ABSTRACT

ALLEN CHAPEL AME CHURCH: BECOMING
A HEALTHY INTERGENERATIONAL
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHURCH

by

Lorenzo Laws

To establish a healthy intergenerational church for the twenty-first century, the church must be intentional about being God's family and representing Christ through mobilizing the participation of all generations. Churches ignoring vital signs, generational gaps, and congregational weaknesses has become normative because members continue to uphold the narrative that "the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (*NRSV*, Matt. 16.18) This dissertation argues that the preceding generations bear the responsibility to ensure the dissemination of the Gospel, create disciples of Jesus Christ, maintain unity within the body, and make sure faith in God through Jesus Christ is passed down to succeeding generations.

Research indicates that although congregants worship in one building or place, segregation has established a stronghold on its intergenerational presence, creating isolation, generational gaps, low morale, and in some instances a loss in membership. To correct this segregationist presence, an intentional push toward full congregational integration and participation is needed. To that end, this project developed a ministry model that establishes intergenerational participation in worship and ministry service.

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A Dissertation

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by

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It is my hope that the work I have accomplished during this degree program speaks highly of Asbury Seminary and provide a path forward for churches to establish intergenerational congregations for the health and vitality of the church for years to come.

CHAPTER 1

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter sets the stage for research designed spiritual formation purposed to establish a healthy intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church, Daytona Beach Florida. The project will utilize biblical approaches to highlight God's intent for followers of Jesus to be relational, family, and ultimately, the church. Personal interest in the topic will be explained and form the basis for the passion that makes this project necessary, relevant, and timely. Next, the statement of the problem and the project's purpose of establishing a healthy intergenerational twenty-first century church is discussed followed by the research methodology, type of research, the project's rationale, selection of participants, and data collection instruments and analysis. Finally, Chapter 1 concludes by providing a preview of subsequent chapters toward the process of developing a healthy intergenerational church for the twenty-first century.

Personal Introduction

On March 19, 2022, I was appointed Presiding Elder of the Dynamic Daytona Beach District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) by Bishop Frank Madison Reid III. As the district's presiding elder, I was responsible for the oversight of twenty-one churches covering Brevard, Seminole, and Volusia Counties. As I assumed responsibility as presiding elder, I became aware of congregational growth and development data points of the churches on my district. What I discovered from the churches' demographical data on the Daytona District was frightening; most of the churches were suffering with growth, almost all of the churches only had two generations as members, and many of the churches were on the precipice of death. The generation most absent in all of the churches were the millennials (born 1981-1996); a

generation I believe no AME or other faith system knew what to do with at the time. Something

must be done to breathe new life and an intergenerational presence in these congregations.

John 14.2 (ESV) reminds us that plenty good room exists in God's kingdom. This means

that room exists for every generation in every church to find a place to work out their soul

salvation, develop meaningful intergenerational relationships and serve the Lord in Spirit and in

truth. Deuteronomy 6.1-15 reminds us of the greatest commandment but also speaks to our

responsibility for all generations to be taught the word of God to ensure they prosper during their

lifetimes.

Sad but true, the archaic church model that provided vitality and sustainability for me and

so many other churchgoers of my youth was also replicated in our family life to some extent.

Very close and tightly knitted family and community relationships were systematically stretched

and disconnected by time, technology, and space. With each successive generation, changes were

occurring without our permission, yet families continued to maintain the practices of old. Family

reunions began to fade out, Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings which loomed large in my

day is an inconvenience for the millennial generation of today. Community churches were

replaced by commuter churches where people are willing to travel great distances over several

communities to attend the church of their choice. The globalization of the job market

necessitating family relocation to new cities and states further stretched and disconnected

families. People moving out and people moving in based on corporate job decisions created

unstable and revolving door communities where the definition of neighbor and community were

unofficially redefined by necessity and not by choice.

During my pastoral journey in the AME church, I have labored with local churches and

garnered good success in ministry leading to me to being appointed presiding elder. My

expanded understanding of congregational growth and development and my success in growing

churches would be my launching pad for redeveloping and transforming churches on the

Daytona District. My success in ministry can be traced to cultivating and nurturing a few key

ministry principles:

1. Members must understand the biblical meaning of being saved and Methodist

2. Members must be committed to knowing and following the Books of Discipline and
   Worship

3. Members must understand the meaning of the institutional church

4. Members must be committed to establishing a unified body of Christ as a part of
   God's family

As these principles took root in the congregations I served, the churches began to grow, and

members assumed responsibility of relationally working together as prescribe in scripture,

maintaining the covenant of Methodism, and living according to the word of God. I was resolute

in my convictions that the model that gave me good success in ministry could also be replicated

in the churches on the Daytona District.

Allen Chapel AMEC was chosen as the prototype for this ministry project because it was

the largest church on the Daytona District, and it consistently maintained at least three

generations of worshippers.

Statement of the Problem

Data from the twenty-first century reveals the church is yet again experiencing another

ebb and flow in her formation. According to Barna Research, there was a 36 percent decrease in

worship attendance from 1993 to 2020 (Barna, A New Chapter). Additionally, with the advent of

media products, larger numbers of face-to-face worshippers have been in decline by 53 percent, especially among younger people who prefer online church services (Elab).

Experience serving the local church suggests family and intergenerational worship and ministry has been difficult to maintain. This phenomenon was realized long before the advent of the Covid 19 virus with its mandatory quarantines and restrictions on face-to-face worship. Before Covid 19, biological families ceased to worship and serve together, and families that made up the church no longer saw themselves as the collective body of Christ. Jeffrey Jones of Gallop provides data to support the decline in church attendance. Jones says that prior to the pandemic, 34 percent of churchgoers regularly attended worship and from 2000 until May of 2023, the number dropped to 30 percent (Jones, *U.S. Church Attendance…*).

The absence of generational groups created a deep void in the sustainability and vitality of the church. With awareness and spiritual maturity reduced, one of the downward spiraling effects on the church was a noted and visual absence in the biological family and the unified church family, which leads to an absence of intergenerational families in the church. Keeley and Keely say, "Churches deliberate in creating an intergenerational presence strive to keep their various generations together, maintain purposeful relationships, and work to meet intended goals and objectives" (Keeley and Keeley).

Purpose of the Project

This project's purpose was to establish an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church by aligning its worship and ministries to what God requires throughout scripture in collaboration with the AME Books of Discipline and Worship while engaging one another as God's family, mobilizing the participation of all generations. When God's family

collectively participates in worship and ministry, over time they develop an awareness of how faithfully God moves individually and collectively in their lives.

Research Questions

The questions contained in this research illuminate the issues undergirding this work. The research questions seek to identify current practices concerning the intergenerational church including worship and ministries, what occurs when intergenerational ministry and worship takes place, and how intergenerational ministry and worship affected the overall ministry participation and worship attendance of the congregation after the testing period had expired.

Research Question #1

What was Allen Chapel AME Church doing to address the generational gap that existed in the church prior to the application of its intergenerational congregational model?

Research Question #2

What has been the impact of establishing an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church by aligning its worship and ministries to what God requires throughout scripture in collaboration with the AME Book of Discipline and Worship?

Research Question #3

What components of the intergenerational congregational model prove most effective in bringing about an intergenerational congregational model for Allen Chapel AME Church.

Rationale for the Project

The AME Church, like many churches across the United States, is suffering with stagnation, a lack of membership growth, minimal baptisms and converts, and missing generational groups. The absence of intergenerational relationships factors into the church of Christ to diminish. On the Daytona District of the 11th Episcopal District of the AMEC, this

dilemma has risen to an urgent status as discussed previously. Church growth experts and many Christian publications like Pew Research, Christianity Today, and Barna Research espouse that many churches consist of one primary generation, creating an unhealthy church environment. These experts say that a healthy congregation consist of several generations worshipping together as the body of Christ (Vaters).

As the newly installed presiding elder of the Daytona District of the AMEC, it is incumbent upon me to provide a spiritual formation process of generational integration and collaboration, thereby increasing the number of generations worshipping together for the survival of the churches on the Daytona District. Additionally, the success of the proposed spiritual formation model can be replicated for all AMECs and other churches, breathing new life, vitality, and sustainability for the denomination and all churches. Allen Chapel AMEC has been chosen as the prototype for this project since it historically worships at least three generations on a weekly basis.

Today, growing an intergenerational church is not easy because of varied options and distractions to worship and ministry service. Looking at reasons to be an intergenerational church, one must consider why vitality and sustainability of the intergenerational church has been difficult in the twenty-first century. At least six reasons exist as to why an intergenerational church is necessary.

First, according to scripture, God values beloved faith communities and intergenerational ministries. God made a promise to Abraham that was interconnected to future generations. The continuous reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob confirms God's intent for his beloved faith community. The biblical witness and story of God continues to apply to God's covenantal people today.

Second, the vast reach of technology offers persons spiritual venues other than church attendance and participation. Not only can people access churches on-line, but other spiritual perspectives that are not Christocentric can be accessed. This reach has adversely affected biblical literacy. Ed Setzer reported, of persons who attend church regularly, only 45 percent read the Bible more than one time per week (Setzer). The narrative account of the Old Testament provides a reoccurring theme of God's desire for God's people to be intergeneration as noted in God's relationship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Third, intergenerational worship provides a place of trust and acceptance of others. Intergenerational worship ensures long lasting Christian relationships and fellowship, which builds the kingdom of God. John Robert says only 20 percent of congregations promote intergenerational contact effectively, and 39 percent of youth say their churches value them knowing adults in their churches (Roberto 7).

Forth, serving and worshipping together strengthens family relationships individually and collectively cross the church and in the community while creating a sense of belonging (Haghdoost et. al.) Strong family relationships that worship and serve together tend to be responsible for new members joining on confession of faith and conversion.

Fifth, the church is a microcosm of the larger community she supports. When congregations represent God's family according to scripture, the ethos of the church can spill over and affect the community around her. Sixth, experience and research confirm that as the church goes, so does the community.

Definition of Key Terms

Intergenerational Church — A church model that is grounded in intentional generational relationships and equality. This model works to ensure all generations represented are connected by gifting, calling, and equal level of participation.

Healthy Congregation — A congregation living out the biblical mandate of family, community, and equitable relationship across generations in the pursuit of attaining common goals.

Face-to-face Worship — Worshippers who gather in their sanctuary on a weekly basis for worship.

On-line/Virtual Worship — A group of worshippers who gather in different places and spaces for worship using multi-media as the vehicle for their collective gathering.

Biological Family — A family unit usually consisting of a father, mother, and siblings.

Generational Gap — Missing generations in an ordered sequence over a defined period of time.

Delimitations

Participants for this project are members of Allen Chapel AME Church who attend two to three Sundays a month, are part of a biological family unit, and meet the age requirement of eighteen to eighty-five years of age. Members of other denominations, guests, visitors, and members of the community who occasionally attend special worship and ministry activities are excluded because their irregular attendance prevents the performance of credible research germane to developing a health intergenerational congregation.

Review of Relevant Literature

This research project grappled with the question of why intergenerational worship at Allen Chapel AME Church is in rapid decline. Relevant literature explored for this project comes from resources on intergenerational churches, church membership and growth, and church vitality and sustainability. Literature on the African American family and church participation, to include spirituality and religion, will also be researched. Articles, journals, and blogs will be consulted to document the progression of the church throughout history, family church models, and the importance of an intergenerational presence to determine how the generational gap has been addressed over time.

Church Membership

Data from church membership experts such as George Barna suggest that belonging to a local church is indispensable for spiritual growth and maturity. However, since the Covid Pandemic, more and more people are opting for virtual worship experiences which lessens the opportunity and probability of face-to-face fellowship. Often people join the church because they are hurting, and the church appears like a good hospital. Also, people join the church because their lives are lacking emotionally, spiritually, relationally, physically, socially, mentally, etc. Jesus said in John 10.10b that his arrival on earth was to provide a greater quality of life for all who would follow him (paraphrased).

Additionally, when biological family members opt to worship in different churches, it creates spiritual separation which leads to a reduction in the number of generations worshipping together in one place. The writers of "Reformed Baptist Fellowship" encourage returning to the Old Landmark of the family-based church. In their view, when parishioners return to the Old Landmark, a resurgence of God's family will emerge where people see themselves as part of

something larger than themselves. Love and fidelity to God and one another in mutual relationships will determine the types of ministries they will undertake. Returning back to God will encourage members to participate in disciple making at home, church, and throughout the community (The Relation of Church and Family).

Church membership experts espouse the notion that God's people were created for relationship. Other scholars and experts on church growth approach church membership first by addressing many of the antithetical practices the church has adopted from the larger social population. Some of the new yet misguided Christian practices are doing the church more harm than good. Just showing up is one of the new fads in church membership, and the newest fad is that of the Revolutionist who espouse that being the church is not going to church at all, and the most important thing for people to do is make Jesus Lord over their lives (Barna, *A Faith Revolution*).

Church Growth

According to Will Mancini, Cory Hartman, and Ed Stetzer, people call their church a "home" because of the attachment of place, personality, programs, and people. The authors quote Andy Stanley in saying "you marry your mission, but you date your model" (Mancini et. al. 19). Churches must learn to adapt and change in order to sustain growth, vitality, and sustainability.

According to Jon Austin, the church is in decline primarily because of postmodernism, individualism, and people who are dissatisfied with the way the church operates. On the other hand, external factors that vie for churchgoer's time and attention cannot be ignored (J. Austin). Church growth is the foundation out of which intergenerational congregations are birthed. Intentional relationships from the beginning of the journey and staying connected throughout the journey compels those who are in the Way to seek out and restore those who have fallen away.

Scholars and church experts believe that the road to church growth begins when Jesus becomes Lord over people's lives and becomes a higher priority in how they live. Everyone who makes up God's family must be resolute in living out their Christian journey. Joining the church and accepting Christ as Lord and Savior are very different actions. The church must understand and be able to distinguish one from the other to achieve vitality and sustainability.

Additionally, scholars and church experts believe that while habits are hard to break, in this season of uncertainty, the word of God has been steadfast even in the darkest days of creation history. From these facts emerge the greatest opportunity and possibility for systemic change to a true biblical way of life and path forward for the Christian church. An urgency exists to return to the Lord by gaining biblical fluency and literacy. Regardless of the situation or conditions placed upon her, God's church has prevailed and will continue to prevail because of what God promised in the gospel according to Matthew 16.18-19.

Church Vitality and Sustainability

Daryl Austin reports that "it is no secret that nostalgia allows us to escape the vicissitudes of life as we currently know them to a time when things for us were at their very best. These are priceless moments etched in our hearts and souls forever; they serve as guidepost to keep us safe and keep us from succumbing to the horrors of life as we live it today" (D. Austin).

This same sentiment holds true for the church; sometimes the old and familiar recalls the importance of remembering times, places, and spaces stored away in our hearts and minds, usually conjured up when our lives are seemingly at their worst. Nostalgia reminds me of my fondest memories growing up in the church and is in part the reason why I stay up at night worrying about the vitality and sustainability of the church. God's church was specifically designed to provide safe sanctuary for the faithful during times of greatest distress and family

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unity during times of great joy and thanksgiving. Church vitality and sustainability occurs most often when seasoned, spiritually mature, and grounded members recall the church in its finest hours and seek to replicate those images in real time.

Church and the African American Family

Scholars who study the relationship African American families have with the church stress collaborating with outside institutions and agencies to meet unmet needs in the community, thereby forging lasting communal relationships. These scholars also support the notion that the African American family must always remember how God made provisions for them as they lived and shared a common commitment to Christ. African Americans survived and thrived because of the interconnectedness of the people who regularly worshipped God together and were determined to trust in God for their increase.

According to Billingsley and Caldwell, the Black church gives voice to the power and resiliency of oppressed people despite setbacks, hardships, and troubles. The sheer will of Black people in Black churches galvanizes the church's institutional power. Spirituality, according to Hill, sets the Black church and her worshippers apart from other congregation's cultural mores (Billingsley and Caldwell). African American families make their communities strong and functional institutions. As Hill explains,

> African American families are sustained by five major sources of strength including, notably, a strong religious orientation, flexibility of family roles, and a strong achievement orientation. Despite the strains on contemporary families, these strengths remain evident. The majority of African Americans are part of family units. (Billingsley and Caldwell).

Richard I. McKinney felt it important for African American families to remember that the religion of white America did not free the slaves, rather finding freedom through social and religious cohesion freed them. Through social and religious cohesion, Africans who were brought to the Americas to serve the whims and needs of white plantation owners learned the power of God through relationships forged out of necessity to maintain some semblance of their homeland (McKinney).

To summarize this brief literature review, resources gleaned for this purpose were intended to broaden my awareness and importance of the African American intergenerational church experience. Each area of research espoused synergistically the value and meaning of Christ being Lord over our lives as demonstrated by the Church's humble beginning in the book of Acts. The Church in and of herself is not sustainable because of the name "church" alone. The Church is made up of many parts and people. To continue being the Church as God intended, a return to intergenerational family worship must occur.

Research Methodology

To establish and design a research methodology for establishing an intergenerational church culture, beginning with the research problem is important. According to data assembled for this project, churches across America are in sharp decline. Coupled with the absence of generational worshippers, a recipe for the death of any church is created if not corrected. The heuristic hypothesis for this project was if the local church (Allen Chapel AME) submits to a biblical process of organizing and encouraging its membership toward fulfilling the Great Commission in collaboration with the AME Books of Discipline and Worship while serving the community and worshipping God, a reduction in the generational divide and an increase in attendance and servant leadership will emerge generationally across the breath of the church.

Type of Research

  The intervention model for this project utilized data triangulation, qualitative, and quantitative research methods to establishing a mixed method approach. Anne Frank defines intervention research as discovering the proper treatment plan and strategies to use to provide the best outcomes based on your level of interest in the project (Frank). Although determining treatment and strategy to gain preferred outcomes takes a lot of time and resolve, Frank says that the rewards professionally and personally are well worth it when you realize the value it adds to congregations (Frank).

  The ability to accurately analyze data to make predictions, verify relationships, determine sums and averages are all determined using the quantitative research method. The qualitative approach utilized direct non-participant observation to capture participants' attitudes and beliefs about establishing an intergenerational congregation from three interactive workshops. Attitudes and general responses were extracted from those participating to capture mood, level of interest, level of excitement, degree of participation, and overall receptibility of the participants. These responses were documented in journal fashion based on each area of observation for each workshop. The areas of observation for each workshop were compared and analyzed to draw basic conclusions from the overall experience. Once the various data instruments were completed, data triangulation was used to validate the results of all testing instruments. Similar findings and results from each data instrument increased the validity and reliability of the results.

Participants

  The participants for this project were comprised of persons attending Allen Chapel AME Church three to four consecutive Sundays who are considered members and are between the ages of nineteen and eighty-five plus. The sample size was eighteen participants. The basis for this

cross section of participants was to avoid excluding any member who by their very participation could become a catalyst for establishing an intergenerational congregation.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation utilized for this project consists of a pre/posttest questionnaire, questionnaires relating to each of the sermon series sessions, Bible studies, three family worship workshops over a thirty-day period to record Likert Scale responses, and a demographic profile of the participants. Additionally, direct non-participant observations were conducted to record qualitative data from each tool and was added to the development of the research findings. Each of these data instruments utilized a Likert Scale questionnaire with possible responses ranging from five being the highest response to one being the lowest response.

Pre/post Test — The pretest questionnaire determined prior knowledge and the posttest determined if any additional knowledge was acquired after the field testing was completed. The aim of this project was for participants to gain clarity and a greater knowledge of the meaning and basis of the formation of the intergenerational church (Appendix A).

Sermon series — A sermon series was developed from 1 Corinthians 12.12-31 and Ephesians 4.1-16. These texts were chosen because they spoke to the importance Christians living as God's family in community together. (Appendix A).

Bible Study — Bible studies were based on the sermon text preached on a designated Sunday or at some time prior to the teaching of the text. The goal of the Bible studies was to drill down on the passage, seek clarifying question, provide hermeneutical references, and get the project participants to begin thinking theologically about the problem statement for this project (Appendix A).

Serving and Worship Workshops — A serving in ministry workshop was designed to forge a generational ethos that was necessary to develop intergenerational ministry and to demonstrate the strength and power of the church family working together as the body of Christ (Appendix A).

Demographic Profile — The demographic profile was used to ascertain age, gender, membership tenure, worship frequency, and Bible study and level of ministry participation (Appendix B).

Data Collection

Research took place for the intergeneration family project between November 4 and December 8, 2023, with the exception of a break for the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. All sessions were conducted by an Asbury approved Field Researcher. Direct non-participant observations were conducted by the Principal Investigator for the three workshops for the field study. All field work for the project was done face-to-face in the sanctuary and fellowship hall of Allen Chapel AMEC. Total time to administer the field work and data collection was eight hours.

The pretest was administered on the first day of testing with all eighteen participants present. Following the pretest, an overview of what was required and expected took place, followed by a period of questions and answers over a one-hour period. The sermons were preached on consecutive Mondays with all participants present. After each sermon, a Likert scale questionnaire was distributed and collected after completion. Each session lasted one hour.

The Bible studies followed the sermons on consecutive Wednesdays. When the Bible studies were completed, the participants received a Likert scale questionnaire to complete and return after completion. Each session lasted one hour.

The three workshops were conducted on three Saturdays. At the conclusion of each workshop, a Likert scale questionnaire was distributed and collected after completion. Each session lasted one hour. The posttest was completed at the end of the final workshop within the one-hour timeframe allocated.

Below is the expected timeline used to guide the project to completion.

Project Timeline

Week	Task
Week One	• Announce project to congregation, explain time commitment, get support from selected participants regarding family worship requirements of worshipping together as whole families for the next 12 Sundays. • Administer multigenerational church pretest questionnaire using Likert scale • Conduct workshop 1 - Community organizing for the church. • Administer Likert Scale for workshop 1 at conclusion of workshop. • Conduct non-participant observation for workshop 1. • Tabulate Likert Scale pretest results • Preach sermon 1 • Administer Likert scale for sermon 1. • Tabulate results from workshop 1
Week Two	• Tabulate results from sermon 1 • Teach Bible study one based on sermon 1. • Tabulate Likert scale for Bible study 1 • Preach sermon 2 • Administer Likert scale for sermon 2 • Administer Likert scale for Bible study 1 • Tabulate Likert scale results for sermon 2 • Teach Bible study two based on sermon 2. • Administer Likert scale for Bible study 2. • Conduct workshop 2 – Family and Friends Sunday • Administer Likert scale for workshop 2 • Conduct non-participant observation for workshop 1.
Week Three	• Tabulate results from Bible study 2 • Conduct workshop 3 – intergenerational church. • Administer Likert scale for workshop 3 • Tabulate results from workshop 2 • Conduct non-participant observation for workshop 1. • Tabulate results for workshop 3 • Administer posttest at conclusion of all data instruments

Week Four	• Tabulate results from posttest • Write up data analysis from pre/posttest. • Write up data analysis on sermon 1 & 2 • Write up data analysis on Bible study 1 & 2 • Write up data analysis on workshop 1-3 • Pull together all data analysis into cohesive presentation • Write up final data collection and data analysis

TABLE 1.1

Data Analysis

Mixed method data analysis was used throughout this process on all data collection instruments. The quantitative analysis relied on the results of each participant's Likert scale ratings to ascertain an overall understanding of the subject matter content. The qualitative analysis relied on the results of a direct non-participant observation method explained earlier. Once all data analysis was completed, data triangulation was applied to all four testing instruments to determine if outliers existed that could be validated by other data instruments.

Generalizability

This project was significant in uncovering systemic reasons that AME churches specifically and other faith systems generally across America have lost their intergenerational edge, which leads to a decline in membership over a sustained period. The project was portable and could easily be replicated in other contexts of ministry where gaps in generational presence is noticeably missing in ministry service and within the pews of the local church.

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Project Overview

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This dissertation was designed to determine what could be done to minimize the intergenerational gap in local churches and what the benefits of acting practically and theologically in responding to the challenge this gap presented to the church's ongoing vitality and sustainability are.

Chapter 2, Literature Review for the Project, broadly reviewed pertinent books, articles, journals, and magazines in areas of intergenerational churches, church membership and growth, and church vitality and sustainability. Literature about African American's involvement in church to include spirituality and religion was also researched. Biblical and theological sources provided foundational information about God's intention for families living in community as an intergenerational church and its effect and impact on disciple making toward congregational growth.

Chapter 3, Research Methodology for the Project, explained the methodology of this intergenerational church project, the study's design, and the data collection and analysis process. Chapter 4, Evidence for the Project, described the study participants, presents data analysis, and provide five findings obtained from the data. Chapter 5, Learning Report from the Project, discussed the study's findings, the implications of the study, provided recommendations for future work, and offered suggestions for ongoing study and practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter documents literature toward establishing a healthy intergenerational church model for Allen Chapel AMEC, Daytona Beach, Florida. Broad categories for this literature review came from biblical, theological, and theoretical foundations and research on the African American/Black church. Biblical foundations documented Old and New Testament text demonstrating the intent of God for humanity to be relational, live in community, serve as a unified people, and become the body of Christ. The theological foundations reviewed theology of family, the theological implications of church, implications of disciple making on the intergenerational church, and other theologies that are germane to establishing an intergenerational church. Theoretical foundations looked at existing disciple making models that lead to church growth, issues of generational gaps in the church, and intergenerational church models that lead to healthy churches. African American/Black research church provided insight on its history, relationality, worship, and family dynamics.

Each of the foundations when considered as a composite group provided greater assurance for establishing a healthy intergenerational church. The literature review that follows is organized based on the above stated foundations and research on the African American/Black church.

Biblical Foundations

Biblical and Theological Foundations of Family

Joseph Atkinson writes, "The whole trajectory of salvation history is a single revelation of God's encounter with His fallen creation" (Atkinson 13). He continues,

> From the very first, Christians refused to view the Old Testament antagonistically and knew it to be not only the revelation of God but also the foundation for Christian revelation. Because there is only one divine being worked out in time and history, there is of necessity an organic connection among all parts of that revelation. This means that there is an intrinsic relationship between Israel and the church, which, unfortunately, is not evident to everyone (Atkinson 14).

This argument is critical to the establishment of the intergenerational church for the twenty-first century. The intrinsic relationship between Israel and the church is liken to the intrinsic relationship between individual and communal local church families.

According to Atkinson, Christian faith is grounded in the revelation knowledge of Israel, therefore, they do not compete with one another (14). Atkinson says,

> Christians are grafted into the prior experience of God's revelation to Israel. This must never be forgotten, especially if one hopes to understand with ever-increasing clarity the depths of the Christian faith. This explains why it is essential to locate the roots of the domestic church in the Old Testament. By so doing, the theological foundations and the richness of this concept will begin to emerge for us (15).

In the twenty-first century, we cannot afford to be uninformed of the biblical foundations out of which the church emerged. Knowledge of God's relationship with Abraham and the covenant promise to be the father of many nations makes the case for intergenerational congregations.

Atkinson quotes Edward Schillebeeckx in saying,

> The fact remains that it pleased God to reveal himself within a Semitic society and in the course of a Semitic history. . .. We can ignore this history and civilization only at our peril, for it is impossible to grasp the word of God as a pure, divine reality somehow divorced from its human expression. It is precisely in Israelite man that the Old Testament revelation comes to us. . . Many aspects of Israel's social and historical setting bear the imprint of divine revelation or of her association with the living God (Schillebeeckx 1965 as cited in Atkinson 16).

When God called Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldeans, God used a three-way process: separation from his family of origin, the promise to be the father of many nations, and circumcision as the sign of the promised covenant. According to Atkinson, the call of Abraham parallels the creation story as described in the first chapter of Genesis. The creation story began with the creation of Adam, the creation of Eve from the body of Adam, and then the birth of children who began the process of populating the earth. God's covenant with Abram was done in like fashion (Atkinson 79). Although Adam was the first human created by God, God chose Abraham to establish the family of God.

Through Abraham's seed, God's promise of Abraham being the father of many nations emerged through a defined system that ensured covenantal birth and knowledge of God from every person born and continuing thru successive generations. Issues of sexuality and family were of utmost importance to preserve the covenant promise that God established with Abraham. Therefore, humans "were no longer merely the instruments by which human life was physically continued. Rather, the growing human life born to the family had to be shaped and formed so that the people would be conformed to God" (Atkinson 91). This shaping and forming into the

image of God weaved its way through the New Testament in the arrival of Jesus, his sacrificial atonement of sin on the cross, and our ultimate baptism and acceptance of Jesus as Lord over our lives. The domestic church, as it were, began in the Old Testament and was to be continued from generation to generation, hence, the intergenerational church. What follows is an illustration of the domestic church and the importance of generational impartation of the mysteries of our faith.

Family as "Little Church"

In support of intergenerational communities as God's will for God's people, Johnathan Edwards, America's greatest philosopher, provides a moving depiction of God's intention for families who have received Christ in their lives. Peter Beck in his depiction of life in the Edwards home provides a riveting understanding of the mission of God and the Great Commission of Jesus. Beck captures his readers attention almost immediately saying Edward's biological family was a replication of the larger church his family attended. Beck quotes, "A Christian family is as it were a little church and commonwealth by itself, and the head of the family has more advantage in his little community to promote religion than ministers have in congregations" (Beck 343). Beck says, "In the Edwards home, the birth of every child was marked carefully in the family Bible as a wedding gift to Jonathan and Sarah. Every child was thus, from birth, dedicated to the cause of Christ, to the worship of the one and true living God" (343). Beck goes on to say, "In Edwards's mind things should be no other way. 'Tis most suitable that men should begin their lives with God and dedicate the first of their time to him. "'Hereby,' he continued, 'the whole life is given to God'" (343).

For Edwards, those things done to honor God on Sunday were also done the other six days of the week in their "Little Church" at home. The duties of the larger assembly of God were replicated in the Little Church. Although segregation of duty existed in the home, when it came

to spiritual matters, the father was chiefly responsible for the family's spiritual life. Notwithstanding the father's role in spiritual matters, both mother and father were equally responsible for the salvation of their children (Beck 344). Thus, Beck quotes Edwards as saying,

> Christian parents operated with advantages greater than even those enjoyed by the most profound theologians and most powerful preachers. Their children are theirs and under their direct supervision and influence. If only parents would capitalize on this gift, Edwards concluded, "multitudes of souls," the souls of their loved ones, might be saved by their means (344).

Beck goes on to say that before a parent can vouchsafe the salvation of their children's souls, they first must ensure that God is dwelling in their own souls. The relationship that parents have with God is often reflected in how they manage their households as well as how their children will approach the gift of God in their own lives. To this end, parents have the responsibility of being pastor, evangelist, and shepherds of their "Little Church" at home (353).

> According to Edwards as quoted by Beck,
>
> The "Little Church," the family with Christian parents, has a unique opportunity. The godly parent, he continued, enjoys the great responsibility and blessed hope of fulfilling this ministry in his or her home. Doing so, he argued, allows them to do a "great deal for Jesus Christ." Their children, their little flock, dwells with them, ever present and ever ready to be instructed, raised in the way of the Lord. Doing so, he said, was beneficial for the family and for the renown of the Savior. "If parents did what they might do this way," he believed, "multitudes of souls might be saved by their means, and a great increase and addition might be made to the kingdom of Jesus Christ" (Beck 352).

We will now look at the biblical support and foundations for the intergenerational church as God originally designed God's people to live and function in relationship and fellowship together.

Biblical Support for Intergenerational Ministry

Churches in the New Testament lived out age inclusion, according to Kara Jenkins, scholars, and church growth experts. As a model for churches in the twenty-first century to follow, little evidence exists that today's churches are following the New Testament example. Jenkins says,

> While almost every church promotes, funds, and encourages a youth and children's ministry based on a youth or children's pastor who is responsible for the discipleship of youth and children in the church, one question must be asked: "Is this a biblical approach?" (Jenkins).

Jenkins' research also says, "The call for one generation to share its faith and story with future generations is deeply embedded in the Jewish tradition… From the first century onward, Christian faith communities have been intergenerational communities" (Jenkins). God says in Genesis 2.18, "it is not good for man to be alone," and throughout the Old and New Testaments, God's desire for God's people was to live in community.

Jenkins further emphasizes the presence of intergenerationality in the early Christian community quoting Allen who says, "God's directives for his people in the Old Testament clearly identify the Israelites as a relational community where the children were to grow up participating in the culture they were becoming. In the religion of Israel, children were not just included, they were drawn in, assimilated, and absorbed into the whole community with a deep sense of belonging" (Jenkins).

In Jenkins' article, D. Kirk reinforces the notion of family and community by identifying six provisions used by God in setting Israel in order:

1. He placed everyone within a family

2. Each family within a tribe

3. Each tribe within the nation

4. No generation was excluded

5. No child left out

6. No older person put aside (Kirk 2023 as quoted in Jenkins)

"Within each tribe were the components of family; they were community" (Jenkins). Everything the Israelites did, including the celebration of rituals and annual feast, were done in community with all generations present. In Jenkins' article, Kirk continues by saying,

> The core purpose of the feasts was to remind the Israelites of what God had done for them in ages past. As children and teens danced, sang, ate, listened to the stories, and asked questions, they came to know who they were and who they were to be. When God created the family, He wanted an expression of Himself; He wanted His image to be reproduced in unity and harmony. God Himself is community; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, relationally communing and flowing together. God created mankind in the image of the trinity; therefore, God's human creation was created to live in community (Kirk 2023 as quoted in Jenkins).

From the call of Abraham and his descendants, Moses and Joshua, Ruth and Naomi, Samuel and Eli, and many others, intergenerational relationships became the hallmark of family in the Bible. In the gospels, Jesus and the disciples were family; in the epistles, Paul, Timothy, Silas, Barnabas, and Lydia were family; thus, the biblical and theological imperative is clear for

churches to model and cherish the intergenerational themes illustrated in scripture as the unified body of Christ to the glory of God (Jenkins).

From the beginning, God established humanity in community; "It is not good for man to be alone (Gn 2:18)" (Jenkins). From that moment, community was established, and the perpetuity of community was commanded to continue until Christ's second coming. Although time has been filled with swift transition, the struggle of humanity to maintain obedience to the covenant and laws of God plays out in numerous ways. The narrative of scripture chronicles the struggle with obedience, sin, sin's consequences, and the graciousness of God. Despite the nature of sin committed by God's people, God's love for God's people continues to encourage togetherness and unity toward God's commitment to God's covenant established with Abraham. Therefore, the church in the twenty-first century must learn from its Godly ancestors the benefits of continuing to live as the body of Christ as described in 1 Corinthians 12.27.

Genesis 17.1-23 Abraham and The Covenant

As it relates to intergenerational family worship, K. A. Matthews writes, "God's covenant is intergenerational, even an everlasting (ʿôlām) covenant for Abraham's generations [dōrōt] to come" (Mathews). This verse, as with the covenant stipulations cited in verses 4–8, progresses from Abraham individually to his collective offspring: "between me and you, and your seed (descendants, NIV) after you"' (Mathews 202-203). From this passage, one can glean that the covenant promises of God with Abraham and extends from Abraham's seed to successive generations.

Therefore, "seed" refers to Abraham individually and to his descendants in the future. The word seed presents itself in the Noahic and Sinaitic covenants. Language of the Noahic covenant contains the word 'between' and the phrases 'generations to come,' as well as

'everlasting covenant.' The Sinaitic covenant uses the phrases 'to be your God and the God of your people after you.' What makes the Abrahamic covenant distinct from the Noahic covenant is that the Noahic covenant includes every living thing, while the Abrahamic covenant is restricted to a specific line of his offspring, namely Isaac. According to the Abrahamic covenant, children born of Hagar and Keturah were not recipients of this blessing (Mathews 202-203).

Warren Wiersbe provides an explanation of the significance of Abram's name change to Abraham. Wiersbe says, "Abram means exalted father; Abraham means father of a multitude" (Wiersbe 66). The irony of Abram's name being changed by God was about his age. At the time of his name change, Abram was ninety-nine years old. Although the promise of bearing a child at that age was mysterious, wonderful, and exciting, his age caused Abraham to reflect on his great blessing. Abraham was reminded of the graciousness of God and the promise of God for him to be the father of many nations. Wiersbe then stresses that the descendants of Abraham were inclusive of Jews, Arabs, and all nations listed in the book of Genesis 25.1-4. Additionally, Wiersbe extends the list of descendants to everyone who believes and trust in Jesus, making up the vast multitude as identified in Revelations 7.9 (Wiersbe 66).

William David Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry posit in Genesis 17.9–14, God instructs Abraham concerning the practice of circumcision and instructions regarding covenant obedience. Genesis 17.9-14 opens with "And God said to Abraham," which becomes God's third speech giving general instructions (Reyburn and Fry 370-71). God has been speaking to Abraham since verse 1. Therefore, as noted in verse 1 of chapter 17, God begins a dialogue with Abraham by saying, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you and will multiply you exceedingly" (Gen. 17.1-2). With this in mind, verse

9 becomes a continuation of the conversation that God had with Abraham beginning in verse 1 (Reyburn and Fry 370-71).

In verse 9, God speaks to Abraham about him and his descendants to execute the covenant promise of being circumcised. God tells Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you" (Reyburn and Fry 370-71).

You shall keep my covenant: there are two main ways in which "keep my covenant" may be understood. In verse 1 Abraham was instructed to "walk before God and be blameless." On the other hand, God requires in verse 10 that Abraham and his descendants be circumcised as a sign of the covenant. Consequently, keeping the covenant is best taken in this context as obeying the requirement that Abraham and all the males of his camp be circumcised. This interpretation is strengthened in verse 14, where failure to follow God's instructions regarding circumcision is said to result in a broken covenant (Reyburn and Fry 370-71).

Matthew Poole uses a metonymy to describe circumcision in Genesis 17.10-11 "because it is the condition, sign, and seal of the covenant, the pledge of God's promise and man's duty. And upon the same grounds the cup, i.e., the wine, is called the New Testament in Christ's blood, Luke 22:20; or which is all one, Christ's blood in the New Testament (Mt 26:28)" (Poole 40).

According to Poole, God's circumcision covenant with Abraham was inclusive of men and women, but only executed on men (Gen. 34.14; Exod. 12.3, 4; and Joel 2.15, 16). This is partly because:

- It could not conveniently be administered to females.

- Man is the principal cause of the propagation of children, and consequently original corruption cleaves to them.

- All persons begotten by man should be polluted by sin, though not all conceived by a woman, as Christ was.

- Man is the head of the woman, and of the family, upon whom all their concerns are devolved, and from whom the distinction of families and people come (Poole 40).

Verse 11, "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you," provides the rationale for the covenant of circumcision. Since the call of Abraham, sexual matters became issues of original and actual sin. By using this part of the body for the sign of the covenant, God was forgiving past and future sins (40).

Genesis 17 describes the importance of covenant to be inclusive of all of God's people. This text clearly demonstrates that the descendants of Abraham that formed the great Godly nation expanded over time to include original Jews, Gentiles, and those grafted into the body of Christ. Romans 8.15-17 expounds on God's covenant with Abraham by saying,

> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

To establish intergenerational churches, churchgoers must take heed to these text as reminders of God's purpose and mission for their lives and the lives of those to come. Even now, Christians

are to live out the covenant promise of God despite the various sins they so grievously commit against God.

Churchgoers' responsibility as heirs of God's promise is the same responsibility that Abraham assumed as the father of the multitudes who cry out "Abba! Father" and who have been saved by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for the remission of our sins. The church is the family of God and the body of Christ, and as the church, she must restore a sense of family among its members to the glory of God.

Next, the emphasis moves from the family of God to the significance of being the body of Christ, living in unity as one.

1 Corinthians 12.12-13 Paul and the Body of Christ

The body of Christ has gone through immense scrutiny by scholars who study Pauline scholarship like Gaston Deluz, Mitchell, J. Smit, A. Schweitzer, and A. T. Robinson. These early scholars posed varied interpretations on how Paul used these phrases. On the one hand, Thiselton quotes Deluz as saying, "Having spoken to those who have an inferiority complex, Paul now turns to those who are convinced that they know best and want to get everything into their own hands" (Thiselton 990-91). Here deliberative genre, according to J. Smit means concerning mutuality and reciprocity is proven good for the whole body (Thiselton 991).

During an earlier period, A. Schweitzer identifies metaphor and analogy as the preferred writing style of Paul. Schweitzer writes, "In the whole literature of mysticism there is no problem comparable to this of the mystical body of Christ. How could a thinker come to produce this conception of the extension of the body of a personal being?" (990-91). He adds, "All attempts to distinguish in the relevant passages between the personal (historical) and mystical body of Christ are initially doomed to failure. The obscurity was intended by Paul" (990-91).

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Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus is how A. T. Robinson relates

Christ's body to the Christian community (see Acts 9.4–5; 22.7–8). Therefore, Robinson insists

that Christ's resurrected body should not be viewed from an individual perspective, rather, it

should be viewed from the perspective of the community. This statement infers the current

understanding of the word "member" as a singular part of an organized body and must be viewed

as the communal body of Christ (Robinson 991). Robinson's interpretation of Paul's meaning

goes to the heart of the intergenerational church. Members of the body of Christ are directly

associated with the resurrected body of Christ, hence as a church, Christians are all members of

God's family; therefore, as Christians of a local church, they become members of the same

earthly family of God (991).

More to this argument exists as shall be seen. Thus far, a simplistic argument for

members of the local church being the body of Christ, not members of a social group who attend

a local church, has been made. To further this argument requires looking at the interpretation of

the text itself.

> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body,
>
> though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit, we were all baptized
>
> into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and all were made to drink of one
>
> Spirit (1 Cor. 12.12-14, ESV).

The captured verses above illustrate with certainty Paul's principal understanding of the

body. Peter Lange interprets Paul's understanding of the body as a diversity of gifts working

together in the same body. The analogy Lange uses parallels the members of a local church. A

local church by definition has many members possessing a variety of gifts that must function in

unity in order for the church to work effectively (Lange et. al. 254). First Corinthians 12.14 says,

"For the body does not consist of one member but of many." Lange uses this verse to highlight the unity in diversity governed by the Spirit. Therefore, although many parts of the body exist, the parts are unified as one without conflict (254). This statement is affirmed by Atkinson who posits Christian faith is grounded in the revelation knowledge of Israel; therefore, they do not compete with one another (Atkinson 15).

According to John Lange, the use of the word "body" emphasizes the many members that make up the one body. Just as the body of Christ, containing many members, is considered a unified body, the body represents the church in him as his living organism. "Jews and Greeks are to remain Jews and Greeks, yet they are to subordinate their national peculiarities to a higher Christian unity" (Lange et. al. 254).

R. C. H. Lenski's interpretation of verse 12 says, "Look at the human body. What do we see? Oneness in multiplicity" (Lenski 512). Just as the human body illustrates oneness in multiplicity, so does Christ. Paul speaks in chiastic form first by saying, "the body is one and has many members," then reverses the order by saying "the members of the body, though many, are one body." This reversal is to bring emphasis to oneness and multiplicity (512).

Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney provide further clarification of the gifts as they relate to members of the body. Hughes and Laney say, "Using the illustration of the human body, Paul described the relation of the gifted believers to one another and to Christ and explained how each was necessary and important" (Hughes and Laney 556). As members are baptized by the Holy Spirit, they are united with all other believers in the body of Christ. "The word "baptized" was used metaphorically here and carries the sense of "identification with"" (556). The Spirit is the source of all gifting; therefore, emphasis is not on the function of the gift, or who receives the gift but rather on the source of the gift which is the Spirit of God (556). As members concentrate

on the giver of gifts and not on the type of gift received, a greater sense of unity in the body can be achieved.

Paul spent time explaining to the church the value of being gifted. He wanted to ensure people that once they became a baptized believer in Jesus Christ, regardless of their socio-economic condition, they were all equal as members of the body of Christ. The church at Corinth has problems with members seeking to prioritize gifts based on their perceived importance and their sense of independence. However, through Paul's insistence, the Corinthians were reminded repeatedly that all members were equal, and all gifts must work together for the good of the whole body and not for a select few parts of the body (Hughes and Laney 556).

The body of Christ, speaking metaphorically about local church membership, provides a sense of equality among members that have various functions. Although each member is viewed in the sight of God as equal, the function (gift) given to each member is different so that the total body can function as a collective unit. In this way, no one function (gift) is able to sustain the body. All members using all gifts make the body function as it is intended. When fully understood, members should be able to work together, leveraging their giftedness for the benefit of the whole body and not an individual part. Similar to the discussion on the family of God, knowledge of the meaning of the body of Christ makes it possible for the local church to function as a healthy intergenerational congregation.

Ephesians 4.11-16 Regarding Unity in the Body

Appropriate use of gifts is a function of unity in the body according to Walter L. Liefeld. Liefeld posits that everyone is excited to receive gifts regardless of when they receive them. Gifts makes people feel good, appreciated, and accepted; however, when it comes to spiritual gifts and the reason they were bestowed upon us, many people become disinterested in

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discovering what their true gifting is. One of the difficulties of today's church is for people to be told that the area of ministry they are serving in does not match their spiritual gifting (Liefeld). Liefeld says, "What must be kept in mind is that the gifts here in verse 11, those in Romans 12:3–8 and those in 1 Corinthians 12:1–31 are not for personal benefit. They are given by God for the good of others ('to prepare God's people,' v. 12; compare 'for the common good,' 1 Cor 12:7)" (Liefeld).

David S. Dockery provides a user-friendly interpretation of gifts as a function of the body of Christ. Dockery emphatically says that God gave different classifications of people gifts. The people are the essential element of the body of Christ and not the gifting they possess. He says, "All of these gifted people carry out equipping ministries so that service ministries can be actualized. Or as Paul put it, 'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith'" (Dockery 579-80).

Ephesians 4.13-16 states the goal of the church according to Dockery. "The church is to grow up in Christ so it will avoid spiritual immaturity, instability, and gullibility" (Dockery 580). The atmosphere of spiritual maturity is described in terms of truth and love. Maturity is defined totally in relationship to the corporate Christian body. Maturity is an ongoing process of being "joined and held together" in relationship with the body of Christ (580). Believers are to walk in love, please God by avoiding evildoers, and walk in wisdom. The church is enabled to do this by the empowering of the Holy Spirit. When this happens, believers can praise God together, constantly offer thanksgiving in all things and mutually submitting one to another (Dockery 580).

This brief review of the biblical text concerning the body of Christ is provided to emphasize the importance of God's intentions for the church. As the church, members become

the body of Christ with Christ. Therefore, the unity of the body of Christ is inclusive of the church. Members of the church do not give up their biological families, rather their biological families are joined together with other biological families to become the unified body of Christ; each of them individually and collectively makes up Christ's body as they function together as the intergenerational church.

Through the covenant promise, members become the family of God. Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, they become the body of Christ. The family of God and the body of Christ cannot function effectively in chaos or chaotic fashion. Each local church must never forget God's covenant promise nor the implications of Christ's suffering on the cross as an extension of God's covenant promise. The mission of God is for all to be saved; however, all will not make the choice of everlasting life in Christ. This choice is why it is incumbent upon church members to learn the narrative story of the Bible and to operate as an extension of that story during their lifetimes. Churchgoers can ill afford to confuse the meaning of family and body as defined in scripture with how the world defines family and body.

The universal truth about God is that God is a God of all people who call upon the name of Jesus. This statement means that every baptized believer in Jesus Christ is a critical member of Christ's body with a charge to keep. Every baptized believer has been gifted by God to serve the local church as God equips them to serve. No one individual in the church has the right or authority to exercise power or privilege over another member since each member is equal and each gift is necessary for the body of Christ to be complete. Generational gaps in the church are a sign of an unhealthy and incomplete body, a body that cannot please God when all members are not present and actively doing God's will.

Theological Foundations

Study-Worship Together Aids Marital Relations

The old slogan, "couples who pray together stay together" may be true especially for African Americans, according to a new study (Christian Century 18). Data shows four in ten African American couples attend worship more often than other racial and ethnic groups. Other data reveal that 31 percent of Mexican Americans and 29 percent of whites say they attend church regularly (18). Economically, W. Bradford Wilcox reports "Without prayer, Black couples would be doing significantly worse than white couples." (Wilcox 2006 as quoted in Christian Century 18) He goes on to say, "The vitality of African Americans' religious life gives them an advantage over other Americans when it comes to relationships. This advantage puts them on par with other couples" (18).

The National Survey of Religion and Family Life, who conducted the study in 2006, also reports that besides couples attending worship, African Americans are also more likely to have in-home prayer meetings and Bible studies (Christian Century 18). This article in part provides significant meaning to the need of intergenerational churches to be revitalized. When families worship together, family ties and long-term relationships are strengthened.

Intercessory Prayer Across Generations: Case Study

Christina Embree posits age specific ministry is creating silos in many congregations. The Bible is the primary resource of local churches; however, congregations have shied away from the biblical examples of generational groups living out their faith together. Rather than worshipping, studying, and serving together, the church has opted to divide congregants into what is considered age-appropriate groups, providing a false sense of unity in the body. For the church to be the unified body of Christ, the church must seek to bring all generations together.

"Intercessory prayer has been shown to have positive effects on a variety of social relationships and is a spiritual discipline available to all, regardless of age or spiritual maturity" (Embree 128). Philip Clements-Jewery suggest the practice of prayer is central to the Christian faith but is in decline (Clements-Jewelry 1). He says the landscape of the church has become more inward focused and small-minded. Members have become so me-focused that they participate on the basis of what is in it for them; they want to know what they will get out of their participation (Clements-Jewelry 2).

Although Embree believes intergenerational prayer has positive effects on a variety of social relationships, Clements-Jewery posits, "A closer examination of the present-day scene might suggest that, in fact, all is not well in relation to the practice of prayer, particularly of the intercessory and petitionary kind" (Clements-Jewelry 1). He says, "It is often the case that, in the public worship of Churches whose services are non-liturgical, particularly those of a 'charismatic' or 'renewed' nature, so much time may be given over to worship and praise that intercession may sometimes be left out altogether" (1). To this end, Embree wonders if a way exists for generations to gather together without the resistance and tension from any one generational group (Embree).

According to Ephraim Radner, the effectiveness of intercessory prayer is age-old yet has modern doubts because of convictions of science and ethics. The scientific conviction is based on natural law and disavows the story of creation and God's mystical and majestic movement in the world. The ethical conviction posit exceptions are considered unjust. A sense of one or the other, someone wins, and someone loses, one person is healed, and another is not, whether they pray or not seems too arbitrary and leans toward injustice (Radner 71). It is difficult at best for

intercessory prayer to be effective when sceptics and doubters proliferate society with false narratives rather than faith.

Because society today has become more inward focused, Jewery believes issues of intercessory prayer stem from concerns about our psychosocial character preoccupied with individualism and may have difficulty fitting into this current contextual ethos (Clements-Jewery 2).

Data indicate that kids who are involved in intergenerational church activities continue their affiliation with church and their intergenerational relationships. Embree says, "Separate worship services based on generational likes and dislikes along with the increase of specialized ministries that focus primarily on age as a defining characteristic has led to an environment where interaction between generations, while a positive and desired attribute for a church, finds little space to take place" (Embree 129). Embree continues her argument by saying, generational discipleship, passing the faith from one generation to another through relationships within a community of faith, can be difficult when a church is structured in a way that tends to segregate members by age and stages of development. Creating space within the church for the types of relationships that support, nurture, and equip children and the family can be difficult. One may ask, "Is this concept of generational discipleship and intergenerational community worth the work it takes to create that space? And if so, could there be a way to span the generations with an approach that could increase the interaction between the generations within a community of faith without creating tension and resistance" (Embree 129).

As today's church find herself more age-separate and generationally divided, the topic of the intergenerational church has become popular. Embree says, "In 2003, the Commission on Children at Risk, a group comprised of thirty-three doctors, research scientists, and mental health

and youth service professionals, released a study which found that 'the U.S. social institutions that foster connectedness for children have gotten significantly weaker'" (Embree 131). What the study further discovered was that moral and spiritual connections, which were a hallmark of the historical church, has shifted from multigenerational to unigenerational and are no longer tightly held assemblies. (131).

Historical church's connection to multigenerationalism has much to do with its shared memory and identity. During this period, children benefited greatly from sharing with people of many generations. Associated with the absence of children being exposed to multiple generations in the church is an increase of children problems. Reengaging the networks of mutually held generational relationships across the church contributes to greater outcomes for children and their behavior (Embree 131).

Worshipping together was the norm in churches as far back as the third century, says Embree. Today an age-appropriate siloed modality has taken center stage in what many scholars believe has weakened the resolve of Christian churches to live in community as the family of God. During that time, children participated with adults in annual feast and worship, and infant baptism became the entry point into a life of Christ. Andrew Meehan records that Pope Cornelius instituted the position of acolytes in 251 A.D. to serve as a training ground for young boys to learn about serving the church (Meehan 1907 as quoted in Embree 18). Allen and Ross state, "House Churches of the First Century were places in which all generations were present. The generations remained integrated throughout much of Christian history until recently" (Allen and Ross 2012 as quoted in Embree 133).

In the late twentieth century, the term "generation gap" was used to describe the age segregation in society and the church. Sociologist Mary Pipher states:

A great deal of America's social sickness comes from age segregation. If ten fourteen-year-olds are grouped together, they will form a Lord of the Flies culture with its competitiveness and meanness. But if ten people ages two to eighty are grouped together, they will fall into a natural age hierarchy that nurtures and teaches them all. For our own mental and societal health, we need to reconnect the age groups (Pipher as quoted in Embree, 133).

Intergenerational churches report having the highest level of spiritual maturity as opposed to churches separated by age and space. When asked what the weakest area of church life was, those who were polled said getting younger people connected with older generations (Embree 134). Dr. Martin Kohli of Free University of Berlin looked at intergenerational interactions in other areas of society and found that "Where cross-age interaction in the structures of everyday life is deficient, it needs to be institutionalized in other domains" (Kohli as quoted in Embree 134). In other words, "something has to be put in place to encourage and incorporate intergenerational involvement" (134).

The Intergenerational Church's Role in Family Worship

Domestic church is used in reference to the family based on four aspects of church life, i.e., as the people of God, as a community of Christ's followers, as a worshipping community, and as servant people in the kingdom of God.

Molding one's family into "a people of God" involves forming it into a community. Becoming people of God means making decisions and choosing how to treat and relate to one another, as members strive to be influenced by the Spirit of God. Family members try to be directed not merely by their own will, but by the will of God (Singarayar 49).

Being members of the church alone does not make it a domestic church, rather, love for one another and being faithful does. Some of the images used to describe Christ's relationship with the church are the vine and the branches and the various sacraments practiced in the community of the faithful (Singarayar 50). Singarayar says, "By means of the sacrament of marriage, in which it is rooted, and from which it draws its nourishment, the Christian family is continuously vivified by the Lord Jesus and called and engaged by Him in a dialogue with God through the sacraments, through the offering of one's life, and through prayer" (50). Prayer is a central component in observing sacraments, and the celebration of Holy Communion is the most frequent way different families of the church unite and demonstrate being in relationship with Christ and one another (50).

Jereme Jordan says, "Family worship is a form of discipleship allowing parents to take first responsibility in raising their children. The church, including parents, is called to pass on the faith and teachings of Jesus Christ. This calling adheres to the Great Commission, in which followers of Christ are to share the good news, thereby creating more followers" (Jordan 4). Discipleship through family worship and disciplining one's household prepares the larger church body to go out and make disciples of others. Effective family worship through disciple making becomes a spiritual discipline that engages existing members in being obedient to the Great Commission. Going, baptizing, and teaching (the three components of the Great Commission) is more effective when observed within the church community. Attracting new believers is maximized when members develop the spiritual disciplines of making and maintaining disciples among themselves.

When children are discipled by their parents and members of the faith community, they will grow and mature over time to repeat the disciple making process with families they create.

Jereme Jordon quotes Steve Parr and Tom Crites saying, "Parents have a greater opportunity to influence their child's spiritual development, positively or negatively, more than anyone else in their foundational years. Parents cannot take this responsibility lightly" (Jordan 4). "The impact parents can have on their children, either positive or negative, is far greater than the church or school" (4).

Multigenerational vs Intergenerational Church

Billy Kluttz quotes Liz Perraud, Executive Director of GenOn Ministries, who presented on the future of intergenerational ministry at the 2018 Next Church Conference. According to Perraud, "churches have historically been multi-generational by accident" (Kluttz), she argued. "Now, however, we are called to create intergenerational ministries for the sake of institutional survival" (Perraud 2018 as quoted in Kluttz).

The accidental formation of multi-generational churches is formed based on location and family structures. Rarely do multigenerational church form out of a sense of call, vision, and mission. Families who choose churches based on location and structure usually have limited relationships resulting in them assimilating into existing siloed structures of the churches they join. These siloed structures have limited interaction by design with the larger church resulting in declining membership. Based on Perraud's findings, being in the same building at the same time does not constitute unity in the body. In fact, the opposite is true. The church must come face-to-face with the reality that being in the same building at the same time does not constitute integration, especially when the church's activities demonstrate segregation based on how it functions (Kluttz).

Social isolation among older adults is a functional reality of multigenerational churches that must be addressed. To address social isolation is hard work that demands a deconstruction of

the multigenerational church and the establishment of the intergenerational church body. The intergenerational church includes all age groups of the congregation where everyone finds meaning in genuine relationships that nurture all members of the church together as one large family and body of Christ (Klutttz).

Kluttz gives a definition of intergenerational ministry "Intergenerational ministry develops disciples and energizes churches by bringing together any combination of at least two generations in planned and purposeful settings; empowering multiple generations to mutually invest in each other and in their faith community; intentionally encouraging … relationships among multiple generations" (Klutz).

Intergenerational families from across the church are necessary to make up the intergenerational church so that the generational gaps that currently exist can be minimized. Additionally, as members of the church see themselves as God sees them, as one family in God, a more effective church will emerge to serve the community as God intended.

It's Time to Grow Up

Drew Dyck posits adults have been a significant stumbling block toward improving generational relationships by reducing spiritual growth and maturity (Dyck 65). As a result of this unintentional problem, Dyck developed an approach to ministry that very well could lead to the reinvigoration of the church. Most churches are relatively successful in their evangelistic efforts and do a good job of preparing children and young people on how to evangelize. However, the other side of the coin to evangelism is discipleship, which churches have a difficult time in engaging (Dyck 65). Seemingly church leaders have been reluctant to empower the church toward discipleship in fear it may minimize the effects of evangelism. This is far from the

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truth, evangelism and discipleship are two sides of the same coin; one cannot exist without the other.

According to Dyck, the evangelism/discipleship metaphor goes to the heart of the generational gap in the church. The church has placed more emphasis on some groups and ministries than she has others. The same holds true for an intergenerational church. Without all members being in relationship one with another and serving together, the church does not fully develop. Intergenerational relationships are crucial, as is involving young people in the life of the church. Dyck raises the poignant question, which church programs or activities are truly making disciples? (65).

Churches must pay attention to the years after high school. Dyke says, "More parents and high-school students should strongly consider a Christian college. Today's culture is almost perfectly designed to disengage emerging adults from the church by putting their faith on hold. We should absolutely support ministries at state universities. But some students, especially those whose faith is a little shakier, need a Christian college environment" (65).

Dyck asks the question: how can we foster maturity across all age groups? He answers the question by saying the church needs to look at its environments. In this way, Dyck insists that the church looks at the opportunities in which it affords members to spiritually grow. Many churches provide Sunday morning worship as the most significant place spiritual growth is fostered without assessments to prove worship increases spirituality. Dyck provides alternatives to Sunday worship by suggesting activities such as small groups, mission trips, service projects, and even committees cause spiritual growth (65).

Research supports the notion that adults grow spiritually through intergenerational interaction; however, they are not the only people that need cross-generational attention.

Churches maximize congregational spiritual growth when all ages of the congregation are able to draw from the gifts and experiences of one another. As the church fortifies its intergenerational presence from within, it will be more effective in making disciples from those beyond the walls of the church (65).

Intergenerational: What's In a Word

Jocelyn Hill remembers the word intergenerational becoming popular in the 1970's and was defined as a time when various age groups came together for some type of Christian education activity. The results of these efforts were surprising as each age group came away from the discussions with something different about the subject matter. As time went on, the intergenerational age group studies began to die and were constantly being rebirthed without the intergenerational relationship component (J. Hill, "What's In A Word," 18).

Hill firmly believes intergenerational relationships and ministries are one of the greatest opportunities for congregants to experience the church in its fullness. These relationships and ministries can happen across several different platforms, however, rather than coming together to study and discuss a topic or theme. Hill urges the coming together to learn about one another and how each person experienced the theme over the years. The more generations present, the greater number of stories that can be shared. The shift in Hill's intergenerational approach is not to learn about one another but to learn from one another. Learning from one another provides a richer experience which builds relationships and solidifies the intergenerational church (Hill 18).

Good For All Ages: Don't Underestimate The Power Of Intergenerational Relationships

Annemarie Scobey says when all the generations of the church are in covenant relationship with one another, it is good for everyone.

One study, published in a 2015 issue of the American Journal of Public Health, revealed the positive benefits when older generations form relationships with younger generations. The benefits from the study identified a sense of warmth and acceptance from younger generations and older generations memory retention increased and became healthier in relation to the older generations who are in isolation (Scobey 43).

A University of Oxford study found that grandparents are a great source of emotional stability when they are involved in their grandchildren's lives. The study also reported that these children are better able to face difficult life challenges and crisis over children whose grandparents are not an active part of their lives (Scobey 43-44). "A two-decade Boston College study that tracked the mental health of grandchildren and their grandparents found a reduction in acts of depression when both parties have active interactions with one another. Data from this study showed the importance of giving and receiving by grandparents and grandchildren" (43). When grandparents are the givers, they suffer fewer episodes of depression. Conversely, when the grandchildren give to grandparents without the grandparents reciprocating, higher rates of depressive episodes occurred (44).

Time and space play an important role in intergenerational health. In prior years, seeing several generations living together in a single home or within relative distance from one another, allowing for intergenerational family relationships to flourish, was common. Today, because of the job market, air travel, and other factors, families have been disconnected from one another necessitating planned gatherings around times that were convenient for all parties. Indeed, time and space have impacted the ability of generations of the same family to maintain close bonds, fellowship, and care for one another. In cases like this, volunteering is recommended as a source of maintain some semblance of intergenerational relationships (Scobey 44).

The notion of volunteering is based on providing relationships for older and younger members of a church or community to support one another in ways that families are not able to because of distance. Volunteering provides security, hope, and a sense of belonging. Volunteering reinforces the term ubuntu, which is grounded in African philosophy. This philosophy proffers community co-dependence where the joys and challenges of the community are placed before the issues and concerns of a single individual. Ubuntu provides an excellent opportunity to model intergenerational relationships (Hunhu/Ubuntu in the Traditional Thought).

From Age Segregation to an Age of Intergenerational Community

Eugene C. Rochlkpartain provides an illustration that gives a false sense of community which has caused a deterioration of biological and communal family relationships. Rochlkpartain shares in vivid detail church families that gather weekly for worship and ministry activities with a seemingly solid relational foundation. Upon closer examination, what is seen is the picture of churches across America on Sunday morning, segregated (Rochlkpartain 7).

In 1964, Martin Luther King, Jr. writes that Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m. is the most segregated hour in America. King's statement at that time spoke to the racial divide of the Christian church as a microcosm of the racial divide in America. Peculiar to note was the prophetic utterance of King, seeking to bring cohesion and unity to the country, also spoke volumes to the reality of the current generational gap in America at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning in 2023 (Rochlkpartain 7).

Rochlkpartain's illustration spoke to the only time when all age groups could be seen under the same roof gathered for worship. Rochlkpartain says what seems on the surface to be a healthy display of family and church unity was nothing more than modified segregation. Once inside the church, age groups diverged into age-appropriate rooms and had little in common

except for the building. Something significant exists about intergenerational participation in the life of the church, Rochlkpartain says, especially among the older adults who feel estranged and isolated from the younger members. Similarly, younger people are depraved for developing relationships with older members which is a critical component of establishing congregational unity (Rochlkpartain 8).

Significant stress has developed in many churches based on the generational divide. Disagreement on style of music, worship, activities, and ministry has taken a toll on many congregations. While intergenerational worship and ministry might not solve the issues of separation, it can lead to meaningful conversation about how to shape and shift faith traditions so that all members can have vital and fruitful congregational experiences (Rochlkpartain 8).

Additionally, intergenerational relationships provide opportunities for passing on faith and values, not through curricula and classes but through meaningful relationships. Relationships can be established intergenerationally through sharing lived experiences and providing mentorships and friendships, all of which leads to sustained vitality as a faith community. Other attributes of intergenerational relationships include informal relationships and leadership opportunities (Rochlkpartain 9).

Growing More Communities of Faith

James Gambone reports that over a twenty-five year period, he has worked extensively with intergenerational ministry and what is desired most is more diverse communities of faith. The church has evolved extensively since the days of the Acts 2 church. More churches, more denominations, and more faith systems exist to choose from; however, with larger choices from which to choose, diversity has still been absent, not that the church has not tried (Gambone 33-34).

Gambone admits that no amount of Christian education, spiritual formation, and worship styles and experiences can take the place of the richness of diverse communities of faith. Gambone strongly believe churches should step back and shout to the heavens regarding the need for the church to recommit following the design of God, to loving God and one another as we are loved by God (Gambone 34).

According to Gambone, all cultural groups have survived in part because of the intergenerational relationships that have been fostered down through the years. Because of intergenerational relationships, strong families were developed, sustainable churches were planted, and communities were galvanized. As these intergenerational groups grew and developed, the society benefited. Gambone says our current society is suffering needlessly today and gaps in generations within the church and the community is a large reason for this. Gambone is calling on what is left of intergenerational groups to build on the strengths that has preserved them over the years (Gambone 34).

Gambone tells the story of a community of monks that began to die. The monks traveled to the site of a wise monk who after hearing them complain and bemoan their circumstances said that one of them has a special relationship with Jesus that could save their community, but he did not say which one. The monks went back to their village and the story of the spirit filled monk among them had the power to save the village. Immediately, people of all ages began to work together, show more love, kindness, and interest in one another; to their surprise, the village became whole again. Gambone goes on to say, no reason exists that today's church cannot do the same (Gambone 34).

Building Intergenerational Communities Through Research And Evaluation

Valeri Shahariw Kuehne begins her article by saying that most people take their communities for granted and live out their lives in communities that need repair, resuscitation, and rejuvenation. She defines intergenerational communities as places where all age groups foster meaningful relationships across the generations. She sees these as healthy communities not because of financial wealth, rather, because of the richness of the relationships that have been developed over the generations. Young, old, and in between live life together, benefitting from the stories, heritage, and emerging lifestyles that spring up as time passes on (Kuehne 82).

Some people, according to Kuehne, have no faith in these kinds of communal relationships ever returning. As our society develops, it has become highly competitive, less relational, more individualistic, and relentingly complex. The complexities of life today have brought with it a reduction of self-care, family time together, and an increase in crime. With so much going on in everyone's multitasking lives, rarely do people take time to fellowship. The stressors of living in this fast-paced society have had a negative effect on marriages resulting in a number of single parents raising children with little to no support (Kuehne 82).

Those who seek to develop communities based on ubuntu philosophy are placing community needs over individual needs and have developed programs that promote intentional intergenerational community relationships. These programs seek to benefit first and foremost the overall community, while providing support and satisfaction of those involved in the program. Over time, the community becomes a healthy caring community of mutuality and generational strength (Kuehne 82).

"In sum, action research provides opportunities for community members to participate in answering questions and grappling with challenges that face them in their everyday lives," she

says (Kuehne 82). Riley and Riley describe these as "opportunity structures" and argue that more of these structures must be created for older adults to contribute to their society. The same may well be said about the youth in our communities, who often are without vehicles for constructive collective involvement, and have few opportunities to practice responsibility. Clearly, many research methodologies are available to researchers interested in studying intergenerational programs in communities. The advantages of a community-based action-research approach is its congruence with the community-building qualities of intergenerational programs themselves (Riley and Riley 1994 as quoted in Kuehne 82).

From Age to Age

Ken Walker makes the point that a good thing can go too far. Walker affirms the need for age integration among congregants but does not agree that a one size fits all remedy is sustainable. Walker refers to the stirring dialogue among interest groups that Scott Brown, director of the National Center for Family-Integrated Churches has created. Walker also uses and illustration by Brian Haynes that says when it comes to youth ministry and youth involvement in generational church functions, they are "a branch that needs pruning instead of a weed that should be plucked" (Walker 15). Haynes goes on to say, "I wouldn't have a problem being a church with family-integrated Sunday school classes. Where I do have a problem is when you say that's the only way to do that" (Walker 15).

Mature faith linked to intergenerational worship and discipleship are among the results of a six-year study according to Kara Powell and Chap Clark. The study also helped to explain why almost half of high school students stop participating in church after they graduate. Although young people of all ages need to have age-appropriate time together, Powell insists it should not be indefinite (Powell and Clark as quoted in Walker 15).

Accordingly, balanced time with other generations provide a healthier environment for long-term engagement (Powell and Clark as quoted in Walker 15). Powell sites the Christian Education Journal as saying that intergenerational church models formed over the last twenty years were formed for parents with children. The ecclesial study indicated that the difference was based on these members understanding of what it means to be the church. Intergenerational involvement does not mean being together all the time, says Scottie May but rather that everyone is welcome to participate in all ministries at any time (May as quoted in Walker 16).

The Power of Intergenerational Connection

Human existence is based on people needing one another. People needing one another is the foundation for intergenerational connectivity. Healthy social interaction involves connecting with others through physical, mental, and emotional ways that allow people to grow to live balanced lives. Social isolation is the opposite of social interaction and can have damaging effects on people's health when they do not receive social interaction and stimulation (Cockrell 1). Maurya Cockrell says, "Young people and older adults have an opportunity to leverage intergenerational relationships to improve cognitive function, increase empathy, and live longer lives" (1).

Physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization are the components of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which produces healthier individuals. Depravation of these needs' leads to poor health, morbidity, and higher mortality. Unrealized needs can be neutralized through intergenerational relationships which provide care, companionship, and connectedness (Cockrell 2). This truth is particularly important as people get older, and age-diversity become more difficult to maintain. The ability to look and feel younger as you age provides untold opportunities for older adults. Those who are unable to remain youthful as they

age seek refuge in senior living facilities where they become siloed in communities of the aging. The ability to remain active and socially involved provides an opportunity for wisdom to continue to be passed down to younger generations to share as they age; thus, perpetuating intergenerational connectivity (2).

Reciprocal care is a powerful benefit of intergenerational connection for families. This care is illustrated best by grandparents caring for their children's children. This level of care gives opportunities for young parents to maintain social connections, attend adult only activities, and often take a break from the seemingly never ceasing demands of raising children. Reciprocation takes place when grandparents get to an age where they need care themselves. When this occurs, their children and grandchildren step up and assist while maintaining the generational connection that is critical to living a balanced life avoiding isolation (Cockrell 3).

The power of generational connections gives a sense of belonging, importance, and value to those who share such connections. These connections are different from caring relationships because these connections are intentional about living life together. Cockrell says, "According to Brubaker and Brubaker, four Rs are needed for strong intergenerational relationships: 1) Respect; 2) Reciprocity; 3) Responsibility; and 4) Resiliency" (4).

Church As Family

Christina Zaker says that a number of definitions of spirituality exist and many of them deal with the individual. However, Zaker believes in the spirituality of the family or, as she describes it, the bonded family unit (Zaker 10). Zaker says, "A bonded family unit is in touch with each other day to day versus spread out across time and space" (10). She says the spirituality of the family is sacred and begins with love and is lived out in the manner in which love is shared and received (10).

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As a family, a sense of belonging, relationship, and responsibility for one another exist. Family was instituted by God and as families share and receive love, they are able to sense the presence of God and God's love for them (Zaker 11). As families live out their spirituality together, they are reminded to include God in who they are and what they do. Sharing God as a part of family spirituality allows the love of God to be experienced throughout the community in relationships beyond the family (11).

Krish Kandiah says church is not an event on the calendar that one gets to attend like a party, movie, or concert, and many families have inappropriately used this type of language to describe the church (66). She says that defining church incorrectly results in phrases like "going to church" and "shopping around" for a church or "church hopping" (66). As a result of using terms that define the church incorrectly, Kandiah insists that Christians no longer see themselves as the church when in fact, as a family, Christians are the church. Because of church branding, celebrity status, and religious iconic personalities, people will travel great lengths to attend the church of their choice. For Kandiah, "The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught, and the sacraments are rightly administered" (66).

When the definition of church is misapplied, it can lead to people attending church in ways that God never intended. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark say, "The American church is fundamentally shaped by free-market capitalism… Church leaders frequently act as salesmen, and evangelism strategies often resemble marketing campaigns. Churches end up competing with one another for attendees just like businesses compete for customers" (Fink and Stark 1992 as quoted in Kandiah 69).

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundations portion of this research looks at existing disciple making models that lead to church growth, issues of generational gaps in the church, and intergenerational church models that lead to healthy churches.

Disciple Making

This section began by hearing from scholars who are convinced that the Great Commission of Jesus in the twenty-first century needs a major overall. The authors provide a review of how far the church has departed from the last command of Jesus to go, baptize, and teach. If followed in earnestness, the church will emerge better equipped with members willing to go and make disciples

Making disciple, according to the Great Commission, is the primary function of the church (Collinson 240). The model of disciple making Jesus left on record in the Gospels and was adopted by the Apostle Paul was designed to grow the church throughout the known world. Adaptations and hybrid models of Jesus' directive have been passed down over the years, and now it appears that what Jesus taught and commanded is rarely used. Today's church must return to what Jesus taught if Christians are to grow the church and build the Kingdom of God (240). In support of a biblical approach to disciple making, Collinson posits Jesus' command to make disciples is to foster a lifestyle grounded in scripture, to adopt a biblical model in relating to today's followers, and to develop new believers in the faith. (240).

Taking visitors on a journey to salvation is the model of disciple making used by Gene Tanner. The journey involves moving visitors through stages of growth and development with the end goal of them accepting Christ in their lives. The phases of the journey are sanctification, membership, assimilation, and maturity (Tanner as quoted in Wiseman 70-77). What makes the

journey effective and successful for Tanner's visitors is the deployment of a tour guide who facilitates each step of the journey. This model keeps the visitors looking forward to where they are headed, avoiding them aimlessly wandering along with no clear direction. By leading and guiding visitors on the journey toward salvation, there is a better chance they will complete the journey and not get lost along the way (70-76).

Greg Ogden says, "If I were to choose one word to summarize the state of discipleship today, that word would be superficial" (21). He says, "There appears to be a general lack of comprehension among many who claim Jesus as Savior as to the implications of following him as Lord" (21). Superficiality is the byproduct of what we say and what we do. A gaping gulf exists between those who say they are saved and those who live saved lives (22). Making disciples of Jesus Christ is minimized considerably when we are unable to live lives that attract people to Jesus.

Rod Dempsey and Dave Earley say the most important mission for all Christians is disciple making. They say, "Be a Disciple and Make Disciples! Orient your life around the Great Commission" (Earley and Dempsey xi). The last words of Jesus to his followers were to make disciples. Making disciples is a principal component in the mission of God. Although methods may be different, however, the end result should be the same: to build God's kingdom on earth by making disciples (xi).

Dempsey and Earley espouse a three-step process for making disciples grounded in the ministry of Jesus and replicated by the Apostle Paul. The three steps are (1) Declaration; (2) Development; and (3) Deployment. These three steps derive their significance from Jesus who made disciples by getting people to become believers, growing believers to become disciples, and sending disciples out to make disciples (Earley and Dempsey 59). Today's vernacular is to

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save the lost, disciple the saved, and multiply the sent. Each of these steps align with the Great Commission of Jesus according to Matthew 28.16-20.

Additionally, the disciple making process of Earley and Dempsey is in alignment with God's will for humanity. Dempsey and Earley say that disciples of Jesus are sacrificial, relational, and transformational (Earley and Dempsey 59). When these attributes are integrated in the process of making disciples, a radical shift will occur in the life of the church. When Jesus' model of making disciples is taught and implemented in the congregation, members will understand that Christians make to disciples to glorify God in five ways. Christians are saved, grown spiritually, serve, suffer, and bear fruit all for the glory of God (Earley and Dempsey 14-15).

Because churches and denominational affiliations have different polity, disciplines, and values, Earley and Dempsey provide a general understanding of the four dominant types of church models: (1) Traditional Model; (2) Attractional Model; (3) Organic Model; and (4) Hybrid Model (Earley and Dempsey 230-33). Each of these models have strengths and weaknesses, and knowing which of the four models a particular church resembles, avoids the risk of seeking to replicate a church's model of ministry and disciple making that may not be right for their church.

Hull references Robert Coleman where Coleman takes apart the life of Jesus and put it back together again to develop eight steps for equipping disciples. These steps are necessary for any church that is serious about transforming their congregation into disciples rather than attenders or members. The steps are selection, association, consecration, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision, and reproduction.

1. Selection — Jesus chose to use people to reach other people. He used everyday men and women rather than miracles to transform lives into becoming his followers. Choosing men and women demonstrated the faith he had in us.

2. Association — Rather than sending his disciples away to be taught, he taught them every day as thy did life together. The life and ministry of Jesus was all that was needed for his disciples to understand their ultimate mission.

3. Consecration — After choosing his disciples, Jesus compelled them to be obedient to his teaching and way of life. Jesus was the teacher, and they were his students who obediently followed his direction. Consecration for this purpose means being set apart to Jesus' service.

4. Impartation — Jesus poured himself into each of his disciples. The disciple benefitted from everything Jesus did, and everything that Jesus had. He withheld nothing from them.

5. Demonstration — The method of teaching that Jesus used was the coaching method. Jesus showed the disciples how to live by the way he lived, and eventually he sent them out to live among others has they had lived among him.

6. Delegation — After watching Jesus live his life among them, the disciples were given assignments to serve others. Although they lived with Jesus and observed his teaching, doing the work themselves was a difficult task. However, when they were ready, he sent them out. Ultimately, he gave them the Great Commission to go into the world and make disciples.

7. Supervision — As the disciples developed a lifestyle of living like Jesus, there were times when Jesus corrected them when they went off course. Jesus continued to

develop the disciples to be able to handle all aspects of life. Jesus wanted the disciples to be ready to carry on his ministry once he ascended back to God.

8. Reproduction — Jesus understood that his twelve disciples would not be able to serve everyone in the world; therefore, his teaching and instruction prepared them to make new disciples who make disciples through the process of multiplying and reproducing more disciples. (Coleman 2020 as quoted in Hull 111-12).

Coleman's eight steps for equipping disciples expand the three steps of disciple making of Earley and Dempsey. Step one of Coleman would be Declaration for Earley and Dempsey. Steps two thru seven would be Development, and step eight would be Deployment. As it relates to the intergenerational church and bridging generational gaps, Hull says,

Spiritual reproduction creates spiritual generations that can be as short few minutes or as long as decades. I have known people who committed to follow Christ later that day led their whole family to make the same commitment. While that would qualify as a spiritual generation regarding entry to the Christian faith, it wouldn't qualify under Jesus' more sweeping command to "[teach] them to obey everything I have commanded you'" (Mt 28:20) (Hull 186).

Although the church has not been faithful in reproducing disciples following Jesus' model, the growing of the church throughout the world took place. The responsibility of Christians as disciples of Jesus is to prepare others to be disciples, following Jesus' example. This responsibility should not be taken lightly but with pride and thanksgiving for the opportunity to assist God in bring about the New Creation (Hull 186).

Harrington and Patrick quoted Bill Hull in saying, "All who are called to salvation are

called to discipleship. No exceptions. No excuses" (Hull 2006 as quoted in Harrington and

Patrick 10.)

Harrington and Patrick make the sobering point that being a Christian is not enough, they

say, "With our baptism, we are dead to ourselves (Rom 6:1–6). We want Jesus to live in us and

with us" (Harrington and Patrick 21). The authors remind us "Jesus is not just our Savior. Jesus

is our Lord, our leader, and the one who determines the direction of our life" (Acts 2.36;

Harrington and Patrick 21). Critically important to every Christian is knowing that Jesus saved

us from a life of sin and is reigning over our lives each and every day. Out of recognition of what

Jesus did, Christians should want to demonstrate their gratitude by being disciples who give the

gift they have received to others so that they too can receive equal benefit from living a life of

Christ (21).

For churches that wish to transform from attenders and members to disciple makers,

Harrington and Patrick encourage they become members of the disciple making movement. A

day does not go by that Christian we are not engaging people from all walks of like, many who

have not made Jesus Lord over their lives. The church is the place established by God where

members are converted to become disciples and followers of Jesus. Therefore, the church has the

obligation to develop trustworthy disciples who infiltrate the larger society demonstrating what

living a life following Jesus looks like. As disciples go out into the world using Jesus's method

of disciple making, a surge will occur in those coming and asking, "what must I do to be saved"

(Harrington and Patrick 179).

Disciple making is not intuitive to who Christians are but rather is a process that must be

taught, reinforced, and encouraged on a daily basis. Going it alone is bound to be met with

resistance and failure. David Watson comments that God had to teach him how to make disciples of Jesus and not his denomination or local church. As a result of his obedience to God and God's teaching, eighty thousand churches were planted to reach souls for Christ (Watson and Watson 4).

In disciple making, most people, churches, and organizations make the same mistake Adam and Eve made in the Garden. God gave Adam and Eve one command — do not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. God expected them to obey; they did not. The search for knowledge and wisdom has persistently plagued humanity as God later said, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching" (John 14.23). When the number of disciple making systems available is examined, most are knowledge-based rather than obedience-based (Watson and Watson 66). Knowledge-based disciple making forms a crack in the foundation, and while success may be realized using this principle, it is never sustainable.

According to Watson and Watson, moving from knowledge-based to obedience-based disciple making is an educational process designed to orientate new believers and existing members to the biblical and historical practices of the church (Watson and Watson 204). The root of disciple making is grounded in knowing the word of God, building a relationship with Jesus, doing what the Bible says do, and then watching what happens (204). This process provides the believer irrefutable evidence that the word of God does what it says it will do. True disciple makers do not just know the word of God, they do what the word of God says to do in every situation regardless of the consequences (204). To do this takes time to grow spiritually and is necessary to become true disciple makers.

In agreement to Watson and Watson, Aubrey Malphurs says that while every disciple is a committed believer, every believer is not a committed disciple. Malphurs argues that the biblical

meaning of committed in relation to faith is a person who has been converted or has become a disciple of Jesus. Therefore, a disciple is a Christian. Malphurs continues his argument to say a Christian is a committed disciple of Jesus. In this way, committed is implicit in the understanding of what a Christian is. All Christians should be committed to following Jesus, otherwise the nature of their Christian witness comes into question. "Committed Christians are committed disciples. Uncommitted Christians are uncommitted disciples" (Malphurs 15).

Quoting Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Malphurs writes,

Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. Discipleship means adherence to Christ, and, because Christ is the object of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship. An abstract Christology, a doctrinal system, a general religious knowledge of the subject of grace or on the forgiveness of sins render discipleship superfluous, and in fact, they positively exclude any idea of discipleship whatever, and are essentially inimical to the whole conception of following Christ. With an abstract idea it is possible to enter into a relation of formal knowledge, to become enthusiastic about it, and perhaps even to put it into practice; but it can never be followed in personal obedience (Bonhoeffer 1937 as quoted in Malphurs 21).

A plethora of definitions exist regarding being a disciple. Many of them are adaptions of one another. However, Malphurs provides a definition that seems to sum them all up:

1. Disciples are learners

2. Disciples are committed believers

3. Disciples are ministers

4. Disciples are converts who have decided to make Christ Lord over their lives (26-27).

This definition is simplistic and to the point without wavering on solid biblical principles. As with other scholars in this section, the church must stop appeasing members with false positives regarding what God requires and what Jesus expects in the Great Commission. At some point, Christians must decide either they will, or they will not be obedient followers of Jesus Christ who become disciples that grow to become disciple makers.

Bridging the Generational Gap in the Church

"God's design for family is for parents to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord—to train them to live holy lives" (McFarland and Jimenez 6). Even though parents strive to raise their children in the ways of the Lord, many of these children as they grow older turn away from the faith (6). The critical question is why? According to McFarland and Jimenez, the causes are as diverse as millennials themselves. Millennials carry with them a considerable amount of pain, hurt, confusion, and rejection and suffer silently. These conditions often stem from a lack of biblical literacy and fluency in their foundational years 24).

Additionally, McFarland and Jimenez offer seven major causes for faith abandonment common among millennial Christians.

1. Many millennials who say they are Christian have never had a conversion experience by repenting of their sins and confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior.

2. Too many Christian parents have not taught their children the Bible and have not lived lives in their children's presence as followers of Christ themselves.

3. The reputation of what it means to be a Christian and the authenticity of the Bible cause millennials grave concerns.

4. Millennials' faith formation has not been fully developed; therefore, they have a difficult time connecting their faith to how they live life.

5. The preoccupation with money and getting butts in seats take a backseat to spiritual formation and faith as contained in the scripture.

6. The majority of millennials are biblically illiterate. Most of them have neglected reading and applying the Bible.

7. Failure to acquaint millennials to the stories of the Bible and the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus (McFarland and Jimenez 27-29).

A cursory reading of these seven major causes for faith abandonment clearly indicate that many millennials may have encountered Jesus, but they have not had an experience with Jesus. The root causation of this reality in many cases, even though parents report being believers and churchgoers, is that living a life of a believer is frequently practiced in the home by millennial's parents.

Not only are parents failing to live lives obedient to Christ, but the church is also complicit in the problem. The church is indebted to its members to forge a relationship between the church and Jesus Christ. Making this connection has not been a high priority in recent years, which makes it nearly impossible to reach future generations with the importance church plays in their lives. As millennials seek information on their own, often they are searching in the wrong places (McFarland and Jimenez 70).

McFarland and Jimenez say three major ways exist in which the church is failing millennials: "Valuing tradition over people, making safety more important than service, and choosing comfort over cause and community" (McFarland and Jimenez 72). Millennials are exposed to and have access to far more than generations of the past because of the advent of technology. The church cannot afford to provide millennials watered down sermons and Bible

studies while standing in judgment, refusing to forgive, and most importantly, not showing love to all of its members (74-75).

Although the reasons for millennials are well documented, McFarland and Jimenez have identified ten ways for churches to improve its effectiveness. Here are a few significant takeaways from their list:

- Focus on reaching people and not getting people in a building or program

- Explain why the Christian message is relevant and important for today

- Solutions to a poorly designed website is sitting in the pews

- The process of mentoring will be caught rather than taught

- To reach millennials we must plan to release them (McFarland and Jimenez 156).

Ultimately, McFarland and Jimenez believe that the generation gap can be bridged. They posit, "The hearts of millennials are searching for truth and awakening to real purpose and meaning" (McFarland and Jimenez 156). The millennial generation is not forgotten by God; however, this generation is in search for genuine connectivity in more ways than through social media; they are desirous of heartfelt and meaningful face-to-face engagement from the parents, loved ones, friends, and God's church (156).

Intergenerational Church

The church must reclaim the millennial and other generations that seem to have fallen by the wayside. In the prior paragraphs, McFarland and Jimenez provided invaluable information for why millennials are leaving the church as well as methods for improving relationships with them. Seibel and Nel use a term coined by Eric Erickson called generative which describes the process of establishing and guiding the next generation. Applying this term to the church, a

generative church is one that demonstrates an active commitment to establish and guide the next generation in the faith (Seibel and Nel 5).

While generativity entails interaction between the members of two or more generations, this can be expressed in a variety of contexts and roles. "Generativity can be exercised through teaching, mentoring, leadership, and a host of other activities that aim to leave a positive legacy of the self for the future" (Seibel and Nel 7). Whatever role one plays, the goals are the same: investing in the life of future generations through establishing faith formation among youth today (7).

Generativity explored in connection to intergenerational communities provides a path for disciple making among people with a common vision who are connected to the mission of God. Seibel and Nel posit, "Intergenerational congregations do take a lot of hard work, as it is much easier to work with a uniform group of people" (55). They argue that five factors exist that must be present for intergenerationality to flourish. The first three factors — positive interactions, connectedness, and interdependence — are progressive steps toward building a healthy relationship. The last two factors — accommodation and empowerment — concern inclusivity, which is an essential characteristic of a Christian community (55). These five factors are also present in the three stages of disciple making of Earley and Dempsey as well as Bill Hull, Robert Coleman, and others.

What makes intergenerational congregations experience positive generativity is mentoring. While many churchgoers have an aversion to being mentored by someone, in many cases, mentoring happens in informal settings without their knowledge (Seibel and Nel 60). Interdependency is the results of long-term mentoring when varying generations contribute meaningful things to their connection. Both parties must accommodate the other in order for

empowerment and transformation to occur. As modification and the mutual sharing of meaningful things are sustained over time, the results are a flourishing and healthy intergenerational congregation (60).

Allen and Lawton define intergenerational ministry as "intentionally bringing the generations together in mutual serving, sharing, or the core activities of the church in order to live out being the body of Christ to each other and the greater community" (Allen and Lawton 16). Biblical evidence and church history documents how the people of God gathered together for worship and other activities as an act of intentionality. Today, unless a church is considered a small congregation, a departure of this norm has given way to separating the generations in silos for most of their church activities (Allen and Lawton 16).

Separating generations is not only a church occurrence, but society in general has placed people in generational groups, which some believe has weakened the basic family unity. More than ever before, generations are being separated across families and institutions, reducing the opportunity for intergenerational connectivity (Allen and Lawton 27).

Leaders cannot afford the luxury of knowing the significance of intergenerational communities and not moving to establish them in their churches. In the process of drawing the congregation together intergenerationally, all members must get behind their leaders to make this happen. Without the cooperation of the whole congregation, the endeavor toward intergenerational connections and relationships will be difficult to implement (Allen and Lawton 169).

According to a panel of experts, the following should be implemented toward a more age inclusive Christian education formation.

- Establish intergenerational community as a core value

- Keep intergenerational values in balance with age specific ministries

- Leaders must be fully vested.

- Begin where you are.

- Educate the congregation.

- Be intentional and strategic

- Include all generations and ministry venues (Allen and Lawton 169-70).

Immediately after the first intergenerational activity is completed, an evaluation and assessment should be performed to determine progress. During the evaluation and assessment period, feedback and open dialogue should occur to illuminate what else is needed for the generations to function in ways that lead to spiritual maturity and the attainment of the church's mission (Allen and Lawton 171).

According to Holly C. Allen, intergenerational experiences contribute uniquely to sustainable, long-term faith formation across all ages. Her rational for this assertion is:

- Members are accustomed to living with superficial and polite interactions as a way of life in the church.

- While people engage one another in listening, learning, and sharing, it does little toward communal transformation.

- The configuration of intergenerational connections lends themselves to wholesome environments where equity and mutuality is ongoing making it possible for the church to succeed in establishing intergenerational relationships. (Allen 18)

The methodology for moving from a multigenerational to an intergenerational community of faith is in the nature of the relationships. The "other" is eliminated in

intergenerational communities because everyone is invited to participate with leaders being

intentional about no one being left out. In secular circles, gerontology is the impetus for

establishing intergenerational communities because of the intrinsic benefits derived from older

and younger generations (Allen 18). Therefore, intergenerational ministry is for the whole

congregation to grow and learn from one another. Differences in age is not a deterrent for

meaningful relationship to flourish. Below is the language Allen uses for intergenerational

spaces.

- Promises and our words mean something

- Life is not about personal happiness

- There's always hope. (18)

Our current experience of the generational divide can be identified by tenants of

individuality, sustainable peer groups, and self-fulfillment over and against community

gatherings (Allen 34). In 2005, The National Study of Youth and Religion provided data that

suggests that Christians are not doing an adequate job of passing on faith traditions, and when

Christians do, what they are passing on is often lacking substance. The study revealed that youth

were deficient in biblical literacy, fluency, and did not have a biblical and theological vocabulary

from which to lean on (34).

During this period, in an attempt to solve the dilemma, children were taken out of

corporate worship to concentrate on faith development at age-appropriate levels. The results

were not what was anticipated, a number of groups and activities emerged, and an influx of

children and their families began to attend church; however, they still remained on the fringes of

the church's faith community (Allen 35).

The African American/Black Church

Reviving the Black Church

In 2010 during Black History Month, Dr. Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. raises a question that has been the heartbeat of African American churchgoers for years, yet no one dare raise the question publicly. Raising this question is similar to raising dirty laundry in public, and everybody knows that is not the way things are done, especially when it comes to the Black church. However, Glaude did, and his premise was based on three things. First, Glaude says that some Black congregations have become too conservative and go against the narrative that defines the strength of the Black church of being progressive and at the center of American life (Anyabwile 2).

Secondly, Glaude points out that the age-old statement that the African American community revolved around the church is no longer valid. He says the church has been replaced by various and different activities that have distracted congregants from attending the Black church. Additionally, nondenominational and large evangelical megachurches are attracting more members than the traditional African American church historically has ever done (Anyabwile 2).

Thirdly, and most important to Glaude, is the notion that prophetic witness can be passed down from generation to generation rather than embraced by those who chose to follow the will of God against all odds. Here, Glaude believes that an immature understanding of prophetic witness has damaged the mystic power of the Black church in ways that may never be recovered. Prophetic witness, according to Glaude, is not a birthright, nor is it a right of any one particular church; rather prophetic witness is the desire of people who are resolute in being in relationship with God (Anyabwile 2).

Glaude provides a sobering definition of the dead Black church as "Memory becomes its currency. Its soul withers from neglect. The result is all too often church services and liturgies that entertain, but lack a spirit that transforms, and preachers who search for followers instead of fellow travelers in God" (Glaude 2010 as quoted in Anyabwile 3). "So it is that Pentecostals call quiet churches dead. Liberationists proclaim politically inactive churches dead. Conservatives label liberal church's dead. It seems everyone thinks churches not like their own ought to be given a proper burial and the new broadcast for others to know," says Glaude (12).

Not all Black clergy and laity agree on whether or not consternation and angst must arise from proponents of the Black church. Many disagree on the definition of the Black church, while others disagree on the pronouncement of death. Ultimately, according to the Old Testament text Ezekiel 4.4-14, resurrection is possible when the word of the Lord is spoken over that which was assumed and pronounced dead.

The Black Church in the African American Experience

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya reports "At the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century that Black churches are, on the whole, still healthy, and vibrant in situations" (Lincoln and Mamiya 382). This view is a stark departure of professor Glaude as Lincoln and Mamiya say, even though attendance in Black churches have been down among the educated and middle-class Blacks, the church still remains the most prominent gathering place in most Black communities (382). They note the following:

Based on the indices of church membership, church attendance, and charitable giving in 1987, different studies have pointed out the following: about 78 percent of the Black population claimed church membership and attended once in the last six months; Blacks (44 percent) tend to have slightly higher rates of weekly church attendance than white

Protestants (40 percent); and they have the highest rates of being super churched

(attending church more than on Sundays) among all Americans (37 versus 31 percent).

(381)

Secularization has a major impact on the Black church. According to Lincoln and

Mamiya, secularization provides an alternative to the Black church creating diminished influence

and attrition of its importance to the community. Black college graduates becoming gainfully

employed is another factor in the diminished importance of the Black church of the past and

present day (Lincoln and Mamiya 382).

Lincoln and Mamiya suggest that while upward mobility of educated Blacks and the

establishment of a Black middle-class has its merits in and of themselves, the opposite has

occurred to the Black community. Upwardly mobile Blacks with increased incomes,

systematically vacated Black communities, leaving behind those who are minimum-wage earners

and those who are dependent on minimum-wage earners for their survival. This move in

retrospect created social isolation and a sharp reduction of property values of Black

communities. Lincoln and Mamiya give an example of what happened in Atlanta in the 1960 by

saying, "48 percent of the Black population of Atlanta moved out of the central city into

surrounding counties. The gradual emergence of two fairly distinct Black Americas along class

lines—of two nations within a nation— has raised a serious challenge to the Black church"

(Lincoln and Mamiya 383). When upwardly mobile Blacks left the central city for the suburbs,

they left churches trying to maintain on middle-income and poor members while a growing the

Black underclass was continuing to grow (383).

Unbeknown to Blacks moving out of predominately Black communities was the survival

of the Black church withing those communities. According to Lincoln and Mamiya, what

remained after the exodus of upwardly mobile Blacks was churches and communities solely

dependent on the poor. "If the traditional Black church fails in its attempt to include the urban

poor, the possibility of a Black church of the poor may emerge, consisting largely of

independent, fundamentalist, and Pentecostal storefront churches. There also may emerge cults

and sectarian forms of new religious groups" (Lincoln and Mamiya 384).

The Black church membership consists primarily of the Black family. Historically, the

Black church consisted of Black families who worshipped and served the needs of the Black

community from sanctuaries they built themselves, complete with memories of those who had

gone on before them, and now rest in church provided cemetery located on the grounds of the

church (Lincoln and Mamiya 402). "There is a symbiosis between the Black family and the

church which makes for mutual reinforcement and creates for most Black families their initial or

primary identity. Probably the most crucial of all concerns is the need to bolster the personal and

cultural identity and the self-esteem of Black youngsters at all socioeconomic levels" (402).

The lack of clergy and laity role models in the Black church have affected the self-esteem

of young people. In prior years, despite the economic challenges in Black communities, Black

role models still existed that provided hope, pride, and a sense of belonging to members of the

community. "A related concern is the escalating problems of Black teenagers and young adults

in the crisis sector of the Black community, the dependent poor or underclass. Black teenage

females have among the highest pregnancy rates in the world, and Black males have the highest

homicide and incarceration rates in the United States" (Lincoln and Mamiya 403).

There is a continuing debate among social analysts as to whether these social problems

are merely symptoms of the need for a structural reform in the American economy or are

indicators of the need for a deeper social revolution to change the pattern of race and class oppression embedded in our capitalistic system. (403)

It is incumbent on the Black church to reconnect to the urban Black poor to assist them negotiate the roughed terrain of racism, ecumenism, and the threat of Islam. "Past tradition has cast the Black church as the proverbial 'rock in a weary land' — the first and the last sure refuge of those who call it home, and all those who live in the shadow of its promises'" (Lincoln and Mamiya 404).

The Divided Mind of the Black Church

Raphael G. Warnock writes about church and theology in 2014 and raises the question in light of the church being established to carry on the work of Jesus Christ as described in the Gospels, what is the evidence of its witness, and what is it called to do, especially in the twenty-first century. From the Black church perspective, the Black church galvanized its faith fighting for freedom internally and externally by expressing the longings and humanity of Black people (Warnock 12-13).

Warnock posits the Black church has a divided mind, holding in tension radical protest and revivalist piety. Radical protest is based on the inalienable rights provided by the Constitution of the United States to provide external freedom. Revivalist piety has to do with internal freedoms as a byproduct of having a relationship with God. According to Warnock, this divided mind is perpetuated by the divide between Black theologians and Black pastors regarding the mission of the church. Although Black theologians support the Black church, they are often its hardest critics. They are not convinced that the Black church has fully embraced the importance of liberation as essential to the faith nor has it shown signs of uplifting the Black community. Black pastors, so it seems, have not infused theology generally and Black theology

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specifically as a basis for enlightening Black parishioners toward how they view themselves (Warnock 23).

Warnock illuminates a conversation between Gayraud Wilmore and Emmanuel McCall, conservative Black evangelical scholars who often find themselves at odds with each other over issues of the Black church with Wilmore saying,

> That Black theology is not obscure, unbiblical, or has no doctrine of the church, but because the majority of Black preachers confuse themselves with Billy Graham and the most unenlightened versions of White evangelicalism. Because they do not know the rock from which they were hewn, they and their people do not know who they are and the inheritance that was passed on to them. Because their sense of sin is personal and individualistic, they understand redemption that cannot admit the sanctification of secular conflict and struggle (Wilmore 1990 as quoted in Warnock 118).

Ultimately, for the sake of the Black community at large, Black theologians and Black pastors have a responsibility to uplift the Black community and the mission of the Black church with head and heart. An integration of biblical and theological knowledge with praxis must occur resulting in teaching and doing so that the Black community sees itself as God sees it.

The Black Church and HipHop Culture

Emmitt Price writes, "If the Black church were more vigilant toward the needs, concerns, and desires of its youth and young people during the late 1960s and early 1970s, there probably would be no Hip-Hop Culture" (Price xi). Although the Black church has been viewed as a homogeneous and monolithic faith community, the truth is that within the Black populous, a range of philosophical and theological thought exists which makes it as diverse as other faith communities. However, as a community of faith, if the Black church held true to its mission of

liberation, both internal and external, Hip Hop culture would have never found a voice and expression among youth and young adults (xii). What makes the Black church unified is the shared petition "God would never leave nor forsake them" (xi).

 The plight of Black people, the Black church, and the Black community has been of such grave concern that large amounts of resources and time has gone toward protecting their future at the expense of the present condition. This gave rise to alternative expressions of up-and-coming Black people who live in the now. Prices says,

> The Black church has a fascinating, rich, and deep history—a history that has not only
>
> championed the survival, liberation, and equality of Black folks, but struggled to delve
>
> into the internal chasms of generational differences. In many ways, the story of the Black
>
> church is a narrative that puts so much focus on the future that limited time, energy, and
>
> resources were allocated to protecting the present. (Price xii)

Several faith communities and denominations exist that make up the Black church, not all embracing the same biblical and theological thought. These differences have in part, been determined by the socio-economic makeup of various faith systems and denominations within the Black community. However, regardless of the differences in theology, the greatest challenge of the Black church in the twenty-first century is its generational divide. The generational divide in the Black church is homogeneous to the generational divide experienced in churches throughout the country (Price xii).

From the days of Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, differences in worship and liturgy has created segmentation. Allen and Jones were challenged on whether to associate with the episcopal order of the church or to launch a progressive, more innovative mantle of faith for their

Black members. Although fourteen years apart in age, their age may have had something to do with the decision to assimilate and accommodate as the best course of action.

The twentieth century gave rise to a national debate between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois hoping to develop the best social path forward for Black people in America. Likewise, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcom X were also in a national debate over the spiritual life of Black congregants (Price xiii). These two debates drew attention to age-separation and divided the mind of the Black church as proffered by Raphael Warnock.

As recent as 2007 Bill Cosby gave remarks at the NAACP's fifteenth Anniversary Celebration of the Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education, entitled "Come on People." The remarks of Cosby had a deleterious impact on all Black churches and did not settle well with young and old alike. Here again, a generational divide is found, this time between the Civil Rights generation and the Hip Hop generation. This divide, because of age differential, has forced the church to choose since both modalities of theological thought have not been successful in uniting all generations.

Price opines, "Although Hip-Hop culture today is different from its infancy, Hip-Hop and the Black church are essentially fighting for the same thing and that is what makes this question the dilemma of the generational divide and the initial and subsequent disengagement of the Black church so intellectually perplexing" (Price xv). Although spirituality is a byproduct of both generations, it would seem that consensus could be achieved, similar to what churches had to contend with during the era of "traditional versus contemporary" worship styles. As long as no consensus exists, the church on the surface would appear divided (xiv).

The Ground has Shifted

In this offering, Walter Earl Fluker provides a vivid account and assessment of the future of the Black church amid an over racialized America. Although written in 2016, what Fluker provides is a sobering foretaste of the church that once provide refuge for a people who only had Jesus to depend on. Fluker begins his work with a heartfelt reminder that regardless of where one finds themselves today, they must remember their story. Fluker says, "Memory believes before knowing remembers, believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing even wonders" (Fluker 4).

Fluker provides an account of what it was like in Mississippi during the early 1950s growing up in Frogbottom and later transitioning to Chicago, which he likened to a bucket of blood. Fluker says his father upon moving to Chicago discovered he did not have the requisite skills to compete with people from Chicago. Moving from Mississippi, Fluker's father lacked almost everything required to live in the big city. Fluker was convinced, as hard as his father worked, his heart was not in the big ruthless city, rather, his heart was still in Foggy Bottom, Mississippi. Fluker says his father "traded in Frogbottom for a Bucket of Blood" (Fluker 4).

Fluker spoke of how he was carried to church every Sunday by his mother and the influence the church had on his life. Fluker spoke of the dichotomy of sounds emanating from the city streets; from jazz on one side of the streets to gospel songs sung by a choir on the other. He also recalls in tearful detail the images of his father and the suffering he endured so that his family could have some sense of freedom in a land called home of the free.

Fluker writes that only when one is able to relive, retell, and imagine the rhythm and time of where they are now in this moment of time regardless of how they got here can they ever have an opportunity for a glimpse of a preferred future. He says in the meanwhile, Black people and

the Black church will be plagued with "the old ghost of the house that didn't die right" (Fluker 166). In a statement that grips the heart, Fluker says,

> We must give ourselves permission to reimagine and re-language ourselves in diasporic and exilic spaces that provide hospitality and sanctuary to strangers and those from whom we have been estranged, especially those who are part of a larger global configuration of justice-seeking peoples who are constructing new roads to the future (166-67).

The way Blacks do church today does not resemble the church of our grandparents, however, they too lived into a church that did not resemble the church they left on record for us. Honest reflection is necessary for all generations to see the hand of God moving in the lives of people who maintained the church in their day and time. In doing thus, one can see a truism about God; God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Time is filled with swift transition, and this is something one should never forget.

The Church: The Families of Families

Bishop Joey Johnson says that the greatest human institution is the institution of marriage. Marriage is paramount to the family because there can be no institutional family without the institution of marriage according to scripture. Since marriage and the family are ordained by God, society can only work properly by abiding within God's economy. Johnson says that unfortunately, the basic family structure is being challenged and strained by various factions that seek to divide and conquer young people away from churches of their birth. As this occurs, not only is there a split in spiritual values, but there is also a split in what constitutes family. If the family is ordained by God to stay together, it should be a primary task of the church to make sure that happens rather than seeking to break families apart and feed them inconsistent diets of biblical theology that does more harm than good (Johnson 13).

Significant issues that youth of today have, according to Johnson, directly contributed to broken biological homes and the advent of broken spiritual homes. Parental failures have led to young people becoming attracted to cults that ultimately lead them away from their family and the church. Cult leaders are highly trained, similar to those who seek young girls, in the art of manipulation. These leaders, according to Johnson, convince troubled youth that their parents were bad and ineffective and by joining them, they will have wholesome and happy lives (Johnson 13).

Somos Familia

"A family is not just a mom, a dad, 2.5 kids, and a dog" (U.S. Catholic). Issues of faith, church, social justice, and God are shaped by our extended families. According to Nichole Flores, this is because "it is impossible to fully understand God, therefore, humans come up with metaphors to try to explain our conviction of a loving God who holds us in community with each other" (Flores 2016 as quoted in U.S. Catholic). God as shepherd is important to her family, although this may not be true for other cultural groups (U.S. Catholic).

Metaphors from living with family and extended family shapes how one is under God and the church. Extended family is also captured in how different family groups interrelate as a church. One of the most powerful metaphors to understanding God and the church is family (U.S. Catholic). When Flores thinks of family, she sees places of love, bonding, support, and encouragement. Family shifts the focus from individuals to the entire group, this shift is important as churches foster a sense of generational community love and support for one another (U.S. Catholic).

The sacrament of Holy Communion signals generational cohesion, especially when members partake in the remembrance of what Christ did. In like fashion, witnessing a baptism

signifies agreement with the one being baptized as being included in the family of faith. In some cultures, establishing godparents is another sign of extending family beyond mother, father, and their children. Persons serving this role usually has a strong relationship with the family. Flores also speaks of participation in and witnessing wedding vows being shared as an intimate time of closeness between those getting married and those who bear witness to the occasion (Flores 2016 as quoted in U.S. Catholic).

Family Matters: Domestic Altars and Godly Offspring

Allen C. Carlson makes the argument that from a Catholic and Protestant church perspective, a wellspring of churches was established as young families and their children flocked to the church of their choice to give their lives to Christ during the period from 1940 to 1960. Not only were people flocking to church, church schools and church-based schools were in high demand, and seminaries were being filled with prospective pastors and priest. During this period, the increase in established new churches grew over 80 percent from prior years because of the baby boom, and children were beginning to populate families (Carlson 30).

Governmental policies which redefined what constitutes the family in addition to the church's failure to acknowledge and celebrate the family became the two primary reasons the growth of the church plateaued (Carlson 31). Carlson provides three reasons for the demise of the Christian church family.

1. The first of these was a broad complacency among religious elites. A healthy family system, and the social benefits that it delivered, were taken for granted. The deliberate, and usually difficult, efforts of persons in earlier generations to build a family-centered order went unappreciated or forgotten.

2. The second failure of the churches that lay behind family collapse was the open embrace of strident dissent, the encouragement of attacks on the common, orthodox Christian understanding of marriage, sexuality, and family.

3. The third failure of the demise came as churches let down their guard, allowing for a return of the Gnostics (Carlson 33).

Carlson believes Christians are holding in tension two extremes: moral collapse and moral renewal. A definite shift has occurred in what is permissible today over what was permissible less than fifty years ago. Drugs, sex, unwarranted mass killings, irreconcilable differences, high divorce rates, and lying with impunity has changed our society, our church, and our world. Sin seems to have evolved into evil with only God being able to corral humanity before humanity destroy itself. On the other hand, signs are present of a fresh outpouring of God's spirit as the concerns of current society are becoming less fashionable. Families are seeing renewal, injustice is being vocalized from unlikely places, and the church has yet another chance to make disciples to help transform our world into a place God would be proud of (Carlson 34).

Research Design

The research design for this project was based on the mixed method approach. The mixed method approach integrates the qualitative and quantitative approaches together to derive interpretations from both sets of data (Creswell and Creswell 15). Here, qualitative and quantitative methods were implemented at the same time allowing the investigator to integrate and interpret data of the overall results (16). All testing instruments (pretest, posttest, sermons, Bible studies, and three workshops) had a quantitative component and the three workshops had quantitative and qualitative components.

Limitations are inherent in all research. To maximize the integrity of the process, a team approach utilizing a subject matter expert in congregational growth and development was used to facilitate the fieldwork portion of the process (Creswell and Creswell 16). As principal investigator, I facilitated the role of non-participant observer (present but not visible) to capture the qualitative component of the fieldwork. The subject matter expert was chosen to increase assurances that information dissemination would be accurate, allowing participants to fully engage in the project. As the Presiding Elder over the chosen context for this project, eliminating any suggestion of bias responses from the participants due to my position was necessary. Care was given to the consistency and efficacy of the five instruments used in the project field work to ensure the highest level of project integrity.

According to Creswell, the mixed method design is emerging to document what makes good mixed method models. Research toward enhancing this method includes utilizing teams to expand mixed method design worldwide (Creswell and Creswell 16).

Summary of Literature

Overall, this literature review was very enlightening and telling. First, the biblical foundations galvanized the necessity of God's expressed purpose for humanity and humanity's responsibility to God, each other, and the environment. This statement is verified in Genesis 1.26-28 which says,

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply

and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the

birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

Although this passage provides the authority God gave man and woman, implicit in the text is

the nature of relationship. The text says, "let us make man…and let them (male and female) have

dominion" (Gen. 1.26). The nature of relationships is seen here. According to the creation story,

God was very intentional for man and woman to live together in relationship. This relationship

expanded with the recording of Adam and Eve's first children, Cain and Able, and so forth.

Sin rose to the level of being evil prompting God to cleanse the world of sin through the

flood. Noah and his family along with a pairing of each animal entered an ark until the waters of

the flood subsided. Notice here that even through God cleansed the world of sin, the nature of

relationships continued with Noah and his family. Beginning with Genesis 12, God calls Abram

and his family and establishes an everlasting covenant with Abram and his descendants. This

covenant promise is still in effect even in the early stages of the twenty-first century.

Additionally, God through the sacrifice of his only begotten son Jesus, established the

body of Christ, which became the basis of the church. The body of Christ called church has

endured many challenges because of God's love for God's people, even in some of the world's

darkest hours. Through all that has occurred up until the twenty-first century, God's people

continue striving to be the family of God and the body of Christ.

The family of God since the beginning of time and throughout the Bible has been an

intergenerational family. However, as each successive generation came and left the scene, the

church has systematically lost its sense of family and understanding of the importance of

maintaining the church as the body of Christ. Theologians and scholars have provided countless

references throughout this literature review of the importance of the church maintaining its intergenerational presence as God intended.

The consequences for allowing generational gaps to emerge have weakened the church family, the biological family, and the community the church is called to serve. Data records sharp declines in membership and the emergence of sects and other institutions that have weened God's people away from God to following other forms of religion that dishonor God. When God called Abram and established the everlasting covenant with him, Abram and his family were polytheistic and worshipped multiple gods. Over the course of 430 years, purging and pruning, God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments which set the basis for monotheism and worshipping God and God alone. Today, the church seems to be drifting back to polytheism and worshipping multiple gods, which is a grave mistake.

The benefits of an intergenerational presence as the church of God have many advantages for the twenty-first century churchgoer. Based on this literature review some of the benefits are:

- Instilling stronger faith in young people

- Ensuring continued engagement in the congregation

- Providing support for families

- Passing on generational faith from one generation to another

- Establishing regular, sustained interaction among persons from all generations

This Doctor of Ministry project seeks to provide a model of ministry that allows the church to establish an intergenerational presence within the life of the congregation. In Chapter 3, Research Methodology, the process of designing the model that will be tested at Allen Chapel AME Church, Daytona Beach, Florida toward establishing the healthy intergenerational church as a replicable model of ministry will be reviewed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The research methodology for this project utilized the intervention method, coupled with qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and used a Likert Scale to capture participants understanding, attitudes, and receptibility to establishing an intergenerational congregation at Allen Chapel AME Church.

The research questions posed in Chapter One was restated with more detail identifying how various testing instruments were used to arrive at data to analyze. Expanded information was provided about the ministry context to include its episcopal structure and how that structure informed many of the leadership decisions made at the local church level. The selection of participants and the accompanying ethical considerations were outlined to ensure confidentiality of those who participated in the project. Finally, the project design, data collection, and data analysis were discussed to provide the reader an understanding of the overall scope of the project and how it would be administered.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to establish an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church by aligning its worship and ministries to what God requires throughout scripture in collaboration with the AME Books of Discipline and Worship while engaging one another as the family of God and the body of Christ, mobilizing the participation of all generations. Gathering God's people from all age generations exposes them to deeper relationships by experiencing the different ways God has been faithful in the lives of God's people.

Research Questions

Research Question #1 Participation Level

  What was Allen Chapel AME Church doing to address the generational gap that existed within the life of the church prior to the implementation of its intergenerational congregational model?

  This research question was designed to determine the current number of people/family units that participated in ministry or worship at Allen Chapel AME Church. A demographic data instrument as part of the pre/posttest survey was used to ascertain these data points.

Research Question #2 Congregational Impact

  What has been the impact of establishing an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church by aligning its worship and ministries to what God requires throughout scripture in collaboration with the AME Books of Discipline and Worship?

  This research question was designed to determine the impact of family and congregational relationship building when encouraged to participate in ministry and worshiping together as people/family units. A quantitative questionnaire using a Likert Scale was used to determine if knowledge increased. A sermon series and Bible studies followed by a Likert Scale questionnaire was used to determine attitude and behavior.

Research Question #3 Willingness to Reconnect Relationships

  What components of the intergenerational congregational model proved most effective in bringing about an intergenerational congregational model for Allen Chapel AME Church?

  This research question was designed to measure the increase/decrease in worship attendance and ministry participation during the thirty-day testing period. Workshops on

communal worship and ministry service followed by Likert Scale surveys were used to determine willingness and the importance of the biological and church family being the body of Christ

Ministry Context

The ministry context for this Doctor of Ministry project was the Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Daytona Beach, Florida, under the direction of Reverend Dr. Nathan M. Mugala. Allen Chapel is a part of the Eleventh Episcopal District of the AME Church under the leadership of Bishop Frank Madison Reid III and a member of the Central Florida Conference under the direction of Presiding Elder Reverend Lorenzo Laws. The structure of the church is based on episcopal leadership; therefore, pastors are appointed to churches at the behest of the Bishop over their assigned Episcopal District.

Allen Chapel was organized on March 8, 1910, under the leadership of Reverend J. W. Allen, its first pastor. The members held their first service in an old barn. Four years later, they laid a cornerstone for the church on then Second Avenue, near what was then Bethune-Cookman College. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of Bethune-Cookman, was a member of the church from 1914 until 1923 when she transferred her membership to the United Methodist Church. Allen Chapel stayed on Second Avenue for more than seven decades before relocating to its current site at 580 George W. Engram Blvd. Bethune-Cookman purchased the old 626 S. Second Ave. church edifice and property in 1993. Due to its long stability, the church has been able to impact countless lives. The church's congregation numbers around five hundred people. Its motto is "A Growing and Glowing Church Family."

The AME Church uses a Book of Discipline to regulate the temporal affairs of all functional areas of the church. The Book of Discipline is modified, if necessary, every four years

at the denomination's General Conference. Therefore, all AME congregations share a common polity and are considered a connectional church. At the local church level, governance is under the leadership of an appointed pastor who selects lay leadership under the headings of Stewards, Trustees, and various other ministries as defined by the denomination's Book of Discipline to carry out the ministries of the local church. Each pastor appointed to a local charge is responsible for that local church being faithful to the vision and mission of the denomination while serving the peculiar and unique needs of the community surrounding the church.

Participants

Criteria for Selection

The participants for this project were comprised of members of Allen Chapel AME Church in Daytona Beach, Florida. Membership criteria included persons who completed new member orientation and those who have been members for the longest period of time. The participants represented a cross section of Allen's membership to include families and single individuals who have family yet serve and worship separately. Persons under the age of eighteen were excluded because they were considered youth, and as such, were limited to participation based on parental or legal guardian consent.

Description of Participants

The age range for this project consisted of men and women between the ages of nineteen to those in their eighties. The sample size for this project was eighteen persons of which some were members of extended families. A family group as defined for this project is a mother, father, and their children. Also included were members over the age of eighteen who attend separately from their mother or father. The basis for this cross section of participants is to not

exclude any member who by their very participation could become a catalyst for establishing an intergenerational congregation.

Ethical Considerations

To avoid the possibility of breach of confidentiality, all participants signed a consent to participate form which included the scope of work being performed and the nature and purpose of said work. The nature of this project was such that names of people/family units are not required. The project sought to decrease the generational gaps in membership and increase a sense of the church operating as the body of Christ according to scripture.

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Instrumentation

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Instrumentation utilized for this project consists of a pre/posttest questionnaire and questionnaires relating to each of the sermon series sessions, Bible studies, three family worship workshops over a thirty-day period to record Likert Scale responses, and a demographic profile of the participants. Additionally, direct non-participant observations were conducted to record qualitative data from each tool and was added into the development of the research findings.

Expert Review

This intergenerational church model utilized the intervention model using a mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative research as well as data triangulation. Learning what treatments or strategies work best to improve outcomes and make a difference in developing an intergenerational church model was important. To this end, each of the Likert scale questionnaires used throughout the testing of this ministry project were reviewed by Dr. Scott Booth, and Dr. Angela D. Washington, Pillar Seminary, Omaha, Nebraska.

Reliability and Validity of Project Design

The process of design, implementation, and administration of the project field work was based on the work of the Creswell who stated, "researchers need to think through the philosophical worldview assumptions they bring to the study, the research design related to the worldview, and the specific methods or procedures they bring that translate the approach into practice" (Creswell and Creswell 6). Following their systematic approach to developing sound research practices along with the chosen intervention model made a difference in the outcomes toward an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AMEC.

The testing instruments were a Likert scale and a non-participant observation form to test a pre/posttest survey, sermon series, Bible studies, and family workshops. Postpositivist assumptions have held a traditional form of research and is used most often in qualitative research (Creswell and Creswell 7). The project used a "postpositivist worldview that reflected the need to identify and assess the causes that influence outcomes such as found in experiments" (7). The research design used the quantitative method utilizing survey research. The survey method provided a numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of Allen Chapel by studying a sample of the congregation (13).

Each testing instrument used in the study was done on separate days, using different Likert scale testing instruments labeled according to the testing that was conducted. Before securing the testing instrument for that day, they were reviewed to make sure all questions were answered. This ensured that data collection and analysis was based on the same instruments, avoiding spoiled or unfinished instruments being turned in by the participants. After each testing instrument was completed, they were placed in a separate clasp folder and locked away to be tabulated and analyzed on a different day for each instrument.

Each area of testing (sermons, Bible studies, workshops) were done in the same fashion, by the same field researcher. This provided consistency of instruction with ample time allocated for question and answers before the testing instrument was disseminated for scoring.

Tabulation and analysis of each instrument was done on a different day to ensure that no instruments were comingled together, avoiding erroneous results. Data tabulation for each instrument was performed using Microsoft Excel to compute mean, standard deviation, and applicable graphs.

The analysis of the results of the testing instruments was also performed on different days to avoid exhaustion and to ensure the field researcher was coming to the analysis of each testing instrument with a fresh head and not carrying thoughts from another testing instrument into the analysis.

Data Collection

Data for this ministry project was collected from five testing instruments over a thirty-day period using the postpositivist worldview with a mixed method research design. The ministry project was advertised four weeks prior to its beginning as an in-person project. Persons were given information about the project, how the project would benefit the congregation, and were then requested for a minimum of twenty family/people units to participate. The pre/posttest was the first instrument distributed to the participants in an in-person setting prior to the data collection process. The pretest asked several questions designed to assess the current knowledge of the participants understanding of the church, the body of Christ, generational gap, intergenerational church, and church as family. The pretest questionnaire was collected and scored using a Likert Scale and put away until the end of the thirty-day period.

The two-part sermon series was preached to inform participants of the value and need to conduct themselves as prescribed in scripture. The biblical texts used were 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. After each sermon, participants were provided a Likert Scale survey to complete. The Bible study series was taught after each sermon. After the lesson was taught, participants were provided a Likert Scale to answer questions about the nature of God, the nature of the church, unity in the body, and the meaning of being the family of God as a congregation. The family workshops were conducted to teach and receive comments and feedback on the biblical basis for ministry service and worship. At the end of each workshop, participants were provided a Likert Scale to answer questions regarding teambuilding, collaboration, and working together as a unified body.

Each sermon, Bible study, and workshop took an hour to complete. The pretest was administered prior to any testing being conducted followed by questions and answers from the participants covering a period of one-hour. The posttest was administered after the final workshop testing instrument was completed covering a period of one-hour.

Data Analysis

Each data instrument used for this project utilized a mixed method data analysis consisting of non-participant observation tabulated in a journal and a Likert Scale to measure the results of each instrument. The sermon series was preached and after each sermon, participants were provided a five-point Likert Scale to complete based on statements pertaining to each sermon. The Bible studies and family workshops followed the same format as the sermon series in that after each segment of the testing instrument was completed, a five-point Likert Scale was completed by the participants. Non-participant observations were provided by the Principal Investigator in a journal and these entries formed the basis for qualitative analysis.

After the five-point Likert Scale for each testing instrument was completed, they were placed in a clasp folder and locked away (see Reliability and Validity of Project Design above). Once all non-participant observations were completed, they too were placed in a clasp folder and locked away until the time of analysis.

The testing instruments were tabulated using a separate paper Likert scale questionnaire for each instrument. When the tabulation for each instrument was completed, the data was transferred into Microsoft Excel to compute the mean, standard deviation, and applicable graphs. Descriptive statistics allowed for summarizing, organizing, and presenting data meaningfully and concisely. The descriptive statistics focused on describing and analyzing the main features of each Likert scale testing instrument and characteristics without making any generalizations or inferences to a population beyond the project participants responses.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

Knowing that churches on the Daytona District of the 11th Episcopal District of the AMEC were experiencing generational gaps in worship attendance and ministry service, this project sought to establish a healthy intergenerational twenty-first century church for Allen Chapel AMEC, Daytona Beach, Florida. The design of the project taught biblical truths regarding God's desire for God's people to be relational, family oriented, and to operate as the body of Christ through sermons and Bible studies. The design also provided for workshops that taught about the intergenerational church, the myth of family and friends Sunday, and community organizing as a way to reorganize the membership toward increasing the number of generations worshipping together.

The purpose of this project was to establish an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church by aligning its worship and ministries to what God requires throughout scripture in collaboration with the AME Books of Discipline and Worship while engaging one another as the family of God and the body of Christ, mobilizing the participation of all generations. This chapter describes the participants in the study and shares the qualitative and quantitative data collected from pre/posttest, two sermons, two Bible studies, and three workshops. Finally, this chapter identifies five major findings gathered from the data.

Participants

The participants for this project were comprised of members of Allen Chapel AME Church in Daytona Beach, Florida. Membership criteria included persons who completed new member orientation and those who have been members for the longest period of time. The

participants represented a cross section of Allen's membership to include families and single

individuals who have family yet serve and worship separately. Persons under the age of eighteen

were excluded because they were considered youth and as such were limited to participation

based on parental or legal guardian consent.

Eighteen members participated in the entirety of the project field work. Of those

participants, 72 percent or thirteen were female and 28 percent or five were male. The age range

of the participants were as follows: Sixty-five and up, 50 percent; forty-five to sixty-four, 28

percent; and nineteen to forty-four, 22 percent. No participants were at least eighteen years of

age who attended. All participants were African American.
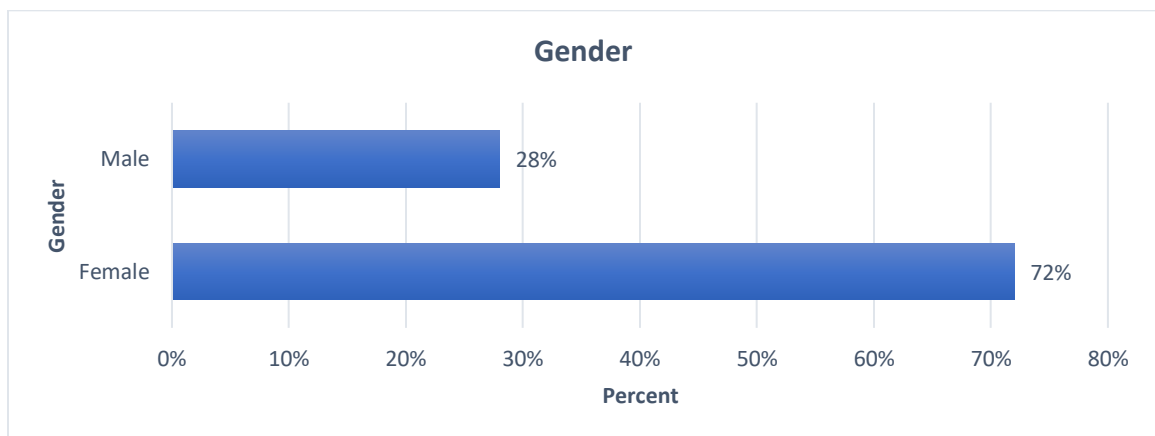
FIGURE 4.1 GENDER
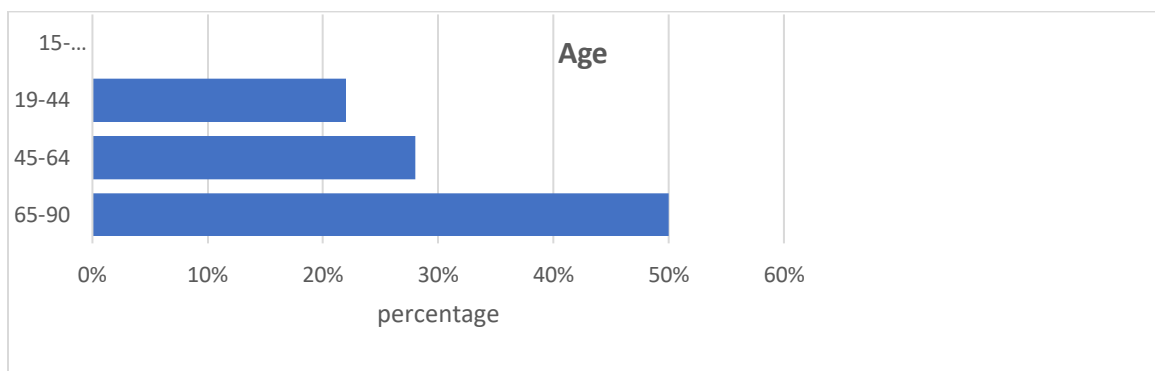
FIGURE 4.2 AGE

The number of years participants have been active members of Allen Chapel varied. The breakdown of tenure in years is as follows: sixty-one and over, 50 percent; fifty-one to sixty, 22 percent; forty-one to fifty, 17 percent; thirty-one to forty, 11 percent; twenty-one to thirty, 17 percent; ten to twenty, 11 percent; and one to nine, 17 percent. This data point revealed three generations of Allen Chapel membership participated in the project field study.

Length of Membership

Years	Percent
61+	~50%
51-60	~22%
41-50	~17%
31-40	~11%
21-30	~17%
10/-20	~11%
1-9 Years	~17%
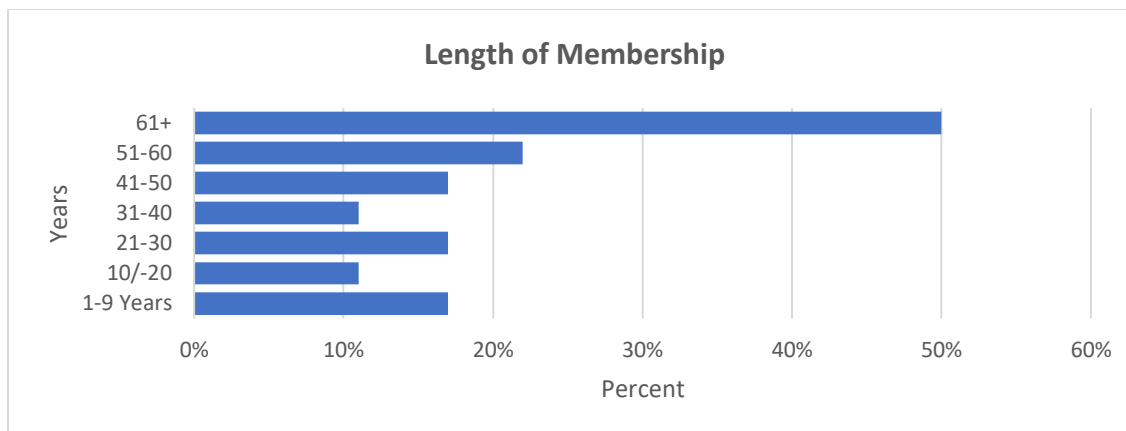
FIGURE 4.3 LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP

Additionally, the demographic survey looked at the frequency participants attended weekly worship service. The results were: four of four weeks, 78 percent; three of four weeks, 11 percent; and two of four weeks, 11 percent. The participants' responses provided a glimpse of how long they were committed members of Allen Chapel.

Weekly Worship Attendance

Weeks of Worship	Percentages
0 of 4	
1 of 4	
2 of 4	~11%
3 of 4	~11%
4 of 4	~78%
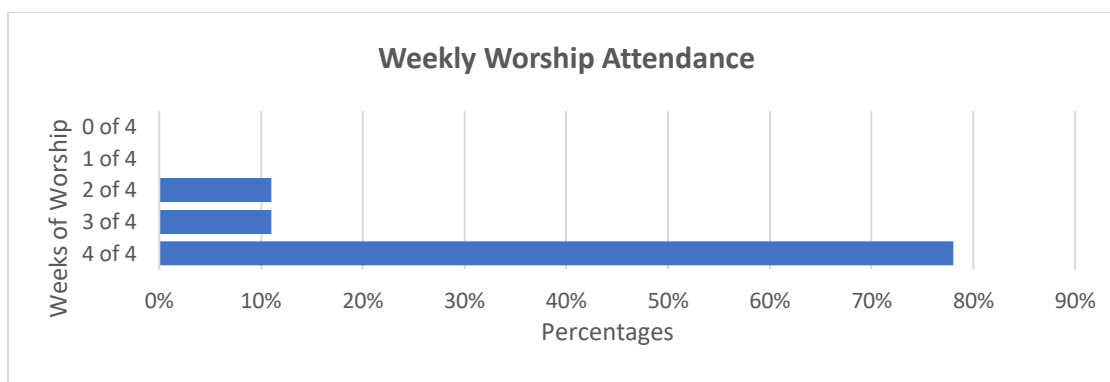
FIGURE 4.4 WEEKLY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

The survey looked at the members' tendencies toward worship attendance. The results revealed the following: worship alone, 50 percent; parent and kids, 5 percent; husband and wife, 17percent; and attend as a family, 28 percent. This data point was significant because one of the field study workshops placed emphasis on the phrase, "Every member of every family living in the same home should worship together." If this phrase is applied across the church, greater relational participation could take place and the number of generational groups could increase.
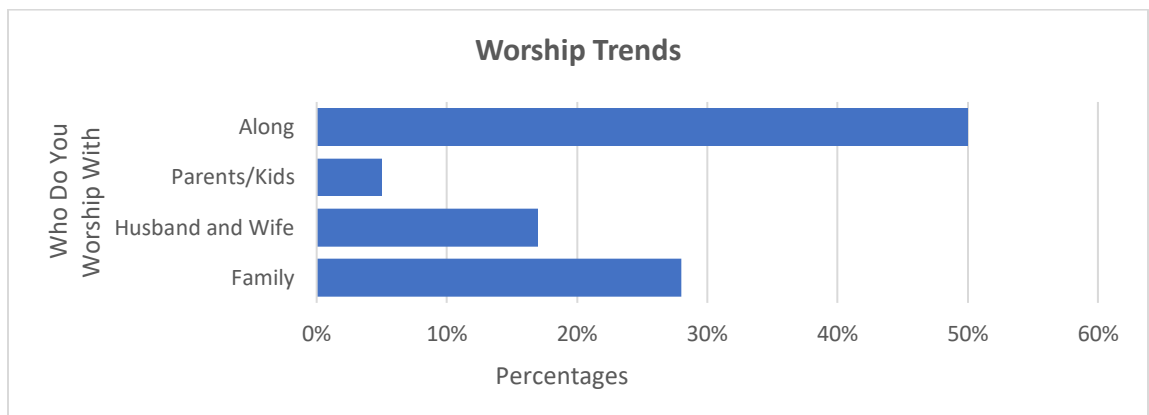
FIGURE 4.5 WORSHIP TRENDS

Another gauge of generational health was attendance in Bible study, Sunday school, the level of ministry engagement, and church participation. In both Bible study and Sunday school, the results were the same, 55 percent attend and 45 percent do not attend.
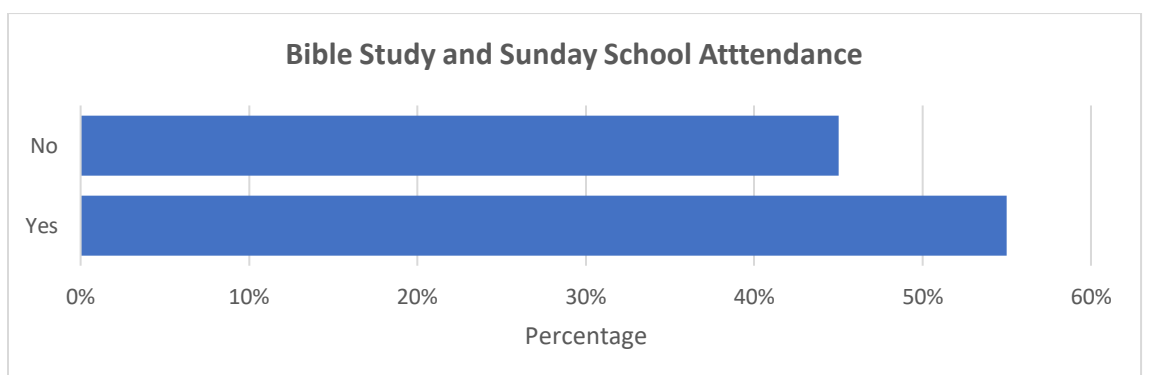
FIGURE 4.6 BIBLE STUDY AND SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The level of church and ministry involvement showed slightly different trends. Of those participants who are involved in church activities, the results were: very involved 55 percent and involved 45 percent. When asked about the number of ministries the participants were involved in, the results were: five or more, 34 percent; three to four, 38 percent; and one to two, 28 percent. These results would suggest that participants who attend worship regularly are also actively involved in ministry. The data also reveal that active participation in worship and ministries is not reflective in Bible study and Sunday school; a great opportunity for an emphasis in church-wide Christian education.
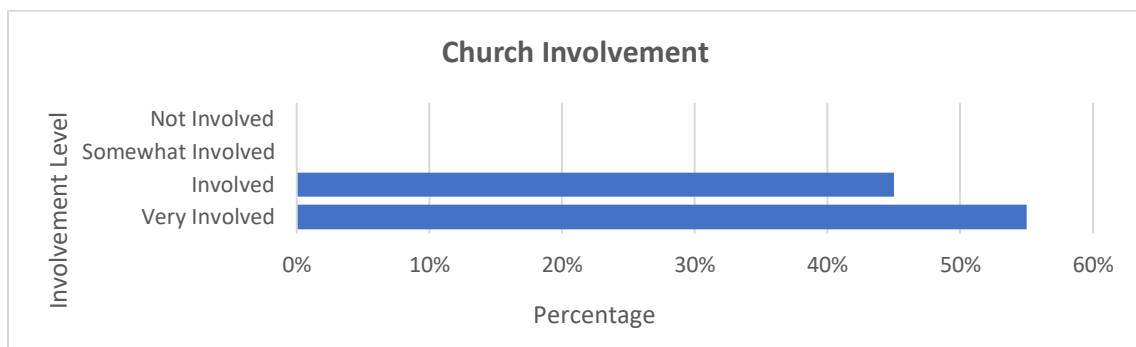
FIGURE 4.7 CHURCH INVOLVEMENT
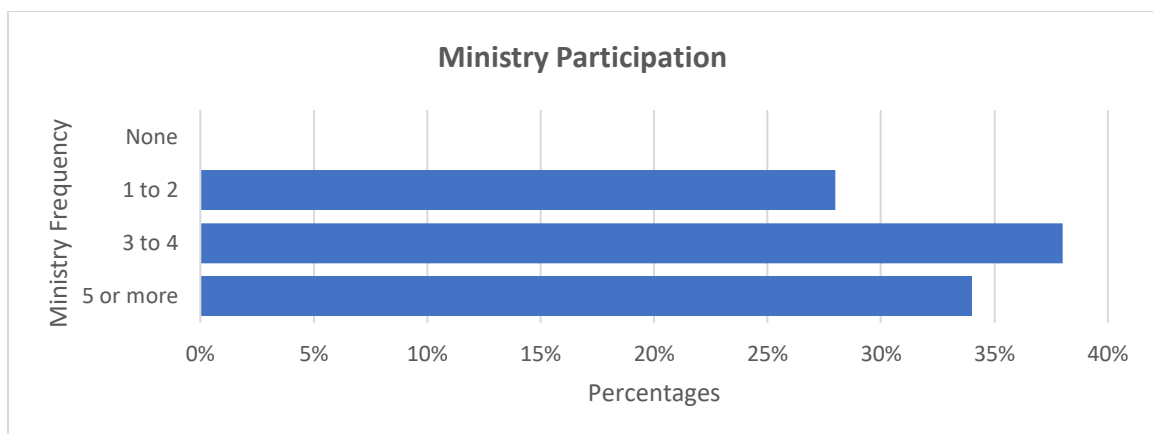
FIGURE 4.8 MINISTRY PARTICIPATION

A summary analysis of the demographic data received from the eighteen participants in the project field study revealed interesting correlations. Participants who attend worship

regularly are actively involved in the life of the church and actively participate in ministry in addition to having deep membership roots in Allen Chapel AME Church. Of the participants who report being highly active in worship, church, and ministry involvement, roughly half attend Sunday school and Bible study.

Interestingly, a broad definition of spiritual maturity would suggest a lifelong process, marked by continuous growth, transformation, and refinement. Through Bible study and Sunday school, individuals strive to deepen their relationship with God and apply God's teachings to their lives. Through intentional study, they become more Christ-like in their character, actions, and impact on the world. Bible study and Church school attendance is an area Allen Chapel can improve.

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Research Questions

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To evaluate the probability and readiness of Allen Chapel AMEC, Daytona Beach, Florida to become an intergenerational church for the twenty-first century, the following questions were designed to guide the research in discerning the effectiveness of the project.

Research Question #1: Description of Evidence

What was Allen Chapel AME Church doing to address the generational gap that existed within the life of the church prior to the implementation of its intergenerational congregational model?

Pre/posttest questionnaires and non-participant observations were used to demonstrate and document Allen Chapel's congregational participation level in becoming an intergenerational church. A five-point (1-5) Likert scale was used with 1= highly disagree and 5 = highly agree. Non-participant observations were obtained through journaling.

To demonstrate the impact of quantitative data analysis as a source of decision making for the church, research question one was calculated using two methods: (1) The percentage of those responding, and (2) The weighted average of all possible responses using mean and standard deviation calculations. Both methods provided useful data; however, from my experience in the AME Church and discussions with African American colleagues from other denominations, the percentage of those responding method has been most often used to make decisions. However, the weighted average method provided greater reliability when seeking to determine how close responses were to the center point which indicate greater agreement.

Calculating the results of the pre/posttest using the percentage of those responding, a bar graph was provided to give a visualization of the results. The percentage of those responding was also applied to each question for comparison. For the purpose of this field study, while all questions from the pretest were tabulated and analyzed, only selected results were used for further analysis.

Pretest Questions 1, "As a member of Allen Chapel AMEC, I have experienced at least 4 generations worshipping together during normal worship times." Using method 1 or percent responding: The percentage of those responding showed 50 percent of the participants highly agreed, 28 percent agreed, and 22 percent were neutral. The accompanying bar chart visually identifies those who highly agreed as the dominant response of choice. However, applying method 2 or weighted average using mean and standard deviation calculations, the results were quite different. A mean (average or center point) of .20 and a standard deviation of .2102 indicate relative agreement. On the posttest, the standard deviation was .2828 (pre = .2102; post = .2828) which suggest the results moved farther away from the mean indicating not as much agreement even though the responses were 40 percent agree and 60 percent highly agree on the

posttest. This lengthy explanation was necessary to support the weighted average method with mean and standard deviation calculations.
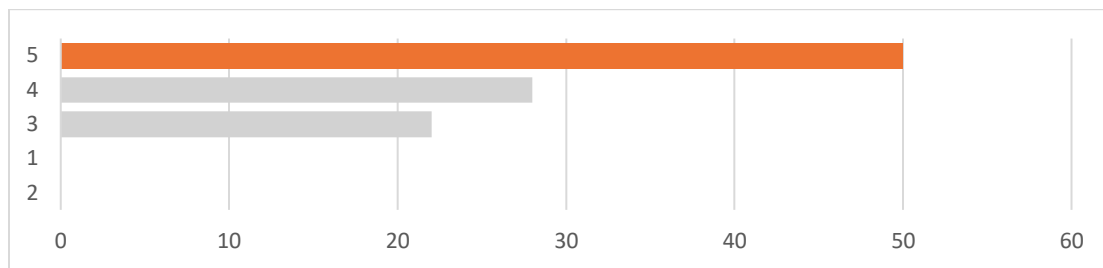
FIGURE 4.9 PRETEST QUESTION 1

Pretest Question 3, "I am beginning to notice an absence of various age groups in regular morning worship services." Method 1 showed 43 percent highly agreed, 17 percent either agreed, were neutral, or disagreed, and 5 percent highly disagreed. Method 2 has a mean of .20 and a standard deviation of .1438, showing little agreement with various choice. The posttest standard deviation was .1467 which moves slightly closer to the mean of .20.
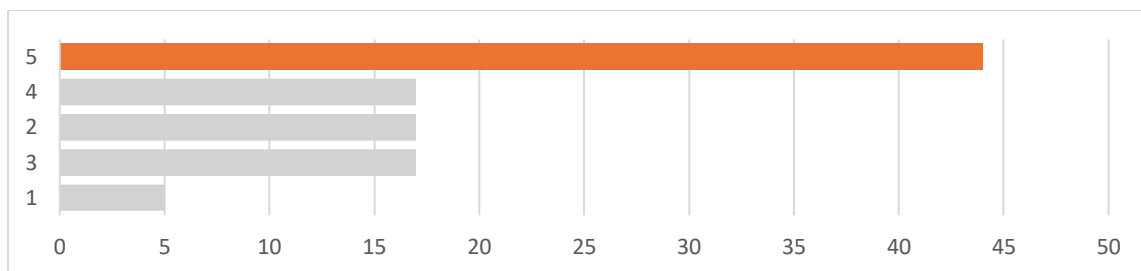
FIGURE 4.10 PRETEST QUESTION 3

Pretest Question 4, "The visible absence of various age groups was noticeable prior to and after Covid 19." Method 1 showed 37 percent agreed, 33 percent highly agreed, 17 percent disagreed, and 13 percent were neutral. Method 2 showed a mean of .20 and a standard deviation of .1554 indicating a wide range of responses and a sign of low agreement. The standard deviation for the posttest was .1560, which is slightly closer to the mean than the pretest.
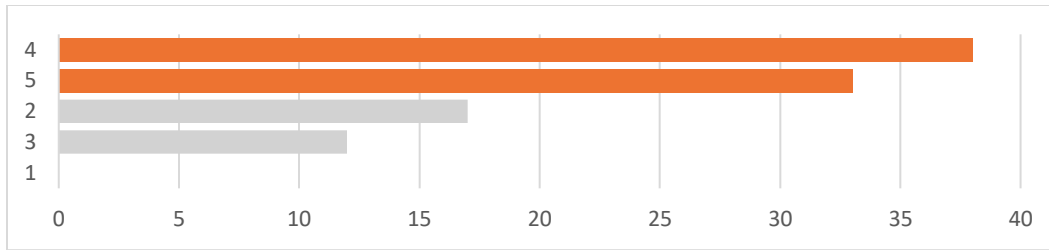
FIGURE 4.11 PRETEST QUESTION 4

Pretest Question 5," Ministry leaders prioritized generational congregational growth prior to Covid 19." Method 1 showed 37 percent disagreed, 33 percent were neutral, 11 percent highly disagreed, 11 percent agreed, and 7 percent highly agreed. Method 2 showed a mean of .20 and a standard deviation of .1435 indicating significant distance from the mean. The standard deviation for the posttest was .1541, which moves slightly closer to the mean but still quite a bit of disagreement.
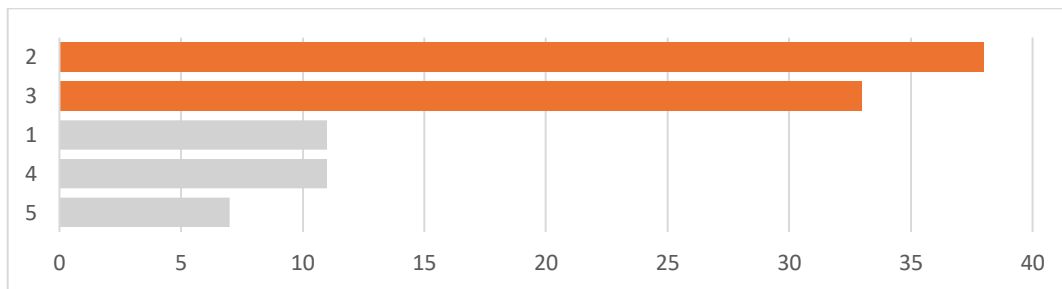
FIGURE 4.12 PRETEST QUESTION 5

Pretest Question 9, "Besides fellowship after worship, our church promotes ongoing churchwide ministry activities." Method 1 showed 43 percent agreed, 23 percent highly agreed, 23 percent disagreed, 7 percent highly disagreed, and 7 percent were neutral. Method 2 showed a standard deviation of .1562 which would indicate low agreement and a number of differing answers. The standard deviation on the posttest was .2761, which is much farther away from the mean of .20 and increased the level of disagreement and choices.

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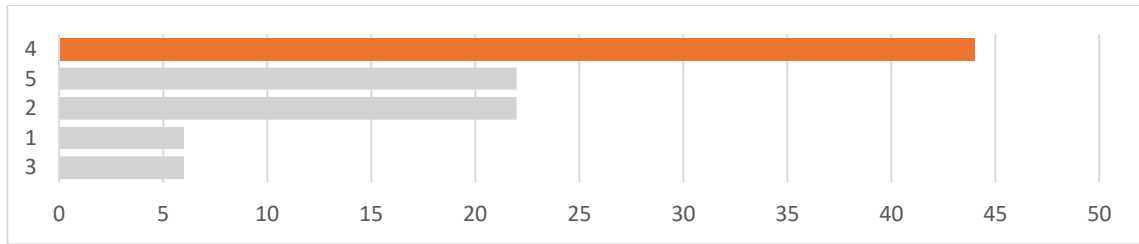
FIGURE 4.13 PRETEST QUESTION 9

Significant data findings from the pretest questionnaires reveal participants highly agreed or agreed to experiencing more than four generations in worship, a noticeable absence of generational groups, and the church's promotion of ministry activities. The data also reveals that participants disagreed that leaders prioritized generational growth prior to and after Covid 19, and the church has a history of maintaining strong children, youth, and young adult ministries.

What follows next are the Likert scale results and the non-participant observations. The first row of responses represents the pretest and the second row represent the posttest.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (mean % answered)						
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1. As a member of Allen Chapel AMEC, I have experienced at least 4 generations worshipping together during normal worship times.	0	0	.22	.28	.50	.20	.2102
	0	0	0	.40	.60	.20	.2828
2. Congregational decline has not been an issue at Allen Chapel AMEC since I have been a member.	.22	.28	.17	.11	.22	.20	.0636
	.20	32	0	.25	.23	.20	.1202
3. I am beginning to notice an absence of various age groups in regular morning worship services.	.5	.17	.17	.17	.44	.20	.1438
		.36	.25	.29	.10	.20	.1467
4. The visible absence of various age groups was noticeable prior to and after Covid 19.	0	.17	.12	.38	.33	.20	.1554
	0	.16	.15	.42	.27	.20	.1560
5. Ministry leaders prioritized generational congregational growth prior to Covid 19.	.11	.38	.33	.11	.07	.20	.1435
	.10	.50	.20	.25	.05	.20	.1541

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6. The church has a history of maintaining strong children, youth, and young adult ministries.	.07	.22	.38	.33	0	.20	.1632
	.40	.17	.28	.15	.20	.1498	
7. Our ministry activities promote family and prospective member involvement.	0	.17	.33	.50	0	.20	.2166
	0	.38	.22	.40	0	.20	.1954
8. The church has ministries designed for all family members to participate together.	0	.38	.17	.45	0	.20	.2096
	0	.27	.10	.63	0	.20	.2644
9. Besides fellowship after worship, our church promotes ongoing churchwide ministry activities.	.06	.22	.06	.44	.22	.20	.1562
	0	0	0	.55	.45	.20	.2761
10. I am willing to work with leadership to increase intergenerational participation across the church.	0	.06	.11	.28	.55	.20	.1680
	0	0	0	.75	.25	.20	.3818

TABLE 4.1 PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES

The closest standard deviation to the mean of .20 was the pretest response to question 8, which was .2096 and question 7 on the posttest with a standard deviation of .1954. These responses represent high agreement based on the mean.

The greatest standard deviation changes between the pre and posttest were from questions 2, 9, and 10. Question 2 asked if congregational decline has been an issue. The standard deviation on the pretest was .06 and .12 for the posttest representing a .06 change. The standard deviation on the pretest represents a wide range of responses and little agreement while the standard deviation on the posttest moves 50 percent closer to the mean and center point, indicative of moving closer to agreement.

Question 9 asked if the church promoted ongoing churchwide ministry activities. The pretest standard deviation was .1562 and the posttest was .2761. The pretest standard deviation indicates highly varied responses moving close to the center and the posttest standard deviation indicates varied responses yet moving away from center.

Question 10 asked if participants were willing to work with leadership to increase intergenerational participation across the church. The standard deviation of the pretest was .1680 and the posttest was .3818. The pretest indicates a move toward the mean of .20, while the posttest shows a significant move away from the mean in a negative direction. Although all responses were agree and highly agree on the posttest, the level of agreement is questionable.

A final discovery was revealed with quantitative computations with and without using a weighted average of percentages to arrive at a mean and standard deviation rating. Without computing the weighted average of the percent of responses, questions 1,3,4,5, and 9 were identified as being significant on the pretest and questions 5 and 6 on the posttest. When a weighted average of the percentages was used to arrive at the mean and standard deviation, questions 8 and 7 were closer to the mean than all other responses. Questions 2, 9, and 10 were farther away from the mean.

Only question 9, which asked besides fellowship after worship, our church promotes ongoing churchwide ministry activities, was significant using both methods.

The field work consisted of four levels of testing: pre/posttest, sermons, Bible studies, and workshops. Each level of testing was observed by the principal investigator, Lorenzo Laws, through the process of journaling.

As participants entered the sanctuary to begin the field study, excitement existed in the air coupled with great anticipation and expectation for what was to follow. The principal investigator was informed by one of the participants that she had participated in the field study of Reverend Dr. Nathan Mugala, but this process seemed to be very different. She went on to say "Pastor Mugala's study involved interaction with the community around issues of social justice,

this seems to be about growing the church. I can't wait to help." Another participant said, "I did not know all of this was involved; I'm glad I signed up to help."

As the pretest was passed out, participants responded around the room with words like "deep, serious, this is heavy stuff, and I didn't know it was going to be like this." Once the first sermon was preached, additional responses were, "The sermon was powerful," "I had no idea the body of Christ was about intergenerational participation," and "I've never heard a sermon from this scripture put quite like this." Other observations were that the participants seemed attentive, took their input seriously, and it did not seem as though the participants were in a workshop based on how they responded and participated.

Research Question #2: Description of Evidence

What has been the impact of establishing an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church by aligning its worship and ministries to what God requires throughout scripture in collaboration with the AME Book of Discipline and Worship?

Posttest questions 5 and 6, the sermon series, Bible study series, and non-participant observations were used to assess congregational impact in increasing the level of generations actively participating in worship and ministry.

Posttest Question 5, "Ministry leaders prioritized generational congregational growth prior to Covid 19" showed 50 percent disagreed, 25 percent agreed, 20 percent were neutral, 10 percent highly disagreed, and 7 percent highly agreed. Using the weighted average method with a mean of .20 and a standard deviation of .1541 shows responses farther away from the mean, low agreement, and a variety of answers. The pretest standard deviation was .1632 which is close to the mean of .20; however, there are still many choices and quite a way from the mean of .20.
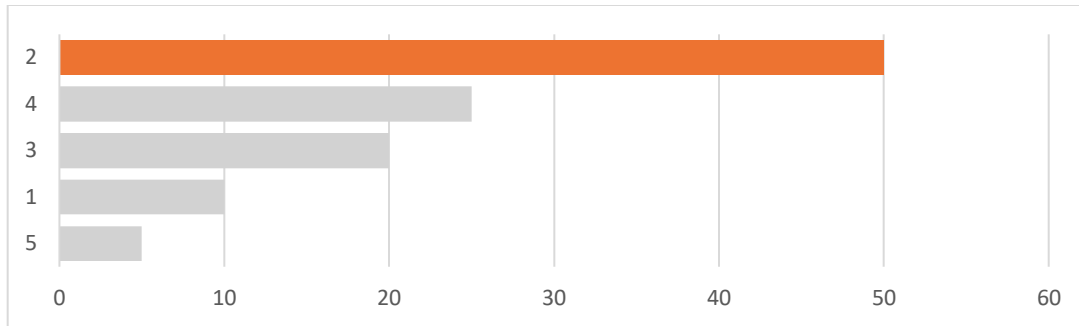
FIGURE 4.14 POSTTEST QUESTION 5

Posttest Question 6, "The church has a history of maintaining strong children, youth, and young adult ministries." Method 1 showed 50 percent disagreed, 28 percent agreed, 17 percent were neutral, and 13 percent highly agreed. Method 2 had a mean of .20 and a standard deviation of .1498 which would indicate various opinion and distance from the center point.
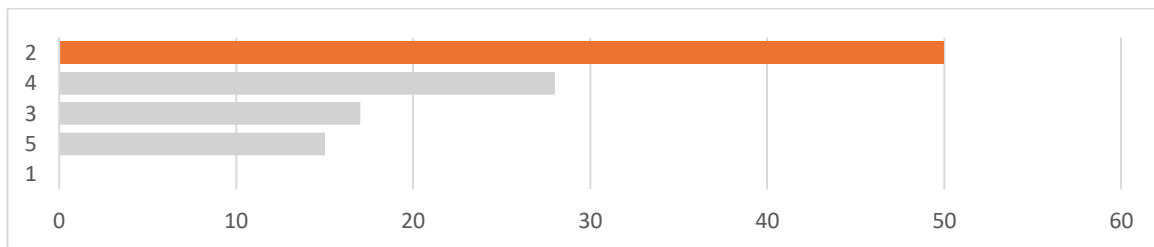
FIGURE 4.15 POSTTEST QUESTION 6

1 Corinthians 12.12-28 Sermon Questions 1-5 and 7-9. A five -point Likert scale was used with 1=highly disagree and 5=highly agree. Data analysis revealed several questions as significant in assessing congregational impact.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)						
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1. I understood the meaning of the text before the sermon was preached.	0	.22	.28	.22	.28	.20	.1157
2. The sermon changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.	.11	.11	.17	.33	28	.20	.1004

3. I was not aware that this text applies to intergenerational congregations.	.11	.06	.11	.44	.28	.20	.1579
4. The sermon confirmed my role as a member of the body of Christ at Allen Chapel AMEC.	.06	.06	.11	.33	.44	.20	.1744
5. The analogy of the parts of the body helped me visualize the importance of inclusion of members in ministry.	0	0	.22	.22	.56	.20	.2293

7. The sermon and text helped me expand my understanding of intergenerational ministry.	.11	0	.06	.28	.55	.20	.2216
8. More members of the congregation need to experience this sermon toward wholeness and healing.	.05	.11	.06	.28	.50	.20	.1914
9. The sermon needs to be preached again for greater clarity.	.05	.28	.22	.28	.17	.20	.0956

TABLE 4.2 1 CORINTHIANS SERMON QUESTION

The calculations used for this table were based on the percentage of respondents selecting choices 1-5 with 1 being highly disagree and 5 being highly agree. Once the percentages were calculated, the mean (.20) and standard deviation was computed. The first data observation was regarding question 8 which asked if more members of the congregation needed to experience the sermon toward wholeness and healing. With a mean of .20, the standard deviation for question 8 was .1914 suggesting high agreement. Question 9's standard deviation of .0956 was the farthest from the mean suggesting varied responses and little agreement. All other questions represented standard deviations that were farther from the mean suggesting a range of choices after hearing the sermon "Bridging The Generational Gap Requires Body Building." Twenty percent of the participants answered neutral to questions 1, 5, and 9. Neutral responses in this case could mean that the people surveyed were undecided on how to answer. Neutral responses could also mean that the questions in the questionnaire were not clear, or that the questions simply did not have one definite answer. The neutral responses decreased significantly for questions 7 and 8 and

were the lowest neutral responses of the series of questions. However, question 9's neutral

response was .22 and among the highest neutral responses for this sermon's set of questions.

Question 1 asked if the participant understood the meaning of the text before the sermon

was preached. This question was revealing in that the neutral percentage was just as high as

those responding highly agree. Participants who responded disagree or highly disagree to this

series of questions could raise concern since "the body of Christ" is a very familiar illustration

throughout the Christian church.

Question 9 asked if "the sermon needed to be preached again for greater clarity." This

question had a standard deviation of .0956 which was the farthest from the mean of .20. This

distance represented low disagreement with varied responses.

Ephesians Sermon Questions 1-5 and 7-9.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions						Rating (% answered)	
						1 2 3 4 5	
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	St. Dev
1. I understood the meaning of the text before the sermon was preached.	0	.38	.22	.22	.18	.20	.1356
2. The sermon changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.	.05	.05	.17	.55	.18	.20	.2054
3. I was not aware that this text applies to intergenerational congregations.	.33	.06	.06	.38	.17	.20	.1494
4. The sermon convicted me to understand that all members of the church are a part of Christ's body and has been equipped to serve the kingdom of God.	.06	0	.28	.33	.33	.20	.1579
5. The sermon dispelled the notion that title, and position are more important than faithfulness and kingdom service.	0	0	.17	.28	.55	.20	.2290

7. We need more sermons that teach the importance of being the body of Christ	0	0	.05	.28	.67	.20	.2871

8. More members of the congregation need to experience this sermon toward wholeness and healing.	0	0	.17	28	55	.20	.2290
9. The sermon needs to be preached again for greater clarity.	0	.11	.33	.33	.23	.20	.1438

TABLE 4.3 EPHESIANS SERMON QUESTIONS

The Likert scale questions for the Ephesian sermon text were the same as the 1 Corinthians sermon text. Question 2 asked if the sermon changed the participant's understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation. The standard deviation for this question was .2054 and was closest to the mean of .20. Both questions 5 and 8 had standard deviation of .2290 and were also close to the mean.

Question 1 asked if the participant's understood the meaning of the text before the sermon was preached. The standard deviation of .1356 was the farthest from the mean of .20. This difference shows a variety of responses and indicated low agreement among those who responded.

Questions 2, 5, and 7 received the highest favorable responses and provided the greatest impact on the participants based on their responses and understanding of intergenerational ministry. Questions 2, 5, and 7 goes to the heart of intergenerational ministry.

- Q2 — The sermon changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.

- Q5 — The sermon dispelled the notion that title and position are more important than faithfulness and kingdom service.

- Q7 — We need more sermons that teach the importance of being the body of Christ.

Of these three questions, question 7 received the highest responses of agreed and highly agreed with an aggregate participant response of .95 and a standard deviation of .2871. Question

5 received an aggregate participant response of .83 and a standard deviation of .2290. Question 2 received an aggregate participant response of .73 with a standard deviation of .2054. Important to note, although question 7 received the highest aggregate participant response for agree and highly agree, the standard deviation was the highest at .2871.

Neutral responses for questions 1, 4, and 9 were .22, .28, and .33 respectively and their standard deviations were .1356, .1579, and .1438. This data point underscores the importance of neutral responses and their effect on agreement.

- Q1 — I understood the meaning of the text before the sermon was preached.
- Q4 — The sermon convicted me to understand that all members of the church are a part of Christ's body and has been equipped to serve the kingdom of God.
- Q9 — The sermon needs to be preached again for greater clarity.

Question 9, "The sermon needs to be preached again for greater clarity," received the highest neutral response from the Ephesian series of questions of .33 with a standard deviation of .1438. For the 1 Corinthians series of questions neutral responses were .22 with a standard deviation of .0956.

1 Corinthians 12.12-28 Bible Study.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)						
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1. The sermon had more meaning after the Bible study was taught on the same text.	.06	.06	.11	.55	.22	.20	.2062
2. The Bible study changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.	.06	0	.17	.44	.33	.20	.1837
3. The Bible study provided irrefutable proof that the church was more than a gathering place	0	0	.12	.33	.55	.20	.2375

and is essential for building the kingdom of God.							
4. The Bible study reminded me of how much I do not know about God and why knowing his word is important to establishing a relationship with God and members of the body of Christ.	.06	.11	.22	.33	.28	.20	.1133
5. The Bible study gave me the confidence to share the biblical text with members of my family toward increasing their involvement in the life of the church.	0	0	.17	.38	.45	.20	.2096

TABLE 4.4 1 CORINTHIANS BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

The Bible study from 1 Corinthians 12.12-28 was taught after the sermon from the same text was preached. This re-teaching may be a reason for higher responses of agree and highly agree. Question 5 asked if the Bible study gave the participant the confidence to share the biblical text with members of their family toward increasing their involvement in the life of the church. The standard deviation was .2096 indicating strong agreement.

Question 1 asked if the sermon had more meaning after the Bible study was taught on the same text. The standard deviation for this question was .2062, again indicating strong agreement. The lowest standard deviation farthest from the mean of .20 was from questions 4, "The Bible study reminded me of how much I do not know about God and why knowing his word is important to establishing a relationship with God and members of the body of Christ," with a standard deviation of .1133.

Neutral, disagree, and highly disagree standard deviations were very far from the mean and provided little to no significant data influence on congregational impact.

Ephesians 4.1-16 Bible Study.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)						
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1. The sermon had more meaning after the Bible study as taught on the same text.	0	0	.06	.50	.44	.20	.2485
2. The Bible study changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.	0	.06	.17	.44	.33	.20	.1837
3. The Bible study provided irrefutable proof that the church was more than a gathering place and is essential for building the kingdom of God.	0	0	.11	.17	.72	.20	.2997
4. The Bible study reminded me of how much I do not know about God and why knowing his word is important to establishing a relationship with God and members of the body of Christ.	0	.12	0	.55	.33	.20	.2375
5. The Bible study gave me the confidence to share the biblical text with members of my family toward increasing their involvement in the life of the church.	0	.06	.18	.38	.38	.20	.1766

TABLE 4.5 EPHESIANS BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

The aggregate percentage of participant responses for agree and highly agree were impressive for this Bible study. The responses were .94, .77, .89, .88, and .76 respectively. Question 1 asked if "the sermon had more meaning after the Bible study was taught on the same text." This question had the highest aggregate percentage of participants responding at .94 and a standard deviation of .2485. Questions 3 and 4's aggregate percentage of participants responding were .89 and .88 with standard deviations of .2997 and .2375. This response is another example of the impact of weighted average responses and the standard deviation. Although the responses were highly favorable, their standard deviations were far from the center in each case. The questions were:

- Q3 — The Bible study provided irrefutable proof that the church was more than a gathering place and is essential for building the kingdom of God.
- Q4 — The Bible study reminded me of how much I do not know about God and why knowing his word is important to establishing a relationship with God and members of the body of Christ.

An interesting data point about the Bible studies was that both were taught after the participants listened to the sermons from the same text, and both texts addressed the same general issue; however, the standard deviation responses for 1 Corinthians question 4 was .1133, while the standard deviation for Ephesians was .2375. This represents a standard deviation difference of .1242 with no neutral responses.

A final data point for the Ephesians Bible study was that all standard deviations were far from the center indicating low agreement with a variety of responses.

The Bible study from 1 Corinthians stimulated strong energy and ongoing dialogue with a variety of questions. The participants seemed to be interested in the concept of one body with many parts. The Bible study instructor, Dr. Moore, used the example that one body does not mean one generation but rather several generations functioning together to make the whole body of Christ and community of faith.

Another example was that unity in diversity is not the same as uniformity. Dr. Moore stated,

When unity gives way to uniformity, systems shut down and when systems shut down, it's like a patient in the hospital, and when family members are told that their loved one's systems are shutting down, that means their loved one does not have much longer to live.

He went on to say, "It's no difference with a congregation that reaches the stage of uniformity; systems began to shut down, programs begin to stop, members began to cross over the river Jordan to study war no more, and eventually, the church dies from a lack of membership participation.

The participants got a real kick out of the above illustration as someone said, "I don't know about you all, but I'm not ready to concede to uniformity and die, when I can have unity in diversity and live." It was as if we were sitting in morning worship and the preacher makes a strong point causing the congregation to say, "Amen."

Another strong illustration about unity in diversity and reaching full maturity in Christ was when Dr. Moore raised the question, "'Does the church have a cry room, nursery, children, and youth specific rooms?'" Oh, I get it, you still believe the delusion of inclusion still works in the 21st century." He goes on to say, "No offense, but unless the church is intentional about providing equitable space, opportunity, and funding for every generation in the church, attracting new members and new generations will not happen, no matter who the pastor is." His response was followed by much laughter and hand clapping.

As the participants were leaving the last Bible study, someone said, "Elder, you are feeding us in the morning, right." Elder Laws (Principal Investigator), turned and said, "Yes I am," and the response was, "We'll be here, bright and early." We left the evening with a sense of electric satisfaction.

Research Question #3: Description of Evidence

What components of the intergenerational congregational model prove most effective in bringing about an intergenerational congregational model for Allen Chapel AME Church?

Three workshops and non-participant observations were used to assess congregational willingness to increase the level of generations actively participating in worship and ministry. The workshops were entitled Community Organizing for the Church, Family and Friends Sunday, and the Intergenerational Church. Question six from the two sermons factor into research question three, being the willingness to reconnect relationships.

A five-point Likert scale was used for each workshop with 1=highly disagree and 5=highly agree. Data analysis reveals several questions were significant to assessing congregational willingness to reconnect relationships.

Community Organizing and the Church Workshop. This workshop was developed to teach and organize the congregation about the power of organizing exposing them to methods, practices, and strategies that address public problems and also strengthen people's capacity to work together generationally. Through this model, congregational members learn to share their stories, deepen relationships with one another, discover issues of common concern, develop leaders, and act to improve the lives of members of their church and community.

Likert Scale Questionnaire

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)						
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1. I have a better understanding of community organizing as it relates to intergenerational ministry and our church.	0	0	0	.28	.72	.20	.3149

2. Community organizing can assist our congregation in understanding the need to realign worship and ministry service to be inclusive of all members.	0	0	.05	.17	.78	.20	.3315
3. The concept of "no permanent friends and no permanent enemies" is not applicable to the church, however the premise behind it can build bridges to congregational healing and wholeness.	0	0	.11	.22	.67	.20	.2781
4. This workshop revealed the power of an organized group to act toward a positive outcome. Using this process can also provide positive outcomes for our congregation.	0	0	.17	.17	.66	.20	.3379
5. Community organizing most always focus on a specific issue or topic. Organizing our congregation around the issue of generational gaps in our church should garner churchwide support and participation.	0	0	0	.22	.78	.20	.3379

TABLE 4.6 COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND THE CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The most interesting data points in the community organizing workshop was that no disagree or highly disagree responses occurred and the standard deviation for all questions were very far from the mean. This response is a strong indication that the participants had a variety of perspectives based on the facilitator's sharing information and the questions from the Likert scale. Few responses were neutral and not significant data points. The most impressive data points for this workshop were the agree and highly agree responses. As noted on the line chart below, the highly agree responses dominated the response percentages. However, based on the standard deviations from the workshop, little agreement and varied opinions existed.

The aggregate responses of agree and highly agree are as follows: 1, .95, .89, .83, and 1 respectively. The data reveals that overwhelming support existed for community organizing principles to be used to deepen relationships and expand generational active participation in the

church. However, based on the standard deviations of .3149, .3315, .2781, .2708, and .3379, a significant hesitancy may be present when it comes to implementation.

Question 2 asked if community organizing could assist the participant's congregation in understanding the need to realign worship and ministry service to be inclusive of all members. Question 5 asked if community organizing generally focused on a specific issue or topic and if organizing their congregation around issue of generational gaps in their church would garner churchwide support and participation. These questions' standard deviations were farthest from the mean at .3315 and .3379.
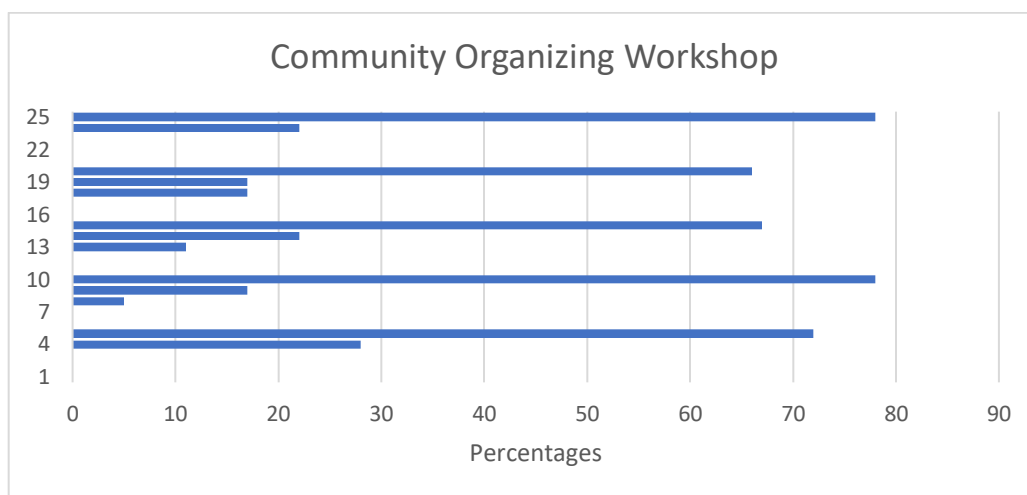
FIGURE 4.16 COMMUNITY ORGANZING WORKSHOP

Family and Friends Workshop . Although Family and Friends Sunday has been heralded as a time to make a concerted effort to bring friends and family members who either have not attended church or have not attended in a long time. The goal of Family and Friends Sunday is to incentivize family members or friends to make a commitment to becoming a member of the church. The problem with this age-old concept is that every Sunday members should invite and encourage people to join the church as they make disciples of Jesus Christ.

This workshop sought to encourage members to recommit as Christians to making disciples of Jesus Christ as a way of life without having a special Sunday to do it.

Likert Scale Questionnaire

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)						
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1. The purposes of designating a Family and Friends Sunday are to increase worship participation, attract guest, and gain potential new members.	0	.05	.11	.33	.51	.20	.2142
2. Allen Chapel has no documentable evidence that Family and Friends Sundays are effective in growing the church's worship attendance and membership.	.05	.11	.17	.28	.39	.20	.1360
3. Based on what I have learned, every Sunday should be Family and Friends Sunday.	0	0	0	.05	.95	.20	.4198
4. The amount of effort deployed in planning and carrying out a Family and Friends Sunday is what God requires of the church every Sunday.	0	0	0	.22	.78	.20	.3379
5. This workshop convicted me that the Word of God has the best solution for and is the final word on church growth.	0	0	0	.17	.83	.20	.3597

TABLE 4.7 FAMILY AND FRIENDS QUESTIONNAIRE

The results of the data from the Family and Friends Workshop revealed that questions 1 and 2 and questions 3 thru 5 may have been perceived differently by the participants. Questions 1 and 2 identified mixed thoughts among the participants with standard deviations veering away from the mean of .20.

Question 1 asked if the purposes of designating a Family and Friends Sunday were to increase worship participation, attract guest, and gain potential new members. The standard

deviation of those who responded neutral was .2142 although agree and highly agree were the top percentages of those responding.

Question 2 asked if Allen Chapel had documentable evidence that Family and Friends Sundays are effective in growing the church's worship attendance and membership. The standard deviation was .1360 with percentage of those responding neutral were .17. The percentage of those responding disagreed was .11 and those who highly disagreed was .05.

The highly agree responses were the dominant responses from all participants. Questions 3 thru 5 had an aggregate standard deviation response of 1 for each question for participants who responded agree and highly agree.
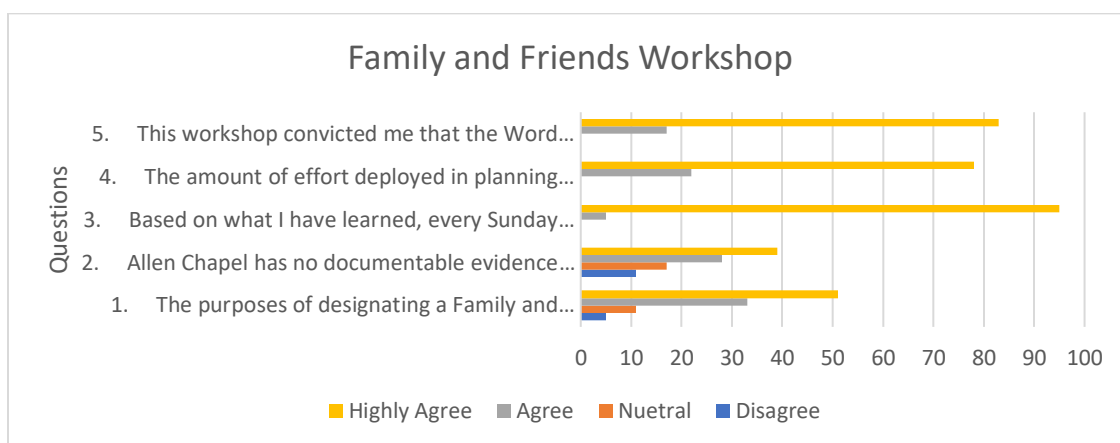
FIGURE 4.17 FAMILY AND FRIENDS WORKSHOP

Intergenerational Church Workshop. According to the Bible, God created humanity to be family. Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites lived out their lives in relationship with one another as the children of God. Everything they did was done in community together, will all generations, young and old, participating in worship, festivals, meals, and other activities. During that time, living together was an expectation that was strictly followed. The accounts of the New Testament revealed a similar pattern. Jesus and his disciples lived together as Paul established the church throughout the known world with the assistance of his protegees and members of the

churches he established. They were on one accord and identified themselves as the body of Christ.

The generational unity of God's people survived for centuries; however, with the advent of individualism of the twenty-first century and social media platforms, families and churches began to experience generational separation creating an erosion of congregational sustainability and vitality. To restore the church as the family of God and the body of Christ and to bridge the generational gap, intentional effort is necessary to recreate the intergenerational church. An intergenerational church is one that serves age groups from several generations in succession at the same time. Ministries must be established to include all generations, and each family must begin to encourage all members living under the same roof to worship together at the same time in the same place. As intergenerational churches are established and reestablished, the growth of the church will be realized, and the kingdom of God will be expanded.

Likert Scale Questionnaire

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

| Questions	Rating (% answered)						
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
1. When so much of the discussion and debate in churches around intergenerational ministry is about our doing, however, biblically, and theologically, intergenerationality is about being.	0	0	.11	.11	.78	.20	.3288
2. Intergenerational churches are healthier by definition when they include a minimum of two generations.	0	0	0	.38	.62	.20	.2867
3. To be truly intergenerational requires the generations to be genuinely interacting and engaging together. It requires modelling and deliberate cultivation of the values, attitudes, and behaviors that enhance intergenerational engagement.	0	0	.22	.33	.45	.20	.1998
4. The joy and potential of intergenerational ministry is to see people of all ages, across	.12	0	.22	.33	.33	.20	.1419

the generations, doing life together and growing in faith together, with genuine love, respect, and mutuality.							
5. Effective intergenerational ministry activities are successful when they create a planning team with representatives from across the church.	0	0	0	.17	.83	.20	.3597

TABLE 4.8 INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The intergenerational church workshop was consistent with the first two workshops based on how the participants responded to each question. The agree and highly agree categories received the highest responses overall for percentage of those responding. Question 3 asked, "for a congregation be truly intergenerational requires the generations to be genuinely interacting and engaging together." It is not enough for the generations to be in the same building yet participate in silos. Intentionality toward generational cohesion is necessary to allow growth and learning throughout the generations. Bridging the gap between generations is hard work but is well worth the effort in the end. An aggregate percentage of those responding was .78 with a standard deviation of .1998 which is very close to the mean or center indicating strong agreement.

Question 1 made the statement when so much of the discussion and debate in churches around intergenerational ministry is about our doing, however, biblically, and theologically, intergenerationality is about being. The percentage of those responding had an aggregate percentage of .89 with a standard deviation of .3288.
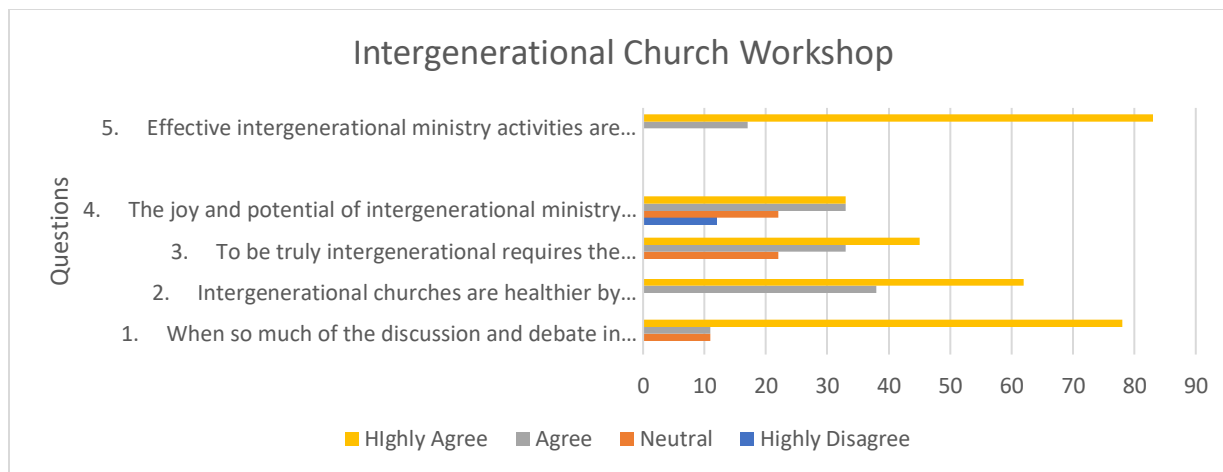
FIGURE 4.18 INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH WORKSHOP

Additionally, question 6 from both sermons factored into research question 3, the willingness to reconnect relationships. Question 6 from the 1 Corinthians sermon asked even though sermons are good, do you have a hard time accepting some people as members. Seventy eight percent of those responding said highly disagree or disagree with a standard deviation of .2373. Although the standard deviation was somewhat high, their percentage of disagreement indicate a willingness to reconnect relationships across the church.

Question 6 from the Ephesians sermon asked if the sermon gave the participant a greater appreciation for raising up younger and newer members as leaders? Twenty eight percent of those responding were neutral and 70 percent either highly agreed or agreed. The standard deviation was close to the mean at .2102, indicating strong agreement to the question.

The workshops were the crowning jewel of the field study because they allowed for group discussion, back and forth exchanges with the presenter, and a sense of "we can do this" from the participants. Nothing is more satisfying than to see participants share among themselves ways and methods of reconnecting their congregation using the recommended community organizing principles to chart a path forward.

This entire process could have been a bust as a week prior to the start date of the field work, the current pastor, Reverend Dr. Nathan Mugala, was reappointed to another congregation creating many mixed emotions, none in the least were jovial and pleasant. Nonetheless, with great preparation and determination to move forward the participants signed up and the work went forward with the help of God.

The interactions in the workshops made it difficult for me as the non-participant observer and principal investigator as I wanted to jump in and interact with the participants. Various moments when epiphanies occurred as information was being shared and resolution to seemingly difficult questions were being answered let me know that Allen Chapel was ready to be the church to develop the replicable model for the Daytona District of the AME Church.

It goes without saying that the role of facilitator played a vital part in keeping the participants engaged, excited, and hungry for more. One participant asked, "When do we begin putting all of this into action?" The response was simply, "As soon as your new pastor approves it."

Summary of Major Findings

Developing a replicable model for establishing an intergenerational church for Allen Chapel AME Church, Daytona Beach, Florida is possible based on the level of commitment and excitement displayed by the participants who were a part of this projects field work.

Emerging from this chapter are a number of major findings that will be discussed in detail in chapter five of this document.

1. Allen Chapel has at least three generations from which to establish an intergenerational church model and expand the number of generations actively

participating in worship and ministry and may be ready and willing to establish an intergenerational congregation.

2. The program participants who represent a cross section of the congregation and three generations also agree that there are noticeable age groups missing in worship.

3. There is a sense that participants are willing to work with leadership to increase intergenerational participation across the church.

4. A commitment has emerged from among the participants to engage disciple making as a way of life and be more intentional about inviting family and friends to church each week.

5. Age, length of membership, active participation in worship, and membership of the participants is a strong indication that the church is poised to grow numerically with multiple generations.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The end goal of this ministry project was the establishment of an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AMEC, Daytona Beach, Florida. The design of the project taught biblical truths regarding God's desire for God's people to be relational, family oriented, and to operate as the body of Christ through sermons and Bible studies. The design also provided for workshops that taught about the intergenerational church, the myth of family and friends Sunday, and community organizing as a way to reorganize the membership toward increasing the number of generations worshipping together.

The purpose of this project was to establish an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church by aligning its worship and ministries to what God requires throughout scripture in collaboration with the AME Books of Discipline and Worship while engaging one another as the family of God and the body of Christ, mobilizing the participation of all generations. This chapter focuses on the major findings from chapter four, the ministry implications from these findings, limitations of the study, unexpected observations, recommendations for further work, and final thoughts and reflections on this research journey. These topics will be discussed in detailed below. In addressing the research findings and what was learned from the project, beginning with the research problem and purpose is important.

Major Findings

Major Finding #1: Allen Chapel has at least three generations from which to establish an intergenerational church model and expand the number of generations actively

participating in worship and ministry and may be ready and willing to establish an intergenerational congregation.

Allen Chapel AME Church was chosen as the project site because it is the largest church on the Daytona District of the 11th Episcopal District of the AME Church. As the largest church on the district, it was assumed that Allen Chapel had multiple generations worshipping and serving on a regular basis. This assumption was the basis for choosing Allen Chapel as the model church for other congregations on the Daytona District to replicate. In today's religious culture, churchgoers need to see the impact on growth, health, and sustainability of churches that are intergenerational in their worship and service. Providing a model congregation with multiple generations worshipping and serving together as the body of Christ makes a compelling argument for establishing intergenerational congregations across the Daytona District of the AME Church for the 11th Episcopal District and beyond.

Advertising the launch of this Doctor of Ministry project from the pulpit, during ministry meetings, administrative board meetings, and during Sunday school aroused excitement throughout the church. Members were eager to participate because they experienced the results of participating in a prior Doctor of Ministry project that led to a vibrant social justice ministry. Members saw this project as an opportunity to expand its discipleship, grow its membership participation in worship and service, and increase new families in the life of the church. Once an official sign-up sheet was circulated during a Sunday morning worship service, the number of participants needed to proceed was secured immediately.

The dates of each testing process were scheduled, and all eighteen participants attended each of the eight sessions. Active participation among the participants was strong. The participants were a prideful group who sought to use the project as a means of expanding the

vitality and sustainability of the church. Clarifying questions were asked and answered for each sermon and Bible study session prior to the dissemination of the Likert scale testing instrument. The three workshops were highly interactive causing time to run over during each session. The level of interest stimulated discussion for the sessions to be shared again with a wider group at a later date.

The participants demographic profile identified three generations of participants who were long standing members very involved in worship, service, and ministry participation. While only three generational groups participated in the study, there are known families who have four generations as members. Allen Chapel plans to use this model to achieve four or more generations of active church participation. The participants seemed to be convicted by the information gleaned from the overall project and shared what took place with members who were not in attendance to increase the anticipation for the next phase of this project's work.

The literature review substantiated the results of this finding. The participants demographic profile identifying how they attend worship and who attends worship with them. The data revealed the following: those who worship alone, 50 percent; parent and kids, 5 percent; husband and wife, 17 percent; and attend as a family, 28 percent. In relation to church attendance, African Americans attend worship together at a great percentage than other groups. According to the study, 40 percent of African Americans say they attend worship as couples (Christian Century 18). However, only 17 percent of participants worshipped as husband and wife. The low attendance by husband and wife provides an opportunity to increase couples worshipping together, which will increase attendance leading to a possible increase in intergenerational participation.

Research from the literature review substantiated the desire to expand generational participation. Christian Schwarz posits, "Healthy churches are growing churches, making more and better disciples in loving obedience to Christ," (Schwarz Preface) and Christina Embree says, "The significance of an intergenerational connection is found in the 'shared memory' or the 'core part of its identity' where children 'benefit enormously from being around caring people in all stages of the life cycle'" (Embree 131).

From the biblical perspective, Kara Jenkins speaks to the intentionality of the family being an integral part of Jewish culture. She says, "The presence of intergenerationality in the early Christian community: God's directives for his people in the Old Testament clearly identify the Israelites as a relational community where the children were to grow up participating in the culture they were becoming" (Jenkins). As it relates to intergenerational family worship, K. A. Matthews writes that "God's covenant is intergenerational, even an "everlasting" (ʿôlām) covenant for Abraham's "generations [dōrōt] to come" (Mathews 202-03). Jenkins further adds, "When God created the family, He wanted an expression of Himself; He wanted His image to be reproduced in unity and harmony. God Himself is community; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, relationally communing and flowing together. God created mankind in the image of the trinity; therefore, we were created to live in community" (Jenkins).

Major Finding #2: The program participants who represent a cross section of the congregation and three generations also agree that there are noticeable age groups missing in worship.

Prior to the project implementation, and possibly because of the lingering effects of Covid, enrollment in face-to-face Sunday school and worship attendance was down. This occurrence was especially true for young adults and children. The age group for this project was

between the ages of nineteen and eighty plus, and 22 percent of the participants were between

nineteen and forty-years old.

Data from the pre/posttest indicated that 61 percent of the participants noted an absence

of various age groups participating in worship. Data also indicated that 68 percent of the

participants said the absence of various age groups occurred before and after Covid 19. These

data points clearly show that members have noticed missing generational groups in the life of the

church. Embree says, "the term 'generation gap' began being used to describe the age

segregation in society and the church" (Embree 133). Embree quotes Mary Pipher in saying,

> A great deal of America's social sickness comes from age segregation. If ten fourteen-
>
> year-olds are grouped together, they will form a Lord of the Flies culture with its
>
> competitiveness and meanness. But if ten people ages two to eighty are grouped together,
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> they will fall into a natural age hierarchy that nurtures and teaches them all. For our own
>
> mental and societal health, we need to reconnect the age groups (Embree 133).

Intergenerational churches provide a wealth of opportunities for children to grow and

develop spiritually through interaction with members from other age groups. This interaction can

reduce the generational gaps that currently exist in many churches. With great intentionality,

families can extend what they are learning in church at home. As the church and family work

together to grow spiritually as the body of Christ, familiarity, closeness, and a sense of relational

fellowship will begin to bridge the generational gap.

Biblically speaking, intergenerational relationships became the hallmark of family in the

Bible from the call of Abraham and his descendants, Moses and Joshua, Ruth and Naomi, and

Samuel and Eli to many others. In the gospels, Jesus and the disciples were family; in the

epistles, Paul, Timothy, Silas, Barnabas, and Lydia were family; thus, the theological imperative

is clear for churches; create generational models that worship together and pass on the faith from one generation to another (Jenkins). According to Jewish culture, every member of the family was included in worship and service unto God. When generations are missing, it goes against the religious culture that God established from the foundations of the earth.

Major Finding #3: There is a sense that participants are willing to work with leadership to increase intergenerational participation across the church.

As stated earlier, at least three generations participated in the field study. These generations comprised a cross section of ages, length of membership, and active participation. Participants age ranged from nineteen to eighty plus, length of church membership ranged from one year to sixty-one plus, active participation in ministry averaged three to four ministries, and worship attendance reported: four of four weeks, 78 percent; three of four weeks, 11 percent; and two of four weeks, 11 percent. When asked about the desire to work toward increasing the number of generations serving the church the pretest indicated 83 percent and the posttest indicated 100 percent of the participants would work with leadership to increase intergenerational participation across the church.

Allen Chapel has a history of being the largest church on the Daytona District of the 11th Episcopal District of the AME Church. As such, an expectation of its members exists to maintain this coveted status.

During the workshops, the participants were open to organizing the church to increase member participation. The workshop on community organizing gave the participants a view of what could happen once members took part in visioning, developing, executing ministry projects, and activities. The workshop on Family and Friends Sunday convicted the participants to become more intentional about inviting guest and visitors more often than a designated

Sunday. The participants acknowledged the importance of having an intergenerational church after participating in the intergenerational church workshop. Although data pointed to a willingness to move forward, some hesitancy exists due to a very recent change in pastors.

Kluttz quotes Liz Perraud saying,

Intergenerational ministry develops disciples and energizes churches by bringing together any combination of at least two generations in planned and purposeful settings; empowering multiple generations to mutually invest in each other and in their faith community; intentionally encouraging … relationships among multiple generations. (Kluttz)J.

Drew Dyke believes that without all members being in relationship one with another and serving together, the church does not fully develop. For churches to be intergenerational, they must integrate young people along with older generations (Dyck 65).

Jocelyn Hill reports the more generations present in a congregation, the greater number of stories that can be shared. Hill's strategy for intergenerational growth is based on learning from one another rather than learning about one another. She says, learning from one another provides a richer experience which builds relationships and ties together the bonds that keep the church operating as the body of Christ (J. Hill 18).

The literature review suggest that intergenerational congregations are important, especially when two or more generations get together, share their stories and learn from one another while building unity and mutuality as the body of Christ. This process is not a difficult process; however, the process must begin with educating the congregation on what God requires in scripture and also by pointing to the impact of fewer generations participating in the life of the church.

Biblically speaking, Genesis 2.18 provides the impetus for intergenerational participation in life as it states, "It is not good for man to be alone." From that moment, community was established and the perpetuity of community was commanded to continue until Christ's second coming. Throughout the Old Testament, God prepared the Israelites to be God's chosen people. Their journey to the Promised Land was fraught with missteps and challenges as they learned what God cares about. The narrative of scripture chronicles the struggle with obedience, sin, sin's consequences, and the graciousness of God. Despite the nature of sin committed by God's people, God's love for God's people continues to encourage togetherness and unity toward God's commitment to God's covenant established with Abraham.

The missionary journey of the Apostle Paul demonstrates God's commitment to God's people as seen in New Testament; God continues to be faithful to God's people. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the metaphor of the body to illustrate the importance of intergenerational participation through the unity of all of God's people. Although the church in the twenty-first century has become fractured and disconnected with its many affiliations, people continue to gather as the body of Christ. Similar to the journey of the Israelites and the work of the disciples and apostles, God continues to compel his people forward in the hope of a new creation. This journey is best captured when intergenerational participation takes place in each church open in the name of Jesus.

The goal of the church according to Paul in Ephesians 4.13–16 is to grow up in Christ until all members have matured in Christ. The full transformative impact of the church on its members happens when they are united in a common belief in Jesus Christ and are able to celebrate sacramental and ministry activities while maintaining mutual respect and love for one another (Dockery 579-80).

Major Finding #4: A commitment has emerged from among the participants to engage disciple making as a way of life and be more intentional about inviting family and friends to church each week.

The final command of Jesus before his ascension into heaven was the Great Commission (Matt. 28.16-20). The three functions of the Great Commission were to go, baptize, and teach followed by, "surely, I am with you till the end of the age." Admittedly, the participants acknowledged that making disciples became less of a priority, especially when an unanticipated Covid 19 pandemic necessitated members quarantine themselves. The church went from being the church gathered to the church scattered with adjustments being made for virtual worship. The protracted nature of the pandemic compelled the church to strengthening its online presence; however, little was done to keep members connected. Prior to the pandemic, the church maintained a robust sense of fellowship at the church, which created a false positive regarding fellowship and intrinsic relationality because disciple making came to a grinding halt. Although the church survived the pandemic, encouraging members to return to face-to-face worship became an urgent concern. A large segment of the membership became comfortable with online worship causing face-to-face worship to suffer.

Reacting to the non-compliance of members to return to face-to-face worship, Allen Chapel, like so many churches, resorted to initiating gimmick and social marketing schemes to encourage members to return. Family and Friends Sunday and other special Sundays were conducted to urge members to return to the sanctuary for worship; however, this process has not provided the outcomes expected. When asked if no evidence existed that Family and Friends Day and other special worship services had a positive effect on worship participation, nearly 75 percent agreed or highly agreed.

An interesting conversation ensued during the Family and Friends workshop that cause the facilitator to pause with great curiosity. Several members commented that one of the problems of getting visitors and guest to attend Allen Chapel was the image the community held about the church. When pressed to articulate and clarify their statement, it was discovered that the community believed that Allen Chapel was a church for educated and wealthy people. While this was not a fair assessment of the church's total membership, the reputation spoke volumes about how the members see themselves and how selective bias might be an unrecognized trait as they approach people when extending an invitation to attend church as visitors and guest.

During each workshop, vocal evidence was present that the participants were in favor of rallying the troops to regain the traction and momentum once realized prior since the pandemic. A sense of urgency existed among the participants to move toward an aggressive disciple making posture as noted in their responses to the community organizing workshop. One of the first areas of disciple making the participants agreed to support was having every member of every household attend worship together. They saw this as the first step in making disciples prior to mobilizing the congregation to engage the community.

From the literature review, age segregation and generational division has impacted the local church's ability to form intergenerational relationships that strengthen the entire congregation. This impact spills over to the community around the church because few models exist of generational connectivity to replicate (Embree 133). Writers like Embree, Jordan, and Dyke support more efforts in getting the various generations to do things together. They believe rather than talking about church school lessons and the Bible in silos, they advocate using the biblical narrative to allow members of all generations to come together and share how these stories impact their lives.

Jereme Jordan posits that the Great Commission was not only given to the disciples or current day pastors, but he also states that everyone has a responsibility of growing people in the faith. Parents and churches are equally responsible for raising their children in the ways of God. Before a congregation can fully engage in disciple making as commanded by the Great Commission, members must be convicted follow Jesus, do what Jesus did, and teach new believers to bless others with the gift of being a follower of Jesus who makes disciples (Jordon 4).

Kluttz is a proponent of using disciple making to grow relationships across the church to increase intergenerational involvement (Kluttz). Using disciple making to forge strong intergenerational bonds means involving all people in the life of the church, which allows the church to fully develop (Dyck 65).

Various theologians state what should be obvious, making disciples is the lifeblood of the church, and making disciples should take place in every generation. The church can ill afford to be selective in who becomes a follower of Jesus. To do this is to cripple and dishonor the command of Jesus and cause the growth of the church to come to a grinding halt. This is part and parcel for the exodus of would-be churchgoers from churches. Disciples are followers of Jesus devoid of socio-economic pedigree and status.

Disciple making was not a focal point in the biblical research although establishing an intergenerational church does require attracting new members from all age groups and socio-economic backgrounds to join the existing congregation. This project primarily focused on unity in relationships and the church living as the body of Christ. Other major findings utilize biblical text for this purpose.

Major Finding #5: Age, length of membership, active participation in worship, and membership of the participants is a strong indication that the church is poised to grow numerically with multiple generations.

If the participants represented a cross section of the total membership of the church, they would make a compelling argument for establishing an intergenerational church. First, the church currently has at least three generations in worship who actively serve in various ministries on a weekly basis. The participants of the project consisted of one married couple, several related as siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

The age of the participants confirms three generations; however, when you take the age range of all participants, the average age is fifty-two years old. With an average age of fifty-two years old, a significant number of members are able to actively participate in life, be gainfully employed, and able to produce children. The age range of the members would also indicate continuous new member growth of younger people. The age differential, along with maintaining three generations, speaks volumes to long term relationships, continuity, and working together as the body of Christ.

Actively participating in weekly worship is a good indication that members' spiritual, fellowship, and relational needs are being met on a consistent basis. All of the participants said they attend worship at least two times per month with 78 percent saying they are in worship every Sunday. One of the famous quotes by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is "Like anybody, I would like to live a long life — longevity has its place" (King). This quote is significant to this finding in that the church has been serving the community for over 114 years, over half of the participants have been members of the church for sixty-plus years, and the participant with the least number of active memberships is between five and ten years.

All of these statistics provide the seedbed for what congregational development experts would consider a vibrant and healthy congregation. A vibrant and healthy congregation has the greatest potential to fill in its generational gaps toward being a healthy intergenerational congregation.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

Reflecting on the outcomes of this Doctor of Ministry project has provided clarity about God's chosen people being relational. Relationality according to scripture is a never-ending process until Christ comes in final victory. Relationality for the twenty-first century church presupposes maintaining an intergenerational presence.

The Bible teaches that a house divided cannot not stand (Mark 3.25). Certainly, this verse applies to generational gaps that are caused because of neglecting various generations, people groups, and families in ministry service and participation. God designed God's people to be relational and to care for one another. This caring happens best when all generations are granted equity participation across the span of the church and when members began to love one another as God loves them. Healthy congregations are possible when the entirety of the body participates in unity in building the kingdom of God.

The church must be unified and function as one. This unity is in keeping with God's command for God's people to be relational and function as a body. Being relational when the body is not unified is difficult. A fragmented body causes disunity, differing visions, objectives, and a sense of estrangement. Nothing is more painful than being estranged from your family, whether your biological or your church family. The church must renew and restore the meaning of a unified intergenerational body as essential for good health, sustained growth, and ultimate survival.

When the church is unified, all people work together for the good of the body. Disagreements will exist because of the human condition to sin; however, disagreement going in the same direction is a sign of a healthy body. This faucet has been a challenge for Allen Chapel although the church has three generations engaged in ministry. Disunity is recognized in the lack of youth, young adults, and children present in worship and service. When 50 percent of the members participating in the project say they come to church alone, albeit data did not request if they were married or single, this aloneness is a sign of disunity. For the church to be unified, the church must have a shared vision, shared purpose, respect, and equity for all generations.

A relational and unified church must become organized around common causes central to all generations. Silos must be avoided as much as possible, and projects and activities should be developed, designed, and implemented by members of each generation. Organizing the church also means caring for the welfare of all members. Members should know one another, share stories, and engage in public life together.

The church should strive to be the body of Christ. Being the body is where relationships are fortified, unity is galvanized, and caring for each generation is concretized. In the body is where the intentional work commissioned by God for God's people occurs. People are to be celebrated; they should embrace unity in diversity and strengthen themselves through the kinship of like minds and values. When the church functions as the body of Christ, its growth will spill out into the community as it seeks to attract others to the body through disciple making as it builds the kingdom of God.

When all of the components of the generational church are put together, (relationships, unity, caring, diversity, and kindred spirits that become the body of Christ), the church is poised to make disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the community and world around them. As

transformation takes place, lives will be changed, and more and more people will come to know Jesus in the pardoning of their sins to the glory of God.

In spite of the challenges Allen Chapel is experiencing, its members believe in the necessity of God's church as the anchor for the community. Additionally, Allen Chapel is poised to becoming a teaching congregation, one that will model kingdom principles for other congregations within the AME Church. With at least three generations of faithful members, Allen Chapel has accepted the responsibility of establishing an intergenerational congregation utilizing Bible based Christian education, disciple making, Christian fellowship, and reverential worship of God.

The findings of this project are not unique to Allen Chapel; many churches are recognizing the need to return to the old landmark which is critical to their survival. Throughout scripture, God's people had to return to God for their survival, and because God was faithful, God continued to make provisions for their good. That same God who restored Israel over and over again will also restore the twenty-first century church as it returns to the path and plan that God set before it from the foundations of the earth.

To transition toward becoming an intergenerational church, this project has uncovered areas of instability in the church's infrastructure. First, a return to developing the spiritual life of the family must take place. Family members must care enough for the souls of their loved ones to bring them to church when they come. Leaving family members behind weakens the spiritual life of the family and becomes a lost opportunity for the church.

The undercurrents of the past and the ever-present tension between members should be addressed through reconciliation and restoration. Although the church seems to have healed on the outside, the appointment of a new pastor during the implementation phase of this project

uncovered hurts and pain that were thought to be resolved. The church can possibly mend old wounds while simultaneously organizing around core values and biblical principles that govern how Christians should conduct themselves in community.

This process would require a series of listening sessions where members come together to identify areas that affect the spiritual health of the body and agree to methods and practices to move the church forward in love. The participants in the project appeared ready to move forward. However, a word of caution is given based on data from the project's field work. Responses to the pre/posttest and the community organizing workshop to move forward with establishing an intergenerational congregation were positive. However, the standard deviation of the answers was farther from the mean or middle than expected prompting the caution.

A broader segment of the congregation should participate in the project field work to expose them to the intrinsic benefits of becoming and intergenerational church following the commandments of God. As additional members engage in the project field work, it is hoped they too would feel energized about moving forward. However, attempting to move forward without reconciling and restoration could compound the issues already surfaced with the appointment of a new pastor.

Due to the awareness of underlying tension, ministries could be developed to bring the members together to help others in the community who need assistance, hospitality, and love. Working in mutuality toward helping someone beyond the congregation would allow God to move on the hearts of the members by reminding them of the reason the church exists.

The implications and uses for ministry extrapolated from this project provide the seedbed for replication in other congregations who are experiencing generational gaps based on a plethora of situations. What has been validated from the research and the results of this project

model is that the church must reconnect its connection as the body of Christ. Longevity is possible when future generations are given opportunity to grow and contribute to building the kingdom of God.

Intergenerational congregations are a must for the church's vitality. The vitality becomes incumbent upon all Christians of all faith traditions to sound the trumpet in Zion, ring the alarm, and issue the clarion call to all who would hear that the church of Jesus Christ is alive and well. Denominational church leaders and pastors must recommit to the call of God by reeducating its congregants to the God of the Bible and how God provides for God's people. The church must illuminate signs and wonders of God's power on the earth to care for the vulnerable, widows, orphans, and the "other" in society.

Families and family ministries must become an urgent priority, and the church must provide a level of care and regard for families to strengthen relationships and family ties that have been fractured for too long.

Limitations of the Study

The most significant limitation of the study was not providing enough time for the project implementation process to be understood by the congregation. If more time was taken on the front end to prepare for the field work, choice dates could have been reserved on the church calendar which was already full of activities. A large segment of the membership base continues to be virtual worshippers; therefore, this may have minimized the number of potential participants. Although eighteen participants was a good number and represented a healthy cross section of the congregation, the three generational group having equal representation would have been preferred. As it stood, participants nineteen to forty-four years of age represented 22 percent of the participants, ages forty-five to sixty-four years of age represented 28 percent and

ages sixty-five and above represented 50 percent. The higher age group had twice as many participants overall, which contributes to the generational gap that exist within the church.

Gender diversity could have been better. Women represented 72 percent and men represented 28 percent. Again, a longer lead time in disseminating the program information to the congregation could have allowed for greater effort in attracting more men. This imbalance was a limitation because the leadership of the church is about the opposite of the gender differential of the participants. Although significantly more women participated, historically the church is led primarily by men. More men needed to learn and hear the needs of those marginalized because of a lack of gender and generational diversity within the church.

Finally, the results of the study may have been different with the participation of laity who do not serve as officers or in a leadership capacity. As it were, all participants held a leadership role of some kind. Experience has shown that views and opinions of officers and leaders are often quite different from laity who are members only. When those who are lay members only voices are left out, results are usually skewed in favor of leadership who maintains the status quo. This is not in keeping with equity in diversity toward being the intergeneration body of Christ.

Unexpected Outcomes

Surprisingly, all participants were in attendance and on time for all testing sessions. From my experience, this is a rarity when conducting workshops for churches. This is especially true based on the eight-testing session require by the project design model. It was amazing to see all participants giving eight plus hours toward this project. This demonstrates in a real way the urgency of becoming an intergenerational church.

A highly unanticipated outcome of the project was the level of transparency and truth sharing that occurred during each workshop. During the workshops raw emotions were revealed. Knowing the Presiding Elder (Principal Investigator) was in earshot of the actual meeting space as the non-participant observer taking notes, the participants expressed hurt, pain, and disappointment with some of the ways the church operated. Nonetheless, they maintained Christ-like behavior and expressed a keen desire to make the requisite changes to become an intergenerational church and the body of Christ.

A final unexpected outcome of the project was the silence of a few participants who hold major leadership positions in the church. What was unexpected was a shift in their normal mode of being. Usually these two participants act as "thermostats" in all meetings, changing the temperature at will to suit their governance and plan of action. Their silence may have been construed as "spying" on the process; however, spying or not, the other sixteen participants embraced what they learned about God's desire for God's people and vocally spoke to making it happen in their congregation. The answers from each testing instrument indicated that everyone spoke their truth and none of the answers indicated implicit bias toward the process.

Recommendations

This project educated its participants toward becoming a health intergenerational church for the twenty-first century. The project results provide a path forward for the congregation to systematically move toward modifying its internal control systems. Although three generations presently worship and serve the church, disunity and lack of transparency currently exist; a much-needed internal controls will strengthen the congregational desire to be a healthy intergenerational church.

What follows are the recommendations based on the results of the project field work.

To Demonstrate Relationality and Generational Fellowship

A modified class leader system with term limits for class leaders as well as shuffling members into different classes would help to broaden relational ties and fellowship bonds. At present, Allen Chapel has twenty-five classes and class leaders as prescribed by John Wesley, founder of Methodism. The same class leaders have been in place at Allen Chapel for decades; sickness or death are the determinants for appointing a new leader. Likewise, members of each class have been together since they were placed in a class. If class leaders rotate on and off after a period of one quadrennium and members are shuffled into new class groups after two quadrennium, it would provide opportunity for new people to lead and give members the opportunity for new relationships to be forged.

Birthday clubs should be established where people born in the same month get together at a designated time in the month of their birth to deepen relationships, celebrate birthdays, and fellowship together.

Random groupings of members should occur to extend the opportunity to get better acquainted. Here, as people enter worship, they are randomly given a card with a number (1-10). On the designated Sunday after worship, tables are set up in the fellowship hall for members with like numbers to sit together and enjoy a desert, share stories, and fellowship.

These are just three ways that intentional relationship and fellowship opportunities could be provided for members to continue learning more about each other over time. The last two recommended activities would develop a level of trust, belief, and fellowship. At each activity, someone new would be selected to lead. This allows for shared leadership to emerge and

opportunity for the sharing of new ideas toward maintaining a strong level of relationality and fellowship throughout the church.

The Church must strive to be the Unified Body of Christ

It is recommended that Allen Chapel encourage all members (excluding the sick and homebound) to bring persons living under their roof to worship with them. As part of the disciple making process, a form of encouragement such as brunch, lunch, or even going to a movie or park after worship may stimulate stay behind family members to join you in worship.

A greater Sense of Fiscal Transparency

The church should provide members with a regular update on the use of church funds pursuant to the church's budget. It is recommended that at the church's quarterly conference a detailed financial report is provided to the membership identifying the source and use of funds devoid of individual member giving. When members give sacrificially, they should have access to the use of those funds for integrity and peace of mind. The absence of many of the millennials in worship and service is largely due to funds not being available for projects and service activities. Correcting this practice can lead to greater involvement by millennials and a stronger desire to be the body of Christ.

Equity in the Body of Christ

Establish a wider range of diverse people who are part of the decision-making team for various activities, especially when the activity is geared for the entire congregation. Leaders must be sensitive to person who may be shy, introverted, or leadership adverse when making decisions. This sensitivity avoids the possibility of overlooking someone who could add value to the decision-making process. The church should avoid as much as possible the same people making significant decisions for the church without consultation with the larger congregation.

Generational Diversity in Leadership

It is recommended that other than decisions prescribed in the Book of Discipline, all decisions regarding the church should have someone from each generation on the decision-making team. It is further recommended that decision-making should be organized around congregational gifting rather than personality, pedigree, or social standing.

A System of Leadership Rotation to be implemented across the Life of the Church

It would seem reasonable for the size of Allen Chapel that leaders maintain positions for a period of one quadrennium with the possibility of an additional quadrennium at the pleasure of the current pastor of record.

Transition to becoming an Intergenerational Church

Return to developing the spiritual life of the church as family. A possible service of reconciliation and restoration could take place or the reinstitution of the "Love Feast," a traditional AME practice where members forgive and are forgiven by one another prior to taking Holy Communion.

It is recommended that a series of listening sessions take place where members come together to identify areas that affect the spiritual health of the body and agree to methods and practices for resolution.

A broader segment of the congregation should participate in the project field work to expose them to the intrinsic benefits of becoming an intergenerational church following the commandments of God.

Postscript

My matriculation through this Doctor of Ministry program has been challenging, satisfying, and rewarding. The challenge came as a result of being appointed District

Superintendent over the Daytona District of the 11ᵗʰ Episcopal District of the AME Church after

I began my studies. What began as a manageable workload quickly became burdensome trying

to learn about churches in my district and keeping up with course work at the same time. Time

management was essential and often I had to make hard decisions and suffer consequences as a

result. Nonetheless, I persevered and made it.

I would recommend any student attempting to do this degree program to secure an editor

and research assistant as soon as possible. I secured such a person late in the program, but they

proved to be invaluable in assisting me in staying on task, submitting academically sound

documents, and meeting institutional deadlines.

My coach seemed to take strong interest in my project and pushed me to dig deeper, think

wider, and write with precision. His ongoing edits, comments, and encouragement helped me

believe my project was critical for all church. Because of his level of insistence, I will be

replicating my project model in all of the churches in my district.

The DMin department and support staff helped create a team I could count on for

direction, in-sight, and resourcing when needed. I appreciate all of your support. It is my hope

that the work I have accomplished during this degree program speaks highly of Asbury Seminary

and provides a path forward for churches to establish intergenerational congregations for the

health and vitality of the church for years to come.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY/INTERVIEW/QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE AND QUESTIONS

Pre and Posttest Questions

Rate the following responses using the Likert Scale provided based on your

understanding of intergenerational ministry as it relates to your ministry context.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	1	2	3	4	5
As a member of Allen Chapel AMEC, I have experienced at least 4 generations worshipping together during normal worship times.					
Congregational decline has not been an issue at Allen Chapel AMEC since I have been a member.					
I am beginning to notice an absence of various age groups in regular morning worship services.					
The visible absence of various age groups was noticeable prior to and after Covid 19.					
Ministry leaders prioritized generational congregational growth prior to Covid 19.					
The church has a history of maintaining strong children, youth, and young adult ministries.					
Our ministry activities promote family and prospective member involvement.					
The church has ministries designed for all family members to participate together.					
Besides fellowship after worship, our church promotes ongoing churchwide ministry activities.					
I am willing to work with leadership to increase intergenerational participation across the church.					

Sermon Series Questionnaire
1 Corinthians 12:12-28

Rate the following responses using the Likert Scale provided based on your

understanding of the sermon preached on 1 Corinthians 12:12-28 and intergenerational ministry

at Allen Chapel AMEC.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	1	2	3	4	5
I understood the meaning of the text before the sermon was preached.					
The sermon changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.					
I was not aware that this text applies to intergenerational congregations.					
The sermon confirmed my role as a member of the body of Christ at Allen Chapel AMEC.					
The analogy of the parts of the body helped me visualize the importance of inclusion of members in ministry.					
While the sermon was good, I have a hard time accepting some people as members.					
The sermon and text helped me expand my understanding of intergenerational ministry.					
More members of the congregation need to experience this sermon toward wholeness and healing.					
The sermon needs to be preached again for greater clarity.					
The sermon was a call to action regarding my responsibility to all generations of the church. All are important.					

Sermon Series Questionnaire
Ephesians 4.1-16

Rate the following responses using the Likert Scale provided based on your

understanding of the sermon preached on Ephesians 4:1-16 and intergenerational ministry at

Allen Chapel AMEC.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	1	2	3	4	5
I understood the meaning of the text before the sermon was preached.					
The sermon changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.					
I was not aware that this text applies to intergenerational congregations.					
The sermon convicted me to understand that all members of the church are a part of Christ's body and has been equipped to serve the kingdom of God.					
The sermon dispelled the notion that title, and position are more important than faithfulness and kingdom service.					
The sermon gave me a greater appreciation for raising up younger and newer members as leaders.					
We need more sermons that teach the importance of being the body of Christ					
More members of the congregation need to experience this sermon toward wholeness and healing.					
The sermon needs to be preached again for greater clarity.					
The sermon was a call to action regarding my responsibility to all generations of the church. Each member is equipped to serve.					

Bible Study Questionnaire
1 Corinthians 12.12-28

Rate the following responses using the Likert Scale provided based on your

understanding of the Bible Study taught on 1 Corinthians 12:12-28 and intergenerational

ministry at Allen Chapel AMEC.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	1	2	3	4	5
The sermon had more meaning after the Bible study as taught on the same text.					
The Bible study changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.					
The Bible study provided irrefutable proof that the church was more than a gathering place and is essential for building the kingdom of God.					
The Bible study reminded me of how much I do not know about God and why knowing his word is important to establishing a relationship with God and members of the body of Christ.					
The Bible study gave me the confidence to share the biblical text with members of my family toward increasing their involvement in the life of the church.					

Bible Study Questionnaire
Ephesians 4:1-16

Rate the following responses using the Likert Scale provided based on your

understanding of the Bible study taught on Ephesians 4:1-16 and intergenerational ministry at

Allen Chapel AMEC.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	1	2	3	4	5
The sermon had more meaning after the Bible study as taught on the same text.					
The Bible study changed my understanding of the text and the meaning of being an intergenerational congregation.					
The Bible study provided irrefutable proof that the church was more than a gathering place and is essential for building the kingdom of God.					
The Bible study reminded me of how much I do not know about God and why knowing his word is important to establishing a relationship with God and members of the body of Christ.					
The Bible study gave me the confidence to share the biblical text with members of my family toward increasing their involvement in the life of the church.					

Workshop One Questionnaire
Community Organizing for the Church

Rate the following responses using the Likert Scale provided based on your

understanding of intergenerational ministry as it relates to community organizing.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	1	2	3	4	5
I have a better understanding of community organizing as it relates to intergenerational ministry and our church.					
Community organizing can assist our congregation in understanding the need to realign worship and ministry service to be inclusive of all members.					
The concept of "no permanent friends and no permanent enemies" is not applicable to the church, however the premise behind it can build bridges to congregational healing and wholeness.					
This workshop revealed the power of an organized group to act toward a positive outcome. Using this process can also provide positive outcomes for our congregation.					
Community organizing most always focus on a specific issue or topic. Organizing our congregation around the issue of generational gaps in our church should garner churchwide support and participation.					

Workshop Two Questionnaire
Family and Friends Sunday

Rate the following responses using the Likert Scale provided based on your understanding of intergenerational ministry as it relates to Family and Friends Sunday.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	1	2	3	4	5
The purposes of designating a Family and Friends Sunday are to increase worship participation, attract guest, and gain potential new members.					
Allen Chapel has no documentable evidence that Family and Friends Sundays are effective in growing the church's worship attendance and membership.					
Based on what I have learned, every Sunday should be Family and Friends Sunday.					
The amount of effort deployed in planning and carrying out a Family and Friends Sunday is what God requires of the church every Sunday.					
This workshop convicted me that the Word of God has the best solution for and is the final word on church growth.					

Workshop Three Questionnaire
Intergenerational Church

Rate the following responses using the Likert Scale provided based on your

understanding of intergenerational ministry as it relates to the intergenerational church.

1=highly disagree   2=disagree   3=neutral   4=agree   5=highly agree

Questions	Rating (% answered)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Intergenerational churches are healthier by definition versus churches with a maximum of two generations.					
The average corporation has an average of 4 to 5 generations in its workforce, the average church has an average of 2 generations in its pews. Corporations benefit greatly from generational consistency; this may possibly be of benefit to the church.					
An intergenerational church is best portrayed in the book of Acts and throughout the Epistles.					
According to one poll, about 75 percent of children raised in Christian churches leave the church when they graduate from high school.					
Effective intergenerational ministry activities are successful when they create a planning team with representatives from across the church.					

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA INSTRUMENT

Demographic Data Instrument

Please complete the demographic survey by checking the appropriate box or writing legibly. Fill in the blank for your answers to each question.

1. Age Range   ____65 and above   ____45-64   ____19-44   ____15-18

2. Gender   ____ Female   ____ Male

3. Ethnicity   ____ Asian   ____Black or African American   ____ Hispanic

                     ____ White   ____ Other_____

4. How long have you been a member of Allen Chapel AME Church, Daytona Beach, Florida? _____

5. Why did you join Allen Chapel AMEC_____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. In a four-Sunday month, what is your customary attendance practice?

   ____ 4 of 4   ____ 3 of 4   ____ 2 of 4   ____ 1 of 4   ____ 0 of 4

7. When you attend Sunday morning worship do you:

   ____ Attend as a family   ____ Husband and Wife ____ Parent/Kids   ____ Alone

8. In a typical week, do you attend Bible study?   ____ Yes   ____ No

9. In a typical week, do you attend Sunday school?   ____ Yes   ____ No

10. Which one of these terms best describes your participation at Allen Chapel AMEC?

    ____ Involved   ____ Very Involved   ____Somewhat Involved   ____ Not Involved

11. How many ministries of the church are you a participant?

    ____ 5 or more   ____ 3-4   ____ 1-2   ____ 0

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

**Allen Chapel AME Church: Becoming
A Healthy Intergenerational
21ˢᵗ Century Church**

Principle Investigator: Lorenzo Laws

Address: 3818 Arrowhead Drive…

Phone: 904.501.5898

Email: llaws5@bellsouth.net

Purpose Of Study

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. There are no known risks to participate in this research study.

The purpose of this project was to establish an intergenerational congregation for Allen Chapel AME Church by aligning its worship and ministries to what God requires throughout scripture in collaboration with the AME Book of Discipline and Worship while engaging one another as the family of God and the body of Christ mobilizing the participation of all generations. Connecting generational groups together exposes members to deeper relationships and to experience the different ways God has been faithful in the lives of God's people.

Study Procedures

Participants in this research study will take part in a pre/posttest questionnaire, a two-part sermon series, two-part Bible study, and three family worship workshops over a thirty-day period.

Time required for your participation is as follows:
- Pre/Posttest questionnaire   30 minutes total
- Two-part sermon series   1 hour total
- Two-part Bible study   1 hour total
- Three Family Worship Workshops   3 hours total
       Total Participant Time   5.5 hours total

At the conclusion of each item above, a Likert Scale Questionnaire will be administered to capture the participants responses to a series of questions.

Confidentiality

Your responses to each Likert Scale Questionnaire will be anonymous. Please do not write any identifying information on your questionnaire. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.

Benefits

Benefits anticipated from this research study are growth and awareness of the importance of intergenerational participation in the life of the church, greater unity, and collaboration across generations, increased spiritual maturity, increased disciple making, and increased generational participation in church related ministry activities.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Consent

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

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