

Copyright © 2022 Joshua Daniel McClain

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation, or instruction.

DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY OF WORSHIP THAT SUPPORTS
INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP AT COLLIERVILLE FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH, COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE

A Project
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Joshua Daniel McClain
December 2022

APPROVAL SHEET

DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY OF WORSHIP THAT SUPPORTS
INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP AT COLLIERVILLE FIRST
BAPTIST CHURCH, COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE

Joshua Daniel McClain

Read and Approved by:

Faculty Supervisor: Matthew D. Westerholm

Second Reader: R. Scott Connell

Defense Date: October 10th, 2022

To my wife, Hannah, and our children, Ethan and Elliana.
Outside of the Lord's grace, you are the very best part of my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Context	1
Rationale	4
Purpose	6
Goals	6
Research Methodology	6
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations	8
Conclusion	8
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP	10
Introduction to Intergenerational Worship	10
Definition and Importance	12
Worship and Community	17
Scriptural Support for Intergenerational Worship	19
Historical and Modern Practices	26
Practical Application	30
Conclusion	33
3. THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL ISSUES RELATED TO INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP	34
Issues That Form When Intergenerational Worship Is Not Practiced	34
Foundational Elements of Intergenerational Worship	38

Chapter	Page
Implementing and Leading Intergenerational Worship	44
Planning and Leading Intergenerational Worship	49
Conclusion	52
4. DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT	53
Assessment of Worship at Collierville First Baptist	53
Teaching Series Podcast	55
Developing the Philosophy of Worship	60
Ministry Plan to Adopt the Philosophy of Worship	63
5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT	66
Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose	67
Evaluation of the Project’s Goals	67
Strengths of the Project	72
Weaknesses of the Project	73
What I Would Do Differently	74
Theological Reflections	75
Personal Reflections	76
Conclusion	79
 Appendix	
1. ASSESSMENT OF WORSHIP	80
2. TEACHING SERIES ON INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP EVALUATION	83
3. PHILOSOPHY OF WORSHIP EVALUATION TOOL	85
4. MINISTRY PLAN TO ADOPT THE PHILOSOPHY OF WORSHIP EVALUATION TOOL	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

PREFACE

The opportunity to embark on this academic journey has been a blessing of the highest order. It has had many highs, and many lows. The world has seen much change since the global pandemic that began in March 2020, just months after I started this journey. Through it all, the Lord has shown himself faithful time and time again. He deserves all the honor and glory for this research project.

I want to express my most sincere gratitude to my wife, Hannah, for all that she sacrificed and did to support me and this project. Countless are the days and nights spent researching and writing, and Hannah handled it all with grace and elegance. Without her partnership in life and ministry, I would not have been able to complete this journey. Our wonderful children have been understanding through it all. For you three I am most thankful.

The idea and passion of this research project was birthed in the classrooms and hallways of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary during my time on campus as a student in the master's program. Dr. Greg Brewton and Dr. Joe Crider guided and encouraged me early on in my theological pursuits. I am forever grateful for these men and how they developed me as a student of theology and worship.

The first time I witnessed a written philosophy of worship in action was at Calvary Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, where I had the privilege of serving on staff under Tim Hathaway. The church utilized a written philosophy of worship developed by Tim and his faithful study of Scripture and worship. I am thankful for my time serving under him, and the theological and practical growth that I gained.

I have also been privileged to have Dr. Matthew Westerholm as my faculty supervisor for this project. His willingness to guide me on this ministry project and

dissertation has been a tremendous blessing. His scholarship is extraordinary, and I have been sharpened by his intellect and mentoring.

To my church, Collierville First Baptist, I express my thanks and gratitude. Your kindness to my family and I since joining the staff has been so encouraging, and you allowing me to pursue this educational journey shows your support and partnership in ministry. I love you all and thank the Lord for you.

In all things, may the Lord receive the honor and glory for the great things he has done. I pray that I can live out my life verse, Acts 20:24: “But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (ESV)

Joshua D. McClain

Collierville, Tennessee

December 2022

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Collierville First Baptist Church “exists to glorify God by totally committing ourselves to Jesus Christ and to the explosive growth of His kingdom!” The mission of the church is derived from the seven core values of the church: authentic worship, gospel driven, Bible based, prayer dependent, disciple making, caring community, and family focused. Each of these core values flows from Scripture and the leadership desires to see the members of Collierville First Baptist Church grow in their faith.

Context

Collierville, Tennessee is the second oldest town in Shelby County and was founded in 1836. Collierville First Baptist Church (CFBC) enjoys a rich history of impacting the region with the gospel of Christ for the last 149 years. Founded in 1857, CFBC has experienced hardship as well as tremendous blessing. The original church location was burned in 1863 during the Civil War and the battle of Collierville.¹ Church members that remained in Collierville after the war met at another church in the area until CFBC was reorganized in 1873.²

The music ministry was one of the earliest established ministries at CFBC with the continued purpose of leading the congregation in worship. The choir was established in 1899, and since then has faithfully led the church in worship and impacted the

¹ Historical Marker Database, “First Baptist Church,” June 16, 2016, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=76816>.

² Bernice Taylor Cargill, *A History of the First Baptist Church Collierville, Tennessee 1857-1993* (Memphis, TN: Castle, 1994), 5.

community in various ways.³ With annual concerts and special events, CFBC has faithfully shared the love of Christ with Collierville and West Tennessee. One of the largest events previously presented by the music ministry was the Festival of Lights Christmas production. This annual event drew thousands in attendance for over ten years.

CFBC is a multi-generational church that offers discipleship and ministry involvement for all ages. Every Sunday Connect Groups serves as a catalyst for fellowship and relational growth, as well as continued Bible teaching and discipleship. Children are taught the Word in age-appropriate settings and activities. Children first grade and above attend the worship service with all other ages. Students are involved in corporate worship as well as disciplined in life groups classes. Wednesday activities are robust and include programs and classes for everyone. Children are involved in midweek programs, students are involved in worship and teaching, and adults have the opportunity to attend midweek worship or discipleship classes. CFBC intentionally offers many opportunities for families to grow in their faith through fellowship and teaching.

The church has appreciated and desired a comprehensive worship ministry that pursues excellence in its methodology, as well as gospel-centeredness at its core. CFBC is a multi-generational church that has opportunity for people of most ages to be involved in serving the Lord through music. CFBC is known in the Collierville community and the region to have a strong worship ministry that utilizes instrumentalists and vocalists. The church remains committed to intentionally growing these ministries and regularly welcomes new members to the choir and orchestra as other churches reduce their opportunities of service through music and worship.

The adult worship ministry rehearses and leads in worship Sundays. In addition to the weekly responsibilities of leading worship, the adult ministry also prepares for special seasons like Easter and Christmas. These services draw many from the community for special times of worship and celebration. CFBC utilizes a blended musical style that

³ Cargill, *A History of the First Baptist Church*, 19.

allows for a wide spectrum of hymns and songs to be used. The worship ministry is comprised of an adult choir, orchestra, and frontline vocal team that leads in worship every Sunday. Other opportunities for adult worship ministry include vocal teams and ensembles, as well as instrumental ensembles. These unique groups meet at various times to prepare music for special occasions, as well as support Sunday morning worship.

Along with the adult choir and orchestra, CFBC also offers worship opportunities for children. One of the goals of the worship ministry is to teach the younger generations about worship, and the methodology of the ministry reflects that. Every Wednesday children are taught worship and music through the graded choir program. This time consists of music and activities, as well as worship discipleship. This is a separate ministry outside of the children's ministry, allowing children to be part of an intentional music training time, as well as the general midweek children's ministry activities.

It is an exciting time as CFBC is poised for continued growth in the worship ministry. By the Lord's grace and favor, people continue to learn of the opportunities for service in the worship ministry and the number of ministry volunteers steadily increases. The church has been blessed with many resources, as well as the vision to continue to support the development of a comprehensive worship ministry. Though CFBC is richly blessed, there is room for growth that the church needs to engage in, especially in the worship ministry.

This project focuses on a few areas of growth regarding the worship ministry at CFBC. Though the church desires every age to worship, there is no regular opportunity for intergenerational worship to take place in the greater context of the church. This likely stems from a deficient understanding of the benefit of intergenerational worship and how it supports a healthy culture of worship. On occasion, the children and students join with the adults for corporate worship, but this is usually for special seasons or events. Involvement in the worship service does not happen often, but when it happens the

blessing to the congregation is obvious. The pastoral staff often hears from church members how they are blessed when the children and students are involved in corporate worship. Many people appreciate and enjoy the worship services that involve multiple generations and have an intergenerational worship focus.

Another weakness in the ministry context is the lack of a philosophy of worship for the church. CFBC does not operate under a clear, written worship philosophy that guides and informs the people on what takes place each week in corporate worship. Though many understand what is taking place, it is likely that many do not. Having a philosophy of worship helps guide the corporate worship time, as well as give insight to the reason things are or perhaps are not done. CFBC is guided by a few statements of faith and other documents. One of the main governing documents is the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*. Through this document, the theology of the church is defined and in place, which guides ministry. Not only does CFBC utilize the *Baptist Faith & Message 2000*, but it adheres to a church constitution as well. Just as these documents guide the ministry of the church, having a clearly stated and defined philosophy of worship is necessary. With this statement, the elements of worship are made clear to the church and help maintain biblical worship. Along with the needed philosophy of worship is the need for intergenerational worship language to be used. Having a written worship philosophy that includes an intergenerational worship section would help lay the foundation for its need and benefit.

Rationale

Every church would benefit from a philosophy of worship that clearly states and guides the method of its worship. Having such a document would aid in clearly defining the corporate worship of the church and how its worship will take place. Though some may not see how having such a document could be helpful, the philosophy of worship can be

as important as a statement of faith.⁴ Every church has a liturgy (a form of worship), and clearly defining that form is beneficial. For CFBC to achieve its desire for intergenerational worship, having a clearly defined philosophy of worship that the church leadership affirms will help ensure that intergenerational worship is taking place. The guiding markers of the philosophy of worship will greatly aid in supporting intergenerational worship.

Scripture is clear in its mandate to teach the generations about the Lord. Psalm 145:4 says, “One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.”⁵ Also, in Psalm 78:4 it is written, “Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.” The call to teach children the faith is evident in the Scriptures. It is the responsibility of every parent to train their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Deut 6). This charge extends to the church, to bring up and teach the coming generations the gospel. One of the main ways this is done is through corporate worship. In this gathered time of proclamation, the church admonishes one another with Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col 3:16), which teaches and reminds the people of the goodness of the Lord.

During these times of worship, hearts and minds are molded into a gospel shape, and children are taught of the grace of the Lord. Theology is taught in praise and worship, so it is imperative that the coming generations learn of the Lord through songs.⁶ How can the church accomplish this corporate task if intergenerational worship does not take place? How can children be taught the truths of Scripture if they do not do so with other generations, so that they may learn from those who have walked with the Lord for many years? Yes, the Christian home is the main institution set for that instruction, but

⁴ For a discussion of the role that worship has in discipling a church, see Matt Merker, *Corporate Worship: How the Church Gathers as God’s People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 61-76.

⁵ All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

⁶ See the discussion in Keith Getty, *Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2017), 53-69.

second only to that is the corporate gathering of worship in the local church. Because of this, the church should provide opportunity for every generation to worship together. This will likely look different from church to church, but in the current society many churches are not providing these opportunities for intergenerational worship. An unfortunate consequence is that many people are worshipping without younger people around them, and even more devastating is that there are young people who have never worshipped with the corporate body of believers. A church that recognizes this and intentionally creates opportunity for intergenerational worship will be blessed.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship at Collierville First Baptist Church in Collierville, Tennessee.

Goals

The following four goals support the completion of this ministry project. Each goal pertains to the worship ministry at Collierville First Baptist Church and the development of a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship.

1. The first goal was to assess CFBC's understanding of biblical worship (specifically intergenerational worship).
2. The second goal was to develop a teaching series to be distributed by podcast.
3. The third goal was to develop a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship at CFBC.
4. The fourth goal was to develop a ministry plan for CFBC to adopt the philosophy of worship.

To support the completion of the goals, significant research methodology was utilized in an effort to clearly outline the purpose of the project. The details of how these goals would be completed and achieved is discussed in the following section.

Research Methodology

The first goal was to assess CFBC's understanding of biblical worship (specifically intergenerational worship). This goal was measured by administering a fifteen-question assessment to at least fifty church members that regularly participate in corporate worship.⁷ The questions covered three categories: theology of worship, philosophy of worship, and specific context worship culture. This goal was considered successfully met when fifty participants completed the assessment and the data had been analyzed, yielding a clearer picture of the church's understanding of biblical worship.

The second goal was to develop a teaching series to be distributed by podcast. This goal was measured by select pastoral staff of Collierville First Baptist Church who used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, clarity, and relevance of the teaching series.⁸ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, then the material was revised until it met the standard.

The third goal was to develop a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship at CFBC. This goal was measured by a select pastoral staff who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the philosophy of worship.⁹ 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, then the material was revised until it met the standard.

The fourth goal was to develop a ministry plan for CFBC to adopt the philosophy of worship. This goal was measured by the pastors and deacons who utilized

⁷ See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

⁸ See appendix 2.

⁹ See appendix 3.

a rubric to evaluate the theological foundation, biblical support, and church context.¹⁰ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, then the material was revised until it met the standard.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms are used in the ministry project:

Intergenerational worship. Howard Vanderwell writes, “Intergenerational worship is worship in which people of every age are understood to be equally important.”¹¹

Philosophy of worship. This project utilizes the definition of philosophy as “a theory underlying or regarding a sphere of activity or thought,”¹² as pertaining to worship. Other philosophies of worship were utilized in early research. Two primary philosophies of worship that impacted this project were from Bethlehem Church and Calvary Church.¹³ These two documents served as guiding examples of biblical philosophies of worship.

Several delimitations applied to this ministry project. All participants of the project were members of CFBC that were actively involved in church life and ministry. Baptism and profession of faith are required for all members of CFBC, which ensured that those who participated are believers. Participants were selected from multiple age ranges, which provided varied data that related to the topic of the project.

¹⁰ See appendix 4.

¹¹ Howard Vanderwell, *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008), 11.

¹² Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, “Philosophy,” accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/philosophy>.

¹³ Bethlehem Baptist Church, “Philosophy of Worship,” accessed August 23, 2022, <https://bethlehem.church/philosophy-of-worship>; Calvary Church, “Philosophy of Worship,” accessed August 23, 2022, <https://calvarychurch.com/evite.aspx?storyid=719>.

Conclusion

The importance of intergenerational worship is clear in Scripture. From the Old Testament to the New Testament the importance of teaching and training the generations in the faith is evident, and one of the primary ways this is done is through corporate worship. In the following chapters, clear support is shown for the need for corporate worship to be intergenerational. Chapters 2 and 3 of this project provide biblical and practical support to the topic.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR
INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

Introduction to Intergenerational Worship

In the phrase that provides the title for his book, A. W. Tozer states that “worship is the missing jewel of the evangelical church.”¹ Man was made to worship God and to enjoy Him forever.² That is the ultimate purpose for which mankind was created. All of life is meant to be a context of which God’s grace and redemptive purpose are played out. The Lord glorifies Himself through mankind and its worship of Him.

In the current age of the evangelical church, an important part of the jewel is missing; a jewel that should be rediscovered for the glory of God. That jewel is intergenerational worship. A survey of church worship would show something missing from worship in the twenty-first century church: generations have been segregated in corporate worship. Children and students have been ushered out of the sanctuary to “age-appropriate” separate places of worship so that they can learn about the faith from teachers in their classes. While that is taking place, adults participate uninterrupted in the sanctuary as they worship and are disciplined.³

There are four main learning styles in which children learn: visual, auditory,

¹ A. W. Tozer, *Worship: The Missing Jewel* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1992), 8.

² Peter C. Bower, ed., *The Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Geneva, 2003), 2.

³ See Timothy Paul Jones, *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, (B&H, 2009)

read/write, and kinesthetic.⁴ These modes of learning are inherent to the child as a natural way of learning. With that knowledge, parents can help instruct their children in the mode that they learn best. Though it is not considered a primary learning style, another main way that children learn is by example (which would be considered a visual mode of learning). Children mimic and emulate their parents as they grow and discover. Parents, then, lead their children by example. Proper diet, behavior, and life skills are just a few things that are taught by example.⁵ These principles can and should be applied to times of corporate worship. This chapter argues that parents who desire for their children to both learn about gathered worship as well as develop a desire for it need to incorporate their children and students into the congregational gathering of worship.

At this point it would be good to consider when learning by example changed in corporate worship. In the last one hundred years society has seen many changes take place. Various contributing factors have altered the way life happens, including education. Holly Allen and Christine Ross write, “Examples of this pervasive age segregation include the ubiquity of 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 and nursing homes for older persons, and preschools for the young.”⁶ One should also consider the different movements that have taken place in the evangelical church, particularly the growth of revivalism.

Early in his ministry the famous evangelist, Billy Graham, was preaching primarily to teenagers. He was the first full-time preacher for the *Youth for Christ*

⁴ The VARK learning styles were developed by Neil Fleming in 1987. See VARK, “The VARK Modalities,” accessed August 23, 2022, <https://vark-learn.com/introduction-to-vark/the-vark-modalities/>.

⁵ Peggy L. Parks and Vincent L. Smeriglio, “Relationships among Parenting Knowledge, Quality of Stimulation in the Home and Infant Development,” *Family Relations* 35, no. 3 (July 1986): 411-16.

⁶ Holly Allen and Christine Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community, and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 30.

ministry.⁷ The *Youth for Christ* ministry was one of the first student dedicated ministries that began in the 1940s. Individualized ministries like this began to hyper-focus on the desires of particular age ranges. This focus began to impact Sunday morning corporate worship. The students had their own Sunday morning gathering, so why shouldn't the children? Church leaders redesigned ministries to give individual attention to each age group so that their particular needs could be met. Having individual ministry is not bad in and of itself, but because of these decisions, the church was scattered, even within the building.

Definition and Importance

Definition

To understand the goal of intergenerational worship one must first know what it is and understand the context in which it has arisen. In the last ten years there has been a resurgence of interest in intergenerational worship. Howard Vanderwell writes on the growth of interest in intergenerational worship:

I have seen, concurrent with all those collisions, a growth process of nearly 10 years in which this idea of intergenerational worship kept germinating in the minds of congregations. *Reformed Worship*, a quarterly journal with a 20-year history now, increasingly published editorials and articles that raised questions and explored the subject of intergenerational worship. In June 2005 an entire issue was devoted to this theme.⁸

Known sometimes as blended worship, church leaders design these services to blur the distinction between traditional and contemporary musical preferences by attempting to offer musical styles that will engage everyone in attendance.⁹ For various reasons, many pastors and churches made the decision years ago to offer these different

⁷ Thomas Bergler, *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 50.

⁸ Howard Vanderwell, *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), xviii.

⁹ Constance Cherry, "Blended Worship: What It Is, What It Isn't," *Reformed Worship* 55 (March 2000): 27-29.

style services. Some were looking to please the personal preferences of multiple generations, whereas others sought to attract new people.¹⁰ These attempts were meant to solve the issue of disunity that churches were having during the rise of contemporary Christian music.

Many churchgoers did not resonate with the new music being brought into churches through the influence of Christian radio. Mostly starting in youth groups, these new songs became the *heartsong* of younger generations that then desired to have the same style of music in worship services.¹¹ Pastors started to realize this and began to think about a way to incorporate this new style of music. The immediate adjustment allowed these new contemporary style songs into the main corporate worship services. It was not long before these pastors realized there were problems. One of the problems was the instrumentation needed to support this new style. Drums and guitars joined, or even replaced pianos and organs causing a major rift between generations.

In a way, emphasis was given to the younger generations with the mindset that they were the future of the church. In doing so, older generations felt cast aside and disrespected. This led to more distance and animosity between generations which needed to be resolved. To bring this resolution forth, many church leaders decided to offer two different services, one offering contemporary music and the other traditional music, so that the preferences of each generation would be met. Unfortunately, this change has led churches down paths with larger problems that are now arising. Generations are split apart and are missing the blessing that comes from worshiping together. Older generations are missing the blessing of leaving a legacy with the younger generations, and younger are missing the knowledge and wisdom that comes from the older. It is a problem that can and should be solved. One way to address this issue is intergenerational worship.

¹⁰ Lester Ruth and Swee Hong Lim, *A History of Contemporary Praise & Worship: Understanding the Ideas That Reshaped the Protestant Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 173.

¹¹ *Heartsong* is a term to describe the musical style that one prefers more than others.

To further the understanding intergenerational worship, it would be good to first look at what it is not. Having people of different generations present together does not necessarily constitute intergenerational worship. Simply having children and students singing fails to achieve intergenerational worship. The distinction between multigenerational and intergenerational is important to make. The multigenerational church can have people of all ages that gather together on Sunday but then segregate out into age specific ministry. Corporate worship void of students and children would not meet this criterion. An intergenerational church sees the importance of having generations gather and grow together. Vanderwell defines intergenerational worship:

Intergenerational worship is worship in which people of every age are understood to be equally important. Each generation has the same significance before the face of God and in the worshiping congregation. Each and all are made in the image of God. Each and all have worth. It is only a half-truth to make statements like “Our children and youth are the church of the future.”, or “Our seniors are the church of the past.” Each and all of them are the church of now.¹²

The importance of every generation receiving equal emphasis is crucial to creating intergenerational worship. This does not mean that certain ages are never highlighted in worship, but rather that the church should avoid prioritizing one generation over another, which in turns leaves others behind. The apostle Paul teaches this attitude of deference in Philippians 2:3: “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” Intergenerational worship models this attitude of deference and humility after Christ’s humility and servanthood. The act of laying down one’s personal preferences is not easy, but the goal of unity is the blessing received by it. Rory Noland explains,

Corporate worship is an ideal opportunity to practice heroic deference. After encouraging us to minister to each other in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, Paul adds that we should do so “submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ”

¹² Vanderwell, *The Church of All Ages*, 11. Though Vanderwell’s ecclesiology baptizes infants in ways that baptist convictions do not allow, there is enough overlap in common concern here.

(Eph. 5:21). Setting aside your personal preferences in music for the greater good of the church is an act of submission and a sign of Christian character.¹³

Intergenerational worship requires deference to one another as an act of Christ-like love for one another.

A second aspect of intergenerational worship should be considered. The church must be careful to exhibit a façade of intergenerational worship that simply involves children and students during special events or services. A healthy practice of intergenerational worship involves every generation together. Allen and Ross write,

Embracing intergenerational worship is more complex than simply including the children and successfully negotiating the worship wars. Being intergenerational in outlook means that all generations, from toddlers to seniors, will feel welcome and included when the body of Christ gathers together; they will be intentionally received; they will belong.¹⁴

Engaging the generations in worship requires an understanding of how to achieve intergenerational worship. The definitions provided guide to a better knowledge of what intergenerational worship is and what it is not.

Importance

To understand the importance of intergenerational worship, a church ought to consider whether such a model is biblical. Why should a church consider implementing an intergenerational worship model? Is this model biblical? Very much so. The model of intergenerational worship exists throughout the Old and New Testaments. The life of the believers was meant to be an act of worship. From morning to evening, training the next generation was a priority (Deut 6:4-9).

Scripture is clear in its mandate to teach the generations about the Lord. Psalm 145:4 says, “One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.” Also, in Psalm 78:4 it is written, “Let this be recorded for a generation to

¹³ Rory Noland, *Worship on Earth as It Is in Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 182-83.

¹⁴ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 197-98.

come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.” The call to teach children the faith is evident in the Scriptures. It is the responsibility of every parent to train their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Deut 6). Don Whitney comments, “The only way Abraham could have commanded his children to keep the way of the Lord was to teach the things of God at home.”¹⁵

This charge to bring up and teach the coming generations the gospel extends from the family to the church. One of the main ways this is done is through corporate worship. Of course, worship is not merely singing, but also uplifts one’s heart and mind in expression of worship. In this gathered time of proclamation, the church admonishes one another with Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col 3:16), which teaches and reminds of the goodness of the Lord. During these times of worship, hearts and minds are molded into a gospel shape, and children are taught of the grace of the Lord. Bryan Chapell comments, “The order of worship (another way of describing the liturgy) conveys an understanding of the gospel. Whether one intends it or not, our worship patterns always communicate something.”¹⁶ Theology is taught in praise and worship, so it is imperative that the coming generations learn of the Lord through the songs that are sung.

To accomplish this task, churches should consider intergenerational worship. Children should be taught the truths of Scripture corporately, so that they may learn from those who have walked with the Lord for many years. The Christian home is the main institution for instruction for children, but second only to that is the corporate gathering of worship in the local church. Because of this, many churches ought to provide an opportunity for every generation to worship together. This will likely look different from church to church, but current churches often do not provide these opportunities for

¹⁵ Donald S. Whitney, *Family Worship* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 17.

¹⁶ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 18.

intergenerational worship. An unfortunate consequence of this is the older generation that is worshipping without younger people around them, and even more devastating is the young people who have never worshiped with the corporate body of believers. A church that recognizes this and intentionally creates opportunity for intergenerational worship will be blessed.

Worship and Community

Created to Worship

Intergenerational worship occurs throughout the Bible. From the earliest recorded times through that which is to come expressed in the book of Revelation, generations worship the Lord together.¹⁷ The Old Testament and New Testament provide a clear look at how the nation of Israel viewed worship as being intergenerational. The people of Israel recognized that they were created for worship and that God has placed the knowledge of His general revelation on the hearts of every man and woman (Romans 1). Understanding that humans were made for worship is a good starting point of support for intergenerational worship because it gives foundation for the reason the church should teach the next generation. If the desire to worship is written in their hearts, then the church should cultivate and guide that desire. Harold Best suggests,

We begin with one fundamental fact about worship: at this very moment, and for as long as this world endures, everybody inhabiting it is bowing down and serving something or someone—an artifact, a person, an institution, an idea, a spirit, or God through Christ. Everyone is being shaped thereby and is growing up toward some measure of fullness, whether of righteousness or of evil. No one is exempt and no one can wish to be. We are, every one of us, unceasing worshipers and will remain so forever, for eternity is an infinite extrapolation of one of two conditions: a surrender to the sinfulness of sin unto infinite loss or the commitment of personal righteousness unto infinite gain.¹⁸

The longing and desire to worship drives to constant pursuit of something.

¹⁷ Evidence of this is seen from Mt. Sinai as the nation of Israel gathered together to worship, to the New Testament church as Paul addresses all ages of the congregation in his letters.

¹⁸ Harold Best, *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 17-18.

Often times it is an earthly pursuit that falls infinitely short of the satisfaction that the Lord grants when rest is found in Him. Intergenerational worship seeks to teach children that they, too, have been created to worship the Lord. Without the proper guidance and instruction, that yearning will develop for something that has also been created (fame, fortune, etc.), rather than for the Creator.

Created for Community

All of life is meant to be in community with one another. In the garden, the Lord saw that it was good for man (Adam) to not be alone and to have a helper (Eve). Community life is practical for things like safety and cultural advancement, as well as comradery and relationships. The communal aspect of life forms us in societies and cultures. Evidence of community resounds throughout the landscape of humanity. Likewise, worship should be in community as faith formation takes place. Writing on the formation of character and community in intergenerational worship, Vanderwell states,

Each age learns from another. The young learn from the old, who have become seasoned by experiences of life. And the old learn from the young in their new exploration of life. Everywhere in this process, the assumption is that the generations are cooperating with each other. And since the formation of faith and character is an essential concern of the Christian church, we should aim to keep the generations engaged with each other, both in ministry activities and incorporate worship.¹⁹

The importance of community is seen not only in social constructs but in psychological constructs as well. Without community, people are lonely and often times struggle with mental instability. Raheel Mushtaq et al. write,

Loneliness can lead to various psychiatric disorders like depression, alcohol abuse, child abuse, sleep problems, personality disorders and Alzheimer's disease. It also leads to various physical disorders like diabetes, autoimmune disorders like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and cardiovascular diseases like coronary heart disease, hypertension (HTN), obesity, physiological aging, cancer, poor hearing and poor health. Left untended, loneliness can have serious consequences for mental and physical health of people.²⁰

¹⁹ Vanderwell, *The Church of All Ages*, 24.

²⁰ Raheel Mushtaq et al., "Relationship between Loneliness, Psychiatric Disorders and Physical Health? A Review on the Psychological Aspects of Loneliness," *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research* 8, no. 9 (September 2014), <https://doi.org/10.7860/JCDR/2014/10077.4828>.

Mankind was created to be in fellowship with God and with one another. The Christian life is no different.

Scriptural Support for Intergenerational Worship

Old Testament

Deuteronomy 4:9-10 and 6:4-7 provide a foundation of intergenerational worship and instructing children in the faith. Ancient Israel was a very communal society and life was learned together with all generations contributing to the formation of children. From a young age, children were taught about life, but more importantly about the Lord. Allen and Ross write, “Scripture presumes that faith formation occurs within intergenerational, familial and community settings. This assumption is reflected in sociocultural and social learning theories . . . and it provides insight to those who seek to evangelize, catechize, disciple and form persons into Christlikeness.”²¹ Scripture tells of the entire nation of Israel being instructed in Deuteronomy 4:9-10:

Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children—how on the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.

In this community setting, Moses instructed the people of Israel on how to respond to God with obedience as an act of worship. Twice in this passage it is emphasized to train and teach the children so that they will know and then teach their children. Just as all Israel gathered at Mt. Sinai to worship the Lord, in this passage all of Israel is gathered together (Deut 1:1) to be instructed by Moses.²² This way of community life was not foreign to the people of Israel and it supported intergenerational worship. Darwin Glassford details community life in Israel:

²¹ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 77.

²² Israel is gathered in Moab, preparing to enter the Promised Land.

Israel's worship in the Old Testament was intergenerational. Children camped with their parents during the Feast of Tents (Lev. 23:33-43); children inquisitively questioned their parents about the significance of Passover ("Why is this night different from all other nights?" Ex. 12:1-28; Deut. 16:1-8); children as a part of the worshiping community experienced the sights, sounds and smells of the sacrificial rituals (Lev. 16; Deut. 15, 19).²³

The formation of the Christian faith in the life of the Israelites was taking place in every area of life. Scripture commands parents to teach their children diligently, having the Word of God on their mouths day and night. All of Israel participated in all of community life. There were no isolated people in daily life. A formational aspect of these festivals and rituals was the bestowing of wisdom from the older to the younger. Allen and Ross write, "In these settings, God clearly expected the older generation to be available to the younger to answer questions and to offer explanations."²⁴ Deuteronomy 6:4-7 is an example of intergenerational instruction of the faith:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Deuteronomy 6 is another setting where the people of Israel are gathered together and instructed to teach their children the Word of the Lord. This passage details the instruction that should take place in everyday life, which would certainly carry over into corporate worship. As Allen and Ross write,

Though these verses have often been assumed to be speaking exclusively to parents, these words convey the communal sense that faith in God is to be modeled and taught in the home as well as among the faith community, across generations. Parents, grandparents and all extended family (that is, *all of Israel* since they were all descendants of Jacob and therefore related) are to participate in the telling of God's faithfulness to those coming along behind them.²⁵

The people of Israel viewed community life as family life. The generations were with

²³ Darwin Glassford, "Fostering an Intergenerational Culture," in *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together*, ed. Howard Vanderwell (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 71.

²⁴ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 80.

²⁵ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 81.

each other daily, growing and learning from one another. The priority of passing on the faith was not taken lightly. From morning to evening children were taught the Scriptures so that they, too, would embrace the faith. Commentator Peter C. Craigie writes, “The commandments were to be the subject of conversation both inside and outside the home, from the beginning of the day to the end of the day. In summary, the commandments were to permeate every sphere of the life of man.”²⁶ The meditation of Scripture was to be as natural as eating and drinking. The people of Israel were to keep God’s Word in front of their eyes and on their mouths constantly. Doing so would ensure that children would see and hear their parents and grandparents proclaiming the works of the Lord.

Psalm 78:4 and 145:4 prescribe the expectation to train the generations in the context of corporate, intergenerational worship. The Psalms are known to be the book of collected songs for the nation of Israel. John Witvliet contributes, “Ample evidence for this claim is the Bible’s songbook, the 150 Psalms, each of which expresses at least one essential communicational habit for a people in a covenant relationship with God.”²⁷

These Psalms are meant to offer praise to the Lord. They vary in content and are broad in their emotion. Psalm 78:1-4 says,

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth!
I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that
we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from
their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and
his might, and the wonders that he has done.

What is the particular context of Psalm 78:1-4? The superscription text tells that it is a *maskil*, or a wisdom Psalm. From the first verse it is evident that the letter is addressed to all of the people. The people were gathered to receive the Word and have wisdom imparted to them. In verses 3-4 is the particular call to tell the coming generations of the faithfulness of the Lord. Allen and Ross write,

²⁶ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 93.

²⁷ John D. Witvliet, *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship: A Brief Introduction and Guide to Resources* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 11.

In order for those of the next generation to be able to place their trust in God, this psalmist says that they must hear repeatedly about this God in whom they are to trust. Whole generations are to pass to the next generations the truths of Yahweh, so that they will not forget what he has done for those he loves. In order for this progression to be possible, the generations must be together, not just occasionally or sporadically, but often—for important events, for rejoicing, for critical moments, for prayer, for solemn occasions, for feasts and celebrations, and for reading the Word, as well as for ordinary happenings.²⁸

The responsibility of teaching the next generation rested on the generations that had gone before. Without this intentional instruction, the younger generations would not learn of all that the Lord had done for their ancestors.

Music is an impactful way to teach and educate. It is an art form that can convey things like emotion and thought. From a young age, children learn simple melodies to help them memorize basic things. Adults can often recall songs they learned as a child because of how it affects them. Researchers study the impact of music to discover how it develops and trains minds. Paul Clark opines,

The Psalms demonstrate something of the power of song to pass truth, tradition, and experience on to the next generation. Psalm phrases and expressions continue to show up through pages of the New Testament, repeating and even replenishing the faith expressions of worshipers who have gone before. What is more, the Psalms set a pattern for the worship that casts an eschatological vision.²⁹

The Psalms describe generations of believers learning about their faith through intergenerational education, intergenerational celebration, and intergenerational worship. Israel did not segregate by age when they gathered for corporate worship. They continued just as they had every other day, teaching and training their children in the faith.

Psalm 145:4 restates the call to teach the next generation of the works of the Lord. The Psalmist, David, writes, “One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.” Listed as a song of praise, David exhorts the people of Israel to teach their children what the Lord has done. Literally he means to laud and boast about the Lord. Teaching the next generation takes place in the corporate worship

²⁸ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 82.

²⁹ Paul B. Clark Jr., *Tune My Heart to Sing Thy Grace* (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2010), 23.

setting. Ross Parsley comments,

David, the writer of Psalm 145, understood that it is imperative for one generation to pass on the stories of God’s miraculous works so that the next generation won’t forget how they have arrived on the scene. David knew that people who have witnessed the faithfulness of God must share these stories with future generations so they won’t lose their way, become discouraged, or doubt that God is with them. One generation should not have to learn the same lessons already learned by the generations before them, but should stand firm on the shoulders of those who know the goodness of God.³⁰

Those who have gone before carry the responsibility to train those younger than them in the faith. This responsibility should not be a burden though, since it comes with great blessing. Every Christian should pray that their children and the coming generations trust and obey the Lord and His Word. Allen P. Ross documents, “The knowledge of the LORD is preserved largely through instruction, but the living faith through continued proclamation. Each generation will testify to God’s mighty works, his glorious majesty, and the might of his awe-inspiring deeds.”³¹ Ross emphasizes the importance of not just teaching the commands of Scripture but living them out as well. The preservation and passing down of the faith require believers to do both. In doing so, the coming generations will learn of the great and mighty deeds of the Lord.

New Testament

Ephesians 6:1-3 and Colossians 3:16 are two passages of Scripture that support intergenerational worship in the corporate gathering. Just as the nation of Israel gathered at Mt. Sinai before the Lord, all ages gather together to worship Him in the New Testament. One of the ways to know this is by looking at to whom the apostle Paul was writing to in his letters to the early churches. In Ephesians, for example, Paul was writing to the church in Ephesus to counter the false teaching that had taken place. There after addressing the men and women of the church (wives, submit to your husbands; husbands,

³⁰ Ross Parsley, *Messy Church: A Multigenerational Mission for God’s Family* (Colorado Springs: David D. Cook, 2012), 82.

³¹ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. 3 *Psalms 90-150*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016), 914.

love your wives) Paul writes, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land” (Eph 6:1-3), Paul is addressing the children that are present in the assembly. Knowing that as the church gathers it does so with every generation, Paul addresses the children in attendance that would be listening to what was read. Frank Thielman states,

Paul urges children to obey their parents and gives three reasons why they should do this. First, it is conduct expected of those who have been incorporated into the Lord through their faith in the gospel. Second, it is “right,” by which Paul probably means that obedience to parents is widely acknowledged to be fair and proper. Third, the Scriptures both command it and attach a promise to the command—the first promise in the Mosaic law that is attached to a specific command.³²

This unique context grants insight and support for intergenerational worship. In verse 2-3, Paul is referencing Exodus 20 and the deliverance of the Ten Commandments by Moses. Just as Moses addressed every age at Mt. Sinai, Paul also addresses every age in his letter to the New Testament church of Ephesus.

The call to edify and encourage one another in worship is clear in Colossians 3:16. Paul writes, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” The apostle is again addressing a New Testament church (Colossae) with every age present as it is read. Paul is instructing the church to teach each other in a specific manner: with music. David Peterson maintains,

The God-directed ministry of prayer or praise and the notion of edification are intimately linked in the New Testament (e.g. Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). Even “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” which are expressions of faith and thankfulness to God, are to be considered simultaneously as the means of teaching and admonishing one another. This does not mean that prayer or praise is a means to an end, namely edification. We worship God because of who he is and because of his grace towards us. Participating in the edification of the church, however, is an important expression of our devotion and service to God.³³

³² Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 395.

³³ David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 221.

This instruction would be meant not just for adults, but also for children. All of life was meant to be a stage for teaching in Israel and that would most assuredly continue during corporate worship. Understanding the context of who is being addressed in the New Testament letters helps bring understanding for the support for intergenerational worship. G. K. Beale comments on Colossians 3:16, “Verse 16 places squarely on the shoulders of each Christian the responsibility to ‘teach and admonish one another’ through psalm-based material and to sing psalm-like hymns to God. By doing so, the Colossian believers will prevent one another from being “lured into the false teaching that may be captivating some of the group.”³⁴ The primary responsibility of teaching and training the next generation was placed on Christian parents. It is important for Christian believers to recognize the importance of what takes place in corporate worship and how it impacts and shapes children.

The book of Revelation sculpts a picture of heavenly worship which also presents an intergenerational worship experience. The dramatic scene that takes place in Revelation 7:9-10 is of a great multitude of people worshipping at the throne of the Lord:

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

This picture of heavenly worship provides a glimpse at worship in heaven. The passage does not say only adults are worshipping in heaven, so the reader might consider that children are present at the throne praising the Lord. People from every generation in history have placed their faith in Christ and entered heaven after their earthly passing.³⁵ Therefore, heavenly worship will be filled with people from every age of every time period in history. Allen Ross observes, “Another aspect of worship is that it is a

³⁴ G. K. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 323.

³⁵ “A great multitude that no one could number” refers to the promised seed of Abraham. See G. K. Beale, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 149.

communal activity. Whether it is the letters to the churches, or the souls under the altar, or the thousands who fall before the Lord, worshippers are portrayed as united in one body from every nation, tribe, and tongue on earth, proclaiming greater praise and devotion than is possible here below.”³⁶

The communal activity of worship lends itself to including people of every age. From Old to New Testament, the Scriptures have given an ideal picture of worship. To teach and train the coming generations, children must be actively included in corporate worship. Glassford states,

Intergenerational worship is a countercultural activity. In a culture that segregates and isolates children, preteens, and teens, and then appeals to them separately, the church is a truly countercultural community when it invites all generations to participate actively in worship. However, intergenerational worship is an essential element for the church that is going to retain a character and ministry consistent with the Bible.³⁷

It is of utmost importance for the church to take seriously the call of teaching the coming generations the great and mighty deeds of the Lord.

Historical and Modern Practices

While the previous section of this research focused on the biblical and theological foundation of intergenerational worship, the next section will take a deeper look at the formation of intergenerational worship and what it looked like in three different eras: ancient practice, the Reformation, and modern day. The focus of this section would be considered more as a review of methodology than theology.

Ancient Practice

A theological foundation has already been laid to support intergenerational worship. It is helpful to consider historical and modern practices and how they support the same. Scripture has clearly pointed to the nation of Israel gathered at Mt. Sinai. This

³⁶ Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 475.

³⁷ Glassford, “Fostering an Intergenerational Culture,” 71.

gathering was not just of adult men and women, but also included children. It was a multiple generation event that all of Israel witnessed. To further support intergenerational worship, one should look at how Israel celebrated and remembered important times. Though it may be foreign to modern day westerners, another aspect of worship for the people of Israel was remembering previous events that took place with ceremony and celebration. Often times these days of remembrance were marked by feasts. Different events were marked by unique feasts in which all of Israel would participate. Bruce Shields and David Butzu articulate the festival aspect of remembering through the celebration of a festival,

The special worship festivals that developed in Israel were connected with annual cycles of planting and harvesting, now that the people were settled in the land. However, they were also connected to major events in the history of Israel. The seven day Festival of Unleavened Bread was celebrated in the early spring (March or April) at the time of the barley harvest. It ends with the celebration of Passover, reminding people of the exodus from Egypt. The Festival of Weeks came seven weeks after Passover, as a celebration of the wheat harvest. It was also called Pentecost, reflecting the fifty days from Passover. It served as a reminder of the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Festival of Booths or Tabernacles is in the fall (September or October), at the time of the grape and olive harvest. During this week the people lived outdoors in makeshift shelters to reenact the forty years their ancestors spent in the wilderness.³⁸

Again, it is evident that worship was taking place in all of life for the people of Israel. Every generation was engaged and taught about all that the Lord had done for his people. Festivals were part of life for Israel and these festivals coincided with major events that had happened. Children were taught these events from a young age and then taught how to remember them. Families would sleep outside to remember and reenact the forty years spent in the wilderness. This would make a major impact on a child who would be internalizing everything taking place. From daily life to corporate worship, generations were engaging together.

³⁸ Bruce E. Shields and David A. Butzu, *Generations of Praise: The History of Worship* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing, 2006), 18.

The Reformation

The Protestant Reformation was a time of reform for congregational worship led by Martin Luther. Luther was gravely concerned with the unbiblical practices of the Roman Catholic church and, by the Lord's help, led one of the greatest worship revivals in the history of the church.³⁹ In Wittenberg at that time, all corporate worship was led, or rather, performed, by the priests of the church. The entire service was in Latin, which was not a common language spoken by the German people. Recitations, incantations, the eucharist, and singing were all presented by priests and church leaders, with the congregation left in the dark as to what was being said. The Catholic Church began teaching against what Scripture taught and Luther rejected this false teaching. Issuing a call to return to Scripture, Luther spoke against the Catholic Church and their unbiblical teaching. However, Luther's concern was for the return to Scripture as well as a return to congregational participation in corporate worship. Luther wanted the people to be able to read, pray, and sing when they gathered for worship. He knew that the generations needed to worship the Lord together in a language that they understood. Discovered documents show that Luther implemented hymnody in the German vernacular to allow his congregation to worship together, thus reviving congregational singing. Robin A. Leaver asserts,

From the end of 1524, the Wittenberg congregations had their own hymnal and were therefore as much involved in hymn singing as was the choir. Congregation and choir sang the hymns together, almost certainly in alternation stanza by stanza, each from their own collection of the hymns, the congregation from its *Enchyridion*, the choir from its part-books.⁴⁰

Understanding the revival of congregational singing in Wittenberg helps one to understand the importance of intergenerational worship. Luther understood that the people needed to have their voice lifted in praise to the Lord, which would include all ages. The

³⁹ Standard treatments of Luther's life and ministry include Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, and Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther*.

⁴⁰ Robin A. Leaver, *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 116.

importance of the call to *sola Scriptura* was equally matched with the importance of congregational worship taking place. Leaver notes,

At every opportunity Luther and his colleagues were concerned to get the whole congregation—not just part of it—involved in the singing, teaching them of the need to sing the scriptural Word, giving them the texts and melodies to sing, supplying the musical means by which an antiphony of unison and harmony graced their services of worship.⁴¹

Modern Day Practice

Why should the church practice intergenerational worship today? For decades, since the “worship wars” (which churches still battle) churches have split themselves into different services on Sundays to help subdue people’s desire for their own style of music. Titled “traditional” and “contemporary,” these varying music styles offer different preference-based music that often splits a church generationally. In a desperate attempt to keep the peace, church leaders offer these services so that older people can enjoy what they grew up with, and younger people can be attracted to the church by new music. The church has faced this dilemma for a while now and it has ravaged corporate worship. Generations have been segregated based on preference, which has caused unhealthy tensions in church. Noland details this damage:

Though well supported throughout Scripture, intergenerational worship has been supplanted by strictly defined age-segregated services in most churches today. Whether they’re called traditional, contemporary, blended, next-gen, or some other trendy moniker, the options are often drawn along generational lines. This approach has done more to polarize the generations than bring them together.⁴²

The importance of intergenerational worship cannot be underestimated. The need for the generations to unite, as in the days of Israel and the Reformation, is just as strong now as it was then. Personal preference must be set aside, and deference given to others. The culture of intergenerational worship can and should be fostered. Vanderwell explains,

⁴¹ Leaver, *The Whole Church Sings*, 162.

⁴² Noland, *Worship on Earth*, 167.

Fostering an intergenerational climate is challenging because each person of the community must distinguish between personal preferences and scriptural warrant. We must value and respect the other members of the body of Christ; we must be willing to learn from each other; and we must seek to nurture the faith of others. We must confess Christ as the head of the church and seek to live in light of that reality.⁴³

Churches will benefit greatly by uniting generations together as they gather for worship.

The younger members of the church will be guided by their elders, and in turn, the elders of the church will see the faith passed down to the next generation.

Practical Application

The foundation and formation of intergenerational worship leads to the application of this form in corporate worship. Churches are beginning to take a serious look at problems in their gathered worship time caused by the segregation of ages. Pastors are evaluating the issues they see and formulating how to make corrective changes. Theology, as well as historical data, point to intergenerational worship.

However, what does the church committed to intergenerational worship look like? How should a church apply the foundation and formation of intergenerational worship to its corporate worship?

Mend the Fractured Generations

The importance of having generations worshipping together cannot be understated. So much is missed when the church is split into “age appropriate” worship on Sundays. Children miss guidance and teaching from their elders, and elders lose the blessing of bestowing that guidance and teaching. Legacy is lost, and future vision without grounding in history takes over. Personal preference is also elevated to become a priority for worshipers, causing rift and tension between people that should be united in Christ. Noland claims,

Intergenerational worship has the potential not only to bring the twenty-year-olds back to church but also to unify different age groups at the same time. In Romans 15:5-6, Paul exhorts us to “live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our

⁴³ Glassford, “Fostering an Intergenerational Culture,” 81.

Lord Jesus Christ.” There is no “generation gap” in God’s kingdom. Whenever the generations worship together, it is a vivid demonstration of Christian unity.⁴⁴

Just as the people of Israel guided and taught their children the great and mighty deeds of the Lord, the church is to continue doing the same today. The Lord promises blessing to those that teach their children and bring them up in the faith. The picture of heavenly worship in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9 shows the generational experience that will take place:

And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.” (5:9)

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. (7:9)

The worship of heaven engages every generation from the dawn of mankind, thus making it multigenerational. If worship on earth should reflect worship in heaven, then people of all ages should be worshipping the Lord together.

Teach and Train the Church

The biblical call to tell the coming generations of the mighty works of the Lord is imperative when considering how to teach about the Lord. A church should consider how this is done in an intergenerational format, which is not always during the gathered corporate singing time. Intergenerational worship can take place in many different ways, with corporate singing being one of them. Intentional mixing of the generations in different events, programs, and ministries will help bring to light the blessing of generations being together. Some churches have utilized prayer as a means to bring generations together. A prayer campaign can be developed and implemented where older adults are connected with high school students and they pray weekly over their assigned teenager. Often times, these praying adults will become like grandparents to their assigned student, which in turn is a powerful blessing to that student. In the realm of corporate singing,

⁴⁴ Noland, *Worship on Earth*, 169.

intergenerational worship can be taught in a plethora of ways. Engaging all ages on the platform, Scripture that teaches about intergenerational worship, and teaching moments during corporate worship are a few of those means of teaching.

Corporate Worship as Discipleship

Corporate worship is a main source of discipleship for many people. Some people are only superficially involved in other areas of church ministry but are formed as they gather for worship with fellow believers. It is important to correlate worship as discipleship. With this in mind, it is imperative to see generations worshipping together so that all are discipled. Scott Aniol submits,

Many evangelicals today consider corporate worship as simply a Christian's expression of authentic devotion toward God. Yet corporate worship is not merely expressive; corporate worship is formative. This is how corporate worship fits into the Great Commission: the liturgy of a church shapes the liturgy of life. How a church worships week in and week out forms the people—it molds their behavior by shaping their inclinations through habitual practices. When people engage in the liturgy that we have provided for them, they will inevitably be shaped by the values and beliefs worn into it.⁴⁵

The impact of corporate worship as discipleship should drive church leaders to the importance of intergenerational worship. In doing so, the spiritual formation of the generations will grow. Discipleship is another missing aspect in many churches. Services and gatherings are formed to attract and draw in people with an experience that is often emotional and shallow. Too often, there is a complete lack of discipleship in corporate worship practices. Instead of seeing the opportunity to equip and develop believers in Christ, church leaders have reduced Sunday gatherings to mere spectacle. Some even utilize secular songs and resources to engage the attending congregation. The lack of true discipleship in this corporate worship model is troubling. There is a gaping hole in the modern-day church in regard to discipleship. Training and equipping are simply not happening in many churches. When discipleship is not a priority, church attenders become

⁴⁵ Scott Aniol, "Disciple-Forming Corporate Worship," *Religious Affections*, July 1, 2020, <https://religiousaffections.org/articles/articles-on-church/disciple-forming-corporate-worship/>.

spectators and consumers at an all-you-can-experience buffet of entertainment. True discipleship engages the body of Christ to grow and be shaped in the faith. The Bible teaches that this is to be done generationally.

Corporate worship gatherings are a primary setting of discipleship for Christians. There are other tools used to equip and grow believers, but the gathered worship setting is a main time of discipleship. Matt Merker writes,

Corporate worship is discipleship. God calls church members to minister to one another by speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:12-15). We often imagine that taking place in small group Bible studies, one-on-one discipling relationships, and informal fellowship. And it does. But a church service is one of the primary settings in which believers speak the truth to one another. When we recite a creed, or read a scripture aloud together, or sing a Psalm, or vocalize “amen” after a prayer, we’re not just following the service leader’s directions. We are discipling one another and building up the body to maturity.⁴⁶

Realizing the role that corporate worship plays in discipleship is important. Understanding the development that takes place in this setting will help church leadership engage their people in a way that will equip them as followers of Christ.

Conclusion

The important part of the missing jewel of worship, intergenerational worship, should be rediscovered and cherished as a blessing from the Lord. Churches that foster and implement this format will be richly blessed by the legacy of generations being formed in the faith through corporate worship practices. The church that does so will be healthier for it, which prepares them to be greater witnesses for the gospel and kingdom of Christ.

⁴⁶ Matt Merker, *Corporate Worship: How the Church Gathers as God’s People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 43.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL
ISSUES RELATED TO INTERGENERATIONAL
WORSHIP

The focus of this chapter is the practical implementation of intergenerational worship. Guiding the chapter will be three main arguments for intergenerational worship—broader scope of music, children impacted in worship, and more people participating—as well as foundational elements, implementing, and leading an intergenerational worship service.

**Issues That Form When Intergenerational
Worship Is Not Practiced**

**Music Is Narrowly Focused to
Reach a Specific Age Range**

The natural focus of contemporary worship music is new music, hence the name, contemporary. There is nothing negative with new music. In fact the church needs it. Fresh songs and hymns should be composed for every generation of believers. However, when corporate worship focuses on contemporary music, then the age range of those mostly impacted is narrow. This also stands true for a corporate worship service that uses only ancient or traditional music. Services that utilize only one generation's musical heartsong lack the engaging power of connecting with multiple generations. Allen and Ross write,

It seems self-evident that becoming fully and intentionally intergenerational will call for some degree of blending styles. To insist on traditional hymnody entirely, ignoring all worship music written in the last several decades, assumes an elitist historical stance that ignores the fact that God is still at work among twentieth- and twenty-first-century believers, pouring out new songs about old truths. However, insisting that the exclusive use of contemporary music and lyrics is necessary to keep churches vital overlooks inescapably the needs of one or two generations as well as the powerful theological and aesthetic contributions of past spiritually gifted musicians

and poets. It also unavoidably limits the worship music repertoire of future generations.¹

If the goal of corporate worship is to include every age, then one musical style should not be the only one used since it would likely lead to a preferred audience. Psalm 148:12-13 exhorts believers, “Young men and maidens together, old men and children! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven.” The church that wants to see generations worshipping together must work to accomplish that goal. It does not just happen on its own. People are programmed to desire their own preference, so naturally younger people will be drawn to contemporary music, and conversely, older people to hymnody (and popular songs from their generation). The goal of intergenerational worship is to see generations engaged together rather than having specific ages receive primary focus. Every generation should be the primary focus of corporate worship. Rory Noland maintains, “In order for the generations to worship peaceably alongside each other (as in heaven), we all need to set aside our personal preferences, especially, in regard to musical styles.”² This setting aside of personal preference allows for the church to be united, which will be highlighted in a future section of this chapter. Rather than all ages being engaged with a multiplicity of musical styles, the use of one style can cause one group to feel more important, and others to feel less important.

No Child Left Behind

In 2001, the United States Congress passed “H.R.1—No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” to improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged children.³ The legislation sought to create resources and support for children in certain life circumstances

¹ Holly Allen and Christine Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community, and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 196.

² Rory Noland, *Worship on Earth as It Is in Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 181.

³ Congress.Gov, “H.R.1—No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, accessed October 17, 2021, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-bill/1/text>.

to have more opportunity in the realm of education. Ultimately, the desire was that children, as the name said, would not be left behind. In a similar way, the church must ensure that its children are not being left behind in corporate worship. With the segregation of worship services over personal style, children are often dismissed to a “child friendly” environment away from the adult service.

Though motive cannot be ascribed to all instances, many children’s worship services utilize energetic dancing and singing to help the children enjoy being at church. Every church desires to see children enjoy their gatherings. However, are children being left behind out of a desire to keep them engaged and occupied? The church should consider what damage has been and is currently being done in these settings. In fact, leaders are beginning to ask these questions as they consider children’s ministries.

Vanderwell contends,

For all kinds of reasons, many congregations have practiced a kind of generational segregation on Sunday morning. Some churches schedule Christian education sessions during worship so that families are split up during their hour at church. Some churches schedule different worship services for Boomers, Busters, and Gen X “audiences,” tailoring each service to the tastes and preferences of each generational cohort. The result of moves like these is a deepening division in the body of Christ that is vexingly difficult to overcome.⁴

Good intentions have turned into poor methodology. Children are being left behind in corporate worship and it is causing major problems. The Bible commands believers to sing individually and corporately (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19). How, then, are children taught to be part of the corporate voice if they are not part of the corporate service? Keith Getty writes,

All our individual stories meet at the cross-section of the worship service. We are reminded that we are not alone—we are members of a multi-generational, multi-ethnic, multi-everything family. We are reminded that we need not despair, for we have His Spirit within us. We are reminded that we are not the center of the universe,

⁴ Howard Vanderwell, *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), xi.

but just one voice and heart among the great worldwide throng of people praising the One who is.⁵

The omission of children from the corporate gathering is a serious matter. How are children to be formed and taught about corporate worship if they never experience it? Just as a family passes down wisdom or tradition to its children, the church must pass down biblical worship to its children. It is in the framework of intergenerational worship that children can recognize their belonging to the body. Eddie Prest contends in *From One Generation to Another*,

The contention of intergenerational worship Christian experience is that it provides the best environment for a child to be helped to find faith and internalize Christian values. Its requirements are a context of warm acceptance and belonging to the family of God's people and the restructuring of worship to incorporate all members and relevantly meet the spiritual needs of each age group.⁶

Fewer People Involved

A second concern when intergenerational worship is not utilized is that fewer people are involved. Naturally, modern worship settings incorporate fewer musicians and singers due to the lack of a choir and orchestra. The band and vocalist setting typically uses five to six instrumentalists and four to six singers. Before transitioning to a more contemporary setting of praise band with worship team vocalists, many traditional churches utilized a choir, and if they had one, an orchestra of instruments. This setting allowed for as many people as possible that had a giftedness or desire in music to utilize that gift in service to the Lord and the church. The church could have hundreds participating depending on the size of the church. Now, those large teams have been relegated down to small teams that are often the same people each week. Some churches rotate musicians, but these modern formats shrink the number of worship volunteers.

This reduction of ministry causes a great problem for teaching and training the generations in worship and worship leadership. Modern bands and vocal teams rarely use

⁵ Keith Getty, *Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church* (Nashville: B & H, 2017), 73.

⁶ Quotes Eddie Priest, *From One Generation to Another, (Training for Leadership, 1993), 22.*

children and students in corporate worship leading. In doing so, these teams have removed an important role of the worship team, which is to train the next generation of worshipers. Greg Brewton asserts on engaging multiple generations:

Although it may be difficult to involve several generations in the worship band, consider how you can involve more generations on the worship platform each Sunday. There are some among the older generations who have good instrumental skills that can be used on Sundays. Train younger generations to play instruments and sing in worship. Consider prayer and Scripture readings in the service given by senior adults or teenagers. Your Sunday morning platform should reflect the generations who attend your church.⁷

The call to train the next generation is important for every church. Worship teams that have eliminated their larger groups should consider ways to involve more people in worship leadership on Sundays.

Foundational Elements of Intergenerational Worship

Blended Worship

Churches should support blended forms of corporate worship in order to minister to multiple generations of church attenders.⁸ The goal of blended worship should not be appeasement or giving everyone a little of what they want, but rather an opportunity for each believer to practice heroic deference to one another. If the goal is satisfying aesthetic preferences, then the likely result is that everyone will not be pleased with the music. However, if the congregation is taught biblical principles and theology of corporate worship, then the generations can be united in praise to the Lord. The objective of blended worship is to unite generations rather than just keeping personal preferences at bay with the occasional song that they like to hear. Martin Thielen writes,

Blended worship also avoids splitting congregations into separate traditional and contemporary worship services, what one church musician calls “carving up the body of Christ.” Instead, blended worship allows traditionalists to experience new and fresh expressions of contemporary worship, and offers contemporary

⁷ Greg Brewton, *A Guide to Worship Ministry: The Worship Minister's Life and Work* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 122.

⁸ A musical style that incorporates multiple lyric styles (patterned after Col 3:16) and musical genres (i.e., modern, traditional)

enthusiasts an opportunity to experience elements of worship that have nurtured the people of God for centuries.⁹

Blended worship seeks to unite people by breaking down strongholds of personal musical preference. Today, contemporary music has a dominant affect in church music. For a couple of decades, it seems to have become the preferred style of music amongst younger generations. Though it does bring a fresh wind into church music, church leaders have noticed that it needs a little re-direction. Dan Wilt claims,

I have contended in this chapter that contemporary worship is a much-needed component in the life of the church of Jesus Christ today. However, I have also sought to emphasize that contemporary worship is not the whole picture. Rather, it is a thread in a much larger tapestry of worship. We must continue to reinvest contemporary worship with the riches of the past for it to mature and sustain a vibrant place in the life of the ever-growing body of Christ.¹⁰

If the goal is to bring together multiple generations to worship together, then churches should consider blended worship music. The Bible calls believers to utilize psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col 3:16), and a great way to do that is blended worship. Contemporary music should not be cast away from church music, but if a more effective musical style will engage the church, then a church should consider adopting that musical style.

Each generation must see themselves as part of such an endeavor. One age group should not look at another and think, “They should do it my way.” Each generation should defer to one another and see others as more important than themselves (Phil 2). On the importance of each generation’s role, Mike Harland writes,

It takes all generations to foster a healthy, disciple-making, legacy-building community of faith. Music becomes a tool that facilitates this process, but it is not, nor could it ever be, the key to holding a community of believers together. Churches that create a generationally segregated congregation through music preferences are only delaying inevitable disruption in the body’s future, and they are doing so in the name of eliminating disruption in the present. Over time, the church grows further

⁹ Martin Thielen, *Ancient Modern Worship: A Practical Guide to Blending Worship Styles* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2000), 16.

¹⁰ Dan Wilt, “Contemporary Worship,” in *Perspectives on Christian Worship*, ed. Matthew Pinson (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 198.

and further apart and consequently becomes an easy target for conflict over even the smallest of issues.¹¹

There is great opportunity to practice Christ-like humility in corporate worship. Deferring to one another is a way that believers can love one another as well as practice humility and sacrifice of selfish desires. Likewise, worshippers can be reminded that corporate worship is not about them, but rather the Lord.

Striving for Unity

The focus of intergenerational worship is unity among the generations, rather than appeasement. A church should consider intergenerational worship as a means to bring generations together and enrich their understanding of biblical worship. If the focus is to merely give everyone a little something of what they prefer, then the outcome will be a church body that is not focused on unity, but rather getting a little of what they want. Music helps express unity in the gospel. Bob Kauflin explains,

Churches can potentially undermine this unity by offering different Sunday meetings based on musical preferences and styles. While it may mean numerical growth for the church in the short run, it can also separate families and tends to cultivate a consumer mind-set in the long run. There are other options. Diverse music teams can take turns leading on a Sunday morning. Different styles of music can be brought together in one meeting.¹²

The church should strive for unity in everything it does, especially when it comes to corporate worship. There is not a better place for Christians to express this unity than when they are gathered corporately. Conversely, a church displays great disunity when it refuses to submit to one another in corporate worship. This can be a difficult journey, especially with a church with a long history of worship service design based

¹¹ Mike Harland, *Worship Essentials: Growing a Healthy Worship Ministry without Starting a War!* (Nashville: B & H, 2018), 86.

¹² Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 100. Kauflin continues, “More importantly, the church can be taught that setting aside their musical preferences for the sake of others is obeying Philippians 2:4: ‘Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interest of others.’ Taking this path will probably require patient instruction, but over time the congregation will begin to see that the determining factor in our unity is not musical styles—it’s the gospel” (100).

upon personal preference. Asking people to give up what they want can cause great trouble and pain for church members. A minister must understand that, to those who grew up fifty years ago, contemporary music does not “feel” like church. Similarly, to those who are younger, traditional church does not “feel” like church to them. The distinctions between generations are vast, but a bridge can be built. Rory Noland comments,

Today’s young adults prefer worship that is less “slick,” polished, and performance oriented than what they see from my generation. Every generation is unique and puts its own characteristic stamp on worship. Intergenerational worship has the potential not only to bring twenty-year-old’s back to church but also to unify different age groups at the same time.¹³

The church should strive for unity amongst the generations and intergenerational worship helps cause this to happen. Certain things can and should be preserved in the church, but the preservation of unity should be a priority for Christians. Mike Harland writes,

When the goal in multigenerational music is to give everyone a little of what they want, the wrong purpose will drive the worship experience. Rather than helping everyone feel better about the variety, it will likely result in everyone having problems with at least part of the service. But, when the goal becomes engagement and response through excellence in the context of a clearly developed worship theology, all generations can celebrate together the joy of a unified voice in worship. There can be joy in variety if the common denominator is the unified response of the people.¹⁴

The focus should be on the object of the church’s worship rather than the personal benefit one feels they should receive. If the attention is on personal preference and desire, then it will not be on the Lord.

¹³ Noland, *Worship on Earth as It Is in Heaven*, 169. Noland continues, “In Romans 15:5-6, Paul exhorts us to ‘live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ There is no ‘generation gap’ in God’s kingdom. Whenever the generations worship together, it is a vivid demonstration of Christian unity” (169).

¹⁴ Mike Harland, “4 Tips for Cultivating an Effective Multigenerational Worship Service,” Lifeway Research, April 2, 2019, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/04/02/4-ways-to-cultivate-an-effective-multigenerational-worship-experience/>.

Faith Building Discipleship

Discipleship is another aspect of corporate worship. Intergenerational worship supports the call of faith building in Deuteronomy 6 by discipling the generations.

Corporate worship should be seen as one of the most effective forms of discipleship and faith formation. The Sunday corporate worship gathering is the most multigenerational time in the church's week. Matt Merker states,

God calls church members to minister to one another by speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:12-15). We often imagine that taking place in small group Bible studies, one-on-one discipling relationships, and informal fellowship. And it does. But a church service is one of the primary settings in which believers speak the truth to one another.¹⁵

The repetition of the gospel seals into the hearts of believers the knowledge of the Lord. Every week, the church gathers to remind one another of the truth of the gospel and to proclaim the gospel to the watching world. Corporate worship should be seen as an opportunity for discipleship that is just as important as any Bible study or group fellowship; perhaps even more important. In this discipleship setting children are formed in the faith and adults are able to pass down generational experience of the Lord. One should consider the story of Samuel and his experience of being set apart. Without the wisdom and discernment of Eli he may not have responded to the Lord as he was supposed to. Eli guided the young boy on the path of discipleship. Greg Brewton details,

Although the main purpose of this passage is focused on the calling of Samuel to be a prophet of the Lord and the judgment of the Lord on Eli and his sons, it is also an example of how this younger person needed an older person to sense the Lord's call in his life. We also see how God uses young people such as Samuel to carry his message to other generations. In our churches generations worshiping and serving together have great value for the body of Christ.¹⁶

Many generational blessings are lost in the church today. Young people are missing out on the wisdom, discernment, and guidance from older believers. Their experiences and Christian journey are not being passed down to younger Christians.

¹⁵ Matt Merker, *Corporate Worship: How the Church Gathers as God's People* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 43.

¹⁶ Brewton, *A Guide to Worship Ministry*, 123.

Likewise, older Christians are missing the blessing of seeing their faith passed down to their children and grandchildren. Leaving a legacy of faith is a tremendous blessing for an older believer.

Another benefit of the discipleship of corporate worship is that the believers' affections are expressed. No matter what is going on in the Christian's life, singing to the Lord can express faith and draw them close to him. Writing on Jonathan Edwards,¹⁷ Bob Kauflin states,

The "affections" he's referring to are more than momentary musical highs, produced by hearing a beat we like or harmonic progression we find interesting. They're religious affections, which means we are engaged with God and his truth in a way that influences and affects our words, thoughts, and choices. When we sing biblically sound, gospel-informed lyrics, our affections for God can be deepened.¹⁸

How do young people learn to press on in difficult times and have their affections stirred for the Lord? They learn from older people who have walked a similar path coming alongside them, walking with them, and discipling them. The path of discipleship is evident in corporate worship. During this gathering, affections for Christ are stirred up as one engages with God.

Another aspect of discipleship in corporate worship is the use and development of spiritual gifts. Every believer is given at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:1-31) and expected to engage and use that gift in service to the Lord. Some have more than one gift to apply to service and ministry. The beauty of the spiritual gifts is that all believers are given different gifts. When these spiritual gifts are put together, the church is built up in Christ. Corporate worship is a primary avenue of these gifts being used and developed. Allen Ross writes,

¹⁷ Kauflin quotes Jonathan Edwards *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*: "The duty of singing praises to God seems to be given wholly to excite and express religious affections. There is no other reason why we should express ourselves to God in verse rather than in prose and with music, except that these things have a tendency to move our affections." Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 98.

¹⁸ Bob Kauflin, *True Worshipers: Seeking What Matters to God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 117.

Christian worship must incorporate the use of the spiritual gifts of the people, not only in the assembly but in the whole Christian life. People need to find places to use their gifts, and they need to cultivate them and improve their service through them; but they cannot manipulate or force the Spirit to work. Someone with the gift of teaching can cultivate the gift through study and prayer. The teaching of Paul is clear: believers must find their spiritual gifts, use them in the service of the Lord with humility without envying or minimalizing the spiritual gifts of others, and give all the glory to God.¹⁹

Corporate worship is a primary discipleship time in the life of the church.

Implementing and Leading Intergenerational Worship

It is difficult to know how to implement intergenerational worship in a local church. Though there are not numerous sources on how to do so, a few guides will aid in developing, planning, and leading intergenerational worship. A good place to start a transition to intergenerational worship is by instructing a congregation in the reasons for intergenerational worship. Training the next generation in a way that does not eliminate previous generations is of utmost importance. The biblical and theological support has already been laid previously in chapter 2. Vanderwell reminds of the importance of intergenerational worship:

Fix this picture in your mind—congregations of old and young reaching across their age differences as they meet together with God. Visualize worship services of praise and prayer, song and sacrament, sermon and service, that are accessible to all ages. See a teenager sing heartily with her grandfather, both carefully learning the other's songs. Imagine a parent and child thrilled to come to the Lord's Table together. See and hear a young boy and his middle-aged aunt standing in front, jointly leading in prayer. It's the biblical "daydream" of "young men and women alike, old and young together!" (Ps. 148:12) being lived out before your very eyes.²⁰

What a picture of intergenerational worship! The pursuit of engaging generations in corporate worship is a worthy cause. Worship leaders/pastors must consider what is at stake. Generations are not being trained in biblical worship, which causes problems for generations to come. Ray Jones opines,

¹⁹ Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 422.

²⁰ Vanderwell, *The Church of All Ages*, 166.

Multigenerational worship paints an accurate picture of all generations gathering under the banner of worship in unified purpose. Targeting a specific look and feel in worship (no matter if it is modern or traditional) sends a message to the entire church that worship is not an inclusive ministry. If our demographic of eighteen to thirty-five are the only people allowed to lead, then a great question will need to be addressed. ‘Who is training the next generation of worshippers and worship leaders?’²¹

For too long, the church separated corporate worship by age, causing not only “worship wars” but a deficiency of biblical worship. This deficiency must be corrected so that the coming generations have a healthy picture and understanding of biblical worship.

Jay Strother comments,

Intergenerational worship enables the entire worshipping community to remember and retell both God’s mighty acts in redemptive history and also the rich stories of grace that are an important part of every church’s own story and mission. The children and grandchildren in our churches need to hear the testimonies of how God has moved. The songs we choose to sing now are those they will remember long after our voices are silenced.²²

Training the next generation in biblical worship is vital to a healthy church. It is time to reclaim lost territory in the church and return to biblical worship that engages all generations of worshippers.

Prayer

Implementing intergenerational worship in the corporate worship setting should be covered in prayer. Seeking the Lord’s help and wisdom is vital to such an endeavor. The worship leader/pastor must seek with all his heart the Lord’s help in doing so. Too often, church leaders set off on a new path of ministry for their church and do not seek the Lord’s help and wisdom. Often, such a journey is doomed before it even starts because the Lord has not given clear direction for such a path. The worship leader/pastor must be on their face before the Lord seeking his perfect wisdom and peace. The blended worship style offers the best solution for intergenerational worship, which for many churches would mean leaving a current worship style and beginning a new one. This

²¹ Ray Jones, quoted in Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 128.

²² Jay Strother, quoted in Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 127.

matter is not something to be taken lightly or without much prayer and consideration. Prayer amongst the church leadership should happen long before decisions start being made. Seeking the Lord's help and guidance through conversations, decisions, and planning is vital.

Leadership

It is also important that the worship leader/pastor sees this opportunity for change as a pastoral role. The call to guide and shepherd the flock will rest heavily on the worship leader/pastor during such a transition. Seeing the responsibility of leading God's people is very important. On leading God's people and the call to pastoral ministry, Christopher A. Beeley writes, "Great church leaders in every age have reminded us that our primary duty and the greatest source of our joy as leaders is to see our people grow in Christ. The focus of pastoral leadership is so consistently on the people, in fact, that the spiritual condition of the flock is the only real measure of a leader's success."²³ This mindset of pastoral leadership in such a change must be in the heart of the worship leader/pastor.

The leadership of the church must also be fully supportive of such a change. The support of the senior pastor is the most crucial support. Many people may think that the worship leader/pastor is the one to lead a church in a new direction regarding musical style, but that is not the case. The senior pastor is the primary leader of change in worship and musical style because he is responsible for leading the church as a whole. The senior pastor and worship leader/pastor should and must work in tandem, but the senior pastor has the most leadership responsibility in the church. If resistance to the change begins, then the senior pastor must lead the church in knowing that he, too, feels that the change is in the best interest of the church. If a worship leader/pastor tries to implement this

²³ Christopher A. Beeley, *Leading God's People: Wisdom from the Early Church for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 14.

change without the full support of the senior pastor, then he will most likely fail in implementing the change.

Relationship with the church staff and leadership is vital. The worship leader/pastor must show that he is willing to be involved in other ministries. The worship leader/pastor that shows he supports ministries other than his own will build rapport with fellow ministry leaders, which will in turn, Lord willing, help support the worship ministry.

Recruiting and Team Building

After much prayer and obtaining the support of the church leadership, it is possible that the worship leader/pastor will need to grow the worship team. If a blended musical style is preferred, then adding voices and instruments may be necessary. There are a few ways to recruit and find these team members. One way to get new team members is to promote the need to the church. Often, there are musicians and singers at churches that are not utilizing their gifts and abilities. There could be a few reasons for this. Maybe that church member does not feel that he has anything to offer. By presenting the need, a person may be compelled to answer the call and join the worship team. Another reason may be that one is simply not using a gift that could really be a blessing to the church. What a great way to help disciple a person in utilizing a specific gift to help lead the church in worship.

Another method of team building is to seek high school students. Many high school students that have been singing or playing since middle school (or before) could be utilized in the church choir or orchestra. A great picture of intergenerational worship is seeing students worshiping the Lord and leading the church in worship. Developing students in the worship team can make a big impact in their lives and faith journey.

Connecting with local school teachers is another way of recruiting. Establishing a relationship with local educators can be helpful to recruit musicians and singers for the worship team. It is also an opportunity for evangelism. Meeting with teachers and

expressing the desire to see students grow in musical ability is a way to recruit. The worship leader can participate in concerts or practices to establish and build a relationship with students. Chances are that students at the church just need a little encouragement and direction to join the worship team.

Discipling the Team

The role of the worship leader/pastor carries the responsibility to not only teach and train the team, but to disciple them in the faith. Many worship leaders/pastors do not see this crucial aspect of worship ministry and miss the opportunity to see their teams grow in the faith. Harland comments,

The person shepherding this ministry has the great opportunity to frame the narrative around that mission and away from tedious subjects like balance of hymns and worship songs, or praise teams versus choirs. Ministries that focus on the right things have fewer conflicts over the specific choice of music approaches and more celebrations for the outcomes of the ministry.²⁴

Though intergenerational worship can be accomplished in the modern band setting, utilizing a worship choir is a great way to offer an opportunity of service in worship ministry that spans generations and gives opportunity for discipleship. Brewton suggests,

While a worship band and praise team may consist of ten members, a choir can be much larger. There are probably a number of people in your congregation who do not fit the requirements of the worship band or praise team, but they could sing in the choir. The choir gives an opportunity for more people to serve in worship ministry. Having a choir also gives the worship minister a larger group of worship team members to disciple. The larger the worship ministry, the more influence you can have for the kingdom as you minister in the lives of your people.²⁵

The opportunity for discipleship is strong when a team involves multiple generations. Faith formation can take place during rehearsals, special events, and of course Sunday corporate gatherings. Some worship ministries implement discipleship groups within their worship ministry. For instance, the choir will have “life groups” of three to five

²⁴ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 54.

²⁵ Brewton, *A Guide to Worship Ministry*, 144.

people that connect weekly for fellowship and formation. Each team would have a group leader to carry the responsibility of keeping up with everyone in the group and providing opportunities for connection points. Sharing prayer requests and other needs is another part of the group. These groups could rotate every semester or stay the same for the year. Community is developed within these groups and discipleship happens.

Another form of discipleship in the worship ministry could be “adopt a student.” Students involved in the worship ministry would have mentors that serve in the worship ministry that are older than them and can pour into their lives. Students need encouragement and guidance, and mentors can provide that in different ways. Phone calls, cards, and general wisdom and building up can make a lifetime impact on students.

Planning and Leading Intergenerational Worship

Planning intergenerational worship will in some ways look very similar to planning worship in any setting. Proper theology of worship will inform the service and its elements. Where intergenerational worship will take a different path is the execution of the service and who it involves. Every worship leader/pastor should begin the process by understanding the importance of what they are doing. Joe Crider comments on what is at stake on Sunday mornings:

Pastors and worship leaders have an eternally significant stewardship to sculpt worship orders that accurately and biblically contribute to the shaping of their congregants’ minds and hearts. The ultimate question for worship leaders is this: “Will the structure and content of our worship contribute to the spiritual health and vibrancy of the people in our congregations.”²⁶

Sound theology and doctrine must be the starting place for every worship leader/pastor. The purpose of corporate worship is to express praise and thanksgiving to God. Robert Webber writes,

Praise and thanksgiving are the hallmark of our worship. We acclaim God as we enter God’s presence; we laud God in response to the Scriptures that retell God’s work on our behalf; we send up prayers of thanksgiving at the Table of the Lord; we go forth

²⁶ Joseph R. Crider, *Scripture Guided Worship: A Call to Pastors & Worship Leaders* (Fort Worth, TX: Seminary Hill Press, 2021), 43.

into the world to magnify God not only with our lips, but also with our lives. The praise that we offer to God should result in a feeling of awe and wonder. When we worship we are encountering the indescribably holy God who created the entire universe and all its magisterial wonder.²⁷

Without this firm foundation of Scripture, the service will be missing the most important part. Church leadership should also determine the musical style of the services. If intergenerational worship is implemented, then musical style becomes a primary conversation. Traditional versus contemporary styles become a topic of discussion. It is important in these conversations to remember that if the desire of the church is to implement intergenerational worship, then a blended musical style will offer the most ability in terms of reaching generations. Webber notes,

Style is not now, nor has ever been, a matter of biblical tradition. Whether our worship is formal, informal, or a combination of both, the style of worship depends on taste. Because the style of worship is the window to the church (or sometimes literally the window itself), we must allow our style to reflect who we are as a people. The Christian world is composed of many varieties of people; some worship best in a high liturgical style; some worship best in the contemporary setting of a chorus band.²⁸

Diversity in worship is important as well. Not just age diversity, but musical diversity. Both of these are aspects of blended worship and intergenerational worship. The diversity of age is a main component of intergenerational worship. Again, one sees the picture of generations worshipping the Lord together in the framework of intergenerational worship. It is important that every generation is made to feel that they are an important part of the church. Seeing this diversity will help shape the culture of the church and its pursuit of intergenerational worship.

One way this is done is by seeing diversity in the worship team. The leader/pastor should consider the choir and its diversity of age. Brewton comments on diversity of age in the worship team: “It is a picture for the church of several generations coming together to worship the Lord. Most worship choirs are open to eighteen-year-olds

²⁷ Robert Webber, *Planning Blended Worship: The Creative Mixture of Old & New* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 44.

²⁸ Webber, *Planning Blended Worship*, 22.

through senior adults. Some churches may also include high school students in the choir. The worship choir provides life-long opportunities for people to serve the Lord.”²⁹ The worship leader/pastor can utilize the different ages in the corporate worship setting to implement intergenerational worship. Children or students could read a scripture or a verse of a song, which would be a picture of generations worshiping together.

Diversity of music is important in planning and leading intergenerational worship. The leader/pastor should consider the direction given by the apostle Paul in Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” The church has a clear, biblical command to use diversity in the songs of corporate worship. Gerrit Gustafson writes on the diversity in music: “The genius of these three song forms is that each is uniquely appropriate to express a different dimension of God’s nature, and each will speak for a different kind of personality, as well as to the different facets within an individual.”³⁰ The multiplicity of musical styles will create opportunity to engage more people in worship.

One way to lead intergenerational worship and diversity of musical styles is with a worship choir. Brewton notes,

Another reason to use a worship choir is the musical diversity it can bring to the service. The worship band can be somewhat limited on style, but the worship choir can give a musical offering that can be a fresh expression to the Lord. Sometimes the choir at my church will sing an acapella song or sing only using piano accompaniment. The choir could sing a worship song from a different era that helps us stay rooted to our heritage as the church.³¹

The reading of scripture is an important part of the corporate worship service. Here is another opportunity to implement intergenerational worship, using different generations to read scripture. Crider warns of the lack of scripture in corporate worship:

²⁹ Brewton, *A Guide to Worship Ministry*, 144.

³⁰ Gerrit Gustafson, *The Adventure of Worship: Discovering Your Highest Calling* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2006), 194.

³¹ Brewton, *A Guide to Worship Ministry*, 144.

In many evangelical worship services, usually at the beginning of a service or during the song portion, worship leaders give personal anecdotes or testimonies concerning what particular songs mean to them, but a biblical reason for singing a song is missing. Week by week in an enormous number of churches that claim to base their faith and practice on the Word of God, the Bible is never opened prior to the sermon.³²

Often, worship leaders are quick to work in stories or feelings about songs and what they think they mean instead of reading the Word of God. This can leave worshipers confused as to the importance of the song being sung, or even its true meaning. Personal stories are not unbiblical, but relying on scripture to guide worship instead of personal stories and feelings can result in more understanding by the congregation.

Implementing this with intergenerational worship can be done in a few ways. A student could begin the service with a call to worship from the Psalms, especially if it ties in with the opening song. Later, a worship team member, elder, or deacon, could read a responsive reading using a passage of scripture. A few children could recite a single verse from a chapter and rotate so that multiple children have the opportunity to read. In the middle of a song, the musicians could underscore and vamp a section while scripture is read that connects with the song, and then when the passage is over the worship leader continues singing. There are many ways to utilize scripture reading in intergenerational worship.

Conclusion

The goal of intergenerational worship is to unite generations together in worship. Leaders' decisions in years past have negatively affected corporate worship, as well as the training and development of worship theology in children and students. This deficiency has caused and will continue to cause issues in understanding the importance of intergenerational worship. This chapter sought to offer responses to the lack of intergenerational worship as well as give insight to implementing intergenerational worship. In chapter 4, the details of the project will be discussed at length.

³² Crider, *Scripture Guided Worship*, 29.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter will focus on the details of the project as implemented at Collierville First Baptist Church in Collierville, Tennessee. The goals of the project were to assess the understanding of biblical worship at CFBC, create a teaching series on biblical and intergenerational worship to be released via podcast, develop a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship, and develop a ministry plan for CFBC to adopt the philosophy of worship.

The process of the project will be detailed and explained, beginning with the assessment of current biblical worship understanding and how it was administered, as well as the results of the data collected. Next, the development and delivery of the teaching series via podcast will be explained, including the assessment from the expert panel. Third, the development of the philosophy of worship to be adopted will be detailed, with the assessment of its content. Lastly, the ministry plan of how the philosophy of worship was adopted will be described, including the final assessment of the ministry plan.

Assessment of Worship at Collierville First Baptist

To better interpret the current understanding of biblical worship at CFBC an assessment was administered to select members of the church.¹ Parameters required to take the assessment included church membership and active participation in corporate

¹ See appendix 1.

worship.² Those who were willing filled out the assessment to generate data on their understanding of biblical worship and intergenerational worship at CFBC. The results of the assessment supported the ministry project and bolstered the development of a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship.

Assessment and Procedure

The data collected from the assessment on biblical worship understanding at CFBC was administered through a volunteer, paper assessment. The assessment was distributed to sixty-five participants and then collected. Written instructions on how to complete the assessment were included. The purpose of the assessment was clearly explained, and participants were asked to answer the statements to the best of their ability. Confidentiality was a benchmark of the assessment, and no names were requested. All collected data was anonymous. The assessment was broken up into two parts. The first part collected general information from the participant including age, gender, etc. Part 2 requested their opinion on biblical worship using a six-point scale. The choices on the scale were strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), disagree somewhat (DS), agree somewhat (AS), Agree (A), and strongly agree (SA). Part 1 had four questions, and part 2 had fifteen questions.

Analyzing the Data

The assessment for biblical worship at CFBC yielded sixty-five completed surveys for data collection. The results provided quality insight into the participants' current understanding of biblical worship and intergenerational worship. The data collected was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to collate and view the results. Of the fifteen questions, four were selected as priority concern regarding this project. Statement 3, "I am knowledgeable about biblical worship," statement 10, "I understand

² Active participation is defined as those who are involved in on-going ministry of the church on a regular basis. The church membership database system, *Ministry Platform*, was used to confirm ministry participation.

what intergenerational worship means,” statement 13, “I believe a church should offer multiple services with unique styles of music,” and statement 14, “I would welcome additional teaching about intergenerational worship.”

There were very encouraging responses for statement 3 and 10. The response to both yielded an overall percent of 98 percent that marked they *agree somewhat, agree, or strongly agree*. This indicated that the assessment subjects feel they have a strong understanding of biblical worship and intergenerational worship. An interesting finding is the response to statement 13, “I believe a church should offer multiple services with unique styles of music. Of respondents, 62 percent marked they *disagree somewhat, disagree, or strongly disagree*, while 38 percent marked that they *agree somewhat, agree, or strongly agree*. This data is interesting because if one considers the results from statement 10, with 98 percent saying they “understand what intergenerational worship means,” the expectation would be for a much lower number than 38 percent saying a “church should offer multiple services with unique styles of music.”

Given the theological and biblical foundation presented in this project on how to best achieve intergenerational worship, the assessment data indicates that CFBC does not have a true understanding of intergenerational worship and its implementation. This fact supported and warranted the project, as well as the need for a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship at CFBC. An encouraging aspect of the assessment was that 90 percent responded to statement 14, “I would welcome additional teaching about intergenerational worship” with *agree somewhat, agree, or strongly agree*. This positive response welcomes the project and the development of a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship.

Teaching Series Podcast

To further the understanding of biblical and intergenerational worship, a three-part teaching series was developed to be released on podcast. Particular insight was derived from the biblical worship assessment data to help guide the content and material in the

teaching series podcast (TSP). The teaching series was given to a select panel of church pastors as well as made available to all who participated in the biblical worship assessment.

Episode 1

The first episode of the TSP provided an introduction and overview of the purpose, context, and content that would be included in the episodes. I introduced myself and explained the project for which the TSP was created, which was to develop a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship at Collierville First Baptist Church in Collierville, Tennessee. The focus of episode 1 was to communicate a clear vision and purpose of the project and the TSP to the listener. Particular care was taken to explain the rationale behind the project. Three areas included in this rationale were a lack of intentional intergenerational worship, a desire to see the church engaged in intergenerational worship, and the importance of a philosophy of worship as a guiding document.

The mission statement of the church was presented, which includes the core values of the church. One of those values, authentic worship, was highlighted as a main catalyst for the project. A brief history and background of the church was given, which helped to give the context of the church and the need for the project. Next, I gave insight to the current music ministry context and how it functions. Goals of the music ministry were explained, including the goal of teaching and training younger generations in worship. Weaknesses of the current ministry context were then given, including the lack of a philosophy of worship that shapes corporate worship at CFBC. An initial look at a few select scriptures on worship and intergenerational worship gave support for the rationale of the project.

Episode 2

The second episode focused on the biblical and theological basis for intergenerational worship in a corporate setting. I delivered an overview of some modern-

day worship practices and how they are deficient of intergenerational worship. Learning styles were then presented, which led to the suggestion of a mode of visual learning, which is learning by example. I submitted that this mode of learning can and should be applied to corporate worship.

Next, a brief history of the desire for multiple musical styles in corporate worship was given. Problems and outcomes of the decision to offer multiple services in multiple styles were proposed. I then presented a definition of intergenerational worship to aid the listener as they considered the content.³ This working definition would provide a framework for the support of intergenerational worship.

The biblical and theological support for intergenerational worship, as well as historical and modern practices, provided the remaining content for episode 2. Old and New Testament passages were studied as guiding beacons for intergenerational worship. Deuteronomy 4:9-10, 6:4-7, Psalm 78:4, and 145:5 were four Old Testament passages given that support intergenerational worship. I illuminated that life in ancient Israel was communal and seen as family life. The two passages in Deuteronomy describe that families are commanded to have the Word of God always on their minds and in their speech, reflecting and meditating throughout the day. Resources were listed to support the content and intergenerational worship. The gathering of the nation of Israel was emphasized to reinforce the philosophy of intergenerational worship. The two passages in Psalms were used to show the expectation and command of training the younger generations in the context of corporate, intergenerational worship. I explained that the responsibility to train the younger generations should not be seen as burdensome, but rather, a great blessing.

The New Testament scriptures used in this episode were Ephesians 6:1-3 and Colossians 3:16. These passages also support intergenerational worship in the corporate

³ Listed in chap. 1, "Intergenerational worship is worship in which people of every age are understood to be equally important."

gathering. The listener was encouraged to consider the church gathered to hear letters written by the apostle Paul, which was reminiscent of how the nation gathered to hear from their leader Moses. Unique similarities were drawn and emphasized to show correlation of these gatherings.

In the next segment of episode 2, the listener was given examples of historical and modern worship practices regarding intergenerational worship. The first was the Reformation and how its reform was not just for Scripture, but also congregational worship. Resources were given that showed music used in worship in 1526 was not only for the choir but for the congregation. Luther was intent on congregational worship being in the German vernacular so that the congregation could participate in corporate worship. Understanding the revival of congregational singing in Wittenberg helps one to understand the importance of intergenerational worship. The modern-day practice emphasized the issues seen in settings where multiple style services are offered. The generation segregation that takes place is destructive to the health of the church.

The closing portion of episode 2 detailed the importance of viewing corporate worship as discipleship. The listener was informed on how the corporate worship setting molds behavior by shaping inclinations through habitual practices.

Episode 3

In the third and final episode the TSP focused on how to develop a philosophy of worship, as well as what a church committed to intergenerational worship looks like. Guiding the episode were three issues that form when intergenerational worship is not practiced (thus creating the need for a philosophy of worship), as well as foundational elements and the process of developing a philosophy of worship.

The first issue addressed the problems that arise when music is used to reach a specific age range. The listener was challenged to consider the implications that a one-style service has on intergenerational worship. It is difficult to have generations together if only one style of music is utilized. The second issue that arises when intergenerational

worship is not utilized is that children are not involved in corporate worship. I expressed the need for children to be engaged in corporate worship so that the command to train the coming generations would be fulfilled. The final issue is that fewer people are involved in worship leadership when intergenerational worship is not practiced. Music ministries that use a modern style only have smaller music teams, leaving many that have musical giftings unable to serve the Lord and the church with their ability.

The episode content then shifted focus to more practical material and how to develop a philosophy of worship. Foundational elements of intergenerational worship were submitted, which included blended worship, striving for unity, and corporate worship as discipleship. A church committed to intergenerational worship should be blended in musical style. If the goal is for multiple generations to worship together, then blended worship provides the best opportunity for that goal to be achieved. Another aspect of a church committed to intergenerational worship is unity. Unity is a marker of a healthy church, especially in its worship culture. Instead of mere appeasement, intergenerational worship strives for intentional unity. Lastly, a church committed to intergenerational worship views corporate worship as discipleship. Faith formation takes place in corporate worship and should be seen as one of the most effective forms of discipleship in the church.

Expert Panel Assessment

After the creation and development of the TSP, an expert panel was assembled to participate in the project implementation. Justin Mullins, Mark LaGrone, and Ed Reed were requested via email to listen to the TSP and then complete an assessment.⁴ The assessment evaluated the content of the TSP in three areas; biblical accuracy, scope, and practicality.⁵ The expert panel was given two weeks to listen to the TSP and complete the

⁴ Justin Mullins is the Young Families Pastor, Mark LaGrone is the Small Groups Pastor, and Ed Reed is the Church Plant Strategist at Collierville First Baptist Church.

⁵ See appendix 2.

assessment.

All three expert panel members scored at either a sufficient or exemplary level on the assessment of the TSP. LaGrone offered this critique of the TSP: “It actually expanded my view of intergenerational worship, and I was not expecting that. I like the comparison of worship in the Bible—Jewish tradition—compared to modern day.” Mullins remarked, “The thesis is clear and identifies the need for our church to have a philosophy of worship and intergenerational worship. Unity is better than preference.” Reed wrote, “This series reinforced my belief in blended worship.”

Developing the Philosophy of Worship

This project intended to develop a philosophy of worship (POW) that supports intergenerational worship at CFBC. The POW would be used as a guiding document that shapes and informs the worship at CFBC. As mentioned, the worship assessment revealed a necessity of teaching as well a desire for more understanding on intergenerational worship. A church with a POW that is rooted in Scripture can respond to criticism and deviation from biblical worship. After collecting data from the assessment, the development of the philosophy of worship was initiated.

Before anything was developed, time was spent in prayer, asking the Lord to grant guidance and discernment. It was crucial that this project be rooted in prayer and wisdom from the Lord, especially because it pertains to corporate worship. Church staff members were invited to pray for the project and the development of the POW, that it would honor the Lord and serve his purposes at CFBC.

Content and material were collected to provide aid in the development of the POW. Books on worship, class notes on worship, worship articles, and personal research were utilized to provide abundant information. The research material was collated and organized by topic and theme to provide a database of information for the project.⁶ Other

⁶ The online program *Evernote* was used to store and organize the documents gathered for the project.

church POWs were gathered to assist in developing the POW for CFBC. One of the resources used to gather other POWs was Metro 2 Music, which is a group of approximately fifty worship pastors serving at Southern Baptist churches that have average attendance of over one thousand people each week. The search request yielded only three POWs to be used as resources in this project. This was an interesting result, as it showed that many of the churches did not utilize a POW.⁷ A total of ten different church POWs were utilized in developing the POW for CFBC. The theme, prose, and organization of each POW was considered.

After gathering the material and content used to develop the POW a draft was created. During this time, ten guiding principles were determined. Each principle was derived to give direction and guidance to CFBC's worship. After the initial draft was created, critique and input were requested. Three members of the church worship team were given the draft and asked to give their thoughts and views on the document, particularly the guiding principles. Each person offered beneficial critique and support of the document and the guiding principles.

Ten guiding principles of worship were used to inform the POW, and each guiding principle was supported with Scripture. The guiding principles were designed to be auxiliary to the first core value of the church, which is *authentic worship*. This core value shapes and informs the preparation of the worship services, as well as how the church engages in corporate worship. Each principle begins with the phrase, "we are committed," to emphasize the importance of each principle.

The first guiding principle is *Christ-centered* worship: "We are committed to *Christ-centered* worship as we gather to celebrate and remember who God is and what He has done. We believe that the ultimate purpose of worship is to glorify God. All that happens in our worship services will be centered on the Gospel of Christ (Colossians

⁷ Not all the church worship pastors responded, so a completely accurate percentage could not be used. Many worship pastors responded that their church did not use a POW.

3:17, Colossians 3:1, Philippians 3:10, Hebrews 8:1-2, Hebrews 4:14).”

The second principle is *scripture-guided* worship: “We are committed to *scripture-guided* worship, and we will submit ourselves to God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:21, Psalm 19:7-14, Deut. 4:1-2, Proverbs 30:5-6, Isaiah 40:8).”

The third principle is *sacrificial* worship: “We are committed to *sacrificial* worship, focusing on pleasing God rather than the pleasing of our own personal desires (Romans 12:1, Hebrews 13:15, Psalm 51:17, Psalm 107:21-22, Hosea 6:6, Philippians 2:3).”

The fourth principle is *dynamic* worship: “We are committed to *dynamic* and engaging worship, rather than passive worship, therefore encouraging participation, not spectatorship (Psalm 34:3, Psalm 95:6, Psalm 86:12, Psalm 95:1, Psalm 69:30).”

The fifth principle is *Spirit-filled* worship: “We are committed to *Spirit-filled* worship, believing that the Holy Spirit inhabits our praise (John 4:23-24, Philippians 3:3, Ephesians 5:18-20).”

The sixth and seventh principles are *unified* and *blended* worship: “We are committed to *unified* worship that utilizes a *blended* musical style of ancient hymns of the faith as well as modern songs and hymns. We believe that we should set aside our personal preferences so that the church can be united in corporate worship (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Philippians 2:2, Romans 14:19).”

The eighth principle is *intergenerational* worship: “We are committed to *intergenerational* worship, believing that we are commanded to teach and train the generations in corporate worship (Psalm 145:4, Psalm 78:4, Deuteronomy 4:9, Deuteronomy 6:4-9).”

The ninth principle is *reverent* worship: “We are committed to *reverent* worship, which calls us to remember the holiness of God (Hebrews 12:28-29, Proverbs 1:7, Exodus 3:5, 1 Samuel 12:24, 1 Peter 1:16).”

The tenth and final principle is *excellence* in worship: “We are committed to *excellence* in worship, believing that in all we do we are to bring glory to God (Psalm 150:2, Psalm 145:7, 1 Peter 2:9, Colossians 3:23-24, Deuteronomy 6:5).”

Expert Panel Assessment

After developing and creating the POW, the pastoral staff of CFBC completed an assessment. This panel consisted of CFBC pastors and directors. The POW evaluation tool was printed and distributed to the pastoral staff.⁸ Six questions pertaining to the POW were asked regarding the goals, theological accuracy, material presented, organization, and overall achievement. The assessments were completed, then data was collected and collated. The results of the assessment yielded satisfactory results and the benchmark for the assessment was achieved.

Ministry Plan to Adopt the Philosophy of Worship

After developing the POW, a ministry plan to affirm the POW needed to be established. To begin the process, a team was created to present the POW to the church leadership (staff and deacons). This team consisted of the myself, senior pastor, and executive pastor. The team provided input on how to have the POW affirmed by the staff and deacons of CFBC. Both the pastor and executive pastor fully affirmed and welcomed the POW and project to have the church leadership affirm the POW. The senior pastor was pleased with the POW and expressed its importance to the church. He believes it will serve the church for years to come.

The first step was for the church ministerial staff (pastors and directors) to review the POW and affirm it. This was so that the pastors and directors could affirm the biblical and theological content prior to sending it to the deacons for affirmation. The POW was presented during a staff meeting for affirmation. The POW was printed, and each member of the ministerial staff received a copy. An overview of the reason for the

⁸ See appendix 3.

POW, as well as its content, was presented. The staff unanimously affirmed the POW and articulated its importance for the church.

The second step was to present the POW to the deacons of CFBC for affirmation. The POW was printed and distributed during a monthly deacons' meeting. The deacon chairman began the meeting and led through a couple of items of business that needed to be discussed. After those items were reviewed, the deacon chairman invited the pastor to speak about the next item of business, which was the POW. The senior pastor gave an overview of the POW and the reason it was being presented to the deacons for affirmation. He clearly conveyed his support and appreciation for the POW and described why he believed it would be beneficial to CFBC. He then invited me to give more detail to the POW and the purpose of presenting it to the deacons. I articulated the importance of having a POW for the church, giving contextual examples of churches that have and have not had a POW. Some time was spent on the biblical and theological foundation for each principle and its purpose.

A time for questions was then offered and some deacons asked questions pertaining to theology as well as future the vision for the church. One question was, "How does the principle of Spirit-filled worship compare with charismatic beliefs?" The question was well received, and its purpose and meaning were clarified. Spirit-filled worship is being interpreted as worship that is by the power of the Holy Spirit, as in John 4:24-25, rather than the charismatic (Pentecostal) view of Spirit-filled worship which includes the broader use of spiritual gifts when exhibited. The response was appreciated and cleared up the confusion.

Another question regarding future vision was raised: "How will this philosophy affect future decisions when our pastor retires?" The question was again well received and seen as friendly. The more in-depth reason for the question is that the deacons are aware that our pastor is near retirement, and that a new pastor would be brought in his place when that happens. The concern was, would this hinder the next pastor from being

able to bring vision to the church regarding worship? The senior pastor spoke to the question with great patience and understanding. His belief is that this would in fact help the next pastor because he would have a clear picture of our biblical and theological beliefs regarding worship prior to being called to the church. This would help ensure that the next pastor would align well with the church's beliefs on worship.

After the time for questions ended, the senior pastor asked the deacons to show affirmation for the POW by raising their hands. The affirmation was unanimous, and the deacons showed their thanks and appreciation for a well-crafted POW for CFBC. The affirmation approved the use of the POW, which will go up on the church's website as soon as possible.

Expert Panel Assessment

The final step of the project was an assessment of the ministry plan to adopt the POW by a select panel. This panel consisted of select pastors of CFBC. The evaluation tool was printed and distributed to the select pastoral staff members.⁹ Six questions pertaining to the ministry plan to adopt the POW were asked regarding the goals, theological accuracy, material presented, organization, and overall achievement. The results of the assessment yielded satisfactory results and the benchmark for the assessment was achieved.

⁹ See appendix 4.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter will focus primarily on a personal evaluation of the ministry project, including the project's purpose and goals, strengths and weakness, theological and personal reflections, as well as personal insight.

The ministry project was the culmination of many years of prayer and study, birthed from a desire to see intergenerational worship taking place in corporate worship. A mark of a healthy church is a desire for intergenerational worship, as well as unity in its corporate worship. CFBC has been a strong supporter of intergenerational worship for many years but lacked understanding on how to achieve that goal. This ministry project evaluated the current understanding of biblical worship and intergenerational worship at CFBC, then developed a POW that supports intergenerational worship. In doing so, the desire to have intergenerational worship would be fulfilled, and the church would have a guiding document for its corporate worship.

The mission statement of the church states that "CFBC exists to glorify God by totally committing ourselves to Jesus Christ and to the explosive growth of His kingdom!" This mission statement drives every ministry of the church, including the worship ministry. The core values of the church are authentic worship, gospel driven, bible based, prayer dependent, disciple making, caring community, and family focused. The first core value, authentic worship, is supported by the philosophy of worship. The last core value, family focused, is also supported by the project since the project's focus is to see intergenerational worship taking place.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of the ministry project was to develop a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship at CFBC. This project came from a desire to teach the next generations as is commanded in Scripture. It is of utmost importance that children and youth are taught by older generations in the context of corporate worship. The project's purpose helped to provide a more robust understanding of how intergenerational worship can take place in the context of corporate worship.

The ministry project also provided an opportunity to assess the church's understanding of biblical worship and intergenerational worship, as well as provide a resource on worship and intergenerational worship that can be used to assist in teaching more about worship and intergenerational worship in the future.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The ministry project was driven by four main goals that evaluated the efficacy of the ministry project. These four goals were crafted to support the project and its end result. To ensure that the project's goals were achieved, two assessments with evaluation rubrics were used. The data collected from the assessments determined that the four goals of the project were successfully accomplished.

Goal 1

The first goal was to assess CFBC's understanding of biblical worship, specifically intergenerational worship. This goal was evaluated by administering an assessment of worship at CFBC.¹ This goal was met by receiving sixty-five of the desired fifty assessment responses and collecting the data for the development of the teaching series and the philosophy of worship. The data from the assessment produced a clear need for the project and the development of a philosophy of worship that supports

¹ See appendix 1.

intergenerational worship. The responses to each of the fifteen statements are provided below.

Statement 1: “I regularly participate in worship.” The responses given were 94% strongly agree, 3% agree somewhat, 2% disagree somewhat, and 1% disagree. The result of this question shows that at least 94% of the subjects regularly participate in corporate worship.

Statement 2: “I believe the Bible commands us to worship.” The responses given were 94% strongly agree, 2% agree, and 4% agree somewhat. The result of this question shows a strong belief in the biblical command to worship.

Statement 3: “I am knowledgeable about biblical worship.” The responses given were 65% strongly agree, 26% agree, 8% agree somewhat, and 1% disagree. This result of this statement shows a strong affirmation that the subjects had knowledge regarding biblical worship.

Statement 4: “I can clearly articulate the theological purpose of worship.” The responses given were 38% strongly agree, 37% agree, 18% agree somewhat, 5% disagree somewhat, and 2% strongly disagree. The result of this statement shows a varying confidence in being able to clearly articulate the theological purpose of worship.

Statement 5: “I believe that corporate worship is a primary way to grow in the faith.” The responses given were 75% strongly agree, 11% agree, 9% agree somewhat, and 5% disagree somewhat. The result of this statement shows support that the subjects believe corporate worship is a primary way to grow in the faith.

Statement 6: “I believe children should regularly participate in worship.” The responses given were 75% strongly agree, 17% agree, 6% agree somewhat, and 2% disagree somewhat. The result of this statement shows clear support for children regularly participating in worship.

Statement 7: “I believe students should regularly participate in worship.” The responses given were 80% strongly agree, 18% agree, and 2% agree somewhat. The

result of this statement shows clear support for students regularly participating in worship.

Statement 8: “Our pastors regularly instruct us on theology of worship.” The responses given were 51% strongly agree, 28% agree, 15% agree somewhat, and 6% disagree somewhat. The result of this statement shows that the subjects believe they receive regular instruction on the theology of worship.

Statement 9: “I have a good understanding of theology of worship.” The responses given were 43% strongly agree, 34% agree, 20% agree somewhat, and 3% disagree. The result of this statement shows that the subjects feel they have a good understanding of the theology of worship.

Statement 10: “I understand what intergenerational worship means.” The responses given were 72% strong agree, 20% agree, 6% agreed somewhat, and 2% disagree. This result yielded a strong affirmation that the subjects understood what intergenerational worship means.

Statement 11: “I would describe our services as intergenerational.” The responses given were 57% strongly agree, 32% agree, and 11% agree somewhat. The result of this statement supports that the subjects believe the services at CFBC are intergenerational.

Statement 12: “Music-style preference is important to me.” The responses given were 28% strongly agree, 21% agree, 29% agree somewhat, 8% disagree somewhat, 11% disagree, and 3% strongly disagree. The result of this statement was interesting due to the high response of the importance of musical style compared to the importance of intergenerational worship.

Statement 13: “I believe a church should offer multiple services with unique styles of music.” The responses given were 14% strongly agree, 6% agree, 18% agree somewhat, 17% disagree somewhat, 28% disagree, and 17% strongly disagree. This result showed that 62% of subjects were not in favor of a church offering multiple

services with unique styles of music, while 38% indicated they were in favor of multiple services with unique styles of music.

Statement 14: “I would welcome additional teaching about intergenerational worship.” The responses given were 25% strongly agree, 48% agree, 17% agree somewhat, 9% disagree somewhat, and 1% disagree. The result of the statement shows support for more teaching on intergenerational worship.

Statement 15: “My knowledge of worship has grown since attending CFBC.” The responses given were 48% strongly agree, 34% agree, 15% agree somewhat, 1% disagree somewhat, and 2% disagree. The result of this question shows a clear belief that the subjects’ knowledge of worship has grown since attending CFBC.

Goal 2

The second goal of the ministry project was to develop a teaching series to be distributed by podcast. The main purpose of this goal was to develop content to show the biblical and theological support, as well as practical support for the ministry project. The teaching series was divided into three episodes with content that answered the why, what, and how of the ministry project; namely, developing a philosophy of worship. Each episode of the teaching series was approximately thirty minutes in length.

Episode 1 was an introduction to the ministry project and an overview of what would be covered in the episodes. Church context and history was given so that there would be clear understanding of the current ministry needs. The first episode also included the rationale for the project. Three points were given for the rationale: a lack of intentional intergenerational worship, a desire to see intergenerational worship taking place at CFBC, and the importance of a guiding document.

Episode 2 covered the biblical and theological support for intergenerational worship. The focus of the episode was the clear support for intergenerational worship seen in Scripture. Old and New Testament passages were given that articulate the biblical call for intergenerational worship. The Old Testament passages used were Deuteronomy

4:9, 6:4-9, and Psalm 78:4, 145:4. The two New Testament passages used were Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20.

Episode 3 covered the practicality of the ministry project and developing a POW. A brief explanation of how the POW was created was given, as well as four points of what a church committed to intergenerational worship looks like. Those four points are involving all ages in corporate worship, teaching and training the church about intergenerational worship, promoting community in corporate worship, and recognizing corporate worship as discipleship.

After developing the content and then recording the episodes, assessments were completed by an expert panel. The expert panel listened to the teaching series podcast episodes and then each filled out an assessment on the scope, theology, and practicality of the TSP. Each assessment gave excellent marks and comments.

Goal 3

The third goal of the ministry project was to develop a POW that supports intergenerational worship at CFBC. The purpose of the POW is to serve as a guiding document for the culture of worship at CFBC. The POW was built from the first core value of the church, which is authentic worship. Ten guiding principles are then given, each including numerous Scripture references for biblical support. Each of the ten principles begin with, “We are committed,” and include a principle. The ten principles are authentic, Christ-centered, scripture-guided, Spirit-filled, intergenerational, dynamic, blended, sacrificial, reverent, unified, and excellence.

Goal 4

The fourth goal of the ministry project was to develop a ministry plan for CFBC to adopt the POW. This goal was divided into parts for two different groups. The project intended to have the church leadership adopt the POW, which is made up of the

ministerial staff and deacon body. Each of these groups serve together but have unique responsibilities regarding church leadership.

The ministerial staff of the church received the POW first during a regularly scheduled staff meeting. The POW was printed and distributed to each pastor and director. The purpose and rationale for the POW were given and then there was a time for questions. Each ministerial staff member was given an assessment to fill out on the POW. The assessments were completed, received, and then collated for data. The assessment responses yielded approving marks and comments for the POW.

The deacons of the church were the second group to receive the POW. During a regularly scheduled deacons' meeting, the POW was printed and distributed for each deacon. The purpose and rationale for the POW were given and then there was a time for questions. After the questions, the senior pastor asked the deacon body to affirm that POW as an official worship philosophy for CFBC. The vote was unanimous, and the POW was affirmed.

Strengths of the Project

Several strengths of the ministry project were revealed during its implementation. The first strength was how the process of the church leadership adopting the POW was a catalyst for affirmation and unity. Through the process, the CFBC leadership was unified under the guidance of the POW (built on Scripture), which strengthens the church. The resolute stance of the leadership showed great unity, which is an incredible example for the church, especially the younger members. Instead of being fueled by a desire for their own personal preference, the leadership showed heroic deference to one another by affirming the POW.

The second strength of the ministry project was the content generated from the intergenerational worship. The process of developing the material for the TSP now provides matter that can be used to help educate the church on worship and intergenerational worship. Many that took the assessment on worship at CFBC were

interested in learning more, and the TSP episodes can do just that. The content can also be broken up into segments for additional teaching. Overall, the TSP is a great resource for worship at CFBC.

The third strength of the ministry project was the deeper commitment to intergenerational worship that has taken place. The worship philosophy of CFBC has supported a blended musical style to encourage intergenerational worship, and the ministry project renewed that vision and commitment. The core leadership of the church (senior pastor, executive pastor, worship pastor), the ministerial staff (all pastors and directors), and full deacon body expressed their support for the church's POW to guide authentic intergenerational worship. Of course there will be different views on music (there always are), but the commitment to seeing corporate worship as discipleship for the generations is the focus. This commitment should not be underestimated, especially in a culture that has been turning from intergenerational worship in church corporate worship.

The fourth strength of the ministry project is the conversations about worship and intergenerational worship that are happening. I have had multiple organic conversations regarding worship and intergenerational worship that I believe were engaged due to the ministry project. As the worship at CFBC assessment showed, some members believe we should have multiple services that offer distinct musical styles. Some of these members have had conversations with me about why we do not do that, and I have had meaningful interactions with them. The ministry project has invited healthy discussion and teaching for the church and its members that participated in the assessment.

Weaknesses of the Project

The first weakness of the project was the missed opportunity to include a larger group of people in the TSP goal. When developing the ministry project goals, I intended to do a biblical worship assessment to have a baseline for the content of the TSP. Then, the expert panel would assess the TSP content with a rubric. Looking back, I missed an

opportunity for teaching and discipleship by not including the larger group assessment subjects in the TSP. The project could have had a larger impact for teaching if they had been included in the TSP and assessment, rather than just the initial biblical worship assessment. If I had the opportunity to go back, I would make this adjustment.

The second weakness revealed is the lack of leadership input in the development of the POW. This was another missed discipleship opportunity. After the biblical worship assessment and the TSP development, I created the POW on my own. Looking back, I could have included other staff members and worship ministry leadership. If I had created a team to be involved in the development of the POW with me, it could have created some beneficial growth opportunity for the ministry. I would make this adjustment if the opportunity came again.

What I Would Do Differently

I would do a few things differently if I had the opportunity to complete this project again. The first change I would make would be to convert the TSP into an in-person class rather than an audio podcast. The TSP was very effective and helped achieve the goals of the ministry project, therefore making it successful; however, I would consider an in-person class instead of the podcast for a few reasons. A class setting allows for questions and discussion from those who are attending, which does not happen with a podcast since it is primarily for individual consumption. An in-person class would provide an environment for personal growth through questions and discussion. Another reason would be the discipleship aspect that would come from an in-person class. There is a great discipleship opportunity with a class.

A second change would be to include more people in the project. For the most part, I developed and created the material on my own without much input from other people in my ministry. I regret having such a narrow focus that prevented me from seeing the opportunity to include other people. Including others would have provided some beneficial and constructive input and discipleship.

The last change I would consider would be to develop a resource list that could be distributed to all who participated in the ministry project. The TSP quoted and used many sources, but a developed list of sources on the subject would be a great tool for personal growth for those who participated. I could have created a digital list with a QR code that people could easily access. Another option would be a printed list that could be distributed.

Theological Reflections

The ministry project has been personally enriching and rewarding. My theological construct has been sharpened through the course of studying to develop the content for the ministry project. The ministry benefit due to the project is prodigious.

The first theological reflection is on my conviction of intergenerational worship in corporate worship. Prior to starting the ministry project, my theological stance was that intergenerational worship is biblical and should be pursued in worship. This conviction has been strengthened and affirmed through the process of study for this ministry project. The research completed for chapter 2 took my understanding of the biblical command for intergenerational worship and intergenerational worship training to a deeper level. The benefit of this deeper understanding is extremely valuable. I feel as though I have been well-equipped to lead and teach on the matter of intergenerational worship and intergenerational worship training.

The second theological reflection is on worship as discipleship. I had not really considered corporate worship as discipleship before embarking on the ministry project. During the course of study for the previous chapters (especially chapters 2 and 3) I was exposed to the idea of corporate worship as discipleship and that illuminated my mind. After reading and searching sources that pertained to corporate worship as discipleship, my personal theological view developed to agree with the belief. Viewing corporate worship as discipleship greatly supports the need for intergenerational worship and

intergenerational worship training. These two views reinforce one another and are extremely beneficial for corporate worship.

The third theological reflection is on intergenerational worship training, specifically music training, in the church. My view on the importance of intergenerational worship training and music training was strengthened during the study and development of this ministry project. I am a beneficiary of a robust music program at my home church. The music opportunities for children and students were second to none. The benefit of teaching music to children and students was evident in corporate worship as they participated and led worship. The benefit of such a training ground is the continuation of worship leadership in the church, and the support of intergenerational worship. Having a comprehensive music program is a significant way to promote and engage in intergenerational worship.

The fourth theological reflection is the reminder that not everyone embraces the idea of intergenerational worship. CFBC, for the most part, embraces intergenerational worship and that is reflected in our corporate worship. After collecting the data from the biblical worship assessments, I was a little surprised to see that not everyone supports intergenerational worship at CFBC. In fact, some were directly opposed to it. Their responses on the assessment showed that they would prefer to have multiple services with unique styles of music instead of a service that offers varying musical styles. It was a reminder to me that teaching always needs to be done in ministry. However, not everyone will have the same views on theological matters in the church.

Personal Reflections

The process of the ministry project has been incredibly rewarding. The journey has been a blessing, as well as a challenge. Diving in to studying and writing on a topic that I am passionate about has been a great joy. Throughout the process of the ministry project, I have been able to think deeply, ponder, and develop my theological and personal views on the topic of biblical worship and intergenerational worship.

I have always had a passion for next generation training, and this project enhanced that passion. From a young age I have enjoyed teaching music to younger students, which is one of the reasons I pursued a degree in music education in college. I enjoy seeing young musicians develop in skill and capability. Even more so, I have always enjoyed seeing young students serving in the church and using their skills and abilities to serve the Lord. Even before this project began, I have been a supporter of intergenerational worship. It is discouraging to see so many churches eliminating intergenerational worship for the sake of doing what seems popular. It has been a great privilege to study intergenerational worship and develop chapters with theological support, as well as create the TSP for teaching material. The deep dive into this topic has truly enhanced my passion for intergenerational worship and training the next generations.

Training of the next generation takes place in everyday life, as well as corporate worship. Parents should be telling (and showing) their children the gospel as they go about their day (Deut 6:6-9). Dwelling on this passage caused me to think about my own family and how we were, or were not, doing this in our own lives. We have two children that are five and three, and as parents our responsibility is to pursue the prescription of Deuteronomy 6 on a daily basis. My wife and I began to pray that the Lord would show us how we could do better in this area. The Lord revealed some shortcoming and we are now implementing some new ideas and ways to daily communicate the gospel to our children. Our prayer is that they will recognize the Lord's grace and offer of salvation, and they would come to know Him by grace, through faith in Jesus.

The need for personal study and knowledge on the topic of biblical worship and intergenerational worship was impressed on me during this project. As one who leads people and teams, the depth of my understanding must always be enhancing. The topic of intergenerational worship is important to me and to our church. Possessing the knowledge to teach and train teams is important. With new resources being made available and new voices speaking about intergenerational worship, there is always a way to learn more and

understand more. I was convicted that I should be studying this topic constantly. My personal time should include reading books and articles on the topic of intergenerational worship. The process of writing in this ministry project revealed to me how important it is to clearly articulate the topic of intergenerational worship. Reading is a necessary and beneficial way to learn about something, but writing about it causes an even deeper understanding in order to clearly articulate and convey thoughts and convictions.

The Lord used many faithful scholars to enhance my understanding of biblical worship and intergenerational worship. My gratitude for them is immense. At the onset of the ministry project I was familiar with a few authors and sources on the topic, but as I began the study and research I was grateful to see the amount of sources currently available on the topic of intergenerational worship. These men and women have been a tremendous blessing to me as I develop my own personal understanding and conviction on intergenerational worship. Howard Vanderwell, the author of *The Church of All Ages*, was a great resource to me as I studied for this ministry project. His scholarly research and writing helped shape my understanding of intergenerational worship and its importance. I used Vanderwell's definition of intergenerational worship in the ministry project to describe intergenerational worship.

I am grateful to see a resurgence of intergenerational worship in writings and in church ministries. Years ago, some churches moved away from intergenerational worship to age-segregated and different style services. This move caused great harm to churches and their corporate worship. Many church members were hurt, and ministries were damaged due to these changes. Even still, many churches are moving away from intergenerational worship into single style services (mostly modern, some returning to traditional).

My relationship with my senior pastor has grown and been strengthened due to this ministry project. We have served together for just over one year now, and to walk through the process of developing a POW has been a wonderful blessing. He has served

as the pastor at CFBC for nineteen years and has incredible ministry experience and insight. I am so thankful to be serving the Lord with him. We have had meetings to pray about the POW as well as its content. He has encouraged me and expressed his thankfulness for the ministry project, which is a great blessing.

Conclusion

The past three years of study for this ministry project have been a rewarding journey. I am so very grateful for the opportunity to pursue this ministry project as part of the degree program at Southern Seminary. The purpose and goals of the ministry project were successfully accomplished. I am grateful to my church for allowing me to pursue this ministry project. They not only approved but supported me in this process. I will always be thankful for their willingness to do so.

My prayer is that the ministry project, “Developing a Philosophy of Worship that Supports Intergenerational Worship at Collierville First Baptist, Collierville, Tennessee,” bears much fruit for worship at CFBC and the kingdom of God. The content of the ministry project theologically and practically supports biblical and intergenerational worship, which will help teach and equip the coming generations about intergenerational worship. Everything done in this project and course of study has been to the honor, praise, and glory of the Lord, Jesus Christ. It is He who planted the desire for this project in my heart, as well as grace to see it through. He deserves all the praise. My prayer is that the words of Scripture would guide our hearts and our minds as we worship the Lord.

APPENDIX 1

ASSESSMENT OF WORSHIP

The following assessment was given to sixty-five participants at Collierville First Baptist Church, Collierville, Tennessee, to assess understanding of biblical worship and intergenerational worship.

ASSESSMENT OF WORSHIP

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of worship at Collierville First Baptist Church. This research is being conducted by Joshua D. McClain at Collierville First Baptist Church in Collierville, Tennessee for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions regarding worship, and the data will be collected for the ministry project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses.

Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this assessment, you are granting informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Part 1

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing an 'X' next to your answer.

1. To what age group do you belong?
 A. 20-30
 B. 31-40
 C. 41-50
 D. 51-60
 E. 61-74
 F. 75+

2. What is your gender?
 A. Male
 B. Female

3. How long have you been a Christian?
 A. 1-5 years
 B. 6-10 years
 C. 11-20 years
 D. 21+ years

4. How long have you been attending Collierville First Baptist Church?
 A. 1-5 years
 B. 6-10 years
 C. 11-17+ years

Part 2

Directions: These questions ask for your opinion using the following scale:

- SD strongly disagree
- D disagree
- DS disagree somewhat
- AS agree somewhat
- A agree
- SA strongly agree

Please circle the appropriate answer in the chart below:

1. I regularly attend and participate in worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
2. I believe the Bible commands us to worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
3. I am knowledgeable about Biblical worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
4. I can clearly articulate the theological purpose of worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
5. I believe that corporate worship is a primary way to grow in faith	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
6. I believe children should regularly participate in worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
7. I believe students should regularly participate in worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. Our pastors regularly instruct is on theology of worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
9. I have a good understanding of theology of worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
10. I understand what intergenerational worship means.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
11. I would describe our services as intergenerational.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
12. Music-style preference is important to me.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
13. I believe a church should offer multiple services with unique styles of music.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. I would welcome additional teaching about intergenerational worship.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. My knowledge of worship has grown since attending CFBC.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

APPENDIX 2

TEACHING SERIES ON INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP EVALUATION

The following evaluation was given to select pastoral staff at Collierville First Baptist Church, Collierville, Tennessee, to evaluate the teaching series and to ensure that it is consistent with Scripture and the church's mission statement.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Teaching Series Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Accuracy					
Each episode was sound in its interpretation of Scripture.					
Each episode was faithful to the theology of the bible.					
Scope					
The content of the teaching series sufficiently covered corporate worship pertaining to intergenerational worship.					
The teaching series sufficiently covered theology of intergenerational worship.					
Practicality					
The teaching series gave resources on intergenerational worship for further study.					
At the end of the series, the listener will have a better understanding of intergenerational worship.					

Other Comments:

APPENDIX 3

PHILOSOPHY OF WORSHIP EVALUATION TOOL

The following evaluation was given to the pastoral staff at Collierville First Baptist Church, Collierville, Tennessee, to evaluate the philosophy of worship and to ensure that it is consistent with Scripture and the church's mission statement.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Philosophy of Worship Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The goal of the POW is clearly stated.					
The need for the POW is clearly stated.					
The material presented in the POW is faithful to the Bible.					
The material presented in the POW is theologically sound.					
The components of the POW are well-organized and concise.					
Overall, I believe the POW, when implemented will promote intergenerational worship at CFBC.					

Other Comments

APPENDIX 4

MINISTRY PLAN TO ADOPT THE PHILOSOPHY OF WORSHIP EVALUATION TOOL

The following evaluation was given to select pastoral staff of Collierville First Baptist Church, Collierville, Tennessee, to evaluate the ministry plan to adopt a philosophy of worship and to ensure that it is consistent with Scripture and the church's mission statement.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Ministry Plan to Adopt a Philosophy of Worship Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The goal of the ministry plan to adopt a POW is clearly stated.					
The need to adopt a POW is clearly stated in the ministry plan.					
The material presented in the ministry plan to adopt a POW is faithful to the bible.					
The material presented in the ministry plan to adopt a POW is theologically sound.					
The components of the ministry plan to adopt a POW are well-organized and concise.					
Overall, I believe the plan, when implement will promote intergenerational worship at CFBC.					

Other Comments:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Holly C. "The Benefits of Intergenerality." *Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 3, no. 2 (2013): 16-23.
- Allen, Holly C., and Christine Ross. *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community, and Worship*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012.
- Aniol, Scott. "Disciple-Forming Corporate Worship." *Religious Affections*, July 1, 2020. <https://religiousaffections.org/articles/articles-on-church/disciple-forming-corporate-worship/>.
- Beale, G. K. *Colossians and Philemon*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019.
- _____. *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015.
- Beeley, Christopher A. *Leading God's People: Wisdom from the Early Church for Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Bergler, Thomas. *The Juvenilization of American Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Best, Harold. *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Bethlehem Baptist Church, "Philosophy of Worship," accessed August 23, 2022, <https://bethlehem.church/philosophy-of-worship>
- Bower, Peter C., ed. *The Companion to the Book of Common Worship*. Louisville: Geneva, 2003.
- Brewton, Greg. *A Guide to Worship Ministry: The Worship Minister's Life and Work*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008.
- Calvary Church, "Philosophy of Worship," accessed August 23, 2022, <https://calvarychurch.com/evite.aspx?storyid=719>.
- Chapell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.
- Cherry, Constance. "Blended Worship: What It Is, What It Isn't." *Reformed Worship* 55 (March 2000): 27-29.
- Clark, Paul B., Jr. *Tune My Heart to Sing Thy Grace*. Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2010.

- Congress.Gov, “H.R.1—No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, accessed October 17, 2021, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-bill/1/text>.
- Craigie, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- Crider, Joseph R. *Scripture Guided Worship: A Call to Pastors & Worship Leaders*. Fort Worth, TX: Seminary Hill, 2021.
- Davis, William H. “Creating a Climate for Intergenerational Worship at Thomasville Road Baptist Church.” DWS diss., Institute for Worship Studies, 2007.
- Estes, Daniel J. *Psalms 73-150*. The New American Commentary. Vol. 13. Nashville: Holman Bible, 2019.
- Getty, Keith. *Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church*. Nashville: B & H, 2017.
- Gilbert, Vicky. *Across the Generations Incorporating All Ages in Ministry: The Why and How*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001.
- Glassford, Darwin. “Fostering an Intergenerational Culture,” in *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together*, ed. Howard Vanderwell, 71. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.
- Goldingay, John. *Psalms*. Vol. 2. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.
- _____. *Psalms*. Vol. 3. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Gustafson, Gerrit. *The Adventure of Worship: Discovering Your Highest Calling*. Grand Rapids: Chosen, 2006.
- Harkness, Allan G. “Intergenerational Corporate Worship as a Significant Educational Activity.” *Christian Education Journal* 7, no. 1 (2003): 5-21.
- Harland, Mike. “4 Tips for Cultivating an Effective Multigenerational Worship Service.” Lifeway Research, April 2, 2019. <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/04/02/4-ways-to-cultivate-an-effective-multigenerational-worship-experience/>.
- _____. *Worship Essentials: Growing a Healthy Worship Ministry without Starting a War!* Nashville: B & H, 2018.
- Hawn, Michael C. “Cross-Cultural Worship.” *Clergy Journal* 6 (2004): 3-5.
- Hellerman, Joseph H. *The Ancient Church as Family*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001.
- Historical Marker Database, ‘First Baptist Church,’ June 16, 2016. <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=76816>.
- Hoehner, Harold W. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

- Kauflin, Bob. *True Worshipers: Seeking What Matters to God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.
- _____. *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.
- Leaver, Robin A. *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.
- Longman, Tremper, III. *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014.
- MacArthur, John. *Colossians. MacArthur New Testament Commentary*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1986.
- Malefyt, Norma deWaal, and Howard Vanderwell. *Designing Worship Together: Models and Strategies for Worship Planning*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2007.
- McConville, J. G. *Deuteronomy*. Apollos Old Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.
- Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, "Philosophy," accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/philosophy>.
- McIntosh, Gary L. *One Church Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Merker, Matt. *Corporate Worship: How the Church Gathers as God's People*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Deuteronomy: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*. The New American Commentary. Vol. 4. Nashville: B & H, 1994.
- Mushtaq, Raheel, Sheikh Shoib, Tabindah Shah, and Sahil Mushtaq. "Relationship between Loneliness, Psychiatric Disorders and Physical Health? A Review on the Psychological Aspects of Loneliness." *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research* 8, no. 9 (September 2014), WE01-WE04. <https://doi.org/10.7860/JCDR/2014/10077.4828>.
- Noland, Rory. *Worship on Earth as It Is in Heaven*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Parks, Peggy L., and Vincent L. Smeriglio. "Relationships among Parenting Knowledge, Quality of Stimulation in the Home and Infant Development." *Family Relations* 35, no. 3 (July 1986): 411-16.
- Parsley, Ross. *Messy Church: A Multigenerational Mission for God's Family*. Colorado Springs: David D. Cook, 2012.
- Peterson, David. *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Ross, Allen P. *A Commentary on the Psalms*. Vol. 3 *Psalms 90-150*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016.

- _____. *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006.
- Shields, Bruce E., and David A. Butzu. *Generations of Praise: The History of Worship*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2006.
- The VARK learning styles were developed by Neil Fleming in 1987. See VARK, “The VARK Modalities,” accessed August 23, 2022, <https://vark-learn.com/introduction-to-vark/the-vark-modalities/>.
- Thielen, Martin. *Ancient Modern Worship: A Practical Guide to Blending Worship Styles*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2000.
- Thielman, Frank. *Ephesians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010.
- Tozer, A. W. *Worship: The Missing Jewel*. Camp Hill, PA: Christian, 1992.
- Vanderwell, Howard. *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.
- _____. “Worship across the Generations, Liturgy, 24:3, 4-10.” *Liturgy* 24, no. 3 (2009): 4-10.
- Villar, Feliciano. “Intergenerational or Multigenerational? A Question of Nuance.” *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 5, no. 1 (2008): 115-117.
- Webber, Robert. *Planning Blended Worship: The Creative Mixture of Old & New*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.
- Whitney, Donald S. *Family Worship*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.
- Wilt, Dan. “Contemporary Worship.” in *Perspectives on Christian Worship*, edited by Matthew Pinson, 198. Nashville: B & H, 2009.
- Witvliet, John D. *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship: A Brief Introduction and Guide to Resources*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Woods, Edward J. *Deuteronomy*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Vol. 5. Chicago, IL: InterVarsity, 2011.

ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY OF WORSHIP THAT SUPPORTS INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP AT COLLIERVILLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, COLLIERVILLE, TENNESSEE

Joshua Daniel McClain, DMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Matthew D. Westerholm

This project sought to develop a philosophy of worship that supports intergenerational worship at Collierville First Baptist Church in Collierville, Tennessee. Chapter 1 presents the unique facets and ministry context of CFBC. Chapter 2 provides exegesis of six passages of Scripture (Deut 4:9; 6:4-9; Pss 78:4; 145:4; Eph 6:1; and Col 3:20) that pertain to intergenerational worship in the corporate setting. Chapter 3 provides numerous resources to support intergenerational worship and supply content for further study. Chapter 4 describes the specific research methodology for the project, culminating in the adoption of a philosophy of worship at CFBC. Chapter 5 evaluates the ministry project and its efficacy based on the completion of the specified goals set forth. This project sought to support the ministry and worship at CFBC as the church glorifies God by committing to Jesus Christ and to the explosive growth of His kingdom.

VITA

Joshua Daniel McClain

EDUCATION

BM, University of Memphis, 2009
MCM, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012

PUBLICATIONS

[Contributor], *New Every Morning: 365 Days of Worship*. Nashville, TN:
B&H, 2019.
[Contributor], *Rise Up and Praise Him: 365 Days of Praise*. Nashville, TN:
B&H, 2021

ORGANIZATIONS

Metro 2 Music
American Choral Directors Association

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Music Student Assistant, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee,
2005-2009
Worship Director, Cedar Creek Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 2010-
2012
Assistant Worship Director, Calvary Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, 2012-
2015
Worship Pastor, Central Baptist Church, Warner Robins, Georgia, 2015-2021
Worship Pastor, Collierville First Baptist Church, Collierville, Tennessee 2021-