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TEACHING GOSPEL-ORIENTED ECCLESIOLOGY TO
MEMBERS OF ICHTHUS MISSION CHURCH
IN ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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TEACHING GOSPEL-ORIENTED ECCLESIOLOGY TO
MEMBERS OF ICHTHUS MISSION CHURCH
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PREFACE

This project would not have been possible without the loving encouragement of many people whom God sent in my life. However, first and foremost, I am thankful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who died in my place and saved me from the depth of sin and death. My Jesus comes to me and encourages with love, knowledge, and wisdom whenever I need Him. His faithfulness and steadfast love bring me up from discouraging moments in life and ministry situations.

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Third, I am thankful for the privilege to serve God's people at Ichthus Mission Church. Both Korean and English congregations inspired my study and the development of this project. They extended the support for my theological study and the project. My pastor, Haeng Joon Lee, encouraged my doctoral study at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and inspired this particular subject for my project.

I sincerely thank my lovely wife, Younghak, for her steadfast love, patience, and support as my life's companion and as a coworker in Christ. She has been a tremendous help as I continue to serve God. She encouraged me greatly while I developed this project. I am also thankful for my family, Hyerin and Chaerin, Christian, and Caroline, for their love and prayer for me.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has equipped me with knowledge and passion so that I could better serve God. Faithful and fervent professors taught me not only through the classes but also through their lives committed to the divine callings. I would like to thank the staff at the office of doctoral studies and the library for their timely helps. I also would like to thank Betsy Fredrick for formatting and editing my project. This project would not have been possible without Dr. Oren Martin, my project supervisor. His insightful suggestions, encouraging words, and patience with my extremely slow pace was truly appreciated.

My prayer is that this project would inspire all people at Ichthus Mission Church to unite all generations as they cross obstacles as an ethnic church. I also pray that this project could help other Asian American churches as they continue to unite multiple generations into one body.

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Columbia, Maryland

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The vision of Ichthus Mission Church is to glorify God through saving, growing, serving, and evangelizing. The congregation shares this vision, yet a gap exists between groups within the congregation. Members need to see that the gospel affects all aspects of their lives, including the way they relate to one another within the church. Teaching gospel-oriented ecclesiology to members helped them understand that the vision of the church is gospel-oriented. Members who participated the project were exhorted to live by the vision and to serve the church according to the teaching.

Context

The history of Ichthus Mission Church (IMC) goes back to 2002, when two Korean churches merged to become one new mission-oriented church. IMC is an ethnic church and is a language-specific church. The whole congregation is either ethnically Korean-born immigrants or second-generation members born in America to Korean parents. The church is highly influenced by Korean culture, food, and language.

Sunday service attendance includes around sixty people. Three quarters of the congregation speak Korean as their first language and worship services are provided in Korean. One quarter of congregation speaks English as their first language and they have separate Sunday services. The church calls these two groups Korean Ministry (KM) and English Ministry (EM) respectively. The EM consists of students and young adults in their twenties and thirties. The KM congregants are nearly all over fifty years old and many are retired. The church has three pastors and four elders. There is a lead pastor, an EM pastor, and a family pastor on the KM side. There are four lay elders and one speaks

English as his first language. I serve as the EM pastor and as an associate pastor to the whole congregation.

IMC grew during its first couple of years, then declined over the next decade and lost nearly two-thirds of the peak congregation. The merger of churches turned out to be unsuccessful in maintaining membership. The subsequent reduction of the congregation caused the church to lose its capacity in a wide range of ministries, and the church gradually lost members in their thirties and forties and early fifties.

Over the time of decline, the second generation grew to become college students and young adults. They speak English as their primary language and are the main group of the EM. Not all second-generation members successfully settled at IMC, however. Some left the church or, in some cases, the faith altogether. They may have left the church because they did not acclimate to the church's exclusive ethnicity or because of cultural barriers with first-generation KM members. Though, the remaining EM members understand their parents' culture and the uniqueness of IMC as an ethnic church. They love the church and are willing to cooperate with the KM.

There are additional hindrances for the EM to grow and naturally merge with the older KM members. As congregants left, younger members lost older role models and mentors. The loss also heightened the gaps in language and culture between the EM and KM members. The EM members have become passive in church businesses and tend to stay away from KM instead of being engaging members of the church body.

Considering IMC's small membership and the connectedness of the two groups, the church is pursuing "one roof, two ministries" under one leadership model. "One roof, two ministries" means that the KM and EM exist as one church, having separate language services and ministries but cooperate for church-wide ministries under a united leadership formed by members of both groups.

IMC cannot accomplish the united model of the KM and EM without breaking the invisible wall between the two groups. The invisible wall is the language/cultural

barrier, perception of a generation gap, heartache of the decline of the membership, fear of complete separation of EM and KM as has happened earlier, and indifference to the matters and businesses of the other group. Despite these issues, the New Testament calls believers to pursue unity in the gospel. The invisible wall between these groups is a barrier to the gospel and may be due to both groups' lack of understanding of how the gospel shapes ecclesiology. Teaching gospel-oriented ecclesiology to members would bring about a united congregation—one group serving the other group as members of one body with different functions while maintaining uniqueness of the two groups.

Rationale

Church unity is a consistent teaching of Scripture, especially in the New Testament epistles. The conflicts between Jewish and Gentile Christians in the ancient church are significant and relevant because of the cultural and language barriers between the two groups, which is similar to inherent barriers between the KM and EM. Jesus came to break down the wall of hostility between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Through his sacrifice he brought peace to the two groups (Eph 2:14-16). The New Testament records the early church's struggle to reconcile Jewish traditions with Gentile converts (cf. Acts 15; Gal 2). This reconciliation provides an applicable model for the members of IMC.

The oneness of a church has a divine cause, which is the advancement of the gospel. The apostle Paul identified with all kinds of personalities to win all kinds of persons (1 Cor 9:19-23). The KM and EM of IMC must be willing to change themselves to be able to work together in obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20).

When this attitude of mutual deference and unity prevails, the members will walk in accordance of Christ's calling (Rom 12:4-5). Scripture calls Christians to approach others with an open heart, embrace one another with patience and kindness, and make their best effort to maintain unity in the church (Eph 4:1-3). Jesus modeled such humble

service: “Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28).¹

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to increase congregational unity among Korean-speaking and English-speaking members of Ichthus Mission Church in Rockville, Maryland, through teaching gospel-oriented ecclesiology.

Goals

The following four goals were established to determine the completion of this project.

1. The first goal was to assess the knowledge of gospel-oriented ecclesiology and the level of desire for church unity among project participants.
2. The second goal was to develop a curriculum on gospel-centered ecclesiology and church unity.
3. The third goal was to increase participants’ knowledge of ecclesiology and motivation for unity through teaching a six-week curriculum.
4. The fourth goal was to develop a ministry plan identifying next steps toward congregational ministry integration.

Research Methodology

Four goals determined the effectiveness of the project. The first goal was to assess the knowledge of gospel-oriented ecclesiology and the level of desire for one church. This goal was measured by administering the Basics of Gospel-Oriented Ecclesiology survey (BGOE) to ten members who speak English as their primary language or can use English without difficulty.² This goal was considered successfully met when ten members completed the BGOE and the responses were analyzed, yielding a clearer

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

² See appendix 1.

picture of the current knowledge and passion about gospel-oriented ecclesiology among IMC members.

The second goal was to develop a six-week teaching curriculum of gospel-centered ecclesiology. The curriculum covered the biblical/ theological/ practical understanding of gospel-oriented ecclesiology. This goal was measured by an expert panel consisting of the lead pastor of IMC, one retired pastor of IMC, one associate pastor of IMC, and two lead pastors of Korean churches in Virginia who have similar congregational context. This panel utilized a rubric to evaluate biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.³ Each week of the curriculum was reviewed on its own rubric page and the average score from all rubrics were calculated. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it met the standard.

The third goal was to increase knowledge and motivation for oneness of the church through a multi-week teaching session. Participants of the BGOE participated in the teaching session. Participants were encouraged to attend all six sessions. Each session was video recorded and made available to participants who missed a session. This goal was measured by re-administrating BGOE within one week of the participants finishing the six-week teaching session. This goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores. A t-test for dependent samples “involves a comparison of the means from each group of scores and focuses on the differences between the scores.”⁴

³ See appendix 2.

⁴ Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 191.

Since this project involved a single group of the same subjects being surveyed under two conditions, a t-test of dependent samples was the appropriate test statistic.⁵

The fourth goal was to develop a ministry plan identifying next steps toward congregational ministry integration. This goal was measured by administering an interview with each student whose post score indicated growth. This goal was considered successfully met when half of the interviewees affirmed to join the ministry council to discuss continued effort for ministry integration.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

Definitions of certain terms used in the project are provided here.

Ecclesiology. *Ecclesiology* is the study of the nature and structure of the Christian church. Ecclesiology may be succinctly defined as the “theology of Christian churches.”⁶

Gospel-centered ecclesiology. *Gospel-centered ecclesiology* is the study of the unity of the congregation of the Christian church as it serves the purpose of spreading the good news (Acts 14:7).

One limitation of the project was its small number of participants. Since the participants who were invited to the project were members of the church who speak English as their first language, the number of participants was small. To mitigate this limitation and to heighten the nature of the desired unity, KM members who speak English were invited to participate as well. One delimitation of the project was its six-week teaching. A second delimitation was that the desired goal for unity cannot be achieved by knowledge transfer alone. Without participants’ willingness to change their hearts, only superficial cognition of knowledge can be transferred. To mitigate this limitation,

⁵ Salkind, *Statistics*, 189.

⁶ Eliade Mircea and Charles J. Adams, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 473.

participants were asked to dedicate time for meditation and prayer during the session for effective motivation to live by the teaching.

Conclusion

God has clearly revealed his will to his church, which is congregational unity. God's people shall live by his will, upholding and honoring the church, one body in Christ. The following chapters will explain how God has shown this principle through Jesus, his Word, and his servants in history.

CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE PROJECT

Congregational unity is a central hallmark of the New Testament vision for the church. This chapter consists of three parts, each reflecting Bible passages to support that congregations must display unity to (1) uphold God’s calling of church as one, (2) despite cultural differences and language preferences, and (3) despite functional differences.

God’s Calling of Church as One

The apostle Paul calls the church, by the authority of Jesus Christ, to make unity without division (1 Cor 1:10). The church is also urged to do the hard work to maintain the unity. Believers are compelled to make every effort to keep unity with humility and gentleness toward others (Eph 4:1-3). Believers must be eager, zealous, and diligent (Eph 4:3) in pursuing unity. The effort to keep oneness should be with intention and purpose. The calling of church unity is holy and sovereign because the subject of the calling is the Triune God (Eph 4:4-6): “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your calling—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” The validity of the calling for unity is displayed by a sevenfold enumeration: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God the Father.¹ God in Three Persons is perfectly and equally stated in this sevenfold oneness in the calling of the church unity. O’Brien states, “The sevenfold list is basically threefold since three of these unities allude to the three persons of the Trinity, while the remaining four refer to

¹ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 89.

believers' relationship to the Spirit, Son, and Father."² Because of this connection, it is necessary to examine the work of the Spirit, the Lord, and the Father in the unity of church in conjunction with the other four.

The Spirit and Church Unity

The sevenfold oneness begins with the group of three—one body, one Spirit and one hope. Church is one body in Christ with many individual members to one another (Rom 12:5). This one body illustration of a church with many members recalls the human body imagery with many limbs and body parts (1 Cor 12:12-26).

O'Brien comments, "Each congregation is a local manifestation of this heavenly entity [assembly gathered around Christ]."³ Therefore, the unity of the church must be visibly maintained in each local congregation. The one body concept is not only the heavenly body but also a visible display as the unified assembly of local believers. Stott explains that the function of the One Holy Spirit is to "indwell and animate" the one body, the church.⁴ Just as a human body is animated by the spirit of the person, the church is animated by the One Holy Spirit. Since there is One Holy Spirit, the church has to be one body.⁵ This logic legitimates the unity of the church. Bruce marks the work of the Holy Spirit in the church: "Without the Holy Spirit's operation as its Organizer there would be no true *ecclesia*: for its fellowship does not hinge on official succession or corporate visibility, but on the interpenetration of a common life identified with His own, wrought by its Divine Author."⁶ The operation of the Spirit in the church includes, but is

² Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1999), 280.

³ O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 281.

⁴ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1986), 150.

⁵ O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 281.

⁶ Bruce, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 89.

not limited to, enabling the divided to approach the Father in unity (Eph 2:18), building the divided together into a dwelling place for God (Eph 2:22), manifesting varieties of gifts to everyone for the common good (1 Cor 12:7), and baptizing them into one body by its name (1 Cor 12:13).

When the early churches were split into classifications and cultures, the separation seemed severe and not mendable. Then the wall of hostility between the separated groups was voided and they became one group. This one group is a newly created one man in place of the two men (Eph 2:14-15). Arnold states, “This Spirit now fills the church as the new covenant temple”—the one new man is necessary in place of multiple men of numerous spirits.⁷

The church as one body and one Spirit is now called to the one hope through God’s sovereign calling. This weighty calling to unity is emphasized throughout the letter to the Ephesians (1:18, 4:1, 4). The repeated use of “calling” in verb and noun in both 4:1 and 4:4 expresses special emphasis.⁸

The calling was given not to individuals but to corporate believers as the declension of the verb “called” (Eph 4:4) is second person plural. Lincoln states that the calling of one hope “is not individual and private but corporate and public.”⁹ When the goal of God’s salvation is as broad as cosmic unity, it is evident that His exhortation of the calling to the church must be pursued by corporate believers.

Paul reminds that the Gentiles, the people of different backgrounds with Israel, were without God and living with no “hope” (Eph 2:12). They were strangers of the covenants of the promise of Israel. They are now brought together by the new covenant

⁷ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 233.

⁸ Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 257.

⁹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Waco, TX: Word, 2005), 239.

of Christ Jesus effected by His blood and made into one in “one hope.” Thielman speaks of this hope nobly: “They now have hope, the same kind of hope that characterized Abraham, who believed that the God who could call things into existence out of nothing could also create a people for himself all appearances to the contrary (Rom 4:17-18).”¹⁰

The hope inherently belongs to the future. Child-bearing seemed impossible for Abraham, but he had hope based on faith that God could make something into existence out of nothing. God gives hope to the church for a future event that is not presently seen (Rom 8:24). The one hope that binds the believers into unity is an eschatological hope that all believers can foresee the future appearance of Christ in glory (Col 1:27) and the unity of all things in heaven and earth (Eph 1:10). The work of the Spirit is to seal the hope of believers for the completion of their future inheritance at the final days (Eph 1:13-14). Arnold sees the appropriateness of grouping the Holy Spirit with “one body” and “one hope” when he thinks of the work of the Holy Spirit is to give “one hope” for the future inheritance: “This Holy Spirit marks believers as God’s property and is a deposit on their future eschatological inheritance (1:13). Thus, Paul speaks of the ‘one hope’ believers eagerly anticipate.”¹¹

The church, as one body motivated by one Spirit, is driven to pursue its unity in the present time foreseeing the futuristic one hope. The one hope, therefore, is meant to bring inspiration to the church of its urgent effort to demonstrate and maintain unity.¹² Unity of the church is the evidence of the cosmic reconciliation of God’s plan in the fullness of time (Eph 1:10). O’Brien asserts that the oneness of the church is the demonstration of the glorious will of God: “As a foretaste of this grand hope the very existence of the church, a society of pardoned rebels, a multiracial community in which

¹⁰ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 257.

¹¹ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 233.

¹² Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 239.

Jews and Gentiles have been brought together in unity in the one body, is the means God uses to manifest his richly diverse wisdom to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm.”¹³

The Spirit is at the central place in the first triad—"one body," "one Spirit" and "one hope." One Spirit breathes life to one body—the church—just as God formed man and breathed the breath of life for the man to become a living being (Gen 2:7). One spirit instills one hope to the body so that it could foretaste the cosmic unity which will come true when the time reaches to its fullness.

The Son and Church Unity

Second, the unity of the church is motivated by the next three-fold oneness comprised of one Lord, one faith, and one baptism (Eph 4:5). Having mentioned one Spirit and His functions in unifying the church through one body and one hope, the urgency of one church is inspired by the second person in the Trinity, the Lord.

The Lord is the same language used to identify Yahweh in the Septuagint (LXX).¹⁴ According to Thielman, “Deuteronomy 6:4 in the LXX, for example, reads, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord [κύριος] our God is one Lord [κύριος εἷς].’”¹⁵ The title, “the Lord,” then, was used to identify Christ Jesus among early believers. Paul and recipients of epistles acknowledged Jesus as Son of God and did not hesitate to call him the Lord. The letter to the Ephesians includes more than twenty references to Jesus as Lord (1:2, 3, 15; 2:21; 4:1).¹⁶

Paul exclaims one Lord without smoothing out the phrase with conjunctions, which heightens the divine request of making one church. It is just as blunt as to say, “If

¹³ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 282.

¹⁴ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 234.

¹⁵ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 258.

¹⁶ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 283.

there is one Lord, then there must be one church.” He already mentioned that Christ is the head over the church (Eph 1:22). Therefore, one Lord possesses one body and must have full authority to orchestrate the body. Bruce relates the headship and influence when writing, “Then the head must possess a body in order to constitute a whole. . . . Christ figures not only as a Head of authority, but of influence.”¹⁷

Now, the two distinctive entities of the community of church—one faith and one baptism—follow one Lord. The two uphold “one Lord” in their central place. Why are these three written in this order? Some scholars identify the variance of the gender of the three. They are masculine, feminine, and neuter respectively, in order. The numeral one therefore, uses different forms. The triad: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, with rhetorical impact emphasizes the quality of imperativeness of divine calling to the church unity.¹⁸

O’Brien says that this second triad may have been “a traditional baptismal affirmation.”¹⁹ It sounds persuasive considering the Lord as the object of one’s faith, and the person who confesses his faith will get baptized according to the faith in the Lord. With Christ in the central place, faith and baptism function to unite believers to the Christ. Bruce speaks the centrality of Christ: “Christ occupies the central place, and with Him are linked the inward and outward vincula that bind His people to the Savior.”²⁰

Apostles welcomed believers who had obtained faith (2 Pet 1:1) and encouraged believers to have the same spirit of faith in God who will raise them with Jesus (2 Cor 4:13-14). Believers have one faith in one Lord. One faith may mean common content of belief or sense of trust of believers in Christ. O’Brien explains the

¹⁷ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 42, 43.

¹⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 239; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 234; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 257.

¹⁹ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 282.

²⁰ Bruce, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 90.

faith in two ways: objective and subjective. “The former (one faith) is probably objective, as many commentators suppose, referring to the substance of one’s faith (Jude 3), their common body of belief. . . . If, as is less likely, one faith is subjective, then it denotes the act or attitude of believing in Christ which is common to all members of the one body.”²¹

Whether in the context the faith is objective faith that is commonly professed doctrinal belief amongst Diaspora Christians, or subjective faith that is inwardly borne and expressed sense of trust of believers in Christ, only one faith can be justified by the righteousness of God—faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22). This one faith must include the core beliefs discussed in the same epistle such as redemption of the saints through the blood of Christ (Eph 1:7), resurrection of the Christ (1:20), salvation through faith in Christ (2:8), and breaking the wall of hostility between the Jew and Gentiles by breaking of His own body (2:14). Believers who share one faith in the consummation of all things in Christ in the fullness of time and the cosmic reconciliation of all things in heaven and on earth (Eph 1:10) must struggle to keep the unity in the present time, and maintain the bondage of one church.

Third in this triad is one baptism, which may be an outward appearance of an inward faith in the Lord. One Lord is the reason of one faith, and one faith is publicly confessed through baptism. One baptism is understood by the rite of water baptism.²² Lincoln writes, “This baptism is one, not because it has a single form or is administrated on only one occasion, but because it is the initiation into Christ, into the one body, which all have undergone and as such is a unifying factor.”²³

Baptism is a unifying factor of church regardless of its members’ divergence of ethnicity, social class, or gender. Believers were baptized into one body whether they were Jews or

²¹ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 283.

²² Arnold, *Ephesians*, 235.

²³ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 240.

Gentile, slaves or free (1 Cor 12:13). Since the rite of baptism represents common faith in Christ, one baptism that unifies believers must indicate the rite itself as an indication of the whole process of a believer's conversion.²⁴ Thielman explains one baptism as a summarization of one faith of the believers:

It is perhaps best to think of "one baptism" as a shorthand expression for the whole process of conversion, summarized by reference to the visible ritual. It was "one" because it was distinctively Christian: it was done in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5) and symbolized the death (Rom 6:3-4) and resurrection (Col 2:2) of the believer with Christ.²⁵

Believers are baptized into Christ in their conviction of common beliefs that is one faith. Those who are baptized according to their faith have clothed themselves with Christ (Gal 3:27). A baptized community has one unifying experience as they were baptized with Christ into death and raised from the dead by one baptism (Rom 6:4). One baptism is an expression of one faith in one Lord; thus, the second triad raises the calling from the Triune God for the unity of the church.

The Father and Church Unity

The unity of church urged by one Spirit and one Lord was explained through an examination of Ephesians 4:4-5. Elevated demand of church unity is now climaxed by the vision of the one Father who is above all, through all, and in all (Eph 4:6). Many scholars state that what was reflected in Ephesians 4:6 as well as in 1 Corinthians 8:6 is a Christian modification of Jewish conviction of monotheism as set forth in Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4.²⁶ It is the Christian acclamation of one God by calling "one God and Father of all." Earlier in his epistle to Ephesians, Paul stated the Father's universal

²⁴ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 235.

²⁵ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 259.

²⁶ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 240; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 284; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 236.

fraternity to all family in heaven and on earth (3:14-15). God's fatherhood is broadened to all of the universe here by affirming God's transcendence and immanence.²⁷

One God and Father whose fatherhood extends to all is over all and through all and in all (Eph 4:6). God is transcendent because He is the creator of all things and is above all and over all. God is immanent because all creation is continually dependent on Him for its existence and its functioning. Therefore, God is through all and in all.²⁸

O'Brien asserts that such pervasiveness of God is the ground of the legitimate claim for the church unity: "On this interpretation Paul is affirming that God is supremely transcendent 'everything' and that his immanence is all-pervasive: he works 'through all and in all'. . . then God's universal sovereignty and presence are set forth as the climatic ground for the unity of the Spirit that believers are to maintain."²⁹

Children of one father constitute a family not only in resemblance with each other but also through their unique characteristics and diverse inclination. Church members, likewise, have wide range of diversity despite some commonalities. Therefore, members of a church constitute one body that is indestructible as they share one paternity. Once again, believers must go back to the calling to maintain the unity of church from Ephesians 4:3. Church is the visible instrument to which God commanded to manifest the universal rule of one God. The church must exert full effort and strength to express its belief in the one God. Lincoln aptly states, "When the Church fails to maintain and express unity, it radically undermines the credibility of its belief in the one God."³⁰

Church unity is the strong impulse of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The church must be united in one body, empowered by one Spirit, in one hope of

²⁷ O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 284.

²⁸ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 267.

²⁹ O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 285.

³⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 241.

eschatological unity. The unity is compelled by one Lord because of the saints' one faith in Him and through one baptism which baptizes all saints into Him. Church must manifest to the world of their belief in one God and Father through accomplishing and maintaining the unity. John Stott explains, "Christian unity arises from our having one Father, one Saviour, and one indwelling Spirit. So we cannot possibly foster a unity which pleases God either if we deny the doctrine of the Trinity or if we have not come personally to know God the Father through the reconciling work of his Son Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit."³¹

Congregational Unity Transcends Cultural and Language Barriers

Unifying Jews and Gentiles in Christ was an urgent issue of the early church in spreading the gospel of the cross. It was regarded unlawful for a Jew to associate with anyone of another nation (Acts 10:28). Peter fled from the table with the Gentiles afraid of judgment of his Jewish friends (Gal 2:12). Jesus alluded to an invisible wall of discrimination to the Gentiles, which was prevailing among the Jews, in conversing with a Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7:27). Gentiles were called "the uncircumcised" by the Jews and regarded as outside the covenant of God with Israel, therefore, they were not able to be saved unless they followed Jewish laws and got circumcised (Acts 15:1). Brown speaks of the tension between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians in the early church period:

In the early Christian communities there was a tension between the believers from among the circumcised, i.e. the Jewish Christians, and those called uncircumcision, i.e. the Gentile Christians. These two groups, associated respectively with Peter and Paul, constantly clashed, because the Jewish Christians insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1; cf. Acts 15:5, where circumcision and keeping of the Law are linked).³²

³¹ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 154.

³² Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:310.

Jesus brought the two distinctive groups into one, breaking the wall of hostility so that the two, now in one, may come to God in peace.

Hostility between the Two Removed

Congregational unity must be pursued because it was the intention of Jesus that the hostility between the Jews and Gentiles be removed. Paul explains that Jesus brought together Jews and Gentiles who had alienated one another: “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace” (Eph 2:14-15).

Through peace. Jesus brought down the wall of hostility through peace. The peace was Jesus himself because no other kind of peace would suffice to break down the wall of hostility. Bruce remarks the sufficiency of Jesus as the peace: “In this arena of strife and discord, only one Peacemaker can be found competent for the task of mediation.”³³ The verse begins with a statement as “For he himself is our peace” (Eph 2:14). In Greek, a personal pronoun is used in the nominative case only when emphasis is intended.”³⁴ Special emphasis is intended here by using personal pronoun Αὐτὸς (he himself). Stott writes, “It is he, Christ Jesus, who shed his blood on the cross and who offers himself to his people today to be united to them, it is he who by what he did once and now offers is our peace, that is to say, is the peacemaker between us and with God.”³⁵ Thielman believes that those who are in Christ cannot be divided into competing groups because Christ himself is peace for those who identify themselves in Christ.³⁶ If

³³ Bruce, *Ephesians and Colossians*, 62.

³⁴ David Alan Black, *Learn to Read New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 67.

³⁵ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 98.

³⁶ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 164.

the church does not unite, then the church is rejecting Christ, what he did, and how he offered peace to the church.

By removing the fence. “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph 2:14). “Both one” is the neuter form here in comparison to the masculine form in verses 16 and 18. Therefore, it is suggested to understand “both” as rather two spatial regions than two people group. Thielman explains what “both” means: “Since the reference to a wall in what follows calls on spatial imagery, the author may have already been thinking in those terms and thus of a Jewish ‘region’ and a Gentile ‘region,’ which the wall separates.”³⁷

The Jews and Gentiles were divided by a wall as if they were separated into two physical places. The reconciliation between the two seemed improbable as much as the wall of hostility was invincible. The “dividing wall” in Ephesians 2:14 is expressed as “the middle wall, that is the fence” according to Thielman which is a graphic imagery of formidable boundary that was removed by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross.

The fence of tradition. Paul redundantly used two words, “barrier” and “fence,” by which the Jews and the Gentiles were divided. “Barrier,” as a metaphor of separation, can be the physical wall that separated the Court of the Gentile from the rest of the Temple in Herod’s Temple.³⁸ Gentiles were not permitted to enter beyond the wall because beyond it was considered more holy, and only for the Jews.³⁹ Attached to the barrier were warnings in Greek and Latin to Gentiles not to proceed further on pain of death.⁴⁰ The alienation of the Gentiles from the Jews by the barrier was powerful and

³⁷ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 164.

³⁸ R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 91.

³⁹ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 165.

⁴⁰ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 195.

forcible. Bruce explains that this traditional barrier was both religious and sociological because the features of the Jewish law included circumcision and the food restrictions, which set the Jews off from the Gentiles.⁴¹

Observing the law was a way to keep the Jews from being influenced by the culture of the Gentiles. The law itself was a fence around Israel to prevent mixing with other nations. Practicing the law was the holiness code to the Jews.⁴² The redundant use of “barrier” and “fence,” therefore, was to put stress on the formidable separation between the two. Thielman readily designates the functions of the two words: “The Jewish law was both a ‘partition’ that separated Jews from Gentiles and a ‘fence’ that enclosed the Jewish people, keeping them safe from Gentile influence.”⁴³ Jesus, who is himself peace, removed the fence that had been separating the two grounds by removing the barrier and fence of hostility.

Setting aside the enmity. Christ in his flesh tore down the wall of hostility by annulling or setting aside (“by abolishing” Eph 2:15) the law. In Christ’s time, as Thielman notes, the Jewish law “was seen as equivalent to the Jewish way of life, which separated Jews and Gentiles.”⁴⁴ Paul once again redundantly used a list of words to phrase the Jewish tradition alluded to the Jewish law: “the law of commandments expressed in ordinances” (Eph 2:15), which Thielman identifies as “specific commandments promulgated in the form of decree.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 296.

⁴² O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 196.

⁴³ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 167.

⁴⁴ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 169.

⁴⁵ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 169.

Despite the goodness of the Mosaic law, the written code of conduct brought Jewish particularism and Gentile exclusion.⁴⁶ Jewish tradition separated the Jews from the Gentiles and the Gentiles from the grace of God, which resulted in enmity between the two people groups. Christ has done away with the enmity between the two groups by annulling specific commandments of the law that had caused hostility.

Christ in his flesh, by abolishing the enmity, made one new man in place of the two. The one new man Christ created in Himself is a new race and is neither Jewish man who absorbed transformed Gentiles, or the Gentile man who absorbed converted Jews. The one new man is now free from enmity and has a new self who takes after the image of its creator, the Christ (Col 3:10). “Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all” (Col 3:11).

Transcends Language Barrier

While many churches were struggling with issues aroused from cultural differences between the Jews and the Gentiles, the Jerusalem church had another issue even among the Jews in the church. As the church grew, language barriers within the church came to the surface. Acts 6:1-2 says, “Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, ‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God in serve tables.’” To unite the church, disciples had to resolve issues between the Hellenists and the Hebrews by modifying the church polity.

Different language preferences. Jerusalem church had two groups of Jews in the congregation. The Hellenists spoke Greek as their primary language, and the Hebrews

⁴⁶ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 299.

were Aramaic-speaking Jews. Schnabel states, “These terms (Hellenists and Hebrews) describe a linguistic distinction, not ethnic difference.”⁴⁷

It is notable that there were no Gentile believers in the Jerusalem church. However, Jewish Christians had returned from diaspora in comparison with the Jewish Christians who had been living in Jerusalem. Luke calls the former group the Hellenists and the latter group the Hebrews. The Hellenists spoke only Greek while the Hebrews spoke Aramaic as everyday spoken language.⁴⁸

Some of the Hellenists who lived in Jerusalem attended their own synagogues where Greek was spoken (Acts 6:9).⁴⁹ Those among the Hellenists who received Jesus as the Messiah joined the church and had close relationship with the Hebrew Christians. Schnabel believes that meetings were probably conducted in Aramaic and Greek in the Christian community. Disciples were presumably not able to teach in both languages.⁵⁰ A language barrier was present among the first century Jerusalem church.

An issue in growing pain. As Jerusalem church grows explosively (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14), people gathered from towns around Jerusalem (5:15). Ethnic diversity and different language preferences were inevitable issues as the church grew. Bock recognizes the problem of the Jerusalem church: “The scene is not ‘artificially constructed’ but does reflect how the early growth of an ethnically diverse church became difficult to manage.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 329.

⁴⁸ David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 231.

⁴⁹ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 231.

⁵⁰ Schnabel, *Acts*, 329.

⁵¹ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 255.

Ethnic immigration churches of present days like IMC have linguistic diversity within the church. The EM congregation has little to no language capacity to communicate in Korean language, and the KM has limited capacity in using English in communication, especially in delicate matters such as business of the church. The EM is inherently smaller in size than the KM in present day Korean ethnic immigration churches, which was similar to the Jerusalem church. Bock suggests that the Hellenists made up 10 to 20 percent of the population.⁵² Emergence of this group into the church created tension and challenged church unification.

Effort to solve the issue. The apostles exercised active effort to resolve the issue between the two language groups in their community. The apostles took responsibility for the problem and intervened to find the solution. Acts 6:2-3 reads, “And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, ‘Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.’”

The apostles involved more people to delegate some of their responsibilities⁵³ to resolve Hellenists’ complaints—the minority of the church. Polhill notes that the apostles wanted the whole church to participate because they knew the problem involved the entire congregation, even though the grievance was from the minority.⁵⁴ They realized that corporate effort was needed to resolve the matters that seemed to affect only one part of the congregation. They proposed an immediate remedy as well as a preventative measure by suggesting a newly organized structure. Peterson observes that the church

⁵² Bock, *Acts*, 258.

⁵³ Bock, *Acts*, 259.

⁵⁴ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 180.

seemed “to adjust its procedures, alter its organizational structure, and develop new posts of responsibility” to remedy the issue.⁵⁵

Congregational Unity Transcends Functional Differences of Members

As a human body has many members (lit. trunk, limbs, organs), every community has members with different functions. So is the church composed of members of different gifts and talents. Romans 12:4-6 says, “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.” Churches must pursue unity through adjoining members of diverse functions. Cranfield explains that church unity is “a matter neither of nature nor of human contriving but of the grace of God.”⁵⁶

Functional Diversity Is God’s Gift to the Church

As in the human body, members of the church have different functions (Rom 12:4). Each organ has its uniqueness not only in its shape or place of a body but also in its unique function. Paul used a simile in 1 Corinthians 12 to illustrate diverse functions of body organs, saying that all cannot be eyes but some must be ears and noses for hearing or smelling. Once again Paul uses the body parable to enlighten an organic relation of church members. Cranfield explains, “Like the various members of a single body, although they differ from one another and have various functions, are all necessary to

⁵⁵ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 233.

⁵⁶ Charles E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: Clark, 1998), 2:618.

each other and equally under an obligation to serve one another, because they all belong together in a single whole.”⁵⁷

The analogy of limbs, eyes, and ears of the church is now applied to real functions according to the gifts of individual members in Romans 12:6-8. The functions are for example, prophecy, service, teaching, encouraging, and giving. These gifts are given to the church according to the grace of God in His higher purpose. Cranfield asserts, “The wide variety of the gifts is grounded in the one grace shown to all; for God’s grace, His undeserved love in action, while it is one and the same for all, is free and sovereign, and it is according to this royal freedom of His grace that He bestows different gifts on different persons.”⁵⁸

Functional diversity is the purpose of God to form a perfect unified body of the church. Schreiner asserts that functional diversity is the gracious gift of God “who has supplied his church with means to strengthen the community.”⁵⁹ This gift of God cannot be taken for granted nor denied because it is God’s gift.⁶⁰ Dunn remarks, “The point is that the body is one not despite its diversity, but is one body only by its diversity; without that diversity the body would be monstrosity.”⁶¹ Unity of body is, by definition, characterized by diversity.⁶² Diverse functions, yet depending on other members or parts, make the whole body functions perfectly. Likewise, when many members come together

⁵⁷ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:618.

⁵⁸ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:619.

⁵⁹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 6, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 655.

⁶⁰ D. Stuart Briscoe, *Romans*, The Communicator’s Commentary, vol. 6 (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 218.

⁶¹ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38B (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 725.

⁶² Schreiner, *Romans*, 654.

as one body in Christ and demonstrate multiple ministries in harmony through united efforts, the church performs as expected, as a corporate body of Christ.⁶³

Functional Diversity Is the Reason to Honor Members

Paul advises all believers in the church, not just a few who might have superior faith or gifts, to refrain from judging others and even oneself according to their own measurement. Romans 12:3 reads, “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.” It is notable that Paul used “everyone among you” rather than “to you all.” By this abundant use, Paul addresses his exhortation to every member equally and emphatically.⁶⁴ This emphatic expression implies that (1) every member was exercising a certain degree of contribution to the church according to each one’s given gift and (2) there was possible tension⁶⁵ in the church on the subject of members’ gifts.

Members of diverse functionality must discern mutuality and dependency as they exercise their own gifts by bearing humility and honoring the gifts of others. If members have good sense and sound judgment they will refrain from judging others. They shall not fall prey to pride but have proper respect of others for their unique gifts and diverse functions in the church.

Paul uses the word “to think” and its variation multiple times in Romans 12:3 to bid members to bear proper virtue toward oneself and others. Dunn explains the phrase, “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” is a warning of an

⁶³ Briscoe, *Romans*, 219.

⁶⁴ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:612.

⁶⁵ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 720.

“understanding which goes beyond proper bounds, so proud and haughty.”⁶⁶ Schreiner comments that Paul meant by the phrase “but to think with sober judgment,” that believers must have a sober, sane, sensible, and realistic estimate of themselves.⁶⁷

When one can estimate oneself with sober judgment, one can recognize others with a renewed view by which believers conceive all gifts are essential to the whole body and are equally regarded by God. Each person shall then measure himself and others with a newly given measurement according to what God has allotted to each one. Cranfield believes that the “measure of faith” is a standard by which one must think that “he is the same level as his fellow-Christians” and not superior or even inferior to them.⁶⁸ Cranfield compares God’s standard and human standard in viewing gifts:

When Christians measure themselves by themselves (or by their fellow-Christians or their pagan neighbours), they display their lack of understanding, and are sure to have too high (or else too low) an opinion of themselves; but, when they measure themselves by the standard which God has given them in their faith, they then—and only then—achieve a sober and true estimate of themselves as, equally with their fellows, both sinners revealed in their true colours by the judgment of the Cross and also the objects of God’s undeserved and triumphant mercy in Jesus Christ.⁶⁹

When believers can truly estimate themselves according to the standard of God, they may be humbled and appreciated for the undeserving gifts entrusted to them. Each member is directed to see the diversity of his calling and gift as a mean to work out the one body in harmony. Each member is called for particular work according to diverse functions not as being more important or less than other functions but as being unique and special functions.

⁶⁶ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 721.

⁶⁷ Schreiner, *Romans*, 651.

⁶⁸ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:615.

⁶⁹ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:615-16.

Functional Diversity Is the Resource to Unite the Church

Romans 12:6-8 lists various gifts the church was given, such as prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, contributing, leading, and showing mercy. These seven gifts are not an exhaustive list because 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30, and Ephesians 4:11 also catalogs gifts.⁷⁰ There are many unlisted diverse functions through which God blesses the church according to His grace.

In addition to the prominent gifts just listed, the church must not exclude the spontaneous response of members to the needs of ministries of the church.⁷¹ First Corinthians 14:26 says, “What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.” Dunn relates this verse to showcase some improvisational functions, such as Spirit-prompted charisms that come together for edification of the church.

IMC has been blessed with functional diversity as having KM and EM. Different language preferences and cultural understanding give the church more resources of diverse functions. Praise can be enriched by dual languages, which can be a benefit to approach ethnically open-minded people in the neighborhood, as well as immigrants from Korea. Functional diversity is the resource bestowed to the church and must be used to unite the church.

It is universally agreed that Romans 12:6 is a separate sentence from the previous verse and is considered to have imperatival force.⁷² Therefore, the verse properly reads, “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them,” having the last four words added from the original Greek text as ESV renders. Cranfield puts the heaviness of the sentence given to the church.

⁷⁰ Schreiner, *Romans*, 655.

⁷¹ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 725.

⁷² Dunn, *Romans*, 725.

The weight of the sentence rests not on an imperative, but on an indicative: “we have these gifts.” Paul speaks not just of what ought to happen, but of what is happening. Out of the received gift arises the function, and therefore also out of the statement which indicates the gift arises the imperative which says how the function is rightly fulfilled.⁷³

Conclusion

Churches may conjure reasons and excuses for division—they split to improve efficiency in their ministries or avoid conflicts within the congregation. Scripture, however, is not in favor of such excuses; instead, it rationalizes the unity of the church despite latent conflicts that may arise. Church unity is the strong impulse of Triune God. The Bible is filled with ample evidence proving that by resolving underlying issues of hostility among congregation, churches are able to become united. Cultural backgrounds and languages should not be seen as an obstacle to overcome but should be perceived as a resourceful gift of God to use for the prosperity of the church. Local churches, especially ethnic churches, must inversely deem their congenital multiplicity of language and culture within them as a resource to further the kingdom of God.

⁷³ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:618.

CHAPTER 3
CONGREGATIONAL UNITY THROUGH THE UNIQUE
DYNAMICS OF ETHNIC CHURCHES

Ethnic churches have unique challenges because they are constituted by one major ethnic group yet have multiple culturally distinguishable sub-groups within. Generational tension is intensified by different cultural understandings of each generation. These tensions may be partly caused by the struggles of the older generation who want to keep their ethnic identity and the oppositions of the younger generation who questions their church for not being culturally flexible and diverse.

In this chapter are commonly perceived issues of ethnic churches in the United States and practical advices to build congregational unity through embracing those challenges.

**Overcoming Generational Tension through
Inter-Generational Effort**

God calls all generations to worship Him. It is natural that all ages assemble and call on the name of the LORD in one voice. “Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people, consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants” (Joel 2:15-16). God promises to pour His Spirit to all ages in the assembly. By the Spirit, old men shall dream, young men shall see visions, and children shall prophesy (Joel 2:28).

Christian community in the first century was like a faith family—a family bound not by blood but by faith. First Timothy 5:1 says, “Do not rebuke an old man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.” In the first century faith family, old men and

women were treated as parents and young people were like siblings. John Hammett believes that Jesus has clearly defined a new family: “He [Jesus] simply calls His followers to give allegiance to a new family . . . to view the church as family is to view the church as that group of people to whom one has primary allegiance.”¹

Generational tension exists in a faith family just as it does in a biological family. When multiple generations gather together, disconnections may follow as well as familial affection within the family. Intentional efforts should be made to overcome generational tension.

Segregation Trend in the Church

Although Scripture calls all generations to form a faith family, the age segregation trend within the church became the norm in the late twentieth century. Churches began to separate generations for practical reasons. Separating people into age groups made all the activities in the church easier and smoother. Holly Allen and Christine Ross speak about the trend of separation in the church:

Throughout much of Christian history, the whole body of Christ— that is, all the generations—met together for ministry and worship as well as most other gatherings; intergenerationality was the norm. However, in the last several decades, all but the smallest congregations have tended to separate the generations regularly for learning, frequently for fellowship and service, and sometimes (or always) for worship.²

Age separation in the church is not irrelevant with the segregation of age in modern society. Allen and Ross recount age segregation in society: “Age-graded public education, the geographical mobility of families, the movement from extended to nuclear family, the rise of divorce and single-parent families, and the prevalence of retirement

¹ John S. Hammett, “Church Membership, Church Discipline, and the Nature of the Church,” in *Those Who Must Give an Account: A Study of Church Membership and Church Discipline*, ed. John S. Hammett and Benjamin L. Merkle (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 26.

² Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 17.

and nursing homes for older persons and preschools for the young.”³ These sociological factors influenced the church to segregate age groups. Age-graded public education sounded more efficient to church Sunday school. Further age segregation is wrought when nuclear families feel more comfortable without the older generation.

Another form of age segregation is having one generation church. Hereafter, the phrasing *homogenous church* will refer to a church that has all members similar in age. According to Sbanotto and Blomberg, this homogeneous church movement peaked in the 1970s and 1980s and made “some success through the 1990s and early 2000s.”⁴ The homogeneous church is also a byproduct of individualism. Homogeneous churches easily avoid conflicts between generations over worship styles, gathering time, etc. Allen and Ross believe that this postmodern inclination to homogeneous churches is “toward individualism and dependence on psychological, therapeutic, or secular educational models rather than theological models.”⁵

Conflicts Incurred Segregation Trend

Although this study is not focused on analyzing generations, it would be helpful to define the generations in discussing generational tension in the church. This study follows the generally accepted sociological categorization of generations: Silent Generation (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1981), Millennials (1982-2001), and Generation Z (after 2002).⁶

³ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 30.

⁴ Elisabeth A. Nesbit Sbanotto and Craig L. Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry: Biblical and Practical Insights for Transforming Church Communities* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 10.

⁵ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 36.

⁶ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 15.

Conflicts between generations in the church often incur from ageism and individualism.⁷ Ageism exists in faith communities as well as in society in general. Allen and Ross observe that younger people in the church, in general, consider older people as “sickly and frail or simply, boring,”⁸ and sometimes older people have negative views of younger people as well.

Individualism is another cause of generational conflicts. Different generations want separate worship times to find their own taste of worship, music style, pace, and length of worship. Allen and Ross write that churches are facing unpleasant generational conflict that they call “worship war” and churches are navigating the issue of traditional versus contemporary worship styles.⁹ Silent Generations like worship services to move along slowly and predictably, while Generation X (Xers hereafter) and Millennials want it to move quicker with “variety and spontaneity.”¹⁰ Worship wars inspire different generations to have age-segmented gathering and separate services to suit their worship needs.

Danger of Segregation Trend

Intergenerational tension exists between young and old generations as well as between contiguous generations.¹¹ Some churches choose to keep generations apart and minister to each generation to lessen intergenerational conflict. This approach results in isolating generations in the church instead of uniting them. Menconi calls this segregation trend the church-within-a church approach and advises, “It will not only lead to greater

⁷ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 140.

⁸ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 140.

⁹ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 42.

¹⁰ Gary McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 202.

¹¹ Peter Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church: Understanding Congregations from WWII to www.Com* (Littleton, CO: Mt. Sage, 2010), 141.

splintering in the congregation, but also will be counterproductive for families and households, further dividing an already fragmented society.”¹²

The segregation trend deprives younger generations of the opportunity to learn from tradition. Churches must recognize that younger generations may easily believe that anything new is right, while anything old or traditional is wrong.¹³ When younger generations are segregated from the older, they will not have good models of Christian work, or even deficient models where they can learn mistakes of the past. Allen and Ross speak the danger of the segregated church using segregated social model:

One of the most significant effects of age segregation in our society has been the isolation of children from the world of work. Whereas in the past children not only saw what their parents did for a living but even shared substantially in the task, many children nowadays have only a vague notion of the nature of the parents’ job, and have had little or no opportunity to observe the parents, or for that matter any other adult, when he is fully engaged in his work.¹⁴

The segregation trend also aggravates emotional barriers that already exist between generations. The most destructive consequence can be apathy. Menconi warns. “When people of different generations stop caring about each other, we are all in serious peril.”¹⁵ Apathy will elevate ageism, prejudice, and discrimination against each generation.

Understanding Characters

To learn the dangers of the segregation trend, churches must first consider distinctions among generations. When churches fail to understand the characters of different generations, they run the risk of serving one niche generation and may not be

¹² Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 150.

¹³ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 166.

¹⁴ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 94.

¹⁵ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 150.

able to attract other generations.¹⁶ Although this study does not mean to focus on generational characters, it will be beneficial to consider the major age groups who play roles in the church.

Baby Boomers (Boomers hereafter) are like the oldest child in a family. They carry the burden and responsibility of the welfare of both themselves and their families. Such position has molded Boomers into “driven, accomplished, and trustworthy” people.¹⁷ However, Boomers are now dealing with empty nest, career changes, loss of dreams, and mid-life crisis. As the oldest child desires to be free of their burdens from home, Boomers want to retire from their responsibilities.

Sbanotto and Blomberg characterize Xers as a middle child within a family in Western culture today. As often as the middle child is overshadowed by the first child and youngest sibling, Xers easily suffer from being lost in society and in the church. Like the middle children, however, they are quite good at finding their own place without competing with other generations.¹⁸ In the home, currently, Xers are often juggling with young children and learning to manage married life.

Whereas the Boomers and Xers are relatable to the oldest and the middle child in a family respectively, Millennials can be compared with the youngest child.¹⁹ Sbanotto and Blomberg suitably describe the youngest as “manipulative, charming, blames others, attention seeker, tenacious, people person, natural salesperson, precocious, engaging, affectionate, loves surprises.”²⁰ These traits surprisingly fit the characters of the

¹⁶ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 18.

¹⁷ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 7.

¹⁸ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 80.

¹⁹ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 168.

²⁰ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 168.

Millennials. This generation is trying to figure their dreams, find spouses, and find answers to faith questions.

Each generation plays roles in the church community. Churches and ministries that actively understand the characteristics of generations in their communities can proactively measure possible conflicts. These churches will be more prepared to resolve intergenerational conflicts.

Understanding Generational Conflicts

Often times, intergenerational tension elevates when the two generations are back to back. Menconi aptly quotes the song “The Living Years,” of which the lyrics say, “Every generation blames the one before and all of their frustrations come beating on your door.”²¹ In a three-generation family home, grandparents are more accepting and generous to the erring grandchildren than the parents are to their children.

Xers can be less tolerable to and from the Baby Boomers and Millennials since they are contiguous. However, Baby Boomers can be tolerant of Millennials and vice versa because they are not contiguous. Sbanotto and Blomberg observe, “The Xers see both Baby Boomers and the Millennials as lacking the strong sense of individualism and independence that they hold so dear.”²² Xers complain that Boomers expect them to “fix everything” and are thus dependent on them. Xers also see Boomers as “self-indulgent, self-absorbed, and selfish.”²³ Sbanotto and Blomberg explain the view of Xers against Millennials: “As Xers look forward at the Millennials, they express more hope and optimism, seeing them as activists who are full of potential. On the other side, Xers also

²¹ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 141.

²² Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 85.

²³ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 85.

look at Millennials with disappointment, describing them as entitled, selfish, sheltered, indifferent to religion, and unable to think for themselves.”²⁴

The negative views of imminent previous generations to the next can be harmful to the future of the church. Boomers who have experienced the after-war struggle may say that Xers are still too young to take the church leadership. Xers believe that Millennials must wait for their turn to help shape the future of the church.²⁵ Churches must acknowledge such underlying tensions so that they may not risk losing younger generation(s).

McIntosh observes that some generational conflicts are revealed in preferred styles of worship. In terms of the sound used in the worship, the Silent Generation (Silent Gen hereafter) dislike blasts, but Boomers and Xers want louder sound. Millennials appreciate louder sound and interactive style using videos, music, and talking. Silent Gen tend to watch and enjoy while younger generations like to participate with clapping and involvement. Regarding lighting, Silent Gen prefer softer lighting while Boomers like brighter lighting. Millennials tend to prefer darker lighting. In their view of the quality of worship service, the Silent Gen thinks the service is well done when effort was shown. Boomers consider mistake-free as a quality service. Millennials value authenticity as well as quality. A few mistakes are fine to them as it is authentic and real. When it comes to what the generations wear to the service, Silent Gen expect a certain level of formality, whereas Boomers prefer dressy casual and Millennials like flexible and casual.²⁶

Inter-Dependent Generations

Segmenting age groups can avoid issues that arise from intergenerational conflict; however, doing so may hinder the Christian community from enjoying the

²⁴ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 85.

²⁵ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 4.

²⁶ McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations*, 202-4.

unique blessings of a church as a faith family. Allen and Ross assert, “The generations must be together regularly and often, infant to octogenarians, to experience authentic Christian community and reap the unique blessings of intergenerationality.”²⁷ Church leaders must understand that all generations have something to offer the church.²⁸ Allen and Ross emphasize the needs of inter-dependent generations rather than segmented generation:

A great deal of America’s social sickness comes from age segregation. If ten fourteen-year-olds are grouped together, they will form a “Lord of the Flies” culture with its competitiveness and meanness. But if ten people ages 2 to 80 are grouped together, they will fall into a natural age hierarchy that nurtures and teaches them all. For our own mental and societal health, we need to reconnect the age groups.²⁹

Generations must ask themselves whether they must pursue style or substance.³⁰ Instead of satisfying the preferred styles of their own generation, they must seek substance of the church, which is to glorify God in all their doings. Menconi asserts that leaders and church members of each age group must stop fighting intergenerational battles to have their unique needs met.³¹

The church also needs to have the right viewpoint to each generation when considering church leadership. Although the younger generation might not be ready for leadership, current leaders must be willing to share leadership with younger generations.³² Sbanotto and Blomberg exhort that older generations must cease to bemoan Millennials’ shortcomings and “find ways to invest in and bless this generation as they come into their

²⁷ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 84.

²⁸ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 166.

²⁹ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 37.

³⁰ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 167.

³¹ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 167.

³² Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 166.

own as adults.”³³ McIntosh’s examination of the sociological roles of the four generations can be useful in promoting inter-dependent generation church model:

The younger generation is preparing to contribute to society as adults; they are studying, learning and experiencing life. The adult generation is promoting their view of the world and life. Although they are not in control of much, they are beginning to make headway in influencing life with their perspectives. The mature generation is prevailing in the sense that it is their worldview that predominates in society, business, and life. The senior generation, as far as their influence is concerned, is now informing the younger generation from their past experience and wisdom.³⁴

Intentional Effort

Provided that age segregation has already taken place within the church, intentional effort must be made to reverse the stream. Corporate worship of all ages, as well as other intentional activities of multi generations, are necessary to combine the whole body of believers. Allen and Ross suggest, “All churches regardless of size are more faithful to the scriptural theme of unity and are more likely to foster faith maturity when they intentionally integrate various generations for 50 to 80 percent of congregational activities.”³⁵

Young members may be frustrated with the inflexibility of older generations while older members may wonder why infants and young children are necessary in corporate worship.³⁶ However, each generation must embrace the idea of the church as one spiritual body and cannot detach seemingly unimportant limbs from the body. Allen and Ross remark that “humility, mutual submission, and respect” must be modeled and

³³ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 199.

³⁴ McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations*, 201.

³⁵ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 42.

³⁶ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 114.

taught to all generations.³⁷ These virtues are hard to achieve but are necessary for the faith pilgrims of all generations.

Corporate activities of multi generations, such as short-term mission trips or ministering to homebound seniors, can be effective to teach and model intergenerational ministries. Young believers will begin to practice intergenerational relationships as they spend time with older believers. Older believers who may have suffered from loss or separation will recover cheer and hope when they have young people around.³⁸ Menconi makes practical suggestions for intentional intergenerational activities, such as ministering to the elderly and single-parent families through home repairs or yard work, connecting experienced parents to first-time parents, and helping youth plan a parents' night out.³⁹

Summary

As Allen and Ross observe, some churches choose to separate generations to avoid intergenerational conflict, some choose a homogenous-generation church model, and others pursue generational unity through intergenerational effort.⁴⁰ However, churches must not abandon the idea that a local church is a community of faith, a faith family. The local church is a place where the Lord must be proclaimed to the next generation as the Psalmist said, "So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come" (Ps 71:18)

Inter-Cultural Effort to Prepare for Rising Multi-Cultural Trend

The United States has always been characterized by ethnic and cultural diversity. The founding citizens consisted of immigrants from many continents. Its vast land has

³⁷ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 52.

³⁸ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 140.

³⁹ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 207.

⁴⁰ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 154.

fifty states and territories of unique social, cultural, and racial variety. Michael Emerson points out, “The official motto of the United States- *e pluribus unum*, out of many, one- reveals both an early recognition of diversity and the hope, vision, and value of unity arising from this diversity.”⁴¹

Americans live in a multicultural society. Their neighborhoods, schools and jobs are multi-racial and multi-cultural. It is natural to have multicultural churches where their faith life can be more consistent with their social life. Multi-cultural churches are a glimpse of a heavenly congregation as shown in Revelation 7:9: “A great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne.”

This section will examine general situations of churches in the United States, find reasons that they are not multi-cultural enough, and study possible solutions to shape local churches into the Revelation 7 congregation.

Cultural Segregation Trend

A famous apothegm, often attributed to Martin Luther King, says “Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week.”⁴² Religious gatherings are more racially segregated than any other gatherings. Emerson calls a congregation racially homogeneous when one racial group comprises 80 percent or more of the people.⁴³ A racially homogeneous congregation naturally makes a cultural homogeneous congregation. Kathleen Garces-Foley comments that churches remained “overwhelmingly homogeneous”

⁴¹ Michael O. Emerson, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 173.

⁴² Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 5.

⁴³ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 35.

even five decades after the Civil Rights movement, despite churches' strong desire to change to multi-racial and multi-cultural.⁴⁴

Emerson explains the homogeneity needs of people: "Most Americans, when they leave the public sphere of work and school, go home to neighborhoods that are filled mostly with people that are racially like themselves."⁴⁵ Many Americans feel comfortable attending and worshiping with people of the same race as them. Churches do not seem to labor to break through racial and cultural homogeneity. Rodney Woo explains racial and cultural comfort zone of people:

Why churches do nothing about the reconciliation process between different races and cultures. In their own separate churches and people group, believers feel that they have everything they need spiritually such as preaching, worship, fellowship, ordinances, networking, counseling, programs for every age group, yet they fail to see the body of Christ through the eyes of the heavenly Father.⁴⁶

Churches must attempt to challenge the reluctance to stay in their racial and cultural comfort zone as they envision a Revelation 7 congregation. Bod Reccord, former leader of the North American Mission Board, impressively contends, "Here's the bottom line, if we're going to spend eternity together, we better learn how to cooperate and learn how to enjoy each other right here."⁴⁷

Tensions in Culturally Segregated Ethnic Churches

Ethnic churches are no exception to the desire to stay in their racial and cultural comfort zone. They are prone to culturally segregate and are reluctant to open to other cultures. Immigrant parents have a strong desire to keep their immigrant heritage and

⁴⁴ Kathleen Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multiethnic Church on a Mission* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), introduction.

⁴⁵ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 105.

⁴⁶ Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 63.

⁴⁷ Bod Reccord, quoted in Woo, *The Color of Church*, 88.

mother language. For this reason, ethnic churches are prone to stay culturally homogeneous. Tensions arise when culturally open-minded congregants, including American-born people, clash with the people who want to keep their heritage in the church. The church may not be separated, but latent tension due to cultural differences may be boiling inside.

Garces-Foley remarks that some people choose to reveal or hide their ethnic culture depending on their settings and context.⁴⁸ People of color may hide their inherent culture in a society where whites are dominant. It is presumable that one can still hide one's inherent ethnic culture in the church and still act more white in ethnic churches. The coexistence of different cultures without intermingling may cause tension within a church.

Another hindrance in uniting congregants in ethnic churches can be different views over interracial marriage. Garces-Foley points out, "Resistance to mixed marriage is the strongest among immigrants."⁴⁹ Immigrant parents worry that their children's interracial marriage may end family traditions and heritage too soon. It is unlikely that such immigrant parents feel comfortable worshipping with American-born generations who have weak ethnic ties and are open to interracial marriages. Immigrant parents who repudiate interracial marriage will not be ready to accept multi-racial and multi-cultural families in the church. Garces-Foley questions this interracial marriage issue: "Out-group marriage have been increasing for all Asian Americans, but among the U.S-born they range between 30 and 50 percent. With this trend came the increase in multiethnic or hapa children. . . . After all, where would these ethnically diverse families go if all churches were defined around a single ethnic group?"⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 62.

⁴⁹ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 113.

⁵⁰ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 31.

Mistakes of Inter-Cultural Effort in Ethnic Churches

Racially homogeneous churches can be intimidated by the fear of sudden demographic changes in the church. Woo says that the members of his white-predominant church were afraid when he hired a black leader for the youth group. Church members thought the new leader might expose the youth to “a style or form of worship that was not appropriate for their (white) children” and then eventually would turn the youth group to all-black.⁵¹ Woo’s experience and the fear of his church are not different from what ethnic churches experience. Korean churches have an underlying fear that their church might turn into an inter-cultural church, which may be too American for them.

Korean churches want their English-speaking congregants to grow in number. However, first generation Koreans want English-speaking congregants to stay within the church’s system and Korean tradition, but do not want them to be the church’s ruling party. Efforts to become an inter-cultural church, in turn, are insufficient. An example of insufficient effort is a reluctance to change church polity. Traditional church polity may make it difficult for the Americanized generation to emerge to the church leadership. As a result of insufficient effort, English-speaking congregants in Korean churches die out or separate from the church. Korean churches grieve at the loss of English-speaking congregants, then become angry, guilty, place blame, and finally decide to remain as Korean-speaking congregation. This emotional process is not different from what Garces-Foley says about the declination that his denomination (PCUSA) churches experience.⁵²

Another mistake in inter-cultural efforts is cultural blindness of the church. Garces-Foley shares a word of an old Asian American who said, “As a Christian I just look people as people and don’t see color. All this talk about race can only be divisive.”⁵³

⁵¹ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 168.

⁵² Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 193.

⁵³ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 52.

Just as the color-blind approach does not help the integration of diverse ethnicity, the culturally-blind approach in an ethnic church does not help in uniting cultural diversity of congregants.

Garces-Foley also mentions the color-blind approach by many white evangelicals: “Since they are used to being in the majority group, the color-blind approach allows Whites in these churches to remain culturally comfortable, while people of color must assimilate to an Anglo American church culture.”⁵⁴ In the same way, culture-blind Korean churches make English-speaking congregants uncomfortably follow the dominant culture of the church. The culture-blind approach must be distinguished from the culture-conscious approach through which members properly understand the coexisting cultures in the church. Garces-Foley believes that inter-cultural effort ends up failing when unity is overstressed without culture-consciousness, and the church will only become homogeneous through assimilation with increasing bitterness of the minority group.⁵⁵

Directionality of Inter-Cultural Effort in Ethnic Churches

Ethnic churches, despite beginning with racial and cultural homogeneity, must acknowledge the multi-cultural wave of modern society. Instead of taking every effort to keep traditions, they should turn their efforts to embrace the surrounding multi-cultural demography. Churches must envision the multitude of nations which will appear at God’s kingdom and not limit the church boundary to their native ethnicity and culture. Woo remarks, “When believers learn the Lord’s Prayer that says, ‘Your kingdom come. Your

⁵⁴ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 85.

⁵⁵ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 82.

will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' those who choose to cross into a multi-racial church will see and experience heaven right here on earth.”⁵⁶

Garces-Foley recommends that churches begin feeling the cultural climate and catch up with the racially diverse social networks of church members.⁵⁷ Recent demography shows the trend of racial and cultural diversity in many neighborhoods in the United States. The city of Rockville, Maryland, where IMC is located, for example, has become a racial and cultural melting pot. According to the 2018 US Census, the city has a total population of 68,079 with 56.5 percent White, 20.4 percent Asian alone, 15.9 percent Hispanic or Latino, and 11.2 percent Black or African American.⁵⁸ Demographic change tells who the friends and co-workers of the congregants are. Churches must acknowledge demographic changes in their neighbors and carefully direct inter-cultural effort.

Woo recommends that churches should have a sense of urgency to learn the “spiritual status of the church, willingness of the people to move into this direction, traditions and patterns that characterize the group.”⁵⁹ By doing so, church leaders can take the right step toward the vision, which is to bring the kingdom of God into the church. Woo calls this kind of leaders as multiracial mission-minded people and gives an example of the apostle Paul who passionately opposed the racial exclusion of the apostle Peter (Gal 2:11-14). Woo says that “this apostolic confrontation is an excellent example” of a person who visions multiracial mission.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 117.

⁵⁷ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 31.

⁵⁸ US Census Bureau, “QuickFacts: Maryland,” accessed June 11, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/rockvillecitymaryland,MD/PST045219>.

⁵⁹ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 220.

⁶⁰ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 153.

People can be xenophobic without conscious guilt. Woo points out that it is the sin of racism and “any church that envisions becoming a multiracial congregation must deal with the sin of racism at all levels.”⁶¹ Ethnic churches are no exception to that criticism if they have exclusive attitudes toward other ethnicities. Racism of any level in ethnic churches greatly hinders the union of American-born generations with first generation immigrants. Generations in ethnic churches must actively seek racial reconciliation which will undoubtedly follow cultural reconciliation between the traditional culture and American culture within the church.

Another question to determine the direction of the inter-cultural effort is whether the church aims for integration or assimilation. Emerson has a question that churches must answer: “Are we better off if the cultures maintain their cultural uniqueness, even if we have limited personal relationships between two cultures. Or should we create a common culture even though we lose cultural uniqueness?”⁶² Emerson notes that sacrificing cultural uniqueness may lead to cultural assimilation where everyone is welcome, as long as they act like the majority group.⁶³ Minority groups are not represented in the common culture and they are forced to assimilate.

Churches must consider their own cultural climate, such as demographic changes of neighborhood, ethnic diversity of friends of the church members, and racism that is present or underlying, as they plan the directionality of their inter-cultural effort. In the next sections, methodologies are discussed in three categories: new race (forming a new cultural identity), worship and leadership, and practicality (a few details that can be easily missed out in actual situation).

⁶¹ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 56.

⁶² Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 114.

⁶³ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 150.

Methodology 1: New Race

The church cannot become multi-cultural without intentional inter-cultural efforts. Garces-Foley remarks that the effort must begin with the dominant group and has to be both “institutional and individual.”⁶⁴ The cultural majority must not wait until the cultural minority reaches a critical mass before making the efforts. The majority must be willing to give up the cultural comforts they were enjoying. She also suggests finding “boundary crossers” who commit to reconciliation and social connections between cultures.⁶⁵ Boundary crossers are those who eagerly explore diversity and choose to be in the minority of the congregation. They can contribute to forming mixed cultures and identities of the congregation. Emerson remarks that the congregation’s identity is not just one culture or many separate cultures but is the cultural complexity “in which the mixtures of people and cultures (have) become part of.”⁶⁶ Boundary crossers do not feel comfortable with homogeneous settings; they look for alternative ways to share the values of diversity.

Emerson coined the term “Sixth Americans” to define a group of people who do not belong within the five major ethnic groups that exist in the US. His definition of “Sixth Americans” says, “Although biologically one part of the five melting pots [ethnic groups] . . . seem to operate outside of their melting pot [biological ethnic group] in most aspects of their social relations.”⁶⁷ Emerson also notes that the social ties of Sixth Americans are more racially diverse than other Americans.⁶⁸ They can play a key role in building multi-racial communities in America. Likewise, Korean churches who want to become multi-cultural need a group of people who exhibit the functional capability to

⁶⁴ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 120.

⁶⁵ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 128.

⁶⁶ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 94.

⁶⁷ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 99.

⁶⁸ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 104.

bridge various cultures melted in the church. They must bridge biological Koreans and cultural Koreans who are not of them but want to join the group by marriage, friendship, or personal attachment. Korean churches must value and respect boundary crossers who are culturally diverse and open to diverse social networks.

Young people have a better chance at becoming the “Boundary Crossers,” or the “Sixth Americans,” who can build up multi-cultural community. Having grown up experiencing ethnic and cultural diversity as the norm, they may feel awkward in a homogeneous church. Intercultural Christian communities may be regarded as natural to most of the young people. Garces-Foley believes that the success of cultural and racial reconciliation greatly depends on young people who “will continue to push the boundaries of the current church structures.”⁶⁹ She also notes that young people will become more conservative on social issues as they age, and their commitment to reconciliation may become weaker. It is necessary to help young people to push the cultural boundaries of the church before they lose their passion to do so.

Methodology 2: Worship and Leadership

There are two tangible elements of inter-cultural effort: attempt to modify worship style and change the leadership structure. Woo agrees that these are the visible elements through which the church can express the commitment to reach all people.⁷⁰ In these efforts, leaders may encounter questions from church members, such as “Won’t we lose our original identity?” “Who would take control of the church,” and “How much effort should we undertake?”

Corporate worship includes all kinds of elements beginning with greeting at the door, Scripture reading, ushering, music, and preaching. Worship style of a church is represented by all these elements. Woo suggests that a church should consider “what

⁶⁹ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 78.

⁷⁰ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 101.

music to select, who reads Scripture, who are the greeters, and how to implement different sounds from around the world” in transition to a newer worship style.⁷¹

First of all, music is intrinsically bound to culture. Woo says that it “becomes a cross-cultural problem when one music [of certain style] is played in another context or culture.”⁷² One culture group must not focus on their own style of music so much; otherwise, another group may feel like giving up more than other cultures so that the corporate worship in a multi-cultural church loses its harmony.⁷³ Cultural minorities may miss their own worship style, music, preaching style, and other elements in a multi-cultural church.

Preaching style may also convey the inter-cultural effort of the church. Style of preaching varies by culture. Woo remarks that preaching with a sense of authority is accepted in some cultures while free style preaching is preferred in other cultures.⁷⁴ The latter style of preaching can be accepted as being open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in some cultures, but can be interpreted as careless to other cultures. Woo recommends rotating different styles of worship for a culturally conscious worship model in a multi-cultural church.⁷⁵ A multi-cultural church can carefully design a rotation system that reflects a variety of color and culture so that no one group in the congregation may suffer a sense of alienation. All groups may experience discomfort to a certain extent during the rotation of the worship style. However, George Yancey believes that “the discomfort

⁷¹ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 186.

⁷² Woo, *The Color of Church*, 189.

⁷³ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 7.

⁷⁴ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 189.

⁷⁵ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 194.

allows that person to rejoice that someone else is getting to hear what he/she wants to hear that Sunday.”⁷⁶

A multi-cultural church must carefully consider if the various groups in the church are represented in leadership because people tend to feel welcome when they are among people like them. Breaking cultural barriers is easier when the leadership is intentionally diversified. Garces-Foley notes that “the leaders of the church have the power to shape the institutional culture.”⁷⁷ If all leaders are culturally homogeneous, then one would question how inclusive the church really is. Churches should strive to appoint leaders from diverse cultural groups to alleviate any pressure that minorities feel to assimilate to the dominant culture around them. Emerson points out that a dominant group must avoid misusing their power to “declare what style of music will and will not be used, determine what historical religious leaders look like racially, decide which teachings to emphasize and which to downplay.”⁷⁸

One important issue not to be missed is avoiding tokenism. Garces-Foley defines *tokenism* as “the policy and the practice of making a perfunctory gesture towards the inclusion of members of minority group.”⁷⁹ To prove whether the leaders from a minority group are not a product of tokenism, churches must ask questions such as “Do they have the power in the leadership?,” and “Is their presence is valued by other leaders?” Garces-Foley suggests that the church must ask the marginalized groups to nominate their leaders instead of letting the dominant culture group select leaders from the marginalized groups.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ George A. Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 75.

⁷⁷ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 89.

⁷⁸ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 147.

⁷⁹ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 118.

⁸⁰ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 119.

Methodology 3: Practicality

Every culture must be highly valued when incorporating diverse cultures into an inter-cultural model. Angie Hong, a second-generation Korean American born in the United States, uses the term “cultural humility,” which she defines as “the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented [or open to the other] in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person.”⁸¹ Unseen cultural differences must not be assumed or presumed. Cultural differences are not always visible but must be identified in inter-cultural efforts. Garces-Foley examples unseen cultural differences that can be easily overlooked by majority group:

They may be subtle, such as facial affect and talking with one’s hands. More significant are differences in values, communication styles, and ways of thinking and making decisions. Those in the majority group are often blind to the extent to which they assume that their cultural practices are normative and, not surprisingly, unseen cultural differences are a common source of tension in . . . communities.⁸²

What is appropriate to one culture may be regarded as unpleasant or even awkward in another culture. Calling someone by their first name, for example, may be normal in American culture but may be informal or even offensive in other cultures. Woo shares that even “greeting one another can become somewhat confusing and awkward” in a multi-cultural setting.⁸³

It is necessary to lay a bridge to cross cultural barriers when urging people to leave their cultural comfort zone and begin inter-cultural connections. Emerson suggests creating internal forums and groups where issues can be learned and discussed.⁸⁴ He also notes that leaders must recognize that members may be at different levels of commitment to inter-cultural connections. Leaders must be flexible and patient to understand the members’ different positions and help them move forward one step at a time.

⁸¹ Angie Hong, quoted in Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 129.

⁸² Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 84.

⁸³ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 141.

⁸⁴ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 168.

Summary

Can ethnic churches be God's inter-cultural bridge that brings people of multicultural roots come together? Ethnic churches are in a stronger position than White churches or African American churches because of their inherent foreign culture background. Ethnic churches can step forward to stop perpetuating cultural homogeneity. Churches must give up their sense of superiority in their culture and stop discounting other cultures. All cultures must be respected in the church so that all cultures can be reachable. Cultural differences must not be a hindrance to joining a church; all cultures must be encouraged, welcome, and nurtured in the church.

Overcome Typical Barriers That Ethnic Churches Face

While generational tensions and cultural barriers between old and young generations are shared issues for all churches, ethnic churches have specific issues to congregational unity. These inherent issues have a positive side as well as negative side. Proper conception of these matters is necessary to enhance the positivity and also alleviate the negativity.

Jonathan Wu observes that “the children and grandchildren of faithful adult believers” in many Asian churches in America find “their own spiritual journey . . . away from their familial roots.”⁸⁵ Peter Cha, Paul Kim, and Dihan Lee point out, “There is not enough incentive for them [younger generations] to stay in a church that is dominated by the Korean-speaking members [first-generation immigrants].”⁸⁶ This phenomenon, commonly called “Silent Exodus” among East Asian Christian scholars in North America, frustrates faithful immigrants because not only are their churches on the verge of existence, but it also reveals their failure to pass down their Christian heritage to next generations.

⁸⁵ Jonathan Wu, “Trusting Households,” in *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, ed. Peter S. Cha, Steve Kang, and Helen Lee (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 106.

⁸⁶ Peter Cha, Paul Kim, and Dihan Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 148.

Cha, Kim and Lee quote some surveys that address the seriousness of “Silent Exodus.” They says that “between 80 and 90 percent of second-generation Korean American and more than 70 percent of Chinese American young adults leave their immigrant churches after college.”⁸⁷ Moreover, not many of those that leave successfully settle in other congregations; they simply fade from their Christian faith, which is a tragic failure of ethnic churches.

Wu recognizes the possible reasons of “Silent Exodus”: “They may have grown weary of being consistently reminded that they are children in their parents’ church, or may be tired of in-church politics and conflicts. They may simply feel the more immediate interest of connecting with their peers.”⁸⁸ Cha, Kim and Lee explain that even the first generation may want to “send out the second-generation congregations with a sense of relief because they are worn out by the conflict-ridden and contentious nature of multigenerational community life.”⁸⁹ Specific challenges and suggestions to alleviate tensions shall be discussed in the next sections.

Church as a Cultural Community

Immigrant churches often function as cultural communities. Steve Kang explains that churches in America, “both Protestant and Catholic, have been largely ethnic specific in its formation and maintenance.”⁹⁰ Immigrants enjoy the comfort of using their mother tongue within their ethnic specific churches. Being strangers in a new world, immigrants relieved loneliness and their feeling of separation from mainstream culture through the homeland culture in the church. Gideon Tsang and Soong-Chan Rah observe

⁸⁷ Cha, Kim, and Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 148.

⁸⁸ Wu, “Trusting Households,” 107.

⁸⁹ Cha, Kim, and Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 151.

⁹⁰ S. Steve Kang, “Truth-Embodying Households,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 42.

that immigrants are in “captivity to the values of majority culture and nostalgia for homeland culture.”⁹¹ Tsang and Rah doubt whether such churches could successfully help the new generation to experience God.

What will a church become if it loses the priority of seeking God? Based on his youth ministry experience, Danny Kwon writes, “Church can become a place for youth and parents simply to be with other peers and faith can become secondary to culture” and he continues, “For youth, they often see the hypocrisy of this and can in turn become confused or alienated about their faith.”⁹² While American-born generations often appreciate their parents’ ethnic culture, many do not like first-generation’s “ethnic particularism.” Karen Chai asserts, “The second-generation congregation chooses the identity of their church not based on Korean culture and language, but evangelical Christianity.”⁹³

Can Asian-American churches be genuinely Bible-believing churches and not give in to functioning as their homeland’s cultural community? Cha, Kang, and Lee ask, “Can Asian-American churches be not too Asian, not too Caucasian, not too much of any racial, but orthodox, evangelical, and Bible-believing community?”⁹⁴ Only when Asian-American churches are identified as genuinely faith-based communities instead of cultural communities will the young generation stay with the first generation in their faith journey.

⁹¹ Gideon Tsang and Soong-Chan Rah, “The Disillusioned Generation: Ecclesiology from the Margins,” in *Honoring the Generations: Learning with Asian North American Congregation*, ed. M. Sydney Park, Soong-Chan Rah, and Al Tizon (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012), 47.

⁹² Danny Kwon, “Spiritual Formation in the Lives of Korean-American Youth,” *Journal of Youth Ministry* 3, no. 2 (April 2005): 83.

⁹³ Karen Chai, “9 Competing for the Second Generation: English-Language Ministry at a Korean Protestant Church,” in *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, ed. R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 309.

⁹⁴ Peter S. Cha, Steve Kang, and Helen Lee, “Introduction: Growing Healthy Households of God,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 10.

Lack of Distinct Identity

It is undeniable that Asian Americans face the feeling of “the other” in the land they call home.⁹⁵ As Erika Lee aptly refers, Asian Americans may be “perpetual foreigners at worst, or probationary Americans at best.”⁹⁶ Such perception of alienation and marginalization is necessarily related with their skin color and other conspicuous features. In the same sense, Antony Alumkal rightly comments that “third-generation Irish Americans . . . earn acceptance as ‘white,’ while fourth-generation Chinese and Japanese Americans [Asian Americans] continue to be treated as foreigners” due to their appearance.⁹⁷

Asian Americans adjusting to American culture come with different patterns or modes of culturalization. Stephen Kim mentions the modes of “assimilation, traditionalism, isolationism, and bicultural integration.”⁹⁸ Some Asian Americans assimilate to the American culture while others keep their homeland tradition. Some people do not ally with either culture, isolating themselves, while others seek to integrate two cultures. Congregants in the first generation, and even the second generation, can have different tendencies of integration to the American culture and the homeland culture. Fenggang Yang explains the patterns of culturalization that immigrants and their descendants may maintain one dominant identity while adopting the other; blend the two cultures “melding

⁹⁵ S. Steve Kang, “Measuring the Health of Our Households,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 207.

⁹⁶ Erika Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 9.

⁹⁷ Antony William Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches: Race, Ethnicity, and Assimilation in the Second Generation* (New York: LFB Scholarly, 2003), 15.

⁹⁸ Stephen S. Kim, “Seeking Home in North America: Colonialism in Asia; Confrontation in North America,” in *People on the Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture and Community*, ed. David Ng (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996), 10.

out distinct characteristics”; or add two cultures “without necessarily losing any particular one.”⁹⁹

It is a challenge to accommodate different opinions about culturalization in an ethnic church while also trying to unite a congregation. Continuous conflict between various cultural identities may be tiring and may lead to the division of the congregation. However, a uniform cultural identity is not desirable either. Efforts to assimilate one group to the other will only result in confusion, frustration, anxiety, and anger.

The church must continue to remind that all believers are aliens and strangers in the world, no matter what their cultural upbringings and cultural identities. Lack of common cultural identity cannot necessarily be a deficit of an ethnic church. Confusion can be reverted as church members regain focus on their faith. True identity is, as Kang asserts, “found in no one else, except in Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁰

Influence of Eastern Culture

Confucian-based perspectives unconsciously play roles in Asian culture and the influences extend to Asian immigrants in foreign lands. Virstan Choy explains the three sociological concepts of Confucian roots affecting Asians: “關係 *quanxi*—personal relationship/network or particularistic ties; 面子 *mianzi*—face or saving face; and 人情 *renqing*—human obligation.”¹⁰¹ While such Confucian roots are tremendously positive, some virtues function in a negative way in relationships between first-generation immigrants and their children in Western culture, especially in the church.

One of those virtues is the shame culture, which is fused deeply in Asian culture. Shame culture is a tendency to avoid being shamed. Helen Lee believes that

⁹⁹ Fenggang Yang, *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 186.

¹⁰⁰ Kang, “Measuring the Health of Our Households,” 207.

¹⁰¹ Virstan B. Y. Choy, “Decision Making and Conflict in the Congregation,” in Ng, *People on the Way*, 250-51.

shame culture extends to Asian Americans.¹⁰² Asian Americans do not want to bring shame and dishonor to themselves or their family. They are urged to live according to high expectations and standards. Honor and righteousness is the highest virtue to save face for the family and in the community. Christine Yeh and Karen Huang explain that one who does not fulfill expectations then loses face, which becomes a tremendous shame.¹⁰³

Younger generations who were born in America will not agree with the shame culture. Immense pressure to perform with excellence and perfection only burns out the younger generation and adds reasons to dislike or even hate their parents' culture. First-generation immigrants may not want to press or impress the younger generation with shame culture because doing so will not ease tensions. Nancy Sugikawa and Steve Wong believe that shame culture contradicts the "most central gospel message, God's grace."¹⁰⁴ God's grace mandates forgiveness to weaknesses and failures. Shame culture may encourage perfectionism and therefore oppose God's grace. Nancy Sugikawa and M. Sydney Park note that shame culture also discourages younger generations from stepping forward in leadership because perfectionism imposes heavy burdens and fear of failure.¹⁰⁵

Lee also counts false humility as a stumbling block in Asian American churches.¹⁰⁶ False humility appears to be humility on the outside, but a mere deflection of

¹⁰² Helen Lee, "Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 1: Challenges and Models," in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 65.

¹⁰³ Christine Yeh and Karen Huang, "The Collectivistic Nature of Ethnic Identity Development Among Asian American College Students," *Adolescence* 31 (September 1996): 651.

¹⁰⁴ Nancy Sugikawa and Steve Wong, "Grace-Filled Households," in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 23.

¹⁰⁵ Nancy Sugikawa and M. Sydney Park, "Formation of Servants in God's Household," in Park, Rah, and Tizon, *Honoring the Generations*, 129.

¹⁰⁶ Lee, "Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 1," 61.

self-pride. Sam Kim and Sydney Park comment that false humility makes people resist “stepping forward or speaking out on critical issues.”¹⁰⁷ In false humility, people say that they do not fit the job or do not say anything even when they are confident in their ability to handle a proposed job or position. False humility is a praised value in Eastern culture because it avoids potential conflict or embarrassment. False humility plays negatively in the church because it takes people away from taking leadership positions. False humility, as well as shame culture, is not accepted as valuable to younger generations.

Hierarchical Relationship

Another Confucian-based perspective is the hierarchical relationships between individuals. Lee defines Confucianism as “hierarchy and patriarchy in the simplest term.”¹⁰⁸ Such perspective defines human relationship with authority and obedience. Although Confucianism is not ostensibly told in Asian immigrants’ society, strong emphasis on filial piety easily pressures the parent-child relationship to be authoritative and submissive. Cha, Kim, and Lee emphasize that such Eastern culture embedded in homes and churches “alienates many second-generation young people” from their parents.¹⁰⁹

Hierarchical relationships extend to relationship between men and women. Alumkal observes that male domination in Korean immigrant churches “operate in a way that is discriminatory toward females.”¹¹⁰ Peter Cha and Grace May also agree that the discrimination of genders is “one of the cardinal Confucian principles” by quoting the Three Bonds: “The ruler, the father and the husband are to be the standards of the ruled,

¹⁰⁷ Sam S. Kim and M. Sydney Park, “Now-Generation Ministry,” in Park, Rah, and Tizon, *Honoring the Generations*, 62.

¹⁰⁸ Lee, “Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 1: Challenges and Models,” 61.

¹⁰⁹ Cha, Kim, and Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 147.

¹¹⁰ Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches*, 38.

the son and the wife.”¹¹¹ Although the issue of gender in church leadership is a heated debate, every gift must be encouraged to be exercised in the church regardless of gender. Cha and May also note that “more women than men join the Silent-Exodus from Asian churches,” which they believe is the result of unhealthy gender relationship.¹¹² The formation of healthy gender relationships is a crucial task for Asian American churches today.

Inability to Resolve Conflicts

Disagreement is natural in human relationships and does not necessarily adversely affect union. Conflict can be productive if openly discussed in a positive light to build stronger relationship. However, in Asian culture, as Lee notes, conflict is regarded as “evidence that someone has done something wrong in the context of a relationship.”¹¹³ Asian Americans, in extension of such perception, tend to think that conflict is an indication of an unhealthy church. Asian Americans tend to avoid conflict by refusing to voice their opinions. This behavior only inhibits Asian Americans from the opportunity to resolve conflict through open discussion. Lee writes, “Many Asian American church leaders have not had sufficient opportunities to practice healthy conflict resolution, either in their own personal relationship or in a congregational setting.”¹¹⁴

Younger generations born in America are taught to practice healthy conflict resolution in personal relationships and in the community. They learn to listen to the voices, debate the matters, take criticism, and appreciate feedback. They have learned basic teamwork skills and have sufficient experience working in teams. Lee shares that

¹¹¹ Peter Cha and Grace May, “Gender Relations in Healthy Households,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 166.

¹¹² Cha and May, “Gender Relations in Healthy Households,” 172.

¹¹³ Helen Lee, “Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 2: Practices and Values,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 89.

¹¹⁴ Lee, “Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 1,” 66.

Confucian-influence results in asserting authority “without allowing much opportunity for teamwork and partnership.”¹¹⁵ Younger generations are more skillful team players; they willingly work in cooperation with others. However, if they cannot apply this attribute toward working with church leaders, then younger generations might quickly lose their motivation to unite with older generations.

Tsang and Rah observe cynicism among young leaders’ minds toward the immigrant church due to the church’s “unwillingness to deal with real problems.”¹¹⁶ They suggest that “immigrant churches need to encourage, give direction to, and nurture their[young leaders’] reformation potential . . . rather than convincing [them] to fall in line with dysfunction.”¹¹⁷ Conflict that is not resolved in a healthy manner will result in further trust deficit between generations, which will be a hindrance in uniting generations in Asian American churches.

Lack of Social Justice Agenda

Kang quotes Wayne Ogimachi to point out another danger of Asian American churches. Ogimachi explains that Asian American churches tend to focus only on orthodoxy and emphasize knowledge, not on a transformed heart or moving beyond knowledge.¹¹⁸ Truthful understanding of biblical teachings will lead to deeds of love toward society and expand their passion for social justice. Soon-Chan Rah comments on biblical commission to the church: “The Bible is not silent on the issue of social justice and compassion. The church must be led to an understanding that a healthy and holistic

¹¹⁵ Lee, “Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 2,” 79.

¹¹⁶ Tsang and Rah, “The Disillusioned Generation,” 49.

¹¹⁷ Tsang and Rah, “The Disillusioned Generation,” 49.

¹¹⁸ Kang, “Truth-Embodying Household,” 51.

household of God requires an application of the biblical mandate for ministries of justice and mercy.”¹¹⁹

Younger generations born in America are more oriented to social justice and may be more attracted to compassion ministries and the fair treatment of unprivileged people and minor groups in society. In addition, the view of disabled people can be an issue to the unification of a congregation. Cha, Kim, and Lee mention that Asians oftentimes view disabled children as burdens for families to bear.¹²⁰ This detrimental way of thinking unconsciously affects Asian churches, causing these churches to ignore the development of ministries to the disabled.

Asian-American churches, by nature, have provided social services and justice ministries from the beginning, by meeting the needs of immigrants through job searches, helping with paperwork, interpreting, etc. If the church continues to develop related ministries and widens the search of needs outside of their ethnic groups, then the church will be able to motivate younger generations to join church ministries. Asian churches also need to pray more for the larger world. Alumkal shares, from his experience with Korean American churches, that they seldomly pray “for the needs of the larger world (except their need to hear the gospel) as is common in many mainline Protestant traditions.”¹²¹

Values of First-Generation Immigrants

It has to be considered whether the values of first-generation immigrants accord with Christian values. Their life in the new land as sojourners, searching for settlement and eternity coincides with the spiritual values of Christianity. However,

¹¹⁹ Soong-Chang Rah, “Households of Mercy and Justice,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 186.

¹²⁰ Cha, Kim, and Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 156.

¹²¹ Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches*, 51.

some values of first-generation immigrants seem to run counter to Christianity. Kim and Park observe that “spiritual values and priorities [of the first-generation immigrants] are sidelined” by exalted expectations for their children’s academic performance.¹²² Alumkal also reports that worldly success is a major Korean value that runs counter to Christianity.¹²³ Such a value can be a major cause of separation of younger generations from the church, resulting a silent exodus. Can Asian American parents surmount shame-based culture at church and not measure their children’s academic success more than spiritual equipping?

Another obstacle that hinders younger generation’s spiritual edification can be the leader’s view of youth ministers. Kim and Park note that children’s and youth ministries are often perceived as a stepping-stone ministry to pastors and leaders.¹²⁴ Youth pastors are regarded as “deputies” and they think that they are taking steps to a “higher ministry” to be pastors of adults. This mindset can downplay the importance of the youth pastors and consequently downplay children’s and youth ministries. Churches will think it is okay to hire part-time or apprentices for children’s and youth ministries. If this is true, then youths are always considered “second-class citizens” and they will grow with a trust deficit against the first-generation in the church.

Walking in Harmony

Mark Mullins, who studied the life cycle of ethnic churches in North America, reports ideal-typical stages of those churches.¹²⁵ After the first stage of monolingual immigrants’ domination, the second stage begins as the native-born population co-exists

¹²² Kim and Park, “Now-Generation Ministry,” 65.

¹²³ Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches*, 113.

¹²⁴ Kim and Park, “Now-Generation Ministry,” 63.

¹²⁵ Mark Mullins, “The Life-Cycle of Ethnic Churches in Sociological Perspective,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14 (December 1987): 324.

and the church becomes bilingual by introducing English services. In the third stage, the native-born population leaks to mainstream society by mobility, intermarriage, and assimilation to North American culture. At the same time, the older generation begins to disappear by aging. Mullins cautions ethnic churches in the third stage to make a choice between “going out of business or developing new goals.”¹²⁶ However, new goals may not have to be complex strategies but can be a simple restoration of relationship between generations.

Mitchell Kim and David Lee believe that the first generation can step up and bless their children instead of waiting for the second generation to earn trust from the first generation.¹²⁷ The first generation must cease to think of the English ministry as subordinate but begin flowing parental blessings to them. Tsang suggests to the first generation leaders “to release the next generation into ministry, to repent and ask for forgiveness for their ways of holding back the next generation from being led by the Lord.”¹²⁸ It is a divine duty and honor for the first generation to pass their heritage of faith to the younger generation who grew in their church.

Younger generations also must come together with the older generation. Younger generations need to open their arms and embrace the hurts of the older generation who have lived as immigrants in the foreign land. Kim and Lee metaphorically speak to the second generation to not be like Ham who exposed the error of his father.¹²⁹ Can the English speaking congregation forgive the mistakes and ill treatment of their parent generation and move forward to unite?

¹²⁶ Mullins, “The Life-Cycle of Ethnic Churches,” 327.

¹²⁷ Mitchell Kim and David Lee, “Intergenerational Ministry: Why Bother?,” in Park, Rah, and Tizon, *Honoring the Generations*, 24.

¹²⁸ Tsang and Rah, “The Disillusioned Generation,” 55.

¹²⁹ Kim and Lee, “Intergenerational Ministry: Why Bother?,” 28.

Ethnic churches must also reconsider the term “next generation” when designating the younger generation. Kim and Park note that “next generation” may give wrong impression that the younger generation “do not require the full attention of the church until they become adults.” They suggest the term “now generation” in place of “next generation.”¹³⁰ Ethnic churches must not ignore the urgency of the issues and “go out of business” at the verge of the “third stage.” Neither should they be one step behind releasing God’s blessings to the “now generation.”

Conclusion

It is ironic that many churches in America are still ethnically monolithic and culturally isolated, while the rest of society is a diverse blend of ethnicity and culture. The multi-cultural trend is rising and is the epitome of modern society, especially appealing to younger generations. Churches cannot lose younger generations and still expect to pass down the Christian faith. Single-ethnic, mono-cultural, or one-generation churches may seem attractive and make people feel at home, but God calls upon all generations and people from all nations to come worship together. Young generations cannot relate to ethnically and culturally bounded churches because those communities do not reflect their social lives. Intentional and proactive efforts must be made in order to start communication between the generations before it is too late. Churches must never become complacent and proclaim that they have done enough to mitigate generational tension. The next generation will not idly remain with the church unless the churches themselves find a final cure.

¹³⁰ Kim and Park, “Now-Generation Ministry,” 60.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project was focused on four goals as stated in chapter 1. The goals were to (1) assess the knowledge of gospel-oriented ecclesiology and the level of desire for church unity among project participants, (2) develop a curriculum on gospel-oriented ecclesiology and church unity, (3) increase participants' knowledge and motivation through teaching a six-week curriculum, and (4) to develop a ministry plan to step forward congregational ministry integration. Significant time passed before starting project implementation, but the goals were met to a certain extent and yielded meaningful results.

Preparation Period

The first goal was to assess the knowledge of gospel-oriented ecclesiology and the level of desire for church unity among project participants. For the project, the Basics of Gospel-Oriented Ecclesiology (BGOE) survey was developed for both the pre-survey and post-survey. I recruited 14 participants, all from IMC: 8 from KM (Korean-speaking congregation) and 6 from EM (English-speaking congregation). As a result of restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, IMC was forced to congregate online. I led two Bible studies through Zoom video conferences twice a week: every Tuesday and Thursday. The students of these two classes were targeted as the core members of the curriculum.

I introduced the concept of BGOE and the purpose of the class: I wanted to present this opportunity to existing Bible study members. Since IMC had been experiencing a plateau after a decline that began ten years ago in both English and Korean-speaking congregation, we already anticipated a turning point. We needed a better understanding of the generational, cultural, and language gaps amongst members to

unite the church. Most of the Tuesday and Thursday class members agreed to join the BGOE class.

There are several specifics worth mentioning about the demographic of the participants. Five out of six deacons of the church accepted an invitation to the BGOE class. It was crucial to reach out to the deacons because the success of the project would heavily rely on church leaders. If the deacons show motivation and want for the unity of the church, then the rest will follow suit. The associate pastor also agreed to attend the class.

The age distribution of the participants directly reveals the unbalanced age population of church members: 2 in their sixties, 6 in their fifties, 1 in his forties, 1 in his thirties, 2 in their twenties, 1 college freshman, and 1 rising high school senior. I reached out to as many young people as possible, especially the two youngest participants in hope of guiding them to build a healthy view of the very Asian ethnic churches that they grew up in. I encouraged them to see a vision of a diverse, but unified congregation. Gender distribution of the participants was even and balanced; 3 males from KM, 5 females from KM, 3 males from EM, and 3 females from EM for an overall ratio of 6 males to 8 females. In terms of immigration history of the participants, 1 has lived in the US over 10 years, 6 have lived in the US over 20 years, 2 have lived in the US over 40 years, and 5 were born in the US.

A few participants who were physically distanced from the church also joined because the class was going to be online via a Zoom class. I also reached out the only interracial marriage couple in the church and explained the purpose of the curriculum. I believed that this course would benefit the couple's church life and pointed out that the study would give them a chance to understand each other's cultural upbringing. We were far from reaching the critical mass of none-Korean in both ethnicity and language, but the couple's attendance was a beginning step toward a diversified congregation. Their participation would make a great initiation of discussion about cultural and racial diversity

in the church. I reached out to as many bilingual members as possible from the Korean-speaking congregation: those who speak English proficiently, but had more of an affinity toward Korean culture.

The total number of 14 participants was regarded as successful, considering the size of active worshipers on regular Sundays was less than 40 after COVID-19 outbreak. Participants of the class were more than 35 percent of the active congregation. Class size was adequate; Korean-speaking class was to be 8 and English-speaking class was to be 6. Those who were bilingual could attend the other class according to their discretion.

The BGOE survey was developed in English first.¹ The survey consists of 34 statements to assess participants' knowledge and motivation for church unity. Statements were created based on the contents of chapter 2 and 3 of this project. About half of the statements were from a scriptural understanding of church unity theologically and historically. The statements were intentionally drawn from the purpose and the goals of three major headings of chapter 2. The other half were shaped from the contents of chapter 3. These incorporated historical and current issues of ethnic churches in the US that had a deeply rooted far-east oriental cultural background.

Although several terms used in the survey are explained in part 2 of the survey, I added several more definitions of Confucianism, culturalization, and homogeneous congregation for accurate measurement of the survey answers. Overly simplified statements could acquire monotonous responses, which would not serve the purpose of the survey; answers could be easily 1 or 6 on six-point Likert scale statements. For this reason, some statements were phrased to be contractual in meaning, containing some difficult to understand or misleading words. The survey was then translated into Korean for accuracy. I tried to translate to the best of my ability, preserving the terminology and

¹ See appendix 1.

intent. Glossaries were also listed and explained in Korean before the survey. By week 2, the BGOE survey was revised and translated.

The second goal of the project was to develop a curriculum on gospel-oriented ecclesiology and church unity. The curriculum was developed from the thesis and the study of the chapters 2 and 3 of this project. The curriculum consisted of six sessions: three from three major headings in chapter 2, and the other three from the three major headings in chapter 3.² The six sessions are as follows: (1) Unity of the church is God's calling, (2) Congregational unity transcends cultural and language barriers, (3) Congregational unity transcends functional differences of members, (4) Overcoming generational tension through inter-generational effort, (5) Inter-cultural effort to prepare for rising multi-cultural trend, and (6) Overcome typical barriers that ethnic churches face. I intentionally kept the order of the thesis of chapter 2 and 3 in the course training. This order helped the participants better understand the biblical mandates and God's decree for church unity of the first three classes. Then I moved toward a historical and sociological analysis surrounding the current issues of Asian ethnic churches in North America, which provided the groundwork to suggest the reconnection of all groups in the church.

All sessions followed an identical pattern, beginning with the goal, introduction, and an outline in three to four pages. Each session ended with a conclusion or final thoughts for review, including an in-class discussion. I tried to include the majority of the core content from the studies made in this project through the outlines of the sessions. In addition, I provided condensed and itemized points as dotted lists for brevity of the material. The actual teaching of the course stemmed from the outline. I avoided using more than three level dots in the outline for intelligibility of the teaching.

By week 6, six sessions curriculum were developed. Then the curriculum, along with the evaluation sheet, was sent to a panel consisting of three local pastors. They were

² See appendices 3-8.

ethnic pastors fluent in both English and Korean—two are the sole and lead pastors of ethnic churches consisting of predominantly Korean immigrants and their children, and the other was a retired pastor who had spent many years as a coordinator of ethnic churches in the area. I chose the two practicing pastors because they (1) were local, which means their churches share similar demographic as our church, (2) practice in a bilingual congregation, English and Korean, and (3) continuously search for a better way to pass faith, wisdom, and tradition on to the next generations of the church. I included the third pastor in my panel because he (1) was an experienced church planter, (2) had worked as a moderator of pastors of diverse ethnic backgrounds, and (3) was passionate about counseling through typical issues that plague ethnic churches.

The panel was given two weeks to evaluate the curriculum and return their evaluation sheet with comments via email. The overall consensus from the comments were in agreement that the curriculum properly addressed general situations of ethnic churches—this course could be used in many Asian-American churches as a teaching resource to their congregations. The panel added that the material was theologically sound to the Scripture, but they pointed out that it lacked possible solutions to implement in the future. According to the comments, I prepared some images to enhance the material and added more opportunities for discussion to each session. I also added intermediate breaks during the session for questions and open discussion. By week 9, the curriculum was revised according to the comments.

The curriculum was also translated into Korean for KM participants to aid in understanding and effective teaching. Quotes, direct or indirect in the curriculum, were footnoted to provide credibility of the teaching. By week 12, the curriculum was translated, printed in both languages, and fastened in binders for each of the 14 participants.

To achieve the third goal—to increase participants' knowledge and motivation through the course—I had to plan to online teach through video-teleconferencing software because of the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Zoom video conferencing was

decided upon because of the church members' familiarity to the platform; they knew how to operate and share documents with ease.

The meetings were held in two groups according to their language preferences: English and Korean. Meetings were held once a week for eight consecutive weeks. During week 13, I distributed the pre-survey and curriculum material to the participants. During week 14, I held the first meeting, introduced the purpose of the course again, and had the participants take the pre-survey. For anonymity, participants were allowed to use their own four-digit personal code in place of their names. The pre-survey consisted of two parts: part 1 was the profession of their faith in Jesus and Scripture, part 2 was 34 statements to assess knowledge and motivation. Before moving onto part 2 of the survey, I stopped to explain the glossary and went over a brief explanation of the terms. Then I explained the six-point scale to answer each statement, how to answer the statements, and encouraged the group to give quick answers without too much contemplation. After the first meeting, I collected the completed pre-survey from all participants and input the six-point scale answers to an Excel worksheet.

Implementation Period

During week 15, I held two video conferences for the two language groups to teach session 1. The purpose of this session was to explain that the unity of the church is the calling of Triune God.³ The Korean-speaking group chose to meet on Thursdays for the rest of the project, while the English-speaking group decided to meet on Sundays. Those who were fluent in both languages had flexibility to switch groups according to their personal schedule. The meeting lasted about one hour and fifteen minutes: an hour of teaching and the rest of time was used for discussion. The Sunday meeting was recorded and made available for one participant who was excused for the first week. The subject of the first session is the heaviest of all sessions: the Triune God mandates the unity of the

³ See appendix 3.

church. However, it was significant to open the whole conversation with Scripture study but not with secular or academic examination. Some were impressed by the fact that our church, as a local congregation, was a local manifestation of the heavenly congregation. The class was a good start to form the motif of unity in the church. The most useful discussion was about how participants would describe congregational unity in one word or phrase. The answers were oneness, acceptance, holding hands, walking alongside, forgiveness, and connection. Each term displayed how much we lacked in how we show love or care for others, especially to the counterpart language group. We then had a time of prayer to acknowledge the dissent that existed in the church and to confess that the church had to be unified because we share one faith together.

During week 16, I held two meetings for the two language groups to teach session 2.⁴ One person from the Korean-speaking group intentionally joined the English-speaking group's session to exchange opinions, which turned out to be a fruitful attempt in understanding both viewpoints. Not many church members are fluent in both languages right now, but even during a period when there were many, they chose to exclusively stay in one group, either English group or Korean group, not necessarily based on their primary language but according to their cultural preference. When bilingual individuals determined which group they wanted to join, their sense of belonging was fixated and permanent that they would not join the other group. In that sense, the attempt to attend the other group's session was a meaningful approach toward providing a bare structure of an internal forum to talk about church unity. Participants exchanged their views about the invisible walls of culture, generation, and language within general ethnic churches as well as in our church. The individual's group swap is metaphoric of any boundary crossers who would feel uncomfortable being in a homogeneous group: they feel the need to pursue diversity because they value it. Participants agreed that both groups were stuck in their comfort

⁴ See appendix 4.

zones and have not made enough effort to mingle across language and cultural barriers. We had an intermission to watch a video clip, entitled “Chosen Witness.”⁵ This is the story of Mary Magdalene clearly demonstrating the effort Jesus made to do away with stereotype and remove the fence of tradition between groups of people.

The unexpected similarity between the first century Jerusalem church and the present ethnic churches caught the attention of the participants during session 2. The fact that there were at least two language groups within the same ethnicity in the church of Jerusalem and their cooperative effort to remedy the issues inspired discussion about our situation. In our church, English and Korean language groups struggle to co-exist in the same church. Participants agreed they would have to take into special consideration that the English group is much smaller, or the minority, in ethnic churches. We also discussed “how they would think about me,” not just “how I think about them.” It was a fruitful reflection of self-examination about how we contribute to the formation of group stereotype. Many agreed that intentional and proactive effort is needed to examine the minority group’s problems because these issues could affect the entire congregation.

During week 17, I held session 3, which focused on the diversity of gifts and functions of church members.⁶ Participants agreed that ethnic churches are more heterogeneous in this manner due to their bilingual and bicultural capacity. They hold a broader understanding and appreciation for different cultures. There were discussions about social progression in how foreign cultures are perceived. For example, Korean pop culture has become accepted and even well-liked. This has paved a way for a fusion of Korean-American customs and traditions: a useful event that could be used to the advantage of Korean-American churches for further outreach of non-Koreans. We also agreed that diversity was a gift from God to the church, through individuals, and we must

⁵ Jesus Film, “Chosen Witness,” April 2, 2021, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2-hqr0VE8c&t=16s>.

⁶ See appendix 5.

be appreciative. One participant was especially drawn to the verse “to think with sober judgment” (Rom 12:3) and concluded that she was equal to her fellow-Christian brothers and sisters, not superior nor inferior. The Korean-speaking group also discussed how they have been neglecting the English group and pushing them down. They have been silently pressuring the minority group to fit in with the majority’s culture pattern.

During week 18, we moved on to session 4 to discuss inter-generational effort.⁷ The generational categorization used to aid in the curriculum was based on generational characteristics found in western culture. However, the characteristic of those generations matched surprisingly well with Korean-American generational characteristics. We engaged in discussions on how to better intergenerational communication with respect for each other. One participant suggested that we must view an individual under that person’s generational category in order to take generational characteristics into consideration so that we might not make hasty judgments. These discussions were beneficial because there was a lack of knowledge of generational analysis, especially amongst Korean immigrants living in North America. Even though the study on this subject was not extensive, we had a productive discussion on specifics of immigrants’ situation, influences of Asian culture in the immigrants’ family, and the general categorization and research of generations.

The trend of church-in-a-church approach in ethnic churches was also discussed. Ethnic churches separated English ministries from others because it was seen as the best way to avoid conflict. A separated ministry inevitably divides the gap between the two wider and irrevocable. Sometimes, difficulties in communication strains the two ministries into almost two separated churches. Participants shared their experience of efforts made to bridge that gap, which felt like an unacknowledged echo in the wind: a futile attempt that ended in two dissatisfied parties. Participants agreed that they needed to make an intentional and organized effort to reconnect these ministries.

⁷ See appendix 6.

The college students shared their experiences of attending single-generational churches that are often found near colleges or urban areas. They claimed that these churches were more attractive because they could befriend their peers more easily. However, there was a lack of families and older members, and the students missed the emotional support. They also perceived that members of single-generational churches had little to no commitment to the churches themselves. Church attendance was infrequent, and many college students bounce from place to place until settling down for a family-friendly church. We concluded that churches are ideal when the members are like family, with many different generations gathered in place.

The older participants acknowledged their hypocritical attitudes toward younger generations in the past and were apologetic of how they failed to be good examples. They wished to coexist with younger individuals and the youth and to show an approachable, more empathetic side. In hopes of helping the younger individuals in the church, the elders wanted to coexist and cooperate. Participants deduced that we should plan events and activities around the interest of all members so everyone would participate. This way, there would not be an excuse to remain apathetic about other generations and their concerns or interests.

During week 19, session 5 was held through two separate Zoom meetings with the topic of inter-cultural efforts to unite the church.⁸ The lesson began with how all churches, not exclusively ethnic churches, share a pattern of cultural homogeneity. Usually, a group of racially similar individuals choose to congregate together. Next, we explored the cultural exclusivity of ethnic churches and the impacts of traditional first-generation immigrants. The younger participants remarked that they shared the same feeling of looming pressure to stay within the bounds of Korean culture. Parents want their children to have the same traditional and conservative thoughts that they grew up on and stay in

⁸ See appendix 7.

Korean churches, no matter how uncomfortable the children are. We also discovered a pattern amongst first-generation immigrant families in the church: one parent is more Americanized over the other.

The young participants shared the dilemma that their parents encouraged them to find possible spouses among Korean-American population. This makes it difficult for the children of immigrants to engage and form meaningful relationships with people outside their race. One of the English-speaking members confessed that this idea of racial exclusivity affected his childhood. He recalled that the church he had attended during his teenage years did not openly welcome his friends of other races. Younger Koreans were also burdened as they were expected to be fluent in both languages because this seemed to be a commendable trait in the eyes of the older church members.

We shared that there was a growing population of inter-racial marriages in the church, but the church itself was not ready to accept them whole-heartedly. The class acknowledged that the world is growing in diversity and fusion of cultures. Although some Korean churches, including our church, have an English-speaking ministry, we concluded that our church was not yet ready to welcome such cultural diversity. Our church needs an impetus to start a wave of acceptance, or we will unfortunately stay extremely homogeneous.

The older participants acknowledged that the racial homogeneity and exclusivity makes the younger members uncomfortable, and to some, even unbearable. Both groups were tremendously challenged by the term “boundary crossers,”⁹ and genuinely felt compelled to find a way to bridge the gap between groups in the church. Then, we had a time for personal reflection and prayed about the inconsistencies of our thoughts and behaviors with the teachings of Jesus.

During week 20, session 6 was held through two separate Zoom meeting. The

⁹ Kathleen Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multiethnic Church on a Mission* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 128.

topic was to examine typical issues ethnic churches face.¹⁰ The most agreed upon issue was that ethnic churches typically function as a cultural community center from their beginning, and that reality continued to be true even after decades passed. Many participants reminisced about the early days after immigration: attending a Korean church in America to connect with other Korean immigrants. As a result, for many participants, their Christian faith was not the only reason why they gathered together. Churches were a medium that brought immigrants together. The homeland culture, language, and fellowship all played significant roles at church gatherings, which in turn impressed some church members that Christian faith could be the second most important reason of their gathering.

Another notable discussion was about the different ways the participants and their families had been adapting themselves to aspects of American culture. Participants exchanged their thoughts and opinions on how the individuals, their spouses, and their children were acculturating differently: some assimilated themselves easily, some held onto their traditions from their homeland and resisted assimilation. Participants also agreed that a bigger problem was amongst people who could bear hostility toward others who acculturate differently than themselves. Those who assimilate more easily view immigrants that cannot do so as pathetic. On the other hand, immigrants who hold fast to their traditions might think that those who assimilate are flatterers. Both the older and the younger groups were transparent about their existing bitterness and animosity toward others' rate of acculturation.

Discussions were held about Asian tradition in their families and the church, as well as how that culture affected immigrant families and the ethnic churches. The class was reluctant to speak about shame culture infused in their thoughts. Shame culture was undeniably rooted into our eastern culture and still influences lives at home and at church. We also discussed how shame culture might have developed some overwhelming

¹⁰ See appendix 8.

expectations for younger generations, which has led to an unachievable goal of perfectionism. Some of the older participants confessed their guilty consciences by stating that they should not have urged their children to reach for something hard to attain. We also discussed how children of immigrant families are urged to live in a way that the family does not lose respect from people outside the family, to keep up their family tradition, be able to speak Korean, and live up to be the model minority.

Follow-Up Period

By week 20, all six sessions were complete, all held through Zoom video conferences. I recommended that the participants review all material until the next discussion session, which was scheduled for the following week. I distributed the post-survey to those who came to the in-person worship service on Sunday and emailed the post-survey to the rest of the participants. During week 21, I held the final Zoom meeting with the two separate groups, briefly went over the six session discussions, had them finish the post-survey, and finalized the training.

There were discussions during the final meeting to wrap up the participants' thoughts and challenges. One participant shared the personal challenge she had during the sessions and what conclusion she had reached: everyone is equally valuable, regardless of the contributions an individual makes to the church community. Many other participants agreed that they somehow had been perceiving people in the English-speaking group as minors, despite their age, and they had not regarded them as important members: not comparable to members of the Korean-speaking group.

Another participant shared his unsuccessful experience of trying to reach out to the other language group. In his opinion, the effort he made was insufficient and inefficient. Many participants agreed that their effort to unite with the other group was not enough and perhaps their gestures of hospitality could have been seen as superficial and insincere. We admitted that the way we chose to coexist was the easy way out to avoid conflict; many decided to ignore underlying issues that may have stood as obstacles.

Participants consented to search for intentional plans to connect the language groups, as well as different age groups.

Participants also shared their experience about joint Sunday services, which combined both language groups. They shared about their disinterest in having joint services, even coming together in worship. To some, bilingual services are simply boring, uncomfortable, and confusing because they have to wait their turn for translations, which in turn lengthens the duration of the service. A couple of participants concluded that they would resolve to be more considerate of each other's language group in joint services. They said that they would be happy knowing that the other language group is spiritually satisfied through the words and music of their style. Participants generally agreed to have more frequent joint services on Sundays.

Most participants agreed that the course was beneficial. It helped them systematically analyze issues that were both visible and invisible that compromised the unity of an ethnic church. Through the studies of generational characteristics and individuals' different patterns of acculturation, they were able to grasp a wider lens to see others in the church. One participant testified that her tendency toward making hasty judgments stems from her limited cultural viewpoint. Still, she believes that variety should be seen as good for the community, and never a reason for discomfort or awkwardness.

All fourteen participants completed the curriculum; none of them missed more than two consecutive sessions. Those who missed a session were encouraged to go over the recorded Zoom meeting. Post-surveys were collected in person over two Sundays and through email. Twelve participants successfully submitted the post-survey; one individual's survey was missing, and the other participant failed to submit within the allotted two weeks. I did not attempt to re-collect the missing one because I assumed that taking the post-survey again might produce inaccurate answers. For the same reason, I did not encourage the last person to finish the post-survey, as I presumed that it would not produce reliable data. Therefore, I used twelve pre-surveys of those who completed post-surveys.

I input the six-point scale responses of the twelve post-surveys to an Excel worksheet for comparison with the pre-surveys.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

The implementation of this project was helpful to IMC and provided members an opportunity to reflect on the present situation of the church. Participants' knowledge of and motivation for unifying the congregation significantly increased throughout the six-week course. During the planning phase of this project, I focused on EM as the target audience because it was more important to change their thoughts and views about ethnic churches. However, as the project began, I realized that the KM actually needed to understand the current issues of ethnic churches as they are the main group at IMC. Therefore, the intended audience for the class opened to the whole church. Leaders and active members from both KM and EM attended the course and exchanged considerable discussions regarding church unity. The course laid a foundation for the participants' biblical understanding about church unity and facilitated conversations between groups in the church.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to increase congregational unity among Korean-speaking and English-speaking members of Ichthus Mission Church in Rockville, Maryland, by teaching gospel-oriented ecclesiology. I believed that congregational unity could only be achieved through an understanding of biblical mandates about church unity and an increased desire to accept and understand one another. Although congregational unity is neither a simple goal to reach, nor easy thing to measure, this project provided a great start toward church unity.

Bringing two groups of different cultural backgrounds and language preference together is difficult. As the study progressed, I found this to be even more complicated than I had anticipated. Individuals from the KM have many different versions of cultural identity—some assimilated to American culture, some continued practicing Korean culture, some straddled their cultural identity somewhere in between, and others in a state of co-existing with two cultures. Even individuals from the EM had a variety of cultural identities depending on each individual’s cultural upbringing. Suddenly, there was a need to acknowledge the intricacy of bringing both groups together. Generational study had to be included in the course. I had to examine the influence of eastern culture to immigrant families and the patterns of assimilation. I regard this project a success for several reasons.

Participation of Both Groups

Although I originally tailored the project toward the EM congregation, I improvised and adjusted the class curriculum to fit both EM and KM. The curriculum was developed in English was also translated into Korean. It was important to teach both groups the same course; church unity cannot be attained if the leadership of one group works toward it while the other remains indifferent. Through active announcements to both groups along with a thorough breakdown of the class and goals, I was able to gain participants. These participants included active members as well as leaders of EM and KM.

Before the class, members from both groups were “culturally blind” toward each other.¹ KM members believed in the concept that we are all similar because we share the same blood, therefore, the same culture. EM, the smaller ministry between the two, was conscious of cultural differences and did not necessarily believe the statement to

¹ Kathleen Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multiethnic Church on a Mission* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 82. Being culturally blind is a reluctant attitude to acknowledge cultural differences that exist within a community.

be true. Participants from both groups realized that cultural blindness was an issue they had ignored before the start of the class. After the post-survey was conducted, I compared the participants' answers to statement 24. "Churches must be conscious of cultural differences within the church." I believe that this statement quantitatively measured improvement toward understanding cultural blindness." After evaluating the responses, the sum of participants' answers went from 56 to 64. In statement 25, "The second generation is urged to assimilate to the first generation's culture and tradition," the sum increased from 46 to 54. The increase of scores from these two questions reveals that participants became more aware of cultural differences among fellow church members and the unfortunate reality of how KM had been urging EM to assimilate for them.

Timeliness of the Class

Due to the year-long COVID-19 pandemic, IMC had become passive in many aspects of ministry. Annual events such as short-term foreign mission trip, churchwide retreats, and Sunday Bible studies were put on hold, and small group gatherings, which were usually held in members' houses, stopped. As in-person Sunday services were replaced with online streaming options, live watching decreased from an average of 21 viewers to 15 viewers. Assuming each household counts as 1 live view, approximately 6 families chose to stop livestreaming Sunday services.

I prepared the BGOE class, as active members thirsted for a spiritual revival of the church. The church had been declining for a prolonged period of time already. There were several attempts at a church revival, but all were short-lived. KM was aging, and EM experienced "Silent Exodus," a phenomenon that younger generations leave the church dominated by first-generation immigrants.² Since the BGOE class focused on church unity through a biblical view of the church, leaders of the church were inspired.

² Peter Cha, Paul Kim, and Dihan Lee, "Multigenerational Households," in *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, ed. Peter S. Cha, Steve Kang, and Helen Lee (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 148.

They chose to re-illuminate a path toward true revival for the rest of the church just as the worst of the pandemic seemed to subside.

Evaluation of the Project's Goal

This project fulfilled and achieved four specific goals, which are described in this section.

Goal 1

The first goal of the project was to assess the knowledge of gospel-oriented ecclesiology and the level of desire for church unity among project participants. This goal was measured by analyzing the results of the participants' post-surveys that consisted of 34 statements. The statements were broken down into the following categories: 10 related with biblical and doctrinal knowledge about church unity, 5 about member diversity and the ways it affects church unity, 6 about modern trends of churches that affect church unity, and 13 about typical issues of ethnic churches that affect church unity. The first goal was accomplished when fourteen members participated and completed the post-survey and the responses were analyzed.

Goal 2

The second goal of the project was to develop a curriculum on gospel-oriented ecclesiology and church unity. The curriculum was prepared and sent to the panel for review and comment. The goal was met successfully when the initial result of the panel's rubric scored 96.9 percent, which exceeds the sufficiency level of 90 percent. The curriculum, however, was revised according to the panel's comments, and translated from the original English version to a Korean adaptation. The six-week curriculum contained biblical knowledge and understanding about church unity during the first three weeks, and studies of modern trends and current issues of ethnic churches in relation to church unity in the second half.

Goal 3

The third goal of the project was to increase participants' knowledge and motivation for unity through teaching a six-week curriculum. Fourteen participants signed up for the class and all of them completed the six-week curriculum successfully. Eleven post-surveys were available for comparison to the corresponding pre-surveys—1 participant's post-survey was lost, 1 participant failed to submit the post-survey, and 1 participant skipped several questions in the post-survey, which invalidated the data.

To measure success in meeting this goal, I compared the post-survey scores to the pre-survey scores. The mean score on the pre-survey 154.2, improved to 167.6 on the post-survey, thus proving the effectiveness of the curriculum. A *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference between pre- and post-survey scores: $t(10) = -4.131, p = .001$.³

Goal 4

The fourth goal of this project was to develop a ministry plan identifying next steps toward congregational ministry integration. Despite the limitations set by online discussions, the online classes were time well spent examining visions for the church and sharing values they held dear as Christians. Based on the discussions, participants reached a consensus on how the church must progress to reflect biblical urgency: “a church for all generations” became a possible new vision for our church. Participants agreed to join further discussions about setting a new church vision with a sense of urgency as the year 2022 quickly approaches and as the COVID-19 pandemic situation subsides from its detrimental stage (as of August 2021 when the final Zoom meeting ended). The goal was met successfully when the five deacons and the associate pastor joined the ministry council to discuss continued effort for ministry integration.

³ See appendix 9.

Strength of the Project

Those who completed the course successfully gained insight and a biblical understanding about church unity. They have a better grasp on the underlying hindrances that prevent congregational unity in ethnic churches. Responses from 10 out of 11 participants exhibited an increase on their personal post-survey total compared to the pre-survey total. The mean score increased by 8.7 percent, confirming the strengths of the project. This is impressive considering the pre-survey 154.2 was already high (out of 204 being a perfect score, 34 statements on a six-point scale).

Another strength of this project was the curriculum. It included diversified viewpoints of ethnic pastors from minority cultures in the US: first- and second-generation Korean Americans,⁴ Chinese Americans,⁵ and other Asian-Americans.⁶ First-generation immigrant participants learned from contrasting viewpoints of younger generations about ethnic churches, and younger participants who were born in the US were able to learn about the invisible influences of Asian culture that affected first-generation Asian immigrants. Participants also had the opportunity to listen from a non-Korean's point of view and experiences of Korean American churches.⁷

Another strength of this project was revealed in the way it caught the attention of almost all church leaders, including five out of six deacons, and the associate pastor. All the leaders were not only interested in the purpose of the class, but also made an effort to finish the six-week curriculum. Less than a month after the course ended, the board of deacons resumed their official monthly meetings to discuss church businesses and deacon

⁴ Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*.

⁵ Fenggang Yang, *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

⁶ Nancy Sugikawa and M. Sydney Park, "Formation of Servants in God's Household," in *Honoring the Generations: Learning with Asian North American Congregation*, ed. M. Sydney Park, Soong-Chan Rah, and Al Tizon (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012), 120-47.

⁷ Antony William Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches: Race, Ethnicity, and Assimilation in the Second Generation* (New York: LFB Scholarly, 2003).

ministries—these regular meetings had not occurred in over a year. Fruitful discussions were held during the meeting about various ministries and church revitalization.

Weakness of the Project

The first weakness of this project was the noticeable gap between my vision and the participants' vision of congregational unity. My ideal vision encompassed diversity as the main contributor for unification. Participants, on the other hand, pictured an image of stereotypical ethnic church: oneness through homogeneity. Unfortunately, for many ethnic churches, including our church, congregational unity merely means a passive coexistence of the first immigrants' generation and their children's generation. Participants are not rejecting the idea of culturally and ethnically diverse groups of people in the church. However, they are skeptical about an ethnic church whose congregation consists of culturally and ethnically diversified people.

The effects of COVID-19 pandemic were also detrimental to project implementation. Zoom conferencing made it difficult to maintain the genuine interest and attention of participants. Large portions of time were wasted toward adjusting or troubleshooting technical computer issues. Communicating exclusively in an online setting is not as seamless as it is in person. Buffering screens and jumbled relays of discussions undeniably interrupted discussions. These factors prevented participants from raising questions at the most opportune times, causing hesitant participation.

What I Would Do Differently

As a Southern Baptist pastor ministering in a church affiliated with Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), it would be meaningful and beneficial to introduce doctrines that SBC and its affiliated churches hold and cherish. I could have included a study of SBC's view of the church: "The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation" which is demonstrated in Article VI of Baptist Faith &

Message 2000.⁸ The view may have been an addition to the curriculum because it clearly mentions the unification of a diverse group of believers.

Another change that could have been valuable to the curriculum is additional Scripture verses. Galatians 3:28 presents a valid point that all believers from diverse ethnicities or social statuses are one in Christ, and Romans 15:7 appeals that Christians must accept and welcome each other as they are welcomed by Christ Jesus. I did not have to limit myself to the scriptural studies in chapter 2 of this project during the planning of the six-week curriculum. It may have been wise to be more flexible in quoting related verses from Scripture to support the material for each session.

To relay the curriculum to the entire church congregation during the timeline of the course, I could have developed a sermon series based on the weekly material. Although I still can plan and render these sermons, preaching the sermons concurrently during the project implementation period could have proven beneficial. If the course and related sermon series occurred simultaneously, (1) the participants' knowledge could have improved by the repetition of main teaching points, and (2) the content of the course could have reached more congregants, which may have made the project more effective.

Theological Reflection

Congregational unity is vital to a healthy local church. The unity of congregation is discussed through sermons, Bible studies, and small groups. However, this project presented the opportunity to re-ignite my desire to move forward toward a truer sense of congregants' unity. Church unity is among one of the major teachings in the Bible. George Ladd speaks about how Jesus emphasized the unity of the church in his parabolic disclosure of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18). Ladd focuses on what Jesus said, "So there will be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16) and suggests that Jesus formed a new

⁸ Southern Baptist Convention, "Baptist Faith & Message 2000," accessed September 10, 2021, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#vi-the-church>.

flock made up of the Jews and the Gentiles.⁹ Jesus introduced a radical doctrine that explained that his people are not limited by boundaries set race, ethnicities, cultures, or sex. Since there is One Shepherd, there is one flock, and all sheep are therefore unified. Despite the many factors that hinder the congregation of an ethnic church from uniting, congregants must bear kindness and humility to accept one another (Rom 15:7).

Mark Dever states that the church is a body of people “who profess and give evidence that they have been saved by God’s grace alone, for his glory alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.”¹⁰ If an individual is personally saved by God’s grace through faith in Christ, that individual belongs to the Christian community. It is natural that Christians bear a sense of solidarity with each other because they all belong to Christ alone.

This project opened an opportunity to better understand not only how Jesus viewed congregational unity, but also how apostles and the early disciples strived to break down the wall of division that plagued the Christian community. The apostle Peter did not object when he was called to visit a Gentile man’s house (Acts 10:28,29); James, the Lord’s brother, led a heated debate concerning how the church should not keep practicing exclusivism (Acts 15:19); and the apostle Paul harshly rebuked one of his best friends and a coworker to rebuff Jewish elitism (Gal 2:11).

Ethnic churches may practice ethnic and cultural exclusivism not by their own choice; this behavior could be involuntary and unconscious. Due to ethnic and cultural distinctions that immigrants in a foreign land inherently bear, ethnic churches seem to slow down their effort to open up to different cultures and begin to consider diversity. Ethnic churches may have to listen more carefully to God’s command for church unity.

⁹ George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 281.

¹⁰ Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 157.

Personal Reflection

When a couple of my pastor friends recommended that I pursue Doctor of Ministry degree, I was hesitant to do so because of my secular job and part-time ministry. I had fallen into the comfort of my busy routines from those jobs. However, in the back of my mind, I desired to learn more about God and Christian ministry from different perspectives. After long prayer and many consultations, I decided to apply to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and was accepted for the doctorate program. My focus in the program, “Applied Theology,” helped me tremendously to determine the theme of the ministry project. I wanted to study and teach others about the unity of church congregants: why our church needs to unite and how churches can be adaptable to unite an ethnic church.

This project significantly impacted my vision for ministry. Although the topic of church unity remained on my mind, I did not know how to achieve it. To me, church unity meant maintaining harmony among congregants while preserving the status quo. I did not realize that my definition of church unity lacked the key concept of diversity. Even during the planning stage of this ministry project, I failed to gain this insight. Fortunately, it did not take me much longer to acknowledge my short-sightedness. The books, articles, and other references I collected to prepare my ministry project changed that vision. To really achieve church unity, I had to appreciate the existing diversity of congregants. Then, I needed to accept that diversity to pursue multiculturalism. I realized that the truest form of unity stems from overcoming differences within the community.

My environment has changed over the past couple of years corresponding to the duration of this project, starting from the planning stage to now (September 2021). I stopped working a secular job that I was holding onto for the sake of my family and was offered a full-time position at my church. However, much to my regret, church attendance decreased by approximately 15 percent in English-speaking and Korean-speaking ministries altogether during the last few years. Multiple reasons contributed to the decrease in church membership: the COVID-19 pandemic, failure in church leadership during the

shift of pastors, and lack of a clear church vision. In the midst of arduous conditions, just as I was stepping forward to full-time ministry, this project aided in building my ministry vision and church values. I was able to focus on a vision of a church for all generations. A church for all generations means a church with a welcoming environment, conducive to different age groups with various cultural backgrounds: the first- and second-generation immigrants, a newer generation that does not limit itself based on boundaries created within its own ethnicity or race.

I wanted to share my vision of radical change with church leaders to open minds to culturally and ethnically diverse people groups. Congregational unification is not truly meaningful when it is achieved in homogeneous uniform congregation. My dream for ethnic churches is to step away from their narrow mindset or image of stereotypical ethnic churches, gatherings bound by their specific ethnicity, to pursue unification of culturally and ethnically diverse congregants.

I also developed some of our church values during the implementation of this project: (1) Acceptance: Christians are called to bear failings of the weak (Rom 15:1) and are obliged to welcome others just as Christ welcomed them; (2) Trust: Christians who trust one another will have a good reward (Eccl 4:9) and withstand trials (Eccl 4:12); and (3) Harmony: the Lord commands Christians to live in harmony and unite in the same mind (1 Cor 1:10). All three values stem from or are related to the subject of the project: congregational unity. The class was successfully executed according to the six-week curriculum during the most opportunistic time for discussions and debates about church vision and church values. The discussions held among church leaders during the class were such a precious, valuable, and fruitful experience that no other seminars or workshops could provide.

Conclusion

Many ethnic churches experience painful divisions caused by cultural and language barriers. It may be inevitable that many ethnic churches in the US gradually cease

to exist in the generations to come as older generations disappear by aging and the newer generations slowly converge to the mainstream. At this crucial moment, members of ethnic churches must not focus on merely how to outlive their inherent difficulties; instead, ethnic churches must seek to mend the disconnect and restore loving relationships among all generations that exist within the church.

It is Christians' obligation to pass down their faith to children so that their children could do the same to the next, yet unborn generations (Ps 78:6). God has entrusted ethnic churches with a task to raise their children in Christ. It is a challenging yet necessary task for older generations as they are still struggling to find their footing in a foreign country. However, ethnic churches must exert effort to fulfill this divine obligation for the next generation to become a healthier church.

APPENDIX 1

BASICS OF GOSPEL-ORIENTED ECCLESIOLOGY SURVEY

The following is the Basics of Gospel-Oriented Ecclesiology survey (BGOE), which was designed for pre-training survey and post-training survey. Part 1 was not used in the post-training survey.

BASICS OF GOSPEL-ORIENTED
ECCLESIOLOGY SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

Ichthus Mission Church is committed to glorify God through saving, growing, serving and evangelizing. We, as members of Ichthus Mission Church believe that the church's vision can be pursued by congregational unification. This survey is conducted for the purpose of collecting data and to be used for ministry purpose to move forward to congregational unification. Any information you provide will be held confidential. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are providing informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Date: _____

Name (or 4 digit code): _____

Gender _____ Age _____

Part 1

Directions: Please mark your answer.

1. Do you profess that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior?
(Yes No)
2. Do you believe that all Scripture is divinely inspired, therefore totally true and trustworthy?
(Yes No)
3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the church?
(Yes No)

Part 2

Several terms are defined for accurate survey purpose.

Confucianism: ethics and culture rooted from teachings of Confucius that unknowingly affects Asian families and communities

Culturalization: a process that immigrants and the next generations get exposed and influenced by American culture

Diversity in a congregation: a congregation where members have different cultural and language background, and possibly various ethnicity

Ethnic church: a church predominantly consists of one ethnic group who use foreign language.

Functional diversity: a context where certain ministries are unique and specific that other members will be difficult to join

First generation: First generation immigrants from foreign country

Homogeneity of a congregation: a context where most of the members have same cultural background, ethnicity and language preference

One-generation church: a church predominantly consists of similar age people

Open conflict resolution: resolving conflicts through open discussion

Second generation: next generation born from 1st generation parents

Directions: Respond to the statements with your opinion using the following scale:

SD = strongly disagree

D = disagree

DS = disagree somewhat

AS = agree somewhat

A = agree

SA = strongly agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 1. Unity of the church body is a central hallmark of biblical teachings about the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 2. All Three Persons of Triune God speak about oneness of the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 3. The Holy Spirit moves the church just as the spirit of a person moves the body. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 4. Believers who share one faith in redemption, salvation, and resurrection can better keep unity in the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 5. A common understanding of baptism is necessary as the church seeks unification. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 6. Cultural tensions within ethnic churches can be found in the first century churches in the Bible. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 7. Christ has ended the hostility between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 8. | Jesus urged Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians to form one new man instead of keeping their uniqueness. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. | Jewish churches in first century Jerusalem faced growing pains caused by language differences among believers. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. | Jewish churches in the first century Jerusalem involved the entire congregation to solve the language barrier. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. | Diversity in a congregation is an advantage in unifying a church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. | Homogeneity of a congregation is not necessary to unify a church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 13. | Various gifts that God has allotted to the congregation are considered equally important. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 14. | God's gift for me is unique and special, and works well for the harmony of my church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 15. | Functional diversity in my church is a resource to unite the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 16. | Age (generational) separation in Sunday school and worship cause generational tension. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 17. | Age separation in the church deprives the younger generation of opportunities to learn from older generations. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 18. | Learning the characteristics of the generations (Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennials) in the church is necessary to resolve generational conflicts. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 19. | When different ages are grouped together at church, a natural age hierarchy among them can nurture the group. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 20. | Church-in-a-church (isolating generations in the church), or forming a one generation church, is not a desirable model. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 21. | Churches in America have been culturally exclusive because of their racial homogeneity. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 22. | Ethnic churches have an excessive desire to keep their immigration heritage and mother language. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 23. | The first generation's reluctance to their children's out-group marriage is an obstacle to generational unification at church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 24. | Churches must be conscious of cultural difference within the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 25. | The second generation is urged to assimilate to the first generation's culture and tradition. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 26. | Young people have a better chance to build up multi-cultural community in the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 27. | We must not wait until the minority group(s) in the church to reach to certain point before making changes of worship style and leadership structure. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 28. | Any level of racism that exists in the church has to be acknowledged, addressed and dealt with. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 29. | Ethnic churches that function as cultural communities will hinder the young generation from experiencing the fullness of God. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 30. | When Asian Americans seek to adjust to or integrate with the American culture, different levels of culturalization of individuals or of families will be a hindrance to unite the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 31. | Confucianism melted into Asian families is an obstacle to unite generations in the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 32. | Eastern traditions, such as hierarchy, patriarchy and/or male-centeredness are obstacles to unite older and younger generations in the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 33. | Younger generations have more experience in teamwork and open conflict resolution than the older generation. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 34. | Ministries related to social justice, such as compassion for the unprivileged and disabled can help unify the church. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

APPENDIX 2
CURRICULUM EVALUATION

This curriculum evaluation was sent to a panel consisting of one retired pastor of IMC, one associate pastor of IMC, and two lead pastors of Korean churches near IMC who have similar congregational context. This panel evaluated the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum. Each week of the curriculum was reviewed on its own rubric page.

Name of evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Gospel-Oriented Ecclesiology Curriculum Evaluation for Week					
1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lesson is clearly relevant to tensions in ethnic churches.					
The material is faithful to the Scripture.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.					

APPENDIX 3

SESSION 1. UNITY OF THE CHURCH IS GOD'S CALLING

Goal: To explain the unity of the church is calling of Triune God.

Introduction: Unity of the church is mandated by Triune God. The most prominent Scripture is Ephesians 4:3-6. Sevenfold oneness in the Scripture raises the voice for the unity of the church.

Session 1 Outline:

- The Spirit and Church Unity (One body, One Spirit, and One hope, Eph 4:4)
 - One body notion:
 - Body illustration of a church with many members recalls 1 Cor 12:12-26.
 - The unity must be visibly maintained because “each congregation is a local manifestation of this heavenly entity [assembly].”¹
 - Just as a human body is animated by the spirit of the person, the church is animated by the One Holy Spirit.²
 - One body because of One Spirit:
 - Since there is One Holy Spirit, the church has to be one body.³
 - The operation of the Spirit in the church includes, but is not limited to, enabling the divided to approach the Father in unity (Eph 2:18), building the divided together into a dwelling place for God (Eph 2:22), manifesting varieties of gifts to everyone for the common good (1 Cor 12:7), and baptizing them into one body by its name (1 Cor 12:13).
 - One new man is created in place of the two men (Eph 2:14-15). Arnold states, “This Spirit now fills the church as the new covenant temple”—the one new man is necessary in place of multiple men of numerous spirits.⁴
 - Called to one hope:
 - The church as one body and one Spirit is now called to the one hope through God's sovereign calling.

¹ Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1999), 281.

² John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1986), 150.

³ O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 281.

⁴ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 233.

- The calling was given not to individuals but to corporate believers as the declension of the verb “called” (Eph 4:4) is second person plural.
 - Gentiles were without God and living with no “hope” (Eph 2:12) and were strangers of the covenants of the promise of Israel. They are now brought together by Jesus and made into one in “one hope.”
 - The hope inherently belongs to the future. Child-bearing seemed impossible for Abraham, but he had hope based on faith that God could make something into existence out of nothing. God gives hope to the church for a future event that is not presently seen (Rom 8:24).
 - The one hope that binds the believers into unity is an eschatological hope that all believers can foresee the future appearance of Christ in glory (Col 1:27) and the unity of all things in heaven and earth (Eph 1:10).
 - Therefore, the work of the Spirit is to seal the hope of believers for the completion of their future inheritance at the final days (Eph 1:13-14).
 - One body, by one Spirit with one hope:
 - The church, as one body motivated by one Spirit, is driven to pursue its unity in the present time foreseeing the futuristic one hope.
 - The Spirit is at the central place in the first triad—“one body,” “one Spirit” and “one hope.” One Spirit breathes life to one body—the church—just as God formed man and breathed the breath of life for the man to become a living being (Gen 2:7). One Spirit instills one hope to the body so that it could foretaste the cosmic unity which will come true when the time reaches to its fullness.
- The Son and Church Unity (One Lord, One faith, and One baptism, Eph 4:5)
 - The two distinctive entities of the community of church—one faith and one baptism, follow one Lord.
 - O’Brien says that this second triad may have been “a traditional baptismal affirmation.”⁵ It sounds persuasive considering the Lord as the object of one’s faith, and the person who confesses his faith will get baptized according to the faith in the Lord.
 - One Lord, Christ Jesus:
 - The Lord was used to identify Christ Jesus among early believers.
 - The phrase without conjunctions reads as bluntly as “If there is one Lord, then there must be one church.” He already mentioned that Christ is the head over the church (Eph 1:22). Therefore, one Lord possesses one body and must have full authority to orchestrate the body.
 - One faith in the Lord:
 - One faith can be the commonly professed doctrinal belief amongst Diaspora Christians, or inward faith borne and expressed trust in Christ. Either way, only one faith can be justified by the righteousness of God- faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22).
 - This one faith must include the core beliefs such as redemption of the saints through the blood of Christ (Eph 1:7), resurrection of the

⁵ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 282.

Christ (1:20), salvation through faith in Christ (2:8), and breaking the wall of hostility between the Jew and Gentiles by breaking of His own body (2:14). Believers who share one faith in the consummation of all things in Christ in the fullness of time (Eph 1:10) must struggle to keep the unity in the present time, and maintain the bondage of one church.

- One baptism according to one faith:
 - One baptism is an outward appearance of an inward faith in the Lord. One Lord is the reason of one faith, and one faith is publicly confessed through baptism.
 - One baptism is understood by the rite of water baptism.⁶ Lincoln writes, “This baptism is one, not because it has a single form or is administrated on only one occasion, but because it is the initiation into Christ, into the one body, which all have undergone and as such is a unifying factor.”⁷
 - Baptism is a unifying factor of church regardless of its members’ divergence of ethnicity, social class, or gender. Believers were baptized into one body whether they were Jews or Gentile, slaves or free (1 Cor 12:13).
- One faith expressed in one baptism in one Lord:
 - A baptized community has one unifying experience as they were baptized with Christ into death and raised from the dead by one baptism (Rom 6:4).
 - One baptism is an expression of one faith in one Lord; thus, the second triad raises the calling from the Triune God for the unity of the church.
- The Father and Church Unity (One God and Father of all, Eph 4:6)
 - Paul stated the Father’s universal fraternity to all family in heaven and on earth (3:14-15). God’s fatherhood is broadened to all of the universe here by affirming God’s transcendence and immanence.⁸
 - God is transcendent because He is the creator of all things and is above all and over all. God is immanent because all creation is continually dependent on Him for its existence and its functioning.
 - O’Brien asserts that such pervasiveness of God is the ground of the legitimate claim for the church unity: “God’s universal sovereignty and presence are set forth as the climatic ground for the unity of the Spirit that believers are to maintain.”⁹
 - Children of one father constitute a family not only in resemblance with each other but also through their unique characteristics and diverse inclination. Church members, likewise, have wide range of diversity despite some commonalities. Therefore, members of a church constitute one body that is indestructible as they share one paternity.
 - Church is the visible instrument to which God commanded to manifest the universal rule of one God. The church must exert full effort and strength to

⁶ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 235.

⁷ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Waco, TX: Word, 2005), 240.

⁸ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 284.

⁹ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 285.

express its belief in the one God. Lincoln aptly states, “When the Church fails to maintain and express unity, it radically undermines the credibility of its belief in the one God.”¹⁰

- Conclusion
 - Church unity is the strong impulse of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - The church must be united in one body, empowered by one Spirit, in one hope of eschatological unity.
 - The unity is compelled by one Lord because of the saints’ one faith in Him and through one baptism which baptizes all saints into Him.
 - Church must manifest to the world of their belief in one God and Father through accomplishing and maintaining the unity.
 - John Stott explains, “Christian unity arises from our having one Father, one Saviour, and one indwelling Spirit. So we cannot possibly foster a unity which pleases God either if we deny the doctrine of the Trinity or if we have not come personally to know God the Father through the reconciling work of his Son Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit.”¹¹

¹⁰ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 241.

¹¹ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 154.

APPENDIX 4

SESSION 2. CONGREGATIONAL UNITY TRANSCENDS CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Goal: To explain the unity of the church must be pursued in spite of cultural and language barriers amongst congregants.

Introduction: Unifying Jews and Gentiles was an urgent issue of the early church. Even among the Jews, language barriers existed. The purpose of this session is to learn the work of Jesus on this matter and the church's effort to overcome the issues.

Session 2 Outline:

- Jesus Removed the Hostility Between the Jews and the Gentiles (Eph 2:14-15)
 - Underlying issues between the two in Jesus' time.
 - It was regarded unlawful for a Jew to associate with Gentiles (Acts 10:28). Ex) Peter fled from the table, afraid of judgment (Gal 2:12). Jesus alluded to a wall of discrimination to the Gentiles in conversing with a Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:27).
 - Tension between Christians from the two groups. They constantly clashed, because of the circumcision matter. (Acts 15:1,5)
 - Through Peace
 - "For he himself is our peace" (Eph 2:14). The peace was Jesus himself because no other kind of peace would suffice to break down the wall of hostility. Bruce remarks the sufficiency of Jesus as the peace: "In this arena of strife and discord, only one Peacemaker can be found competent for the task of mediation."¹
 - Emphasis made in grammar by using personal nominative pronoun Αὐτὸς (he himself).² Stott writes, "It is he, Christ Jesus, who shed his blood on the cross and who offers himself to his people today to be united to them."³
 - Those who are in Christ cannot be divided competing because Christ himself is peace for those who identify themselves in Christ.⁴ If the church does not unite, then the church is rejecting Christ, what he did, and how he offered peace to the church.

¹ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 62.

² David Alan Black, *Learn to Read New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 67.

³ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1986), 98.

⁴ Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 164.

- By Removing the Fence
 - "...has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2:14). "Both one" is suggested to be understood as rather two spatial regions than two people group.
 - Thielman explains what "both" means: "...the reference to a wall ...calls on spatial imagery, the author may have already been thinking...of a Jewish 'region' and a Gentile 'region,' which the wall separates."⁵
 - The Jews and Gentiles were divided by a wall as if they were separated into two physical places.
- The Fence of Tradition
 - "The dividing wall" can be the physical wall that separated the Court of the Gentile from the rest of the Temple in Herod's Temple.⁶ Gentiles were not permitted to enter beyond the wall because beyond it was considered more holy.⁷
 - Religious and sociological barrier was as powerful and forcible as the engraved warning on the barrier to Gentiles not to proceed further on pain of death.⁸
 - The law was a fence; Observing the law was a way to keep the Jews from being influenced by the culture of the Gentiles.⁹
- Setting Aside the Enmity
 - "by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances," (Eph 2:15). The written code of conduct brought Jewish particularism and Gentile exclusion.¹⁰
 - Christ, by abolishing the enmity, made one new man in place of the two. "that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two,"(Eph 2:15). The one new man in Christ is a new race and is neither Jewish man who absorbed transformed Gentiles, or the Gentile man who absorbed converted Jews. The one new man is now free from enmity and has a new self who takes after the image of its creator, the Christ (Col 3:10).
- The Church Dealt with the Language Barrier (Acts 6:1-3)
 - The Jerusalem church had another issue even among the Jews in the church; Language barrier within the church came to the surface.
 - The Issue of Language Preferences

⁵ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 164.

⁶ R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 91.

⁷ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 165.

⁸ O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 195.

⁹ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 167.

¹⁰ Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 299.

- Two groups of Jews in the congregation. Schnabel states that Hellenists and Hebrews “describe a linguistic distinction, not ethnic difference.”¹¹
 - The Hellenists were Jewish Christians who had returned from Diaspora and spoke Greek as their primary language. The Hebrews were those who had been living in Jerusalem and were Aramaic-speaking Jews. The Hellenists spoke only Greek while the Hebrews spoke Aramaic as everyday spoken language.¹²
 - Meetings were probably conducted in Aramaic and Greek in the Christian community. Disciples were presumably not able to teach in both languages.¹³ A language barrier was present among the first century Jerusalem church.
- An Issue in Growing Pain
 - Ethnic diversity and different language preferences were inevitable issues as the church grew. Bock recognizes the problem of the Jerusalem church: “The scene... reflect how the early growth of an ethnically diverse church became difficult to manage.”¹⁴
 - Ethnic churches of present days have linguistic diversity within the church. The EM has little to no language capacity to communicate in Korean language, and the KM has limited capacity in using English in communication, especially in delicate matters.
 - The EM is also, inherently smaller in size than the KM in present day Korean churches, which was similar to the Jerusalem church. (Bock suggests that the Hellenists made up 10 to 20 percent of the population.¹⁵) Emergence of this group into the church created tension and challenged church unification.
- Effort to Solve the Issue
 - The apostles exercised active effort to resolve the issue between the two language groups. “And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said,” (Acts 6:2).
 - The apostles involved more people to delegate some of their responsibilities¹⁶ to resolve Hellenists’ complaints—the minority of the church.
 - The apostles wanted the whole church to participate because they knew the problem involved the entire congregation, even though the

¹¹ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 329.

¹² David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 231.

¹³ Schnabel, *Acts*, 329.

¹⁴ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 255.

¹⁵ Bock, *Acts*, 258.

¹⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 259.

grievance was from the minority.¹⁷ Proposed an immediate remedy as well as a preventative measure by suggesting a newly organized structure. Peterson observes that the church seemed “to adjust its procedures, alter its organizational structure, and develop new posts of responsibility” to remedy the issue.¹⁸

¹⁷ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 180.

¹⁸ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 233.

APPENDIX 5

SESSION 3. CONGREGATIONAL UNITY TRANSCENDS FUNCTIONAL DIFFERENCES OF MEMBERS

Goal: To learn that the diverse functions of members is a gift from God and is the very reason to unite together.

Introduction: As a human body has many members, every community has members with different functions. So is the church (Rom 12:4-6). Diverse functions is a gift from God to the church; it is the reason to honor others, and is a resource to unite the church.

Session 3 Outline:

- Functional Diversity Is God’s Gift to the Church
 - Each organ in human body has its uniqueness not only in its shape or place of a body but also in its unique function. Like Paul says, all cannot be eyes but some must be ears and noses for hearing or smelling (1 Cor 12).
 - Cranfield explains, “Like the various members of a single body, although they differ from one another and have various functions, are all necessary to each other and equally under an obligation to serve one another, because they all belong together in a single whole.”¹
 - The analogy of limbs, eyes, and ears of the church is now applied to real functions according to the gifts of individual members in Romans 12:6-8. The functions are for example, prophecy, service, teaching, encouraging, and giving.
 - Gifts of God. These gifts are given to the church according to the grace of God in His higher purpose. Cranfield asserts, “The wide variety of the gifts is grounded in the one grace shown to all... and it is according to this royal freedom of His grace that He bestows different gifts on different persons.”²
 - To strengthen the church by forming a perfect unified body. Schreiner asserts that functional diversity is the gracious gift of God “who has supplied his church with means to strengthen the community.”³
 - Cannot be disgraced. This gift of God cannot be taken for granted nor denied because it is God’s gift.⁴

¹ Charles E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: Clark, 1998), 2:618.

² Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:619.

³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 6, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 655.

⁴ D. Stuart Briscoe, *Romans*, The Communicator’s Commentary, vol. 6 (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 218.

- Unified body because of diversity. Dunn remarks, “The point is that the body is one not despite its diversity, but is one body only by its diversity; without that diversity the body would be monstrosity.”⁵ Unity of body is, by definition, characterized by diversity.⁶ Diverse functions, yet depending on other members or parts, make the whole body functions perfectly.
 - Likewise, when many members come together as one body in Christ and demonstrate multiple ministries in harmony through united efforts, the church performs as expected, as a corporate body of Christ.⁷
- Functional Diversity Is the Reason to Honor Members
 - Members of diverse functionality must discern mutuality and dependency as they exercise their own gifts by bearing humility and honoring the gifts of others.
 - Romans 12:3 says, “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”
 - “everyone among you” implies that (1) every member was exercising a certain degree of contribution to the church according to each one’s given gift and (2) there was possible tension⁸ in the church on the subject of members’ gifts.
 - “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” is a warning of an “understanding which goes beyond proper bounds, so proud and haughty.”⁹
 - “to think with sober judgment” is a new way of measuring himself and others with a newly given measurement according to what God has allotted to each one. When we can estimate ourselves with sober judgment, we can recognize others with a renewed view by which believers conceive all gifts are essential to the whole body and are equally regarded by God.
 - “measure of faith” is a standard by which one must think that “he is the same level as his fellow-Christians” and not superior or even inferior to them.¹⁰
 - When believers can truly estimate themselves according to the standard of God, they may be humbled and appreciated for the undeserving gifts entrusted to them. Each member is directed to see the diversity of his calling and gift as a mean to work out the one body in harmony. Each member is called for particular work according to diverse functions not as being more important or less than other functions but as being unique and special functions.

⁵ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38B (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 725.

⁶ Schreiner, *Romans*, 654.

⁷ Briscoe, *Romans*, 219.

⁸ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 720.

⁹ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 721.

¹⁰ Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:615.

- Functional Diversity Is the Resource to Unite the Church
 - Romans 12:6-8 lists various gifts, such as prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, contributing, leading, and showing mercy. These seven gifts are not an exhaustive list because 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30, and Ephesians 4:11 also catalogs gifts.¹¹ There are many unlisted diverse functions through which God blesses the church according to His grace.
 - In addition to the prominent gifts just listed, the church must not exclude the spontaneous response of members to the needs of ministries of the church.¹² First Corinthians 14:26 says, “What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.” Dunn relates this verse to showcase some improvisational functions, such as Spirit-prompted charisms that come together for edification of the church.
 - Romans 12:6 is considered to have imperatival force.¹³ As ESV renders properly “let us use them,” the heaviness of the sentence is given to the church in uniting the congregation.
 - IMC as an ethnic church that has been blessed with functional diversity as having KM and EM. Different language preferences and cultural understanding give the church more resources of diverse functions. Functional diversity can be a benefit to approach ethnically open-minded people in the neighborhood, as well as immigrants from Korea. Functional diversity is the resource bestowed to the church and must be used to unite the church.

¹¹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 655.

¹² Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 725.

¹³ Dunn, *Romans*, 725.

APPENDIX 6

SESSION 4. OVERCOMING GENERATIONAL TENSION THROUGH INTER-GENERATIONAL EFFORT

Goal: Generational tension exists in a faith family just as it does in a biological family. Intentional efforts must be made to overcome generational tension.

Introduction: God calls all generations to worship Him (Joel 2:15-16). And God promises to pour His Spirit to all ages in the assembly (Joel 2:28). However, when multiple generations gather together, disconnections may follow as well as familial affection within the family. Christian community in the first century was like a faith family—a family bound not by blood but by faith (Timothy 5:1).

Session 4 Outline:

- Segregation Trend in the Church
 - Age segregation trend in the church became the norm in the late twentieth century. Churches separated the generations for learning, fellowship and for worship. Separating into age group simply seemed practical; it made all the activities in the church easier and smoother.
 - Throughout much of Christian history, all the generations—met together for worship and other gatherings; intergenerationality was the norm.¹
 - Relevant with the segregation of age in modern society. Age-graded public education sounded more efficient to church Sunday school; nuclear families feel more comfortable without the older generation.
 - Another form of age segregation: one generation church (*homogeneous church*) where all members are similar in age. Such movement peaked in the 1970s and 1980s and made “some success through the 1990s and early 2000s.”²
 - The homogeneous church is also a byproduct of individualism. They easily avoid conflicts between generations over worship styles, gathering time, etc. Allen and Ross believe that homogeneous churches is “toward individualism and dependence on psychological, therapeutic, or secular educational models rather than theological models.”³
- Conflicts Between Generations Incurred Segregation Trend
 - In this study, we take the generally accepted sociological categorization of generations: Silent Generation (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964),

¹ Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 17.

² Elisabeth A. Nesbit Sbanotto and Craig L. Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry: Biblical and Practical Insights for Transforming Church Communities* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 10.

³ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 36.

- Generation X (1965-1981), Millennials (1982-2001), and Generation Z (after 2002).⁴
- Conflicts between generations in the church often incur from ageism and individualism.⁵ Allen and Ross observe that younger people in the church, in general, consider older people as “sickly and frail or simply, boring,”⁶ and sometimes older people have negative views of younger people as well.
 - Individualism is another cause of generational conflicts. Different generations want separate worship times to find their own taste of worship, music style, pace, and length of worship.
 - Danger of Segregation Trend
 - Some churches choose to do so to lessen intergenerational conflict. Only results in further isolation of generations. Menconi calls this trend the church-within-a church approach and says that it is counterproductive and further divide an already fragmented society.⁷
 - The trend deprives younger generations of the opportunity to learn from tradition. Churches must recognize that younger generations may easily believe that anything new is right, while anything old or traditional is wrong.⁸ Younger generations will not have good models, or even deficient models where they can learn mistakes of the past.
 - The trend aggravates emotional barriers between generations. The most destructive consequence can be apathy. Apathy will elevate ageism, prejudice, and discrimination against each generation.
 - Understanding Characters of Generations
 - When churches fail to understand the characters of different generations, they run the risk of serving one niche generation and may not be able to attract other generations.⁹
 - Baby Boomers (*Boomers* hereafter) are like the oldest child in a family; carry the burden and responsibility of the welfare of their families. Such position has molded Boomers into “driven, accomplished, and trustworthy” people.¹⁰ They are now dealing with empty nest, career changes, loss of dreams, and mid-life crisis.
 - Generation X (*Xers* hereafter) are like a middle child in a family; overshadowed by the older and younger siblings; suffer from being lost in society and in the church, good at finding their own place without competing with other generations.¹¹ In the home, they are often juggling

⁴ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 15.

⁵ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 140.

⁶ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 140.

⁷ Peter Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church: Understanding Congregations from WWII to www.Com* (Littleton, CO: Mt. Sage, 2010), 150.

⁸ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 166.

⁹ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 18.

¹⁰ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 7.

¹¹ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 80.

- with young children and learning to manage married life.
- Millennials can be compared with the youngest child. Sbanotto and Blomberg describe them as “manipulative, charming, blames others, attention seeker, tenacious, people person, natural salesperson, precocious, engaging, affectionate, loves surprises.”¹² They are trying to figure their dreams, find spouses, and find answers to faith questions.
- Understanding Generational Conflicts
 - Tensions elevates when the two generations are back to back. Xers can be less tolerable to and from the Baby Boomers and Millennials since they are contiguous. However, Baby Boomers can be tolerant of Millennials and vice versa, because they are not contiguous.
 - Xers see that Boomers are dependent on them. Xers see that the Millennials are optimistic and full of potential. But also look them with disappointment, describing them as entitled, selfish, sheltered, indifferent to religion, and unable to think for themselves.”¹³
 - Boomers who have experienced the after-war struggle may say that Xers are still too young to take the church leadership. Xers believe that Millennials must wait for their turn to help shape the future of the church.¹⁴ Churches must acknowledge such underlying tensions so that they may not risk losing younger generation(s).
 - Each generation has preferences in styles of worship, loudness of sounds, way to interact in worship, lightings in the worship room, way to see the quality of worship service, etc.¹⁵
- Inter-Dependent Generations
 - All generations have something to offer the church.¹⁶
 - Allen and Ross emphasize. “If ten fourteen-year-olds are grouped together, they will form a “Lord of the Flies” culture with its competitiveness and meanness. But if ten people ages 2 to 80 are grouped together, they will fall into a natural age hierarchy that nurtures and teaches them all. For our own mental and societal health, we need to reconnect the age groups.”¹⁷
 - Generations must ask themselves whether they must pursue style or substance.¹⁸ They must seek substance of the church, which is to glorify God in all their doings, instead of satisfying their styles.
 - Leadership for inter-dependent generations. Although the younger generation might not be ready for leadership, current leaders must be

¹² Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 168.

¹³ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 85.

¹⁴ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 4.

¹⁵ Gary McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 202-4.

¹⁶ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 166.

¹⁷ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 37.

¹⁸ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 167.

willing to share leadership with younger generations.¹⁹ Sbanotto and Blomberg exhort that older generations must cease to bemoan Millennials' shortcomings and "find ways to invest in and bless this generation as they come into their own as adults."²⁰

- McIntosh's examination of the sociological roles of the four generations:
 - The younger generation is preparing to contribute to society as adults; they are studying, learning and experiencing life.
 - The adult generation is promoting their view of the world and life. Although they are not in control of much, they are beginning to make headway in influencing life with their perspectives.
 - The mature generation is prevailing in the sense that it is their worldview that predominates in society, business, and life.
 - The senior generation, as far as their influence is concerned, is now informing the younger generation from their past experience and wisdom.²¹
- Intentional Effort
 - Corporate worship of all ages, as well as other intentional activities of multi generations, are necessary to combine the whole body of believers. Allen and Ross suggest, "All churches regardless of size are more faithful to the scriptural theme of unity and are more likely to foster faith maturity when they intentionally integrate various generations for 50 to 80 percent of congregational activities."²²
 - Young members may be frustrated with the inflexibility of older generations while older members may wonder why infants and young children are necessary in corporate worship.²³ However, each generation must embrace the idea of the church as one spiritual body and cannot detach seemingly unimportant limbs from the body.
 - Suggestions of corporate activities: short-term mission trips, ministering to homebound seniors, ministering to single-parent families through home repairs or yard work, connecting experienced parents to first-time parents, and youth plan on parents' night out.²⁴
- Final Thoughts
 - Some churches choose to separate generations to avoid intergenerational conflict; some choose a homogenous-generation church model; and others pursue generational unity through intergenerational effort.
 - However, churches must not abandon the idea that a local church is a community of faith, a faith family. The local church is a place where the Lord must be proclaimed to the next generation as the Psalmist said, "So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come" (Ps 71:18)

¹⁹ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 166.

²⁰ Sbanotto and Blomberg, *Effective Generational Ministry*, 199.

²¹ McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations*, 201.

²² Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 42.

²³ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 114.

²⁴ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 207.

APPENDIX 7

SESSION 5. INTER-CULTURAL EFFORT TO PREPARE FOR RISING MULTI-CULTURAL TREND

Goal: To find reasons that the churches in the U.S. are not multi-cultural enough, and study possible solutions to shape them to prepare for multi-cultural trend.

Introduction: The United States has always been characterized by ethnic and cultural diversity. It is natural for citizens to have multicultural churches where their faith life can be more consistent with their social life. Also, multi-cultural churches are a glimpse of a heavenly congregation as shown in Revelation 7:9: “A great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne.”

Session 5 Outline:

- Cultural Segregation Trend
 - Culturally segregated religious gatherings. An apothegm, often attributed to Martin Luther King: “Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week.”¹ A racially homogeneous congregation naturally makes a cultural homogeneous congregation.
 - People need homogeneity. Emerson explains, “Most Americans, when they leave the public sphere of work and school, go home to neighborhoods that are filled mostly with people that are racially like themselves.”²
 - Many Americans feel comfortable attending and worshipping with people of the same race as them.
 - Churches do not seem to labor to break through racial and cultural homogeneity.
 - Bod Reccord, former leader of the NAMB, impressively contends, “Here’s the bottom line, if we’re going to spend eternity together, we better learn how to cooperate and learn how to enjoy each other right here.”³
- Tensions in Culturally Segregated Ethnic Churches
 - Immigrants’ heritage vs. cultural diversity
 - Immigrants have a desire to keep heritage and mother language. Thus, ethnic churches are prone to stay culturally homogeneous.
 - Tensions arise when culturally open-minded congregants, including American-born people, clash with the people who want to keep their heritage in the church.

¹ Michael O. Emerson, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 5.

² Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 105.

³ Bod Reccord, quoted in Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 88.

- Garces-Foley remarks that some people choose to reveal or hide their ethnic culture depending on their settings and context.⁴ People of color may choose to act more white in an ethnic church while others incline to judge such behavior.
 - Different views over interracial marriage.
 - Garces-Foley points out, “Resistance to mixed marriage is the strongest among immigrants.”⁵
 - Immigrant parents who repudiate interracial marriage will not be ready to accept multi-racial and multi-cultural families in the church.
 - Interracial marriage have been increasing for all Asian Americans.
 - Garces-Foley questions: “With this trend came the increase in multiethnic or hapa children. . . . After all, where would these ethnically diverse families go if all churches were defined around a single ethnic group?”⁶
- Mistakes of Inter-Cultural Effort in Ethnic Churches
 - Fear of the church turning into too American.
 - Want their EM to grow but to stay within the church’s tradition. Efforts to become an inter-cultural church, in turn, are insufficient.
 - Reluctant to change church polity. Old church polity make it difficult for the Americanized generation to emerge to the church leadership.
 - As a result of insufficient effort, EM in Korean churches die out or separate from the church.
 - Churches grieve at the loss of EM, then become angry, guilty, place blame, and finally decide to remain as Korean-speaking congregation.
 - Cultural blindness:
 - We may not say, “We are one. We don’t see differences between us.” Culture-blind Korean churches make EM follow the dominant culture of the church.
 - Culture-conscious approach is needed. Garces-Foley believes that when unity is overstressed without culture-consciousness, then the church will only become homogeneous through assimilation with increasing bitterness of the minority group.⁷
- Directionality of Inter-Cultural Effort in Ethnic Churches
 - Acknowledge the multi-cultural wave of modern society.
 - Feel the cultural climate and catch up with the racially diverse social networks of church members.⁸ Recent demography shows the trend.
 - Multiracial mission-minded people (ex. the apostle Paul, Gal 2:11-14).⁹
 - Xenophobic without conscious guilt. Racism of any level hinders the union of American-born generations with first generation immigrants.

⁴ Kathleen Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multiethnic Church on a Mission* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 62.

⁵ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 113.

⁶ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 31.

⁷ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 82.

⁸ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 31.

⁹ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 153.

- Aims for integration or assimilation? Create a common culture or maintain cultural uniquenesses?
- Methodology 1: New Race
 - The effort must begin with the dominant group and “institutional and individual.”¹⁰ Must not wait until the minority reaches critical mass.
 - Find “boundary crossers” who commit to reconciliation and social connections between cultures¹¹ who do not feel comfortable with homogeneous settings but look for ways to share the values of diversity.
 - Emerson’s term “Sixth Americans” who do not belong to the five major ethnic groups in the U.S.¹² whose social ties are more racially diverse. They can play a key role in building multi-racial communities. Ethnic churches need such people group who can bridge people in the church.
 - Young people can be the “Boundary Crossers,” or the “Sixth Americans,” who experienced diversity as the norm, and feel awkward in a homogeneous church. Garces-Foley believes that the success of cultural and racial reconciliation greatly depends on young people who “will continue to push the boundaries of the current church structures.”¹³
- Methodology 2: Worship and Leadership
 - The two tangible elements of inter-cultural effort through which the church can express the commitment to reach all people.¹⁴
 - Corporate worship includes all kinds of elements
 - Greeting at the door, Scripture reading, ushering, music, and preaching.
 - Music is intrinsically bound to culture. One culture group must not focus on their own style of music so much; otherwise, another group may feel like giving up more than other cultures so that the corporate worship in a multi-cultural church loses its harmony.¹⁵
 - Style of preaching varies by culture. Churches can carefully design a rotation system that reflects a variety of color and culture. George Yancey believes that “the discomfort allows that person to rejoice that someone else is getting to hear what he/she wants to hear that Sunday.”¹⁶
 - Represent leaders from diverse cultural groups
 - People tend to feel welcome when they see leaders from their group. Churches must appoint leaders from diverse cultural groups.

¹⁰ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 120.

¹¹ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 128.

¹² Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 99.

¹³ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 78.

¹⁴ Woo, *The Color of Church*, 101.

¹⁵ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 7.

¹⁶ George A. Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 75.

- Avoid tokenism. Garces-Foley defines *tokenism* as “the policy and the practice of making a perfunctory gesture towards the inclusion of members of minority group.”¹⁷
 - Ask the marginalized groups to nominate their leaders instead of letting the dominant culture group select leaders for them.¹⁸
- Methodology 3: Practicality
 - Bearing “cultural humility.” Angie Hong defines it, “the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person.”¹⁹
 - Careful of the unseen cultural differences. They can be facial affect, way of speaking, shaking hands, etc. Garces-Foley says that those in the majority group can easily assume their practices are normative.²⁰
 - What is appropriate to one culture may be regarded as unpleasant or even awkward in another culture. (ex. calling someone by first name)
 - Create internal forums and groups where issues can be learned and discussed.²¹
 - Members may be at different levels of commitment to inter-cultural connections. Be flexible and patient to understand them.
- Final Thoughts
 - Can ethnic churches be God’s inter-cultural bridge that brings people of multicultural roots come together?
 - Ethnic churches are in a stronger position than White churches or African American churches because of their inherent foreign culture background. Ethnic churches can step forward to stop perpetuating cultural homogeneity.
 - Churches must give up their sense of superiority in their culture and stop discounting other cultures. All cultures must be respected in the church so that all cultures can be reachable.
 - Cultural differences must not be a hindrance to joining a church; all cultures must be encouraged, welcome, and nurtured in the church.

¹⁷ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 118.

¹⁸ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 119.

¹⁹ Angie Hong, quoted in Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 129.

²⁰ Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, 84.

²¹ Emerson, *People of the Dream*, 168.

APPENDIX 8

SESSION 6. OVERCOME TYPICAL BARRIERS THAT ETHNIC CHURCHES FACE

Goal: To find some unique and inherent issues that ethnic churches face to move forward to the unity of the church. Specific challenges and suggestions to alleviate tensions shall be discussed in this session.

Introduction: Ethnic churches experience a phenomenon, called “Silent Exodus.” Nearly 90 percent of second-generation Korean American and more than 70 percent of Chinese American young adults leave their immigrant churches after college.¹ Scholars say that younger generations do not find enough incentive to stay in a church dominated by the first-generation immigrants.² Bigger problem is that they simply fade from their Christian faith, which is a tragic failure of ethnic churches. Let us begin with the challenges.

Session 6 Outline:

- Church as a Cultural Community
 - Immigrant churches often function as cultural communities. Immigrants relieved feeling of separation from mainstream culture through the homeland culture in the church.
 - Danny Kwon writes, “Church can become a place... to be with... peers and faith can become secondary to culture. For youth, they often see the hypocrisy... and can... become confused or alienated about their faith.”³
 - American-born generations often do not like first-generation’s “ethnic particularism.” Karen Chai asserts, “The second-generation congregation chooses the identity of their church not based on Korean culture and language, but evangelical Christianity.”⁴
 - Cha, Kang and Lee ask, “can Asian-American churches be not too Asian, not too Caucasian, not too much of any racial, but orthodox, evangelical, and Bible-believing community?”⁵

¹ Peter S. Cha, Paul Kim, and Dihan Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” in *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, ed. Peter S. Cha, Steve Kang, and Helen Lee (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 148.

² Cha, Kim, and Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 148.

³ Danny Kwon, “Spiritual Formation in the Lives of Korean-American Youth,” *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 3, no. 2 (April 2005): 83.

⁴ Karen Chai, “9 Competing for the Second Generation: English-Language Ministry at a Korean Protestant Church,” in *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration*, ed. R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 309.

⁵ Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 10.

- Lack of Distinct Identity
 - Asian Americans face the feeling of “the other” in the land they call home.⁶ Antony Alumkal comments that “third-generation Irish Americans earn acceptance as ‘white,’ while fourth-generation Chinese and Japanese Americans continue to be treated as foreigners” due to their appearance.⁷
 - Different modes of Asian Americans’ adjustment to American culture. Stephen Kim mentions the modes of “assimilation, traditionalism, isolationism, and bicultural integration.”⁸
 - Some assimilate to the American culture.
 - Some keep their homeland tradition.
 - Some do not ally with either culture, isolating themselves.
 - While others seek to integrate two cultures.
 - Congregants in the first generation, and even the second generation, can have different modes.
 - Different voices to the homeland culture and the mainstream culture can cause continuous conflict and may lead to the division of the congregation.
- Influence of Eastern Culture
 - Confucian-based perspectives unconsciously play roles in Asian culture and the influences extend to Asian immigrants in foreign lands.
 - The three sociological concepts of Confucian roots affecting Asians:⁹
 - 關係 *quanxi*—personal relationship or particularistic ties
 - 面子 *mianzi*—face or saving face
 - 人情 *renqing*—human obligation
 - Shame culture: Fused deeply in Asian culture.
 - Shame culture extends to Asian Americans,¹⁰ urging to live according to expectations so that they can save face for the family.
 - Younger generations do not agree with the shame culture. Pressure burns them out and adds reasons to dislike parents’ culture.
 - It contradicts the message of God’s grace.¹¹ God’s grace mandates forgiveness while shame culture encourages perfectionism.
 - False humility¹²: Appears to be humility on the outside, but a mere deflection of self-pride.

⁶ S. Steve Kang, “Measuring the Health of Our Households,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 207.

⁷ Antony William Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches: Race, Ethnicity, and Assimilation in the Second Generation* (New York: LFB Scholarly, 2003), 15.

⁸ Stephen S. Kim, “Seeking Home in North America: Colonialism in Asia; Confrontation in North America,” in *People on the Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture and Community*, ed. David Ng (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996), 10.

⁹ Virstan B. Y. Choy, “Decision Making and Conflict in the Congregation,” in Ng, *People on the Way*, 250-51.

¹⁰ Helen Lee, “Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 1: Challenges and Models,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 65.

¹¹ Nancy Sugikawa and Steve Wong, “Grace-Filled Households,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 23.

¹² Lee, “Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 1,” 61.

- False humility makes people resist “stepping forward or speaking out on critical issues.”¹³
 - False humility is a praised value in Eastern culture because it avoids potential conflict or embarrassment, but not accepted as valuable to younger generations.
- Hierarchical Relationship
 - Lee defines Confucianism as “hierarchy and patriarchy in the simplest term.”¹⁴ It defines human relationship with authority and obedience.
 - Parent-child relationship:
 - Strong emphasis on filial piety easily pressures the parent-child relationship to be authoritative and submissive.
 - Such Eastern culture embedded in homes and churches “alienates many second-generation young people” from their parents.¹⁵
 - Between men and women:
 - Peter Cha and Grace May agree that the discrimination of genders is “one of the cardinal Confucian principles.”¹⁶
 - Every gift must be encouraged to be exercised in the church regardless of gender.
 - More women than men join the Silent-Exodus. It is believed to be the result of unhealthy gender relationship.¹⁷
- Inability to Resolve Conflicts
 - In Asian culture, conflict is regarded as “evidence that someone has done something wrong in the context of a relationship.”¹⁸ Conflict is regarded as an indication of an unhealthy church.
 - Asian Americans tend to avoid conflict by refusing to voice their opinions. It inhibits the opportunity to resolve conflict through open discussion.
 - Younger generations learned and practiced healthy conflict resolution. They are skillful team players and willingly work in cooperation.
 - Cynicism is observed among the young due to the church’s “unwillingness to deal with real problems.”¹⁹
- Lack of Social Justice Agenda
 - Truthful understanding of biblical teachings will lead to deeds of love toward society and expand their passion for social justice.
 - Younger generations are more oriented to social justice and may be more attracted to compassion ministries and the fair treatment of unprivileged

¹³ Sam S. Kim and M. Sydney Park, “Now-Generation Ministry,” in *Honoring the Generations: Learning with Asian North American Congregation*, ed. M. Sydney Park, Soong-Chan Rah, and Al Tizon (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012), 62.

¹⁴ Lee, “Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 1,” 61.

¹⁵ Cha, Kim, and Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 147.

¹⁶ Peter Cha and Grace May, “Gender Relations in Healthy Households,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 166.

¹⁷ Cha and May, “Gender Relations in Healthy Households,” 172.

¹⁸ Helen Lee, “Healthy Leaders, Healthy Households 2: Practices and Values,” in Cha, Kang, and Lee, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, 89.

¹⁹ Tsang and Rah, “The Disillusioned Generation,” 49.

- people and minor groups in society.
- Asian churches also need to pray more for the larger world. Alumkal shares, from his experience with Korean American churches, that they seldomly pray “for the needs of the larger world (except their need to hear the gospel) as is common in many mainline Protestant traditions.”²⁰
 - Values of First-Generation Immigrants
 - Some values of first-generation seem to run counter to Christianity.
 - Expectations for the children’s academic success:
 - Kim and Park: “Spiritual values and priorities are sidelined” by exalted expectations for their children’s academic performance.²¹
 - Alumkal reports that worldly success is a major Korean value that runs counter to Christianity.²²
 - The view of youth ministers:
 - Youth pastors are regarded as deputies. Youth ministries are perceived as a stepping-stone ministry to pastors and leaders.²³
 - It can downplay the importance of the youth pastors, and the ministries. Youths may be considered “second-class citizens.”
 - Walking in Harmony
 - The life cycle of ethnic churches in North America by Mark Mullins:²⁴
 - First: monolingual immigrants’ domination
 - Second: becomes bilingual by introducing English services
 - Third: native-born population leaks to mainstream, the older generation begins to disappear by aging.
 - “Going out of business or developing new goals?”²⁵ The new goal can be a simple restoration of relationship between generations.
 - The first generation can step up and bless their children instead of waiting for the second generation to earn trust.²⁶ It is a divine duty and honor for them to pass their heritage of faith to the younger generation.
 - Younger generations need to embrace the hurts of the older generation who have lived as immigrants. They can forgive the mistakes and ill treatment of their parent generation and move forward to unite.
 - Consider the term “now generation” in place of “next generation” to designate the younger generation.²⁷ “Next generation” may give wrong impression that the younger generation do not require the full attention of the church until they become adults.

²⁰ Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches*, 51.

²¹ Kim and Park, “Now-Generation Ministry,” 65.

²² Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches*, 113.

²³ Kim and Park, “Now-Generation Ministry,” 63.

²⁴ Mark Mullins, “The Life-Cycle of Ethnic Churches in Sociological Perspective,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14 (December 1987): 324.

²⁵ Mullins, “The Life-Cycle of Ethnic Churches,” 327.

²⁶ Mitchell Kim and David Lee, “Intergenerational Ministry: Why Bother?,” in Park, Rah, and Tizon, *Honoring the Generations*, 24.

²⁷ Kim and Park, “Now-Generation Ministry,” 60.

APPENDIX 9

PRE- AND POST-TEST DATA

Table A1. Pre- and post-survey data

	<i>PRE-TEST TOTAL</i>	<i>POST-TEST TOTAL</i>
Mean	154.1818182	167.6363636
Variance	371.3636364	344.0545455
Observations	11	11
Pearson Correlation	0.837527153	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	10	
t Stat	-4.131242591	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00102007	
t Critical one-tail	1.812461123	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00204014	
t Critical two-tail	2.228138852	

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING GOSPEL-ORIENTED ECCLESIOLOGY TO MEMBERS OF ICHTHUS MISSION CHURCH IN ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022
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This project sought to increase congregational unity among Korean-speaking and English-speaking members of Ichthus Mission Church in Rockville, Maryland through teaching gospel-oriented ecclesiology. Chapter 1 presents the history and ministry context of Ichthus Mission Church and the goals of this project. Chapter 2 provides exegesis of four passages of Scripture (Eph 2:16-18, 4:4-6; Acts 6:1-6; Rom 12:4-5) to show that congregational unity is a central hallmark of the New Testament vision for the church. Chapter 3 presents theological, practical, and historical issues related with the unique dynamics of ethnic churches. Chapter 4 describes the project itself, recounting the content and teaching methodology of the specific course curriculum. Chapter 5 evaluates the efficacy of the project based on completion of the specified goals.

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