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## 180° Symposium 2022 Focus Group—Academics

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# 180° SYMPOSIUM 2022

## FOCUS GROUP—ACADEMICIANS

*Facilitator: Rogelio Paquini (Professor, Andrews University)*

*Participants: Steve Case (President, Involve Youth), Jasmine Fraser (Professor, Andrews University), Andrew Francis (Pastor, Restoration Praise Center), Omwocha Nyaribo (Graduation Student, Andrews University), Nestor Osman (Youth Evangelism Director, Center for Youth Evangelism), Endi Stojanovic (Professor, Southwestern Adventist University)*

### MAIN POINTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Intergenerational Ministry<sup>1</sup> is essential to the church because:

- a. Spiritual growth increases for all ages when a church actively includes all generations.
- b. It is what God asked the people of Israel to do. This notion is Biblical.
- c. It is related to the natural family structure.
- d. It should be addressed in every ministry of the church.

Recommendation: Church administrators, pastors, elders, and ministry leaders should become aware of the benefits of intergenerational church life. They can accomplish this by:

- a. Inviting academics to present theories and models on intergenerational church life.
- b. Getting access to materials on intergenerational church life, such as COR, Growing Young, Adventist Growing Young, Growing Together, etc.
- c. Use spiritual retreats, ministerial retreats, etc., as opportunities to invite presenters or discuss how to implement intergenerational ministry in their local churches.
- d. Affirm congregations already practicing intergenerational elements, helping them identify

and encourage this integration in other aspects of church life.

2. It is clear through COVID and beyond that online churches are not going away. Therefore consider that each church's audience is potentially growing in a global scope. Keep in mind that online audiences come from different faiths, cultures, and political ideologies.

Recommendation:

- a. Gear language and content toward a global audience that includes Adventists and non-Adventists.
- b. Make the online presentation representative of the church, not merely something tacked on or created under crisis.
- c. Create avenues to interact with the online community.

3. After COVID, small groups became the lifeline of the church, utilizing both online and in-person "bubbles." They are essential for fostering meaningful connections and intimacy. They also increase the potential for meaningful involvement within the group and the local church at large.

Recommendation:

- a. The purpose of the small group must be well defined for its members.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition: Intergenerational Ministry occurs by intentionally integrating generations in the church; in contrast to multigenerational church, which functions in silos or simply segregates into separate generations.

- b. The small group must limit itself both its size and duration (creating a more seasonal approach).
  - c. Seek to make the small group inter-generational.
4. Make periodic assessments for honest conversations for church members and leaders to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their church.

Recommendation:

- a. Create a simple, short guide for local leaders to assess themselves annually regarding what areas the church is thriving and struggling.
  - b. Hold town hall-style conversations for live conversations and interaction
5. COVID forced the church to meet outside its walls. Doctrinal evangelism took a backseat to community service. Those who were relevant in their community before COVID remained relevant through and after the pandemic.

Recommendation:

- a. For the local church to study and understand the needs of the community.
  - b. Create an approach to meet these needs.
  - c. Partner with organizations already working in their community and seek how to enhance and collaborate in meeting community needs.
6. Building relationships within and without the church is a Gospel imperative. How do we live with each other despite holding on to differing ideological perspectives? COVID has broken many relationships within the church in various ways. Loss of loved ones, differing views regarding safety protocols, ideas on vaccinations, etc. How do we come together and consider one another brothers and sisters despite these differences?

Recommendation:

- a. Make Jesus central without letting anything take this identifying place for a follower of Christ—a Christian.
- b. Agree to disagree, without lessening your love for another, and demonstrate that love.
- c. Dwelling on the forgiveness Christ has lavished on you, ask others for forgiveness, and offer

forgiveness, making relationships more important than your personal truth.

- 7. Avoid moralizing arguments of a certain nature as this tends to divide rather than connect church members.
- 8. Seek ways to create social interaction, now that COVID restrictions are easing, where the whole church can come together to build relationships outside of the church context. e.g., beach afternoons, playing board games.