leader Scheduling Calendar*, plan out the upcoming quarter for both the *Worship Leader Scheduling Calendar* and *Music Calendar* and publish them. These calendars will be posted on Realm and sent out by email by the Music Ministry Assistant.
3. The scheduling of worship leaders each quarter is guided by the following criteria:
 - a. Is everybody being given an opportunity to serve in ALL areas that they are gifted?
 - b. Do the people on the platform each week look like what we want the congregation to look like? Do we have a good representation from all age groups?
 - c. Do we have every part covered?
 - d. Are we giving opportunities for worship leaders to grow?

PLAN THE SERVICES

Just as we seek input from others to find resources for our worship services, we believe our worship services are enhanced by planning by a team rather than the minister of music alone.

1. Plan and schedule choir specials *4 months* out. Although all plans are fluid and are subject to change, we believe it is beneficial to have a long-range plan for the choir.
2. Plan all worship services (morning & evening) and rehearsals (C.R.E.W. 252, Praise Band & Praise Team, and Choir) 4 weeks out.

It should be understood that the further out the service is planned the greater the chance that it may change some, but we believe planning that far ahead allows for worship leaders to practice their music and learn new songs before their Wednesday rehearsal.

Elements used in corporate worship services will be planned with consideration of the worship leaders scheduled for that particular service.

The worship planning team (Minister of Music, Music Ministry Assistant, Media Director, and other lay leaders) meets on Monday afternoons.

3. By noon on Wednesday, the Minister of Music will make sure that all arrangements and tracks are ready for Wednesday night rehearsal. The Media Director will make sure that all necessary tracks and screen lyrics are ready for rehearsals.

4. On Thursday mornings, the Minister of Music will review Wednesday night rehearsals with the Music Ministry Assistant and Media Director to see if there are any adjustments that need to be made before Sunday.

COMMUNICATE THE PLAN

Communication is often the trickiest part of all the systems. Communication isn't simply sending out information. The message must be sent, and it must be heard. If it isn't heard, communication doesn't take place. Effective communication depends on both the consistency of the sender and the careful diligence of the receiver. We want all communication to be two-way.

1. On Monday morning a text will be sent out to the Praise Band members and Praise Singers who are scheduled to sing the following Sunday containing a Wednesday rehearsal set list and a reminder of the topic of our weekly discussion.
2. On Monday a Planning Center Online (PCO from this point forward) invite will be sent out to all to all worship leaders (Praise Band, Praise Singers, and Worship Choir) for Wednesday rehearsal. **Please take the time to respond to this invite.**
3. On Monday, 2 weeks out, the Music Ministry Assistant will confirm the person leading the special music for the offertory and find out what song will be performed (if this person has not already contacted the church office, which is preferred).
4. On Thursday a PCO invite will be sent out to all to all worship leaders (Praise Band, Praise Singers, and Worship Choir) for BOTH Sunday morning worship services. **Please take the time to respond to this invite.**
5. Several important documents will be stored on REALM for easy access. REALM is a great platform for announcements and discussion opportunities.

REHEARSE THE PLAN

Efficient and effective rehearsals are critical to producing God-centered worship services. The old adage of “you’ll never be better than your best rehearsal” is certainly true. Thankfully, we have the help of the Holy Spirit and He can often make up for our deficiencies. Nevertheless, we want rehearsals to go well. Rehearsals are not the time to learn the songs. Choir members are given a CD when new songs are introduced AND through the power of modern-day technology, our music is available at all times through PCO. We can accomplish much more at rehearsals if we have practiced and prepared ourselves before rehearsal.

| Wednesday Night Rehearsal | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|---|---|-----------------------|
| Time | Tech Team | Praise Team | Praise Band | Worship Choir |
| 5:45 | | working parts worship center | | |
| 6:30 | | with worship choir room 104 | run-through Sunday’s set and new songs worship center | rehearsal room 104 |
| 7:15 | | Sunday’s Choir Song worship center | | |
| 7:20 | | time of worship with Sunday’s set worship center | | |
| 7:40 | | devotion & prayer worship center | | |
| 7:45 | | training discussion worship center | | dismiss |
| 8:00 | | new songs worship center | | |
| 8:15-8:30 | | dismiss | | |

LEAD THE WORSHIP SERVICES

This is where all the preparation leads. If we have been faithful to our systems leading up to this event, we have done all we can do. Now we get to see what God can do through us and experience His presence as we worship and lead others to worship.

Sunday Morning Processes

| Sunday Morning Worship | | | |
|------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Time | Tech Team | Praise Team & Praise Band | Worship Choir |
| 7:30 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn on sound board 2. Turn on light board 3. Change batteries on stage mics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review order to know which mics will be used b. Use switch covers to prevent turn off 4. Make sure choir mics are pointed in the right direction 5. Set up any extra mics to be used 6. Change batteries on all headsets 7. Turn on all computers, projectors, and equipment in video booth 8. Prepare sermon PowerPoint 9. Update any late changes to announcement slides 10. Write out service cues for projector operator 11. Set up computer for recording in audio booth | | |
| 8:00 | Prayer time | | |
| | Check track level for choir | Set up gear, tune, get in-ears | |
| | Check baptism mic (if necessary) | | |
| 8:15 | Band sound check <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drums 2. Bass guitar 3. Keyboards 4. Piano 5. Acoustic guitar 6. Other guitars 7. Vocals All instruments – run through transitions and difficult parts | | |
| 8:40 | Offertory sound check | Greet congregation | |
| 8:45 | Begin pre-service music Start slide announcements | | Warm-up in Choir room |
| 8:55 | Start countdown | Get in place on the platform | |
| 9:00 | First service | | |
| @ 10:20 | Begin pre-service music Start slide announcements | Greet congregation | |
| 10:25 | Start countdown | Get in place on the platform | |
| 10:30 | Second service | | |

EVALUATE OUR WORK

Evaluation is an often-neglected system, especially within the church. However, we cannot really know if we are accomplishing our goals if we do not evaluate. We also must resist the urge to evaluate the service based on the reaction of the congregation. When it comes to the work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of people, it is impossible to measure that with our eyes. What we can evaluate is whether we sing the right words and play the right notes. We can review timing and transitions. We can tell whether the technical things like lyric projection and audio run smoothly. We can review participation by the congregation. And we can certainly observe whether or not we have a good representation of ages on the platform.

1. The music portion of the service will be video recorded each week and saved online. Everyone who led worship on that Sunday must watch the music portion of the worship service within the week of it being posted.
2. We will survey a select group of people from a broad spectrum of backgrounds to comment on specific aspects of the service.

Systems to Raise Up Authentic Worshipers

TEACH ABOUT WORSHIP

If we want people to worship authentically, we must teach worship.

1. Teach C.R.E.W. 252 about worship through finding and developing curriculum and devotional material.
2. Teach current worship leaders about worship through online resources and creating curriculum.
3. Teach congregation about worship. Time is limited in our worship services. We must strategically plan opportunities to teach about worship within corporate worship services. Find opportunities to preach on worship.
4. Provide churchwide praise and worship services to give people the opportunity to “practice” biblical corporate worship (i.e., *Overflow* and Communion by Candlelight).

SING BIBLICAL TRUTHS

Just because a song has a Christian theme or is considered religious doesn't mean that its lyrics are good or theologically true. We must be careful to examine what the words are saying to be sure we are teaching good theology to our people. In the past, when our musically repertoire was mainly from the hymnals, we knew that people who were musical and theological experts had examined and vetted each song. Today, with the technology that exists, someone could get up in the morning, write a song, record it at lunch, and upload it to the internet that night and it is

accessible for the entire world. The vetting process now falls into our hands. I have stolen the criteria for the songs we sing from Buddy Owens of Maranatha Music, because it's good criteria:

1. Is it easy to learn?
2. Is it hard to forget?
3. Is it scriptural?

MODEL GENUINE WORSHIP

We have discussed in great length that worship is much more than music. As worship leaders, we are required to model worship on and off the platform.

Processes on the platform

1. Be musically and spiritual prepared in order to direct people toward God and not distract away from Him.
2. Engage with the congregation, not your music stand, cheat screen, microphone or instrument.
3. Inform your face of what you're singing about. Smile! Keep your eyes open!
4. Use your body for worship. Relax and look confident.
5. Dress appropriately. See platform dress code on page 55.

Processes off the platform

1. Worship privately on a consistent basis.
2. Live like the lyrics you sing about are true.
3. Do not allow yourself to be a stumbling block to others.

Systems to Develop Worship Leaders

RECRUIT CAREFULLY

We are always looking for more people to join us in worship leadership. We have two on-ramps or entry points into the Music & Worship Ministry: the Worship Choir and the Unseen Technical Ministry. On-ramps or entry points are simply referring to ways to get immediately involved with few prerequisites. For these ministries, the door is open to get involved 365 days of the year. Other ministry teams have a little extensive process for getting involved, but it is not difficult.

1. Consistently be on the lookout for potential worship leaders. Ask questions. Invite.
2. Create churchwide promotions twice per year (January and August) to try to find interest in serving in the Music & Worship Ministry.

TRAIN MUSICALLY

We believe it is our responsibility to develop new worship leaders. Part of that calling involves providing musical training for those who want to grow in their musical ability, from beginner to advanced – young to old.

1. Provide online training (worshiponline.com, worshipartistry.com, musicacademy.com, worshipworkshop.com, etc.)
2. Offer one-on-one teaching opportunities between new musicians and new techs with experienced worship leaders.
3. Find opportunities for all worship leaders to gain experience in live worship leading experiences.

GROW SPIRITUALLY

Even more important than musical training is spiritual training. We believe all worship leaders must be growing in their relationship with Christ. If we are leading people to worship God, we must know the One whom we are worshiping.

1. Provide online training (worshipworkshop.com, ministrygrid.com, worshiptraining.com, etc. for spiritual growth.
2. Personal teaching and discussions in group settings.

MENTOR RELATIONALLY

Everybody needs people who invest in them. It is the expectation that all experienced worship leaders find at least one person to mentor. Mentoring is about caring and simply investing your life into someone else. Mentoring isn't trying to completely fill someone else's cup, only God can do that. Mentoring is pouring your cup into someone else's; nothing less, nothing more.

Processes for EVERY worship leader

1. Pray and ask God for a person to mentor (someone of the same gender).
2. Keep your eyes open and your heart sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading as you look for an answer to your prayer.
3. Find opportunities to "live life" with your mentee, as you build meaningful relationships.

Team Specific Systems

Worship Choir

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The following leaders make up the Worship Choir Leadership Team. This team will meet once per quarter on the first Wednesday (excluding holidays) of every quarter immediately following choir rehearsal to discuss issues pertaining to the choir. These meetings will be under 30 minutes and guided with a prepared agenda from the Minister of Music.

Minister of Music – Frank Gillespie

Responsible for overall choir leadership and direction.

Music Ministry Assistant – Stacia Quick

Responsible for helping the Minister of Music in administrative duties with the choir.

Choir Director – Georgana Pierce

Responsible for rehearsing and preparing the choir each week and coordinating direction with the Minister of Music.

President –

Responsible for promoting mission and vision for the choir. The president is the ambassador between leadership and the choir and helps maintain unity and fellowship.

Secretary –

Responsible for keeping attendance for Wednesday rehearsals and Sunday morning worship services as well keeping minutes for quarterly Worship Choir Leadership meetings.

Treasurer –

Responsible for keeping up with the Worship Choir Fund and working with leadership to disburse the funds.

Librarian –

Responsible for music distribution within the choir and organization and maintenance of the choir library.

Hospitality and Fellowship Coordinator –

Responsible for working with leadership to schedule and prepare activities that build unity and strengthen supportive relationships within the Worship Choir. The

coordinator may freely enlist help from within the choir to carry out his or her duties.

Section Care Group Leaders

Responsible for helping build relationships between their assigned sections and choir leadership. These leaders will inform leadership of problems people are having as well as offer gentle, caring accountability to their sections.

Soprano 1 – Debi Teal
 Soprano 2 – *not filled*
 Soprano 3 – *not filled*
 Alto 1 – Lynn Russell
 Alto 2 – Edie Gwaltney
 Tenor – *not filled*
 Bass – *not filled*

MUSIC DISTRIBUTION

The Worship Choir Librarian will be responsible for maintaining the folders described below on a weekly basis.

1. Every Worship Choir member will have a folder assigned to them that is kept in their slots in the “choir room.” This folder will contain:
 - a. A copy of the choral music for the next 10 “specials” on the schedule.
 - b. A pencil.
 - c. A CD with a recording of all the songs scheduled for the current quarter.
2. The Choir Director folder will be maintained each week with only the songs that the choir will be rehearsing that week.

MUSIC MEMORIZATION

Our goal is for the choir to memorize all music. During the choir rehearsal two weeks prior to the Sunday we are scheduled to sing a song, we will begin rehearsing the song without “holding folders.” **The most important job of the choir isn’t singing the song perfectly, its engaging with the congregation during worship.**

Why memorize our music?

- The choir sings better and more freely.
- A barrier is removed (holding a folder), allowing the congregation to feel closer to the choir as its worship leader.
- The choir’s hands are freed up to be used in biblical postures of worship.
- The choir’s faces are drawn upward, every countenance is now visible.

- The choir senses one another's presence and is much more able to join hearts as well as voices in the act of leading worship.
- The choir feels closer to the congregation and is able to more effectively lead them in worship.
- Most importantly, the choir is free to concentrate its whole being on the act of worshipping God, which is the first and most necessary step in the process of leading others to worship Him.

WORSHIP CHOIR FUND

The Ephesus Baptist Church Worship Choir maintains a fund to enable it to minister to choir members in times of need.

Process for Collection

- The "money bag" will be passed during choir rehearsal on the first Wednesday of every month. Choir members are not compelled to give. If we all contribute a little, it can go a long way.
- The "money bag" will be passed during choir rehearsals on other Wednesdays if the fund is below \$100. Our goal is to keep the fund at \$100 or above.

Process for Disbursement

- Flowers may be bought for choir members who are hospitalized and given in the name of the Worship Choir. This is *ONLY* for the members themselves.
- Flowers will be sent to the funeral home for the choir member or their immediate family (parents, children, or spouse) in the event of a death in the name of the Worship Choir.
- The choir fund may be used to provide meals or purchase gift cards for choir members in the event of a hardship such as a loss of job, sickness, or surgery.
- The choir fund may be used to purchase remembrance gifts when voted on by the choir.

C.R.E.W. 252

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The following leaders make up the C.R.E.W. 252 Leadership Team. This team will meet two times per year (January and July) to plan for the upcoming semesters. Other organizational meetings will be scheduled as needed.

Minister of Music – Frank Gillespie

Responsible for overall C.R.E.W. 252 leadership and direction.

Choir Director* – Frank Gillespie

Responsible for teaching songs and music to the children.

Lesson Coordinator* – not filled

Responsible for developing curriculum and lesson on authentic biblical worship.

Drama Director* – not filled

Responsible for directing all children's drama.

Choreographer – Sarah Jacks

Responsible for planning and teaching children all motions and choreography.

Tech Director – Bruce Goff

Responsible for training children in the technical arts and preparing te

Instrumental Director* – not filled

Responsible for leading and teaching children to lead worship with instruments.

Game Coordinator* – Abbey Jacks

Responsible for planning and leading all games.

*These are all positions that help fulfill the vision for the ministry. They are listed to create awareness and cast vision. We believe God will provide leadership in these areas as He leads.

C.R.E.W. 252 REHEARSALS

| Time | Activity |
|------|---|
| 5:45 | Opening Game |
| 5:55 | Split into Teams (Choir, Drama, Tech, Instrumental) |
| 6:15 | Weekly Lesson |
| 6:20 | Closing Game |
| 6:25 | Dismiss to Mission Groups |

Worship Platform Leadership Team

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

This team consists of key worship leaders within the Praise Band, Praise Singers, and Unseen Technical Ministry. These leaders assist the Minister of Music with developing mentoring and teaching systems within their area of expertise as well as addressing technical issues that involve the production of the worship service.

Minister of Music – Frank Gillespie

Responsible for the overall production of weekly corporate worship.

Upfront Worship Leaders* – various

Fill the role as the “lead person” during corporate worship services, guiding the band and congregation into an encounter with God through music, scripture, and transitions.

Worship Service Directors* – various

This is the on-platform person who directs the Praise Band and Praise Singers. This person is responsible for handling the click track and must be “in tune” with the worship leader to follow and interpret where the worship leader is going. This person has a “talk-back” mic that can only be heard by the people of the platform.

Worship Service Producer* – **not filled**

Responsible for assisting the Minister of Music and Media Director with coordinating all worship leaders to produce the weekly service. This person helps everything run smoothly and is available to help eliminate issues that may cause distractions within the service.

Band Director* – **not filled**

Responsible for assisting the Minister of Music in running rehearsals and helping him work with the Media Director in using sound and visual technology more effectively.

Vocal Director – Georgana Pierce

Responsible for assisting the Minister of Music lead and train the Praise Singers.

Media Director – Bruce Goff

Responsible for the overall use of technical arts for enhancing corporate worship.

Tech Team Leaders*

Responsible for helping the Media Director mentor in their areas of expertise.

Lyric Projection – *not filled*
 Sound/Audio – *not filled*
 Video – *not filled*
 Lighting – *not filled*

Praise Band Section Leaders

Responsible for assisting the Minister of Music develop ways to improve instrumentation, musicianship, and mentoring within their area of expertise.

Piano – Miriam Godwin
 Keys & Synths – Melissa Thompson
 Guitars – *not filled*
 Bass – Kevin Mullins
 Drums – Brad Hanson

*These are all positions that help fulfill the vision for the ministry. They are listed to create awareness and cast vision. We believe God will provide leadership in these areas as He leads.

MUSIC DISTRIBUTION

Processes

The Music Ministry Assistant will be responsible that all instrumentalists and singers have all the music they need for rehearsal. This includes the songs for the upcoming Sunday morning and evening worship as well new songs that are on the schedule to be rehearsed. **Band rehearsal schedules are not final until Wednesday at noon.** There are sometimes changes that need to be made after Tuesday staff meetings.

1. Piano – the pianist is the only band member who needs physical copies.
 - a. Physical copies are stored in the music file cabinet in the work room.
 - b. Check physical copy of sheet music against the set list on PCO. Make sure you have the correct arrangement and key. Please ask the Minister of Music if you feel he's made a mistake or have any questions.
2. Praise Band – all music for the Praise Band is stored online on PCO and accessed by the band through the Music Stand app.
 - a. Check the list on PCO and make sure that all digital copies are available and in the correct place. If not, please refer to the Planning Center Online Naming Conventions and File Storage system in the Other Important Systems section (page 56)
 - b.

Other Important Systems

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR LEADING CORPORATE WORSHIP

Creating worship experiences that encourage participation from the congregation is arguably the most important thing that we do. It is listed first in this section because of its importance and because it doesn't fit neatly into any one strategy or system. Everything we do – our worship planning, our worship rehearsals, our teaching about worship, and the actual leading of worship should be guided by this principle: **The most important voice in corporate worship is the voice of the congregation.**

Making decisions concerning musical repertoire and how we present that music doesn't always have a clear answer. Often, we are faced with the dilemma between two options and the appropriate direction doesn't always follow the same path. The correct answer always points us to choose with the congregation's voice in mind. We may perform a song flawlessly and sound as good or better than our favorite Christian artist. **But if no one sings, who cares!!!**

1. Keep the key or change the key?

Often, songs that we use in worship are in a range too high for the average person in the congregation. This is especially true for songs written in the upper register of the tenor voice. In this case, the key needs to be lowered. Whether or not the worship leader *sounds* better in the higher key shouldn't even be a consideration. However, we must consider how much we lower the key because dropping it too far often robs the song of its energy.

2. Play it "like the radio" or rearrange it?

The argument that people learn the song like they hear it on the radio does carry some weight. We do want people to be familiar with and even know the songs we use in corporate worship. If we decide to change the arrangement of a song around, we don't want to mix it up so much that it confuses those who know it. But we believe minimal rearranging won't do this.

I would argue that we should never, ever, ever, never ever be held hostage by the way our favorite recording artists perform songs. The way we do the song should be guided by creating maximum engagement with the congregation. *Can* they sing it and *will* they sing it? Here are the important considerations (with perhaps a small amount of hyperbole):

- a. Do we really have to play that 32-bar intro or repeat that bridge 6 times? Is the congregation engaged or confused as they wait for us to sing that first note?
- b. That incredible guitar solo or vocal lick may be very satisfying for us artistically, **but if no one sings, who cares?**

- c. Do we need to include all the “heys,” “oohs,” “ohs,” and “ahs” that the lead singer does on the recording? Here you have to think of your specific congregation and their “heart language. Will this engage the majority of the congregation and illicit participation? Will it detract from the song if we cut it? **If no one sings, who cares?**
 - d. We are worship leaders and not a Christian cover band. **If no one is singing, who cares?**
3. Ignore the song or edit the lyrics?

There are times when we come across a popular song that may have confusing or strange lyrics. In fact, the lyrics may be incorrect theologically. Poetry is a great and thing and our worship is enhanced when we come across a line that helps us to see God and life in a fresh way. But when a lyric is confusing or strange it can hinder worship as it draws attention to itself and away from God.

In cases when we come across a lyric line that says something wrong about God or goes away from sound biblical doctrine, it is an even more serious problem. As those who choose and lead songs in corporate worship, we have a great responsibility to monitor what our songs say.

I am convinced that congregations learn more theology (good and bad) from the songs they sing than from the sermons they hear. Many sermons are doctrinally sound and contain a fair amount of biblical information, but they lack that necessary emotional content that gets hold of the listener's heart. Music, however, reaches the mind and the heart at the same time. It has the power to touch and move the emotions, and for that reason can become a wonderful tool in the hands of the Spirit or terrible weapon in the hands of the Adversary. Naïve congregations can sing their way into heresy before they even realize what is going on.

Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship*

What do we do with popular songs with questionable lyrics? We have one of three options: change the lyric, leave out the lyric, or don't do the song. In my opinion, changing the lyric is the worst option and one I rarely do. If it is a popular song its probable people already know the song from the radio or someplace else. Changing the lyric would simply draw attention to it for those who already know the song. The second option can be done by leaving out the verse or section that contains the problematic words. Many times, we simply choose the third option. Singing the song, even if we leave out the parts with which we disagree, validates the song on behalf of the church. It is highly unlikely that people in the congregation would “edit” the song as they consume it away from our corporate worship.

4. Ditch the song or sing it again?

I have heard several authors describe some of the praise songs as “disposable music.” I understand their point, but I don’t think that is a fair or accurate statement. What these people are describing is the idea that the new songs we sing today have a “shelf life” and we sing them for a while and then quit singing them. I think part of the reason for this is the way we consume music today. We can listen to Christian radio and hear a really good song we love, and if we listen for any time at all, it is possible for us to hear that song 3 or 4 times in one day. After weeks or months of listening to it the song may lose its appeal and we grow tired of it. Only the best of the best songs never lose their appeal. I believe this is the natural cycle for commercial music. The secular “Top 40” is never the same two weeks in a row. Songs climb the charts and fade away as the weeks and months roll by.

In the past, worship songs and hymns were typically heard once per week. That is 52 times per year. That is hardly overexposure. To further debunk this idea of “disposable music” all we have to do is look at the great hymn writers through the past centuries. Today, we sing only a very small percentage of the hymns they wrote. The largest of hymnals today contain about 500 to 600 hymns and the average church that sing hymns probably only use 100 to maybe 150 of those hymns in worship. I do not believe that today’s songs are any more disposable than any other Christian songs written throughout the history of the Church. Only the greatest of all songs have lasting power.

So, the dilemma we face as worship leaders trying to plan corporate worship with which the congregation participate is teaching new and fresh songs and utilizing our established repertoire in a way that is meaningful and engaging. Are we singing our songs too much or too little? When is it time to cycle a song out of our worship?

- a. When introducing a new song, we need to make sure that we sing it enough for the congregation to learn it. New songs should be used in the service at least three out of the four weeks in the first month it is introduced (typically Sunday 1, 2, and 4). After the first month, we should try to work that new song into our service at least once per month over the following 3 months. It should be obvious after the second or third use of the song whether or not our people are engaging with it. If it isn’t working, don’t force it, remove it from the cycle.

I am often surprised at what connects and which songs do not. It is always somewhat of an experiment.

- b. Established songs that people are still engaging with should be worked in to our worship set at least once per quarter (every three months).
- c. There are some songs that have lasting power that should be utilized in our worship at least once per year. These are our “classic” songs and hymns.

- d. Worship leaders need to understand that we “get tired of songs” long before our congregation does. It’s usually about the time that we have become so familiar with the song after practicing over and over on our own, in rehearsals, and in worship that the congregation is just learning and getting comfortable with it. When we start “getting tired of a song” we should look for ways in which we can breathe new life into by making minor adjustments to the arrangement.
- e. When we are “tired of a song” and it has become obvious that the congregation is no longer engaging with it, we should retire it.

5. I need more cowbell!!!

Another issue that can either inhibit or encourage participatory worship has to do with the audio mix in the room. This is another dilemma because there is not a clear-cut answer. The problem is most people will not sing if they “feel alone.” This happens when people hear their voice above the volume of the music and other people singing in the room. The natural assumption is that if all I can hear is myself singing then all the people around me can hear is me singing. The only way that can be true is if the other people aren’t singing, but as they say, perception is reality.

The immediate response is to think how we can address the volume. Should the music be louder or softer? The first problem with this thinking is that I firmly believe that “too loud” and “too soft” is as subjective as musical style. These opinions are typically tied to age. However, the issue isn’t simply volume. Acoustics and mix (sound blend) play a role.

We need to continually work on the mix and volume to “fill out the room.”

- a. Today, running the sound board isn’t setting levels before the service and keeping them there. Mixing sound is as artistic as it is technical. The sound technician must be mixing through the service.
- b. After some research, we went to “What Would Disney Do” in regard to optimum sound levels. We decided to use 75 dB as a nominal level with peaks no greater than 85 dB. This won’t be loud enough for some and too loud for others. The last thing we want is for anybody to be in real pain, but I firmly believe that often when someone says “it hurts my ears” it means “I don’t like it” or “it’s uncomfortable.” Regardless of complaints, we have researched reasons for doing what we do and we will continue to research this.
- c. In the mix, we want to make sure that the vocals and instruments are blended well and one doesn’t overpower the other.
- d. With the vocals, the lead part or melody should always be mixed a little “hotter” than the supporting voices, but all voices need to be heard.

- e. With the instruments, ALL INSTRUMENTS should be heard. In the ideal situation, the congregation should be able to feel the bass and drums. Using an electronic drum set, we should make sure that the cymbals do not overpower the kick, snare, and toms.
- f. Effects such as reverb should be used to give vocals and instruments presence. This is one way in which we can “fill out the room” without turning up the volume.
- g. Acoustics are problematic in our current Worship Center. Some acoustical treatment exists, but we have found there is disagreement among experts and consultants as to what else can be done. We acknowledge that the 3 rows closest to the platform sound very different than the rest of the Worship Center. These are not ideal places to sit. Hopefully we can discover some ways to address this.

6. To ad-lib or not to ad-lib.

Ad-libbing can definitely enhance worship, but it can also be a distraction.

- a. The **person singing the lead** in the song should be the **only person** ad-libbing unless it is decided prior to the service to handle it differently. When the person singing the lead ad libs, it is necessary that the lead is doubled so the melody is carried for the benefit of the congregation.
- b. There can be instances where there is **more than one** singer ad-libbing, but **never at the same time. Multiple ad libs must be planned.** Nothing is more confusing than a bunch of people on the platform doing their own thing.
- c. Ad-libbing can be overdone. Make sure that the way you ad lib and the amount of ad-libbing you do makes artistic sense and matches the personality of the song. Always remember that our purpose is to point to God and get the people involved.

7. To harmonize or stay on melody.

Harmony is beautiful and can be a wonderful tool for drawing the congregation in worship. But it can be overused.

- a. Harmony creates movement and helps with dynamics. We shouldn't harmonize everything.
 - b. Not every song or section of song calls for 3-part harmony. We must find ways to use harmony more effectively.
 - c. Our beautiful harmony should not overpower the congregation's melody.
8. “Well you can tell everybody this is your song...”

We want to avoid as much as possible becoming overly possessive about the songs we use in our worship services. This can be difficult because the lead vocals on some songs just fit some singers better than others for various reasons. However, if we allow ourselves to assume ownership of songs, we limit our flexibility to use any song in any service. We want to have a blank slate every Sunday as worship services are planned.

PLATFORM DRESS CODE

Remembering that our goal is to direct others in the worship of God, we do not want to wear clothing that would inhibit this or draw attention to ourselves. There are outfits that may be completely acceptable in other settings but are not appropriate for the platform. We are not serving ourselves, but others. We should always err on the side of being MODEST and DRESSY.

Tops

- Avoid tank tops, low necklines, showing cleavage, and tops that have bare shoulders
- Tops/shirts/dresses should not be too short or form-fitting (please avoid anything bare or bodycon).
- Tops/shirts must be long enough to cover midriff.
- No t-shirts with sports logos, large logos or large brand names displayed.

Bottoms

- No shorts
- Jeans/slacks/capris are OK; please be sure they are presentable with no rips or holes.
- Skirts/dresses/rompers should come down at least to your fingertips (with arms down by sides).
- Leggings/jeggings/skinnyies can be worn with a top that covers one's bottom.
- Keep in mind that the lights are bright on the platform. Be cautious with sheer or light-colored garments; some may be more see-through than normal under the lighting.

MUSIC LIBRARY ORGANIZATION AND MUSIC STORAGE

1. The cataloguing system will be done by *arrangement* and not *song*.
2. Every arrangement owned by Ephesus Baptist Church will be catalogued using the following system:
 - a. **Adult Choir** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **AC-#####**, where AC stands for "adult choir" and # represents the number. Each anthem or single piece of music as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.

- b. **Youth Choir** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **YC-#####**, where YC stands for “youth choir” and # represents the number. Each anthem or single piece of music as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.
- c. **Children’s Choir** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **CC-#####**, where CC stands for “children’s choir” and # represents the number. Each anthem or single piece of music as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.
- d. **Senior Adult Choir Resources** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **SA-#####**, where SA stands for “senior adult” and # represents the number. Each anthem or single piece of music as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.
- e. **Coed Ensemble** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **CE-#####**, where CE stands for “coed ensemble” and # represents the number. Each anthem or single piece of music as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.
- f. **Men’s Ensembles** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **ME-#####**, where ME stands for “men’s quartet” and # represents the number. Each anthem or single piece of music as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.
- g. **Ladies’ Ensemble** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **LE-#####**, where LE stands for “ladies ensemble” and # represents the number. Each anthem or single piece of music as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.
- h. **Solo Song** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **SS-#####**, where SS stands for “solo song” and # represents the number. Each single piece of music or accompaniment track as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.
- i. **Praise Song** arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **PS-#####**, where PS stands for “praise” and # represents the number. Praise Song is what we call songs we use in corporate worship (excluding hymns). Each anthem or single piece of music as well as each arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.
- j. **Hymn** arrangements will be identified by the hymnal in which they are found.
- k. **Instrumental Music** arrangements not associated with any other arrangements will be given an alphanumeric ID of **IM-#####**, where IM stands for “instrumental music” and # represents the number. For instance, orchestrations for a choir arrangement will

be associated with the choir ID. Every arrangement in a book or collection will be catalogued individually in the same manner.

3. These IDs will match in our physical library, Planning Center Online, and the Diskstation file server.

SERVER NAMING CONVENTIONS AND FILE STORAGE

We will store digital copies of all of our music on our Diskstation File Server. All music files are stored in the "worship resources" folder on this file server.

I. Choral Resources

All choral music is stored in the "Choral Resources" folder. Choral music is identified by type as notated by the name of the subfolders. Types of choral music include, Adult Choir Anthems, Adult Choir Books, Children's Choir Resources, Ladies' Ensembles, Men's Ensembles, Coed Ensembles, Quarter Music, Senior Adult Choir Resources, Solo Resources, and Youth Choir Resources.

Within some of the folders will be 3 folders:

- OWNED BY EBC – we own a copy of these. When this folder exists, only these songs will be catalogued.
- NOT OWNED BY EBC – we have a copy; but these are owned by an individual and not the church (Frank's personal library, for instance)
- POSSIBLE NEW _____ - these are arrangements that have been found for which we do not have a legal copy but is being stored for possible purchase in the future or creative inspiration.

a. Adult Choral Anthems –

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of song, publisher, and catalog ID. For example, "A Servants Prayer (Integrity) / AC-00102,"
- File naming – files will be identified by the name of the song and what it is. For example, "A Servants Prayer choir;" "A Servants Prayer chord chart," "A Servants Prayer demo," "A Servants Prayer split track," etc.

b. Adult Choral Books –

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of book and publisher. For example, "Song of the People (Benson).

Within the folder of each book, each song in that book will have its own folder identified by its location in the book, song name, and catalog ID. For example, in the book *Song of the People*, the ninth song is "You Cover Me." The folder for this song would be named, "09 You Cover Me / AC-#####."

The only files kept in each song's folder (if they exist) will be the choir arrangement, the chord chart, the demo, the split track, the stereo track, and vocal rehearsal tracks. All other items like audio stems and orchestrations will be in their own folder inside the book folder.

- File naming – files will be identified by its location in the book, the name of the song, and what it is. For example, "09 A You Cover Me choir," "09 A You Cover Me chord chart," "09 A You Cover Me demo," "09 A You Cover Me split track," etc.

c. Youth Choir Resources

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of song, composer or arranger, publisher, and catalog ID. For example, "A King Is Born – Sy Gorieb (Integrity) / AC-#####."
- File naming – files will be identified by the name of the song and what it is. For example, "A King Is Born choir," "A King Is Born chord chart," "A King Is Born demo," "A King Is Born split track," etc.

d. Children's Choir Resources

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of song, composer or arranger, publisher, and catalog ID. For example, "A King Is Born – Sy Gorieb (Integrity) / AC-#####."
- File naming – files will be identified by the name of the song and what it is. For example, "A King Is Born choir," "A King Is Born chord chart," "A King Is Born demo," "A King Is Born split track," etc.

e. Senior Adult Choir Resources

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of song, composer or arranger, publisher, and catalog ID. For example, "A King Is Born – Sy Gorieb (Integrity) / AC-#####."
- File naming – files will be identified by the name of the song and what it is. For example, "A King Is Born choir," "A King Is Born chord chart," "A King Is Born demo," "A King Is Born split track," etc.

f. Ladies' Ensembles

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of song, composer or arranger, publisher, and catalog ID. For example, “A King Is Boen – Sy Gorieb (Integrity) / AC-#####.”
- File naming – files will be identified by the name of the song and what it is. For example, “A King Is Born choir,” “A King Is Born chord chart,” “A King Is Born demo,” “A King Is Born split track,” etc.

g. Men's Ensembles

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of song, composer or arranger, publisher, and catalog ID. For example, “A King Is Boen – Sy Gorieb (Integrity) / AC-#####.”
- File naming – files will be identified by the name of the song and what it is. For example, “A King Is Born choir,” “A King Is Born chord chart,” “A King Is Born demo,” “A King Is Born split track,” etc.

h. Coed Ensembles

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of song, composer or arranger, publisher, and catalog ID. For example, “A King Is Boen – Sy Gorieb (Integrity) / AC-#####.”
- File naming – files will be identified by the name of the song and what it is. For example, “A King Is Born choir,” “A King Is Born chord chart,” “A King Is Born demo,” “A King Is Born split track,” etc.

i. Solo Resources

- Folder naming – Folders will be identified by name of song, composer or arranger, publisher, and catalog ID. For example, “A King Is Boen – Sy Gorieb (Integrity) / AC-#####.”
- File naming – files will be identified by the name of the song and what it is. For example, “A King Is Born choir,” “A King Is Born chord chart,” “A King Is Born demo,” “A King Is Born split track,” etc.

PLANNING CENTER ONLINE NAMING CONVENTIONS AND FILE STORAGE

Songs

1. When adding a new song on PCO, the software uses Song Select from CCLI to find the song and fills in all the important information such as authors, publishing information, and CCLI number. Sometimes CCLI will allow you to add lyrics and/or chord charts at that time. **ALWAYS** add their lyrics. **NEVER** add their chord chart. Be sure to always add length of song when available (determined from recording), tempo/BPM, and time signature/meter.
2. Each song can have files attached to it on three levels. The files can be attached to the song itself, the arrangement, or the key. Every song can have multiple arrangements and every song can have multiple keys.
 - a. All **lyrics** should be attached to the **song**.
 - b. All **recordings** should be attached to the **arrangement**
 - c. All **chord charts** and various forms of **sheet music** for **worship songs** should be attached to the **key**.
 - d. All **chord charts** and various forms of **sheet music**, as well as part specific recordings for **choir songs** should be attached to the **arrangement**.
3. Naming arrangements

The name of the arrangement should help us identify where the song came from so that we can find the music in our physical library, Diskstation file server, or PCO. The arrangement name should tell us the book, collection, or online repository from which it was accessed.

a. Choir songs

- Anthems – arrangement names for choir anthems should include the catalog ID and the publisher. For example, an anthem for adult choir, from Word Music would simply be called “AC-##### / Word anthem.”
- Books or Collections – arrangement names for choir songs found in a book or collection should include it’s catalog ID, book name, publisher name, and it’s given number or location in the book. For example, a song for children’s choir that is the fourth song in the book “Shouting Glory” by Prism Music would be called “CC-##### / Shouting Glory / Prism book #4.”

b. Songs used in worship

- Songs from a website – Arrangements for songs found on a website should include the catalog ID, the artist who recorded the song, the

album the song is recorded on, the website, and any identifying number if available. For example, a song by John Doe, recorded on the album "All for Him," and purchased from Praise Charts would be called "PS-##### / Praise Charts #36476 / John Doe – All for Him."

- Songs from a book or collection – Arrangements found in a book or collection would include the catalog ID, the name of the book or collection and the identifying number. For example, "Agnus Dei" is song #15 in the collection "More Songs for Praise and Worship." The arrangement would be named "PS-##### / More Songs for Praise and Worship #15."
- Hymns – Hymn arrangements are named like songs from a collection. For Example, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" is hymn number 151 in the "Celebration Hymnal. The arrangement would be named "Celebration Hymnal #151."

4. File naming

a. Choir songs

- Every choir song should have at least the choir music and a demo recording. The choir music pdf should simply be called by its name. The song "Hallelujah" would be called "Hallelujah choir." This pdf will have 3 associations: choir, piano, and Mix: piano. The mp3 demo would be called "Hallelujah demo." The mp3 has no specific associations.
- Some choir songs will have other music files in pdf form. You simply name them like the choir pdf. For example, the chord chart for the above song would be called "Hallelujah chord chart." Chord charts typically have 4 associations: chord chart, acoustic guitar, lead guitar, and rhythm guitar.
- Some choir songs might have part specific mp3s. An alto rehearsal track for the above song would be named "Hallelujah alto rehearsal mix." These files are associated with their voice part.

b. Worship songs

- File naming conventions for worship songs are similar to those for choir songs. The main difference is including the key. For a chord chart for the song "In His Name" would be named "In His Name chord chart key of A." Associations are the same as above, except for chord

charts that with a capo. The capo versions will only be associated with chord chart and not acoustic guitar, lead guitar, or rhythm guitar.

- Another difference in naming conventions is with the sheet music used by piano would be identified as "piano vocal" instead of "choir."

Our Teams

Within the Music & Worship Ministry of Ephesus Baptist Church are various teams with help to fulfill the **LIVE OUT** strategy of our church. We can **LIVE OUT** the love of Jesus by serving on a Team. There are two kinds of teams, Service Teams and Leadership Teams. Service Teams are teams that people become a part of by choice. Service Teams are open to all people to use their gifting in service to God and others. There are different requirements that must be met to serve on these teams and that information is listed in the pages below.

The second type of team within this Ministry are Leadership Teams. These teams are filled based on position within a specific team. They exist to help the leadership of the ministry cast vision and lead each team. A brief description of each team will be provided below, but a more detailed description can be found in the **Our Systems** section of this manual.

Service Teams

Worship Choir

What Is It?

The Ephesus Baptist Church Worship Choir is our main choir. The Worship Choir leads worship nearly every Sunday morning in our corporate worship services.

Rationale (Why Do We Have a Worship Choir?)

While the Bible is unclear on precise methods for Christian corporate worship and there is no scriptural mandate for choirs, we do have biblical and historical precedence for the use of choirs in worship.

In a secular context, a choir's primary purpose is for performance. It can be argued that this has also been the case for the church choir over the past century. That is not necessarily a bad thing because God can minister to people through art presented in an excellent way. However, we believe the choir's purpose is much greater than performing beautiful music. We believe the church choir is a model for how corporate worship should look for the entire church body. Because of this, we have chosen to make *worship leading* the primary focus of the Worship Choir. We still prepare "special music" that demands more musical skill to perform, but our primary reason for existence is leading worship.

Worship Leading Choir PARADIGMS

© Dave Williamson, Worship Leading Choirs, Inc!

| OUTWARD SIGNS | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| | Traditional Choir | Worship Leading Choir |
| 1. | Sings <i>horizontally</i> , to the people | Sings <i>vertically</i> , to the Lord |
| 2. | Practical role: <i>Spiritual Entertainers</i> | Practical role: <i>Lead Worshipers</i> |
| 3. | <i>Performs</i> for Jesus | <i>Worships</i> Jesus |
| 4. | Celebrates the <i>Gift</i> (music) | Celebrates the <i>Giver</i> |
| 5. | Hopes to hear " <i>You sang great</i> " | Hopes to hear " <i>God IS great!</i> " |
| 6. | Has a <i>minor</i> impact | Has a <i>major</i> impact |
| 7. | Engenders <i>emotion</i> for the moment | Engenders <i>significance</i> for eternity |

| INWARD SIGNS | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| | Traditional Choir | Worship Leading Choir |
| 1. | Partners in <i>singing</i> | Partners in <i>worship and "ministry"</i> |
| 2. | Acquaintances | Family |
| 3. | Competitors | Fellow-servants |
| 4. | Basically <i>Bored</i> | Primarily <i>Passionate</i> |
| 5. | Director: <i>Music professor</i> | Director: <i>Pastor, coach, & cheerleader</i> |
| 6. | Searches for <i>talented</i> members | Searches for <i>faithful</i> members |

A second and possibly less spiritual reason for having our choir is simply because we love the choir. In a culture where more and more churches are doing away with their choirs, we see the Worship Choir as part of how God has made Ephesus Baptist Church unique. We call it being "uniquely Ephesus." The choir is part of our culture and "heart language."

How Do I Get Involved?

- The Worship Choir is open to all adults and students, 7th through 12th grades.
- Simply come to a "no commitment" rehearsal on a Wednesday evening to see if you think the choir may be for you. There are no auditions for to become a member of the choir, but you must attend 2 consecutive rehearsals to become a member. All new members will meet for a brief "get to know you" interview with Frank when you decide to join.
- For more information, contact Stacia by phone at 770-942-4327, ext. 300 or by email at stacia@ebclife.net.

When Do They Meet?

- Rehearsals – The Worship Choir Meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM in Room 104 in the Education Building. From 6:30 to 7:15 the choir rehearses upcoming “special music.” At 7:15, they move to the Worship Center to join the band as they worship together using the songs for the upcoming Sunday. After a brief devotional and prayer, the choir dismisses at 7:45. Additional rehearsals may be scheduled for special events.
- Worship – The Worship Choir typically leads worship every Sunday in both morning services (9:00 AM and 10:30 AM). It is NOT mandatory that a member sing in both. Some members have important obligations in other ministries. The choir meets upstairs in the “choir room” at 8:45 to warm-up before the 9:00 service. For the 10:30 service, the choir just assembles in the choir loft before the service starts. Worship Choir members are expected to attend one complete service every Sunday.
- The Worship Choir leads worship in other events throughout the year such as our special nights of praise and worship called *Overflow*. Participation in these events is strongly encouraged.

What Is Expected?

- Calling – You should sense a *calling* from God to serve in the Worship Choir. We operate under a “no guilt” policy. We do not view this as a volunteer choir or even a commitment choir. We believe if you are serving because this is a ministry in which God has *called* you, then you will be committed (see Colossians 3:23-24).

Three Kinds of Choirs

| | VOLUNTEER CHOIR | COMMITMENT CHOIR | CALLED CHOIR |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| AGREEMENT BETWEEN: | • you and you | • you and others | • you and God |
| REASONS TO JOIN: | • to sing • to make friends | • previous, plus: being part of a worthwhile organization | • previous, plus: calling to lead worship |
| REASONS TO STAY: | • director lives up to your expectations • not too many expectations placed on you | • organization lives up to your expectations • manageable expectations placed on you | • faithfulness to your calling, regardless of expectations |
| EXPECTATIONS OF YOU: | • show up occasionally | • always show up | • always look for meaningful ways to contribute |
| BEST OUTCOME: | • congregations' applause • good singing experience | • valuable use of time • good singing and relational experience | • personal growth as a worshiper • congregation's growth in worship |
| PRIMARY PURPOSES: | • sing • have fun | • song for Jesus (sense of purpose) • develop relationships | • previous, plus: worship, and lead worship in spirit and truth |

- **Membership** - In order to become a member, you must attend 2 consecutive rehearsals and go through a brief interview with the Minister of Music.

For the Worship Choir, we are looking for people who are faithful. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses **entrust to faithful men...**" For the choir faithfulness trumps talent. We can teach singing but we cannot teach faithfulness.

- **Attendance** – There may be times you have to be away. There may be seasons when you may be unable to serve. We understand that. Please let us know. Missing 4 weeks in a row without notifying the leadership will result in being removed from the roll. You can rejoin when you can better fulfill your commitment.
- **Training** - There will be some biblical and musical training. You must be willing to complete any training assigned by the Minister of Music in a timely fashion.
- **Preparation** – You are expected to spend some time practicing on your own before Wednesday night rehearsals. Our songs and rehearsal schedules can be found on Planning Center Online. You will be given access to PCO when you join.
- **Leading Worship** – We model worship in and out of the choir loft. You are expected to live a life consistent with the songs we sing in worship. We want every Worship Choir member to be growing in their relationship with God.

In the choir loft, choir members should be expressive with your voices, faces, and bodies. We are leading worship and should engage the congregation. We want to be an encouragement to the congregation and not a hinderance or distraction. Remember that every noise you make is amplified by the choir microphones.

All choir members should abide by the Platform Dress Code found in the Systems section of this document (page 55).

- **Communicating** – You are expected to respond to PCO invitations. Systems are only as good as people's commitment to them. By responding you are doing two things: (1) letting us know whether or not you will be in attendance which helps us plan, and (2) you are letting us know that you are paying attention to what we are doing. Your response tells us you are committed and engaged.

You are expected to have access to two communication platforms: Planning Center Online and Realm. These are the two methods by which we communicate and provide important information. You can access these via the internet, however there are apps for both of these platforms that may be more convenient to use.

C.R.E.W. 252



What Is It?

C.R.E.W. 252 is our performing arts and technical arts team for children in kindergarten through 6th grade. C.R.E.W. 252 is an acronym for Create, Respond, Engage, and Worship. Our desire is to teach children about music, drama, and technical arts as well as what the Bible says about what it truly means to be a worshiper of God. Through C.R.E.W. 252 we are investing in the next generation and mentoring them in all the ways we praise God.

Rationale (Why Do We Have C.R.E.W. 252?)

We believe we have a responsibility to train up the next generation of worshipers and worship leaders. Our desire is to teach children about music, drama, and technical arts as well as what the Bible says about what it truly means to be a worshiper of God. Through C.R.E.W. 252 we are investing in the next generation and mentoring them in all the ways we praise God.

How Do I Get Involved?

- Simply show up on at a rehearsal in Studio 252 children's area.

When Do They Meet?

- Rehearsals – C.R.E.W. 252 meets during the school year from 5:45 PM to 6:25 PM in the Studio 252 Large Group Room.
- Worship – We aim to have the C.R.E.W. 252 choir sing in the Sunday morning worship service at least once per month. We also strive to provide training and opportunities for our children to be involved in other areas of our main worship service as well as worship leadership in worship events with their peers. On days that the children sing in the morning worship services, the children will gather in the Studio 252 Large Group Room at 8:45 to warm-up and pray.

What Is Expected?

- While there is no attendance requirement, it is our desire that each child would attend regularly. We do expect that children who have worship leadership responsibilities (those who have solos or leading roles, as well as those who are running the tech for rehearsals) to be faithful in attendance.

Praise Band

What Is It?

The Ephesus Baptist Church Praise Band is the main band which leads every Sunday in corporate worship. This band consists of volunteers of intermediate to advanced skill who serve on a rotational basis. Currently, instrumentation consists of piano, keyboards, acoustic and electric guitars, bass guitar, and drums. We are certainly open to expanding this instrumentation.

Rationale (Why Do We Have a Praise Band?)

As we've discussed, musical style can be a touchy subject in a church when we place our focus on methods rather than purpose. Our Minister of Music was called to Ephesus Baptist Church in June of 2002 to help guide the church in worship expression that both encourages participation within the congregation and relates to the culture the church is trying to reach. What this actually looks like is different for every church. The real work is meeting the people where they are by finding their unique "heart language" (the types of songs that they love) and then depending on God to lead them through the broadening of that language. Because every church body is unique, there is not a predesigned recipe to make such transitions successful. While the music and worship service does take on the personality of its leader in many regards, it has to be God who sets the direction for growth in corporate worship.

We firmly believe that our worship services are the way they are today because of the leading of God, not because we necessarily planned for it to be this way. In 2002, our worship was led by a piano, organ, and choir and no technology other than a sound system. Today our worship is led by choir, a full praise band, and a team of praise singers with a full complement of technological equipment. However, we have not arrived. We believe God is continuing to stretch us to accomplish great things for His glory. We desire further growth, so we are open to other instrumentation and expressions of worship as God directs and provides.

We believe our worship services are appropriate to engage our congregation and be relevant to the unique culture of our community. Some like to describe worship as traditional, contemporary, or blended, but the truth with those labels is they mean different things to different people. We aren't striving to fall into any of those categories. We want to remain somewhat eclectic in our worship expressions. We just simply describe ourselves as "uniquely Ephesus."

How Do I Get Involved?

- The Praise Band is open to all adults in the church as well as students who are serving on the Student Ministry Worship Team.
- An interview/evaluation is required. All members must complete the Begin Path on Worship Workshop before they can begin serving on the team.

Specific skills we are looking for in evaluations and interviews:

All

- proficiency on chosen instrument
- ability to listen to a piece of music and “replicate the feel”
- ability to take a song and “re-interpret” it with a different feel
- ability to vary in dynamics
- ability to play with a click track
- copy rhythms that are played for you
- self-correct when mistakes are made
- willingness to take correction and constructive criticism
- spiritual maturity

Percussionists/Drummers

- ability to keep tempo with a click track
- ability to keep tempo without a click track

Keyboardists/Pianists/Guitarists/Bassists

- ability to read sheet music/lead sheet/chord chart

- For more information, contact Frank by phone at 770-942-4327 or by email at frank@ebclife.net

When Do They Meet?

- Rehearsals – The Praise Band meets on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM in the Worship Center. There are also times when we may have a rehearsal on other days to rehearse for an upcoming event or to simply have an extended time to learn new songs.
- Worship – The Praise Band leads worship every Sunday morning (9:00 AM and 10:30 AM) Praise Band members serve on a rotational basis. There is no “A Team,” “B Team,” etc. Members who are scheduled for that Sunday will play in BOTH services. The band meets with the singers and tech ministry at 8:00 am on the platform for prayer before our run-through every Sunday morning. Praise Band members are expected to attend one complete service on the Sundays that they serve.

What Is Expected?

- Calling – You should sense a *calling* from God to serve in the Praise Band. Although you will be held to a high standard of commitment as a member of the Praise Band, it is believed that a calling from God is more motivating than a commitment to man (see Colossians 3:23-24).
- Craftmanship – You are serving on this team because you have the skill to do so. We expect all members to be serious about improving as a musician and a lead worshiper.
- Preparation – You are expected to spend some time practicing on your own before Wednesday night rehearsals. Rehearsals are not the time to learn the song. If we come to rehearsal and it

seems as if we haven't even heard a song, we will not waste our valuable time learning it in rehearsal.

- Rehearsals – Practice is personal. Rehearsal is relational. Respect the other members by BEING ON TIME. This means tuned, hooked up, and ready to start at the scheduled time. If you are scheduled for a particular Sunday, you MUST attend the Wednesday rehearsal before that Sunday.
- Commitment – Your calling is from God. Your commitment is to the other members of the band, the leadership, and the church. It is your responsibility to love, support, encourage, and get along with other band members. We are a family and we will be patient with and extend grace to every brother and sister.
- Training – As a special group of worship leaders, the leadership will expect more from you. You must complete any training in a timely fashion as assigned by the leadership. There are also other resources available to instrumentalists like worshiponline.com and worshipartistry.com. These will only be available for people who will use them because they do cost us money.
- Leading Worship – We model worship on and off the platform. You are expected to live a life consistent with the person you portray on the platform. We expect you to be growing in your relationship with God.

On the platform, you are expected to engage with the congregation, encouraging them to participate and connect with God. We do not want to be a distraction by being buried in our music or instrument, nor do we want to be so demonstrative that we draw attention to ourselves.

All band members should abide by the Platform Dress Code found in the Systems section of this document (page 55).

- Communicating – You are expected to respond to PCO invitations. Systems are only as good as people's commitment to them. You must be at the Wednesday rehearsal preceding the Sunday you are scheduled to play. If you cannot be there please inform the leadership as soon as possible so a replacement can be found.

You are expected to have access to two communication platforms: Planning Center Online and Realm. These are the two methods by which we communicate and provide important information. You can access these via the internet, however there are apps for both of these platforms that may be more convenient to use.

Praise Singers

What Is It?

The Ephesus Baptist Church Praise Singers are vocalists who lead every Sunday in corporate worship. The team is comprised of singers who have strong vocal skills with the ability to engage others in worship on a rotational basis.

Rationale (Why Do We Have Praise Singers?)

We believe having a small team of strong singers who model worship help the congregation more fully engage in corporate worship. Along with the choir and praise band our praise singers help define our corporate worship as “uniquely Ephesus.”

How Do I Get Involved?

- The Praise Singers are open to all adults in the church as well as students who are serving on the Student Ministry Worship Team.
- An interview/evaluation is required. All members must complete the Begin Path on Worship Workshop before they can begin serving on the team.

Specific skills we are looking for in evaluations and interviews:

- find pitch from any instrument
 - stay in tune
 - find appropriate harmony line when none is provided
 - learn song from lead sheet or recording
 - ability to blend with other vocalists
 - ability to sing varying musical styles
 - ability to hear and self-correct when mistakes are made
 - willingness to take correction and constructive criticism
 - sing with expression
 - spiritual maturity
- For more information, contact Frank by phone at 770-942-4327 or by email at frank@ebclife.net

When Do They Meet?

- Rehearsals – As members of the Worship Choir, the Praise Singers start rehearsal with the Worship Choir on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM in Room 104 in the Education Building. At 7:15, when the choir moves to the Worship Center with the band, the Praise Singers help the band lead worship with the choir and continue rehearsing with the band until 8:30.

On certain Wednesday nights, the Praise Singers meet in the Worship Center at 5:45 to work on parts before choir rehearsal.

There are also times when we may have a rehearsal on other days to rehearse for an upcoming event or to simply have an extended time to learn new songs.

- **Worship** – The Praise Singers serve on a rotational basis leading worship every Sunday morning (9:00 AM and 10:30 AM). Praise Singers who are scheduled for that Sunday will sing in BOTH services. The singers meet with the band and tech ministry at 8:00 am on the platform for prayer before our run-through every Sunday morning. Praise Singers are expected to attend one complete service on the Sundays that they serve.

What Is Expected?

- **Calling** – You should sense a *calling* from God to serve as a Praise Singer. Although you will be held to a high standard of commitment as a member of the Praise Singers, it is believed that a calling from God is more motivating than a commitment to man. (see Colossians 3:23-24)
- **Craftmanship** – You are serving on this team because you have the skill to do so. We expect all members to be serious about improving as singers and a lead worshiper.

Praise Singers must be able to blend well vocally with other singers. All singers should be able to harmonize and be able to sing ALL parts (within their range), including the lead on each song.

- **Preparation** – You are expected to spend some time practicing on your own before Wednesday night rehearsals. Rehearsals are not the time to learn the song. If we come to rehearsal and it seems we haven't even heard a song, we will not waste our valuable time learning it in rehearsal.
- **Rehearsals** – Practice is personal. Rehearsal is relational. Respect the other members by BEING ON TIME. This means having your in-ears in and ready to start at the scheduled time. If you are scheduled for a particular Sunday, you MUST attend the Wednesday rehearsal before that Sunday.
- **Commitment** – Your calling is from God. Your commitment is to the other members of the band, the leadership, and the church. It is your responsibility to love, support, encourage, and get along with other band members. We are a family and we will be patient with and extend grace to every brother and sister.
- **Training** – As a special group of worship leaders, the leadership will expect more of you. You must complete any training in a timely fashion as assigned by the leadership.
- **Leading Worship** – We model worship on and off the platform. You are expected to live a life consistent with the person you portray on the platform. We expect you to be growing in your relationship with God.

On the platform, you are expected to engage with the congregation, encouraging them to participate and connect with God. This means that we worship with our faces and bodies as

much as we do our voice. We do not want to be a distraction by staring at the lyric monitor, nor do we want to be so demonstrative that we draw attention to ourselves. The leadership will not force anyone to do something they are not comfortable doing however, we will challenge all to see if God may want them to grow in their expression. The truth is, the congregation will not be more engaged than those leading.

All singers should abide by the Platform Dress Code found in the Systems section of this document (page 55).

- **Communicating** – You are expected to respond to PCO invitations. Systems are only as good as people’s commitment to them. You must be at the Wednesday rehearsal preceding the Sunday you are scheduled to play. If you cannot be there please inform the leadership as soon as possible so a replacement can be found.

You are expected to have access to two communication platforms: Planning Center Online and Realm. These are the two methods by which we communicate and provide important information. You can access these via the internet, however there are apps for both of these platforms that may be more convenient.

Unseen Technical Ministry



What Is It?

The Unseen Technical Ministry Team consists of people who help run all the important “behind-the-scenes” things that make our corporate worship services more engaging. This includes sound, lights, video, word projection, etc.

Rationale (Why Do We the Unseen Technical Ministry?)

The truth of the matter is we really do not need technology to worship God. But when you truly think about it, we don’t actually need the band or the choir to worship God. However, technology is an effective communication tool. Today, technology is everywhere. Some might argue the issue, but Jesus set the example for us by using the effective communication channels of the culture in which He lived. Jesus taught in parables because that was the most effective way for Him to communicate His message. Further, He went to where the people were and interacted with them in those contexts. He didn’t sit around and wait for them to come to Him.

Through technology we can communicate more effectively through means in which people are accustomed. It makes our message more relevant, meaningful, and understandable. Technology does not serve itself. We do not project lyrics to draw attention to the lyrics or shine lights to draw attention to the lights. The purpose of technology is to help draw attention to our Great God. We use technology to enhance our worship services.

How Do I Get Involved?

- The Technical Ministry Team is open to all adults as well as students who receive a recommendation from the Student Pastor.
- For more information, contact Bruce by phone at 770-942-4327 or by email at bruce@ebclife.net

When Do They Meet?

- Rehearsals - Rehearsals on Wednesday nights take place in the Worship Center from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Wednesdays are important times as techs run through the service with the singers, band, and choir, and also serve as valuable training time for the techs themselves.
- Worship - The Unseen Technical Ministry serves every Sunday in both morning services (9:00 AM and 10:30 AM). Members serve on a rotational basis and typically serve in only one of the two services. Techs meet with the band and singers at 8:00 am on the platform for prayer before our run-through every Sunday morning.

What Is Expected?

- Calling - You should sense a *calling* from God to serve in this ministry. We do not view this as a volunteer ministry, and we believe if you are serving because this is a ministry in which God has called you, then you will be committed (see Colossians 3:23-24).
- Membership - In order to become a member, you must receive training. Most people start by being trained projecting lyrics. Further opportunities will be determined based on the member's desire, ability, and ministry need.
- Attendance - If you cannot fulfill your scheduled slot, please let leadership know as soon as possible.
- Training - There will be biblical and technical training. You must be willing to complete any training in a timely fashion as assigned by the Media Director.
- Leading Worship - Even though you aren't on the platform, you are worship leaders. Worship leaders model worship for others. You are expected to live a life consistent with the Gospel we proclaim on Sundays. We want every Unseen Technical Ministry member to be growing in their relationship with God.
- Communicating - You are expected to respond to PCO invitations. Systems are only as good as people's commitment to them.

You are expected to have access to two communication platforms: Planning Center Online and Realm. These are the two methods by which we provide important information. You can access

these via the internet, however there are apps for each of these platforms that may be more convenient.

Soloists – Special Music

What Is It?

These are the people who play or sing “special music” in our corporate worship services.

How Do I Get Involved?

- By invitation only, although you can make a request to the Minister of Music for consideration. All soloists must be involved in another team within the Music & Worship Ministry.

Rationale (Why Do We the Unseen Technical Ministry?)

Being completely transparent, we have “special songs” performed during the offering because we need something besides dead air taking place while we take up the offering. However, we also see this as a special opportunity for people to display their artistic gifts as an offering to God and an edification for the congregation. Furthermore, the offertory provides an opportunity for worship leaders to hone their ability and gain experience in front of people so that they become better worship leaders in the future.

When Do They Meet?

- Worship – Soloists will sing the offertory in both morning services on the day they are scheduled. SOUND CHECK for offertory special music is at 8:40 AM Sunday morning. Note that a SOUND CHECK is not a rehearsal. Ideally the sound check is for the sound engineer to get a good balance in the mix and to ensure that the soloist can sufficiently hear the music and themselves. **This should take no more than a minute.**

Should you need time to practice your song with the mic, please contact the Media Director to find a time that is convenient for the both of you.

What Is Expected?

- Attendance – If you cannot fulfill your scheduled slot, please let leadership know as soon as possible. You are welcome to discuss a swap with someone else on the schedule, but please allow leadership to make that final decision.
- Leading Worship – We model worship on and off the platform. You are expected to live a life consistent with the person you portray on the platform. We expect you to be growing in your relationship with God.

On the platform, you are expected to engage with the congregation, encouraging them to participate and connect with God. This means that we worship with our faces and bodies as

much as we do our voice. We do not want to be a distraction by staring at the lyric monitor, nor do we want to be so demonstrative that we draw attention to ourselves.

Do your best to memorize your song. The message comes across stronger when it is internalized.

All soloists should abide by the Platform Dress Code found in the Systems section of this document (page 55).

- **Communicating** – You are expected to respond to PCO invitations. Systems are only as good as people’s commitment to them. By responding you are doing two things: (1) letting us know whether or not you will be in attendance which helps us plan, and (2) you are letting us know that you are paying attention to what we are doing. Your response tells us you are committed and engaged.

You are expected to have access to two communication platforms: Planning Center Online and Realm. These are the two methods by which we provide important information. You can access these via the internet, however there are apps for each of these that are much more convenient.

All soloists are expected to inform Stacia (stacia@ebclife.net) or Frank (frank@ebclife.net) what they are singing at least two weeks before they are scheduled to sing. We also need to know if you would like the band to accompany you.

Although we strongly encourage you to memorize your song, the Tech Team can put your words on the back screen if you provide them with your lyrics by the Wednesday before your scheduled Sunday.

Leadership Teams

Worship Vision Team

This is a hand-picked team of “leaders” by the Minister of Music that helps **evaluate** and **cast vision** for the Music & Worship Ministry. This team is **intentionally multigenerational** in demographic and people are chosen because of their **knowledge, position, influence,** and **availability to meet regularly**. This team consists of the Minister of Music, Music Ministry Assistant, Media Director, and other selected people.

Worship Planning Team

Consisting of the Minister of Music, Music Ministry Assistant, Media Director, and other creative lay people, this team meets on Monday afternoons to plan upcoming worship services.

Worship Choir Leadership Team

This is a team comprised of leadership from within the Worship Choir. The purpose of this team is to help the Minister of Music evaluate procedures and temperament of the choir as well as administrate and set policies and schedules. This team meets once per quarter on the first Wednesday of the quarter (January, April, July, and October) following choir practice (except for holidays). These meetings will last no more than 30 minutes.

Worship Platform Team

This leadership team is made up of the Minister of Music, Upfront Worship Leaders*, Worship Service Directors*, Worship Service Producer*, Band Director*, Vocal Director, Media Director, Tech Team Leaders*, and Praise Band Section Leaders. This team assists the Minister of Music with developing mentoring and teaching systems within their areas of expertise as well as addressing technical issues that involve the production of the worship service. This team does not have a set meeting time. Most of their work takes place during Wednesday night rehearsals.

*These are all positions that help fulfill the vision for the ministry. They are listed to create awareness and cast vision. We believe God will provide leadership in these areas as He leads.

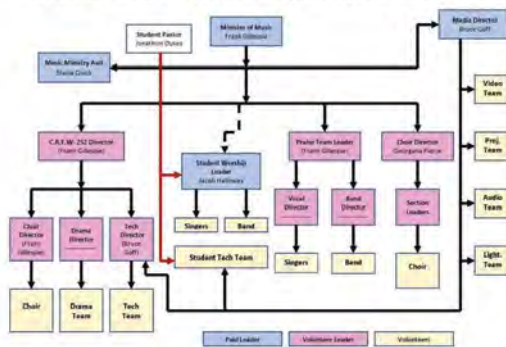
C.R.E.W. 252 Leadership Team

This team is charged with helping to develop the next generation of worshipers and worship leaders. This team consists of the Minister of Music, Choir Director, Lesson Coordinator*, Drama Director*, Choreographer, Tech Director, Instrumental Director*, and Game Coordinator*. This team meets two times per year (January and July) to plan for the upcoming semesters. Other organizational meetings will be scheduled as needed.

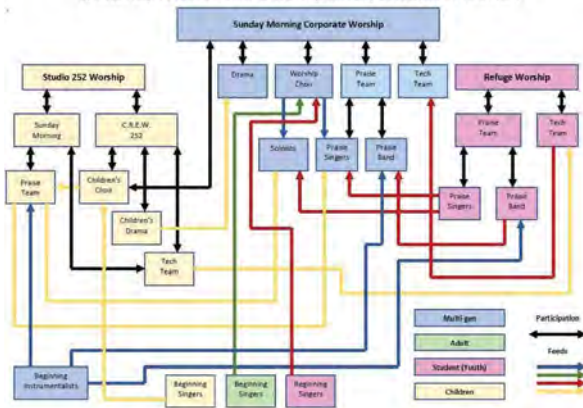
*These are all positions that help fulfill the vision for the ministry. They are listed to create awareness and cast vision. We believe God will provide leadership in these areas as He leads.

Organizational Flowcharts

Ephesus Baptist Church Music & Worship Ministry Leadership Organizational Flowchart



Ephesus Baptist Church Music & Worship Ministry Development Flowchart



Goals for 2020

1. "Publish" this manual in January and be ready to "hit the ground running" when Music & Worship Ministry teams begin meeting at the start of the year.
2. Follow the systems in this manual and enforce all policies.
3. Fill all open positions in Worship Choir Leadership Team.
4. Average 35 singers in the choir in every worship service by the end of the year.
5. Begin using youth and children regularly as part of the Praise Singers.
6. Add at least 2 more men to Praise Singers.
7. Recruit 3 more instrumentalists to serve in the Praise Band.
8. Fill 3 open positions on the C.R.E.W. 252 Leadership Team.
9. Fill 3 open positions on the Worship Platform Leadership Team.
10. Recruit at least 4 new people to serve regularly in the Unseen Technical Ministry.

Important Links

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Ephesus Baptist Church website | www.ebclife.net |
| Planning Center Online | www.planningcenteronline.com |
| REALM | www.onrealm.org/ebclife/ |
| Worship Workshop | www.worshipworkshop.com |
| Worship Artistry | www.worshipartistry.com |
| Worship Online | www.worshiponline.com |

Music & Worship Ministry Forms and Documents



Music and Worship Ministry Application

Personal Information

Name : _____

Address: _____

Phone (best contact #): _____

Can we text you at this number? Yes No If yes, carrier?

Email: _____

How long have you been regularly attending this church?

What other ministries or classes are you involved with at Ephesus Baptist Church?

Please briefly describe how you came to know Jesus:

Please describe things you do on a regular basis to help you grow in your relationship with Christ:

What are some reasons you feel led to serve in the music and worship ministry?

What are one or two unique qualities or gifts you will bring to the team?

Please briefly explain your understanding of how the worship ministry serves God and the congregation. Include how your role (praise band, praise team, or tech team) fits into this:

What will you do if you are not chosen to serve at this time?

If you were stranded on a desert island, what *one* CD would you want to have with you?

Ministry Information

I am interested in serving in... (check all that apply)

Praise Band Praise Singers Tech Team Other:

Please fill out *ONLY* the sections for the boxes you checked on the previous page.

Praise Band

What worship ministry experience have you had in the past, either here or at another church?

What other musical experience do you have that you feel would be beneficial to you as a member of the praise band?

Please list the instruments you play:

What kind of charts/music do you use to play?

lead sheets (chords and melody line)

chord charts (lyrics and chords)

I only play by ear

I'm not sure

Can you read standard notation music?

yes no

Can you play by ear?

yes no I'm not sure

Have you used in-ear monitors before?

yes no

Can you play by ear?

yes no

Can you play in time with a click or metronome?

yes no

Praise Singers

What worship ministry experience have you had in the past, either here or at another church?

What other musical experience do you have that you feel would be beneficial to you as a member of the praise team?

What vocal part do you sing?

Can you sing harmony by ear?

yes no

Can you read standard notation music?

yes no

Can you sing in time with a click or metronome?

yes no

Are you comfortable singing solos?

yes no

Tech Team

I am interested in... (check all that apply)

Audio Tech Video Tech Lighting Tech Projection

Are you willing to learn more than one area of expertise?

yes no

What tech ministry experience have you had in the past, either here or at another church?

What other experiences do you have that you feel would be beneficial to you as a member of the praise team?

All Applicants

I have read the Music and Worship Ministry Manual and understand and am in agreement.

yes no I need clarification

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Important Information

For vocalists and instrumentalists, to schedule an interview/evaluation, please contact Frank at frank@ebclife.net or the church office at 770-942-4327 and pick up an evaluation packet in the choir room.

To schedule a tech team interview, please contact Bruce at bruce@ebclife.net.

What can be expected with the evaluations?

1. Evaluations will take place in the Worship Center in front of the Praise Band and Praise Singers.
2. Singers will prepare a song of their choice and perform it with a microphone on the microphone. The song may be done with a track or acapella.
3. Instrumentalists and singers will prepare the music contained in the evaluation packet per instructions. This song will be performed with the Praise Band and Praise Singers like it would be done in a worship service.
4. Instrumentalists and singers will perform another song with the Praise Band and Praise Singers for which they haven't prepared. Singers will be expected to find an appropriate harmony to sing. Instrumentalists will be expected to play from a chord chart/sheet music and play with the band.

What am I being evaluated on?

All

- proficiency on chosen instrument
- ability to listen to a piece of music and "replicate the feel"
- ability to take a song and "re-interpret" it with a different feel
- ability to vary in dynamics
- ability to play with a click track
- copy rhythms that are played for you
- self-correct when mistakes are made
- willingness to take correction and constructive criticism
- spiritual maturity

Singers

- find pitch from any instrument
- stay in tune
- find appropriate harmony line when none is provided
- learn song from lead sheet or recording
- ability to blend with other vocalists
- ability to sing varying musical styles
- sing with expression

Percussionists/Drummers

- ability to keep tempo with a click track

- ability to keep tempo without a click track

Keyboardists/Pianists/Guitarists/Bassists

- ability to read sheet music/lead sheet/chord chart

Should I still interview if I am weak in one of these areas?

Absolutely, yes! We do not have any professional musicians and we are all learning. Part of the evaluation process is for both you and the evaluators to see areas where you need work. With that said, if a singer cannot sing in tune, blend with other voices, or carry a harmony line by themselves, the Praise Singers is probably not a team they can serve on. If an instrumentalist does not have the fundamentals of their instrument down and cannot play through a simple song, the Praise Band is probably not a team they can serve on.

What can be expected with the interviews?

1. You will bring your completed and signed application with you to the interview.
2. This is a very relaxed interview. There will be no "gotcha" questions. The discussion will be guided by how you answered the questions on the application.

When will a decision be made?

You will be contacted with an answer within a week from your interview/evaluation.