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Promoting Intergenerational Harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Southern New England Conference

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ABSTRACT

PROMOTING INTERGENERATIONAL HARMONY AT THE
DEDHAM SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF
THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE

by

Yves Gerald Francis

Adviser: Ernan Norman

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: PROMOTING INTERGENERATIONAL HARMONY AT THE DEDHAM
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF THE SOUTHERN NEW
ENGLAND CONFERENCE

Name of researcher: Yves Gerald Francis

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Ernan Norman, DMin

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Problem

This field research study explored the prevalence of lack of harmony among first and second-generation Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members. Consequently, families may be divided, and hard feelings and lost souls. Thus, a fundamental problem is an intergenerational and cultural lack of understanding.

Method

The research was a qualitative phenomenological study based on small groups and their activities. The Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church provided a sample of 30 members, who were split into small groups of six each. For two weeks, the researcher and church leaders held small-group activities in the fellowship hall to impart the value of cooperation to both the older and younger generations. A survey was administered to participants, and the SurveyMonkey app was used to collect data. Following analysis of the survey responses, suggestions were offered to the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church on inspiring members of all ages to partake in worship, study, prayer, and service.

Results

Most respondents (89 percent) believed that youth and adults could collaborate, indicating a high degree of optimism and openness toward intergenerational cooperation. The favorable outcome showed potential for intergenerational collaboration across various sectors and domains. Therefore, the study revealed that involving youth in intergenerational church ministry could help strengthen church community relationships. It could also be a more effective instrument for equipping youth to become active and involved church members now and in the future. Nonetheless, it is essential to continue promoting and supporting initiatives that facilitate and enhance such cooperation and address any obstacles that impede effective collaboration.

Conclusion

Intergenerational programs such as small group activities and blended worship are practical approaches for addressing the lack of harmony between the generations at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. This project sought, through special activities, to engage all ages and generations in caring, worshiping, learning, praying, and serving.

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A Professional Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Ministry

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    Date approved

DEDICATION

To my beautiful wife and my three handsome boys, who
supported me in this academic work,
To the members of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church
and all those who have contributed and inspired me
with their courage and leadership.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendix

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

participating and contributing to this study's research. In addition, I would like to thank Laren, Averil Kurtz, and Camille Clayton, who have helped edit and format this work.

I am most thankful to my family: my loving wife, Natacha, and my three handsome sons, Jonathan, Emmanuel, and David, who, by their patience and moral support, helped me achieve the ultimate dream of my life, that is, pursuing this Doctor of Ministry degree. Last, but not least, I am so grateful to my God, who never abandoned me and has sustained me throughout this program. I want to praise his name because I could not have done all this without Him. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The notion of harmony has played a crucial role in many philosophical, political,

musical, scientific, and theological debates. In the theological field, particularly in the

history of creation, the Bible speaks of the Triune God who united or harmonized to

create the universe and make humankind in their image and likeness (Gen 1:27). This

relational God did everything for a purpose. A beautiful and descriptive idea in Gen 1:31

reveals that everything God created was made to live in perfect harmony. Thus, God's

goal was to have humankind live in perfect harmony with Him and each other. Therefore,

in some measures, the resulting partnership, equality, concord, and harmonious relations

are a revelation of the Triune God's nature (Bruce 2007, 116).

The Lord gives His people clear directions regarding living in harmony. His Word

speaks of parents and children, their responsibilities, and their relationships with each

other. Accordingly, God addresses both parents and children in His instructions because

God is not the God of adults only (Ps 127:3–4; Matt 6:9).

Still, He also claims the children for Himself and makes room for them in His covenant.

Therefore, children are not half members but full members in the covenant of God, just

like adults (Matt 19:13–14).

Consequently, God calls on older and younger generations to advance His

kingdom. Therefore, there should be no intergenerational rivalry in the church. In other words, people who meet at the church are from different generations. They think differently, use different methods of communication, and often opt for different worship practices (Vanderwell 2008, xx). Thus, promoting intergenerational harmony within the church is one of the biggest challenges for church leaders and members. God's plan has not changed. Therefore, everyone, including parents and children, adults and young people, must work together to maintain harmony in the church.

The term *harmony* comes from Greek (\a`ρμονία harmonía), which means "joint, agreement, concord" (Webster's New World Dictionary, 5th ed., s.v. "harmony"). Thus, harmony is concord, agreement, or harmonious relations between two variables or groups of individuals (Dictionary.com, s.v. "harmony," accessed September 14, 2022, https://www. Dictionary.com/browse/harmony). According to the Cambridge dictionary, harmony is when people are peaceful and agree or work happily together without significant problems (Cambridge Dictionary, s.v. "harmony," accessed September 14, 2022, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/harmony). Therefore, promoting intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church is crucial for evangelism and personal and cooperative church growth.

Description of the Ministry Context

In July 2018, the Southern New England Conference Executive Secretary introduced me as the new Lead Pastor of one of the most prominent Haitian churches at the Southern New England Conference. It has been a pleasure to serve the 305 Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members. This church previously existed in Roslindale, Massachusetts, under Mount Golgotha, before moving to Dedham in 2007.

The Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church is located at 410 Washington Street in Dedham. It is a suburb of Greater Boston and the county seat of Norfolk County of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Dedham Seventh-day Adventist is a typical Haitian church in a Caucasian-dominated area. In addition, over 99 percent of the church members do not live in Dedham, making the church's work difficult and complex for the community.

The Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church contains Haitian immigrants and their children or second-generation Haitian Americans. The 2018 United States Census Bureau reported that over 84,500 Haitian immigrants lived in Massachusetts (US Census Bureau, 2018). According to Zéphir (2004, 103), more than 70% of Haitians reside in the Boston Metropolitan area, including Mattapan, Dorchester, Roxbury, Hyde Park, and Roslindale. However, Haitian people are also present in other places such as Malden, Everett, Lynn, Randolph, Milton, Canton, Avon, Brockton, and Taunton (see Figure 1).
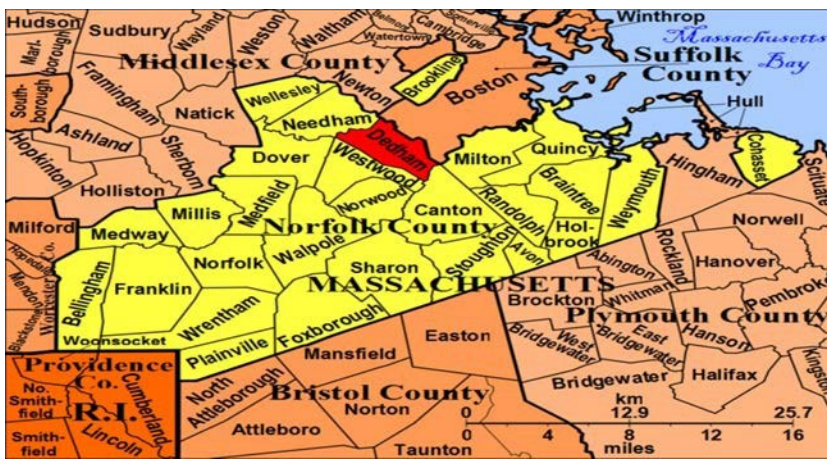
Figure 1. Dedham map. *Source*: Data from FamilySearch. 2022.

Community Context

Dedham church leaders and members face significant challenges in terms of doing ministries. They serve multiple communities, making their work harder than expected. Although the building is in Dedham, the members are mainly from Boston and surrounding areas.

According to the Barna Group (2019), Boston, including its surrounding suburbs, especially Dedham, is among the most post-Christian cities in America. This research has found that the role of religion in public life has been slowly diminishing. The church no longer functions with the cultural authority it held in times past. People living in a postChristian society do not have a solid commitment to religious programs. They are much more interested in their secular activities or businesses than in thinking about the church. They perceive religion as a waste of time. Time is valuable for them, and they schedule their days based on clock time because, as stated by Franklin Benjamin (1748), "time is money."

The church strategically used every option to reach out to unchurched people in Dedham. This hard work would only be possible through the combined efforts of the different age groups of the church. Leaders and members need to create a new environment. In this church, young people and adults can meet, worship, and work together for their spiritual growth and advance God's kingdom. However, the lack of communication between second-generation Haitian Americans and the church leaders who attach themselves to their original language and traditions poses a significant problem.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict exists between the generations, attributable to specific cultural differences such as the use of language and preference in worship music. The issue is the older generation's perception in contrast to the younger generation's. Older generations prefer Creole and traditional hymns and music. Nevertheless, younger generations are more comfortable with English. They want a worship style that matches their contemporary style.

Generations have different tastes in terms of using music in worship services. As a result, there is a difference in how people want to worship. When people worship God, they bring their preferences into the church. As people gather, this opinion clash can cause intergenerational conflict, disruption, hurt feelings, and the pain of rejection. The resistance of the older generation may make the younger generation angry. It can have a devastating effect on an individual's journey with God.

A young person from the Dedham SDA church described the situation this way. There is an outcry in the Haitian churches about a decrease in the presence of young people. In contrast, the adults panic and ask what new things they can do to bring the youth back into the church. They have not stopped wondering what must be changed to keep the second generation from walking out the door in the first place. The problem for the youth is that the world is changing around them. Technology is advancing, and schools are adjusting. Jobs are making changes to support their employees in the best way. Even hospitals keep themselves updated for the sake of their patients.

On the other hand, the Haitian community remains more stagnant than in the old times. They can not pursue change, as change scares most of the members. Most feel that satanic inspirations bring on the change rather than seeing that the world's advancements

call for a new tactic to spread the gospel. The differences of opinion would have spiritual, social, cultural, and moral implications. Music may even cause people to stay or leave the church. Consequently, divided families, hard feelings, and souls may be lost.

Thus, a fundamental problem is an intergenerational and cultural lack of understanding.

Research Questions

The research questions are based on the specific objectives the study will address. For example, how do the generation gap, language barrier, and traditional music in the worship service at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church affect the harmony and the proper functioning of activities within the church? How can older and younger members work and worship together without hurting anyone?

Statement of the Task

This research study aims to develop, implement, and evaluate a pastoral care approach to solving intergenerational conflict between the older and younger Haitian members of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Southern New England Conference.

Delimitations of the Project

This study will only occur among the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist members of the Southern New England Conference in Massachusetts.

Project Expectations

This project would address the lack of harmony or accommodation among older and younger generations who attend the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. This research study will also offer proper data collection resources, which would be helpful in

future studies of intergenerational dissonance syndromes within the Haitian Adventist community. Ultimately, this project would promote team involvement and collaboration in an intergenerational Haitian community with significant engagement and interaction.

Description of the Dissertation Process

The field research process on promoting intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church proposes a procedure comprised of four significant sections: (1) theological reflection, (2) literature review, (3) research methodology, (4) and development of the intervention.

Theological Reflection

The following topics will be examined in light of the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White to start theological conversations about how to bring together the older and younger generations of the church.

A theology of contextualization centered on God's accommodation and Jesus' incarnation was considered to foster the spirit of communication between the generations. Hence, special attention was given to (a) the Word of God, through which God reveals Himself to humankind (2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:20–21); (b) God's accommodation to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:8); (c) Gods accommodation to Abraham and the people of Israel (Gen 18:21–32; Exod 20:18–20; Exod 25:8); and (d) Jesus' incarnation as the climax of God's accommodation to humanity (John 1:14; Phil 2:5–11). Many examples of intergenerational interaction in the biblical record were also significant in this theological study (1) in the Old Testament—Abraham and the concept of intergeneration (Gen 18:18–19; Gen 26:3–4; 28:13–14; 1 Chr 16:16–17) and Israel and the intergenerational community (Exod 10:8–9; Deut 29:10–11; 2 Chr 20:1–4, 13), and in the New

Testament—community for all (Matt 18:1–5; Mark 9:33–37; and Luke 9:46–48); house churches (Acts 2:46–47; 5:42; 10:23, 27–48; 20:7–10; 28:23 [KJV]); the body of Christ (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 10:17; 12:27; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11); and working together (Eph 4:4–6 [NKJV]). This section concluded with insights about Jesus' advice on the power of "Unity" in John 17 and Ellen White's teachings on Christian unity.

Literature Review

Current literature in the field of conflict resolution in the church was reviewed. It includes research on cross-cultural ministry with a specific focus on (a) the impact of intergenerational conflict on immigrant families, (b) the ministry to second-generation Haitian immigrants, and (c) the process of bringing generations together in ministry. The literature review was well organized. It allowed me to provide the intellectual and academic contexts of the topic in light of scholarly articles, books, dissertations, and electronic sources. It has emphasized the impact of the socio-political and economic crisis on Haitian families, which led to a massive migration of Haitians to the United States. The literature review also raised questions concerning the intergenerational relationship between Haitian immigrant families and church members.

Research Methodology

Once the researcher has formulated the researchable questions, the next step is to decide the method for the research design. Research methodology is a way for the researcher to solve the research problem systematically (Kothari 2004, 7). It may be understood as the process and the method by which the researcher acquires knowledge about the field research process and helps answer the research questions (Creswell 2007; Punch 1998).

The research methodology refers to how the researcher systematically uses his research design to ensure that the evidence obtained enables him to investigate the initial research questions (De Vaus 2001, 9). As Sensing (2011) noted, the research methodology also explains "the design of the intervention and what individual methods will be employed" (26). As part of this practical theology project, I used the qualitative research method. This method explores and examines the situation and the practices that older and younger generations at Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church undertake to respond to their particular understanding of the lack of harmony within the church.

The research methodology plays a significant role in achieving research objectives, which are the mechanisms the researcher uses to explore the unknown to learn and gain a deeper understanding. It is also an essential component of the success of the researcher's work. It should be noted that no research work can be designed without fundamental objectives. Khan (2014, para. 10) stated that the research methodology points the research process toward its descriptive or interpretative level. For example, the current study seeks to remedy intergenerational dissonance by foregrounding an examination of members' perceptions and understandings through survey questions as the primary data collection method.

<center>Development of the Intervention</center>

A strategic plan was developed based on an applied and systematic procedure to address intergenerational conflict in the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church and to help members worship and work together for their spiritual growth and unity. This methodological procedure will also be implemented to develop and evaluate a pastoral care approach.

The project fostered practical intergenerational small group activities to encourage members to live their Christian faith and experience the five biblical purposes of a mission-driven church: fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, and worship. Within the church, these small group activities were developed as a good model for an intergenerational cell with healthy adults, youth, and young adults. In addition, under a trained moderator, the small group members meeting once a week conducted effective and efficient activities, such as meditation, testimony, corporate worship, intergenerational conflict seminars, and bilingual (Creole-English) social activities. The intergenerational group activity models were implemented for two sessions at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dedham, Massachusetts.

Active church members from 18 years old and up were recruited and signed the consent contract to be part of the study and enroll in a small group setting. At the end of the small group activities, a closed-ended questionnaire was given to the participants in strict confidence. The results were evaluated, analyzed, and discussed phenomenologically using the electronic SurveyMonkey system. Examination and understanding were the factors that played a crucial role and authenticated the results of this study. Furthermore, sufficient and in-depth data can be critical in understanding the phenomenon under investigation and explaining and resolving the research questions (Khan 2014, para. 18).

These qualitative research and data collection strategies also allowed me to investigate and solve the intergenerational dissonance between the older and younger Haitian members of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Southern New England Conference.

Based on the conclusions from the data analysis, a model for intergenerational activities was developed and adapted for the proper functioning of ministries at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. These recommendations are adaptable and applicable to other churches.

Definition of Terms

For this study, I set to define the following key terms.

Accommodation: The willingness to cohabit, live, or work together despite people's differences.

Acculturation: The process by which a group or individual rejects the significant parts of their native culture to assimilate into a foreign culture.

Biculturalism: The co-existence of two different cultures in the same family, group, or society.

Condescension: The voluntary action of a dignitary to stoop to a lower level.

Cross-cultural: The interaction between individuals from different cultures.
Haitianness: The strong ethnic identification among first-generation Haitian immigrants, including their pride, dignity, and self-regard (Zéphir 2001).

Intergenerational dissonance: The clash between parents and children of immigrants over cultural values.

Intergenerational harmony: The level of understanding and accommodation between members of different generations.

Intragenerational relationship: The relationships between members of one generation, such as siblings, cousins, etc.

Summary

This chapter briefly introduced the problem of a lack of harmony or accommodation among older and younger generations who attend the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dedham, Massachusetts. This issue is within the ministry context regarding Dedham church leaders and members' significant challenges in doing ministries. Therefore, finding harmony through intergenerational small-group activities was the main focus of this research study. However, I first collected the data. Then, I used the qualitative phenomenological approach to analyze and interpret the results.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON GOD'S ACCOMMODATION AS
A SOURCE FOR JOINING FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS
INTO THE INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH

Introduction

Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church is a predominantly minority church in a

Caucasian neighborhood. God has called this church to advance His kingdom in the

Dedham area and the surrounding towns. This incredible work will only be possible

through the combined efforts and the harmonious and productive work of the church's

different age groups. Every youth and every elderly member is very significant in the

body of Christ. Communication and an excellent spirit of collaboration or cooperation

among members of different age groups should reflect God's relationship with humans.

What do the Scriptures say about intergenerational ministry? Why is it so crucial for

church leaders to support intergenerational activities? In this discussion, besides the

explanation of God's way of communicating to humankind and the power of unity among

church members, this chapter will be looking at the questions raised to initiate a

framework for theological reflection on addressing intergenerational harmony in light of

the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White.

A Theology of Contextualization

The differences of opinion between older and younger generations can have

spiritual, social, cultural, and moral implications on the church's proper functioning. This

conflict in views can also cause friction between ages, disruption, hurt feelings, and

13

rejection. The resistance of the older generation may make the younger generation angry. Both generations need to work together and accommodate each other. Therefore, promoting intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church presents good reasons for leaders and members to find ways of working according to the model of divine accommodation. How can God's adaptation or accommodation to human beings and Jesus' incarnation be used as an accurate model or an example to teach both generations to live, work, and worship together?

<div align="center">God's Accommodation of Human Beings</div>

God's existence is perfectly transcendent. He is infinite and holy, and humanity is finite and unholy (Crispin 2017). How does the infinite and holy God meet the human mind? It is undeniable that God cannot be known by humanity without some movement on God's part to communicate or reveal Himself to humanity. In this sense, accommodation is based on God's transcendence. It is linked to God's revelation.

According to Gulley (2003, 177), theology does not exist apart from the Bible. The Bible is an incredible book that reveals God. It gives an overview of the situation of humanity (John 5:39; Ps 51: 5–6; Rom 3:23). The Bible guides many aspects of life, from the Old to the New Testaments. It also gives guidance in faith and the principle of living well together. The Bible is an excellent teaching source that plays a significant role in the theology of church member relationships. As a guide in several essential aspects of God's accommodation or condescension for man, the Bible can still be useful for exploring the importance of promoting intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Bible is an inspired book (2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:20–21), a means by which God communicates knowledge of Himself to humanity. Thus, the Bible is an accommodation, a book through which God speaks to human beings in human languages and makes Himself known to us (White 2005, p. 106). However, it is also enjoyable to ask what would have happened to humankind if God had revealed Himself to them in His divine style, using heavenly language, words, and expressions. Would they be able to understand?

Communication in the Garden of Eden

In Genesis, Moses speaks of a God who came down to the Garden of Eden to communicate openly and directly with Adam and Eve (Gen 3:8a). After falling into temptation, Adam and Eve felt guilty. They imprudently attempted to escape or hide from God (Gen 3:8). Moses described their situation as follows: "They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden" (Gen 3:8 [ESV]). This verse suggests that God met with Adam and Eve in the garden and spent time with them. One of the most significant consequences of sin was losing those face-to-face moments between the Creator and humanity. How did God, Spirit, and the Supreme Creator, adjust, adapt, or accommodate Himself to the new reality that would determine the entire life of the first couple and their descendants?

By hiding behind the trees in the garden, Adam and Eve showed that they realized they had broken the covenant between them and their Creator (Gen 2:15–17; 3:9–13). It became impossible for humans to communicate directly with God because of their disobedience (Gen 3:23–24). Since God is a sun and a consuming fire (Ps 84:11; Deut

4:24; Heb 12:29), His transcendence and holiness, according to Crispin (2017), remain the primary reason for the need for accommodation. God is the one who makes room to adapt to the human condition to save humanity (Ps 68:20; 88:1; Isa 45:21–22; Rom 3:10–12). He took the initiative and came looking for the man in the middle of the garden and called unto him, "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9). God made Himself understood to human capacity by condescending and taking steps to reach them and bringing them the good news of salvation (Gen 3:15). The God of love initiates this rescue process (Rom 5:10; John 3:16; 1 John 4:19). His action toward humanity should be a real example of accommodation that needs to be a principle governing practice in the church—such as the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church.

<div align="center">Abraham's Intercession for Sodom</div>

In Gen 18, God speaks with Abraham about the imminent destruction of Sodom. He reveals to Abraham His intention in v. 21: "I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." Is He not omniscient? Did not He see or know what was going on? Why did God need to go down and find out what was happening there? And why did God allow Abraham to intercede on behalf of this corrupt city? It is an excellent example of divine accommodation of "God acting and speaking at the level of human acting and speaking" (Peter 1998). Above all human wisdom, the infinite God allowed a human being to question Him openly (vv. 22–32). Abraham understood that it was within the accommodation framework that God had allowed a sinner to ask Him and advocate for his nephew and his family's survival.

God knew Sodom's proper condition before He visited Abraham, but, as Sanders

(2007) wrote, "God chooses not to exercise judgment without the human input of this man He trusts" (52). The author continued, "God makes himself available to his people, and provides access that people may call on Him" (52). God allowed His servant to call on Him and have something significant to say. Abraham recognized his limits as a human being and God's condescension to reach the weakness of finite beings like himself. He exclaimed: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes" (Gen 18:27). In such cases, it is clear that the dialogue between God and His servant is genuine evidence of God's will to condescend, accommodate, and adapt to human reality.

The People of Israel

Because of sin, God's presence became so dangerous to sinful humanity. As a result, they sometimes preferred for God to speak to them through a third party. This presence was seen in the reaction of the people of Israel. In Exod 20:18–20, Moses refers to the Israelites' fear when God burst forth His glory among them. They were terrified of seeing and hearing "the thundering, the flashes of lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking" (Exod 20:18). The people trembled in fear at the holy and infinite God's presence. In their fear, the Israelites asked Moses to speak to them instead of hearing God's voice directly (Exod 20:19). God accepted their request and decided to accommodate His communication through His servant Moses (Exod 20:20).

For the sake of adapting or accommodating the children of Israel, God commanded Moses while on the mountain with Him: "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exod 25:8). How can an infinite and powerful God be limited to a temple? It is interesting to note that God makes room to accommodate

17

humanity. This idea is further built upon Exod 29:42–46. Moses pointed out that God came down from heaven to communicate and dwell among His people (Lev 26:11–12). He limited Himself and was present among them in cloud and fire to lead and protect Israel during their peregrination in the wilderness (Exod 40: 36–38).

Meanwhile, knowing that the infinite and powerful God surpasses heaven and the heaven of heavens, King Solomon declared in his temple dedication prayer, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?" (1 Kgs 8:27). This question clearly shows that the temple in question here is no attempt to localize or limit the infinite God (Bruce 2007). However, it is a place where God met the people of Israel and revealed the plan of salvation to them (1 Kgs. 8:29–30; Heb 8:4–5; 9:11). Then and now, humanity still needs God to come down to accommodate or adapt to their reality. The supreme act of God's condescension happened when Jesus Christ descended to face the most extreme humiliation and suffering that mortality could inflict.

<div align="center">Incarnation and Revelation</div>

To get closer to or dwell among humans, the mighty and infinite God came down (John 3:13; Eph 4:9), became flesh (John 1:14), and was called Immanuel, that is, God is with us, or God dwells among us (Matt 1:23). The incarnation of Jesus is the climax of God's accommodation to humanity (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:22–23; Gal 4:4). The concept of a God who humbles Himself to adapt to humans is taken from Phil 2:5–11. Indeed, God adapts His revelation to human nature to make it applicable to humans. By revealing Himself in the flesh, "God emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7 [ERV]). He has lowered himself to the level of tendencies

and notions, even human prejudices and weaknesses, to accommodate or adapt to humans (Phil 2:6–7; Heb 2:14).

Philippians 2:6–11 gives a complete revelation of the person of Christ. It also embraces the three moments of Christ's life: His pre-existence or form of God (v. 6), His incarnation or condition of a servant (v. 7), and His exaltation (vv. 9–11). From these three moments, the one that depicts Christ as a servant, His incarnation or humility, is a perfect accommodation model for the church. It can apply in particular to the Dedham Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church.

When the angel announced to Mary that she would give birth to a son (Luke 1:31), knowing well the process of human procreation, she responded immediately, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34 [NASB]). Thus Mary's response becomes the concern of all believers, that is, their attempt to find out how could a being, existing in the form of God, become human. Despite the fact that the Bible does not give a clear answer to the action of the divinity who incarnates, John merely confirms the essence of revelation in this powerful statement: "The Word, that is, the son of God became flesh" (John 1:14). Christ, the eternal Logos who is God (John 1:1), came to earth as a man. The apostle Paul established that God's incarnation in human flesh is a profound mystery. He looked into this subject and declared, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim 3:16 [KJV]). White (1973, 48) stated, "The incarnation of Christ is the mystery of all mysteries."

To adapt or accommodate to humans, God came to earth as a man, hiding His divinity, setting aside His glory, and being born as a babe in Bethlehem (White 1957). God's manifestation in the flesh is not another revelation; instead, it is another way for God to manifest and reveal Himself to humans. The gospel clearly explained that Christ

became a man and adapted or accommodated Himself to the limitations of the knowledge of the people of His time. He adapted His teaching to the educated and the uneducated people accordingly (John 3:1–10; 4:7–29).

John and Paul received a significant revelation on this crucial and problematic subject. Both speak of the divinity of Jesus Christ, followed by His condition or human form. Paul's and John's statements are essential and relevant to the thematic of accommodation. In agreement with this subject and according to what Paul and John said regarding the incarnation of the divine being in human form, Allen (2018, 54) said, "It is in the incarnation where God most fully accommodates himself to humanity for no one has ever seen God."

Undeniably the one who became man and made himself the servant of men is the God of Glory (Phil 2:9–11; Luke 2:32; John 17:5; 1 Pet 1:21). No human attribute is lacking. Isaiah the prophet prophesied of Him, saying, "For a child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6 [NASB])

It is to this God who was incarnated that the affirmation applies. Nothing has remained foreign to Him (Heb 2:14; 4:13). Christ's earthly life and death were a perfect model of God's accommodation to each member of the human family's needs. This remarkable adaptation model finds powerful expression in the following words of Ellen White (1902, para. 4):

> He graciously adapted His life for universal imitation. United in Christ were wealth and poverty; majesty and abasement; unlimited power, and meekness and lowliness which in every soul who receives Him will be reflected. In Him, through the qualities and powers of the human mind, the wisdom of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known was revealed.

Following Christ's example (Phil 2:7), Paul asks his readers to be his imitators, just as he was of Christ (1 Cor 11:1); as he said, "To the weak, I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may, by all means, save some" (1 Cor 9:22). Thus, Paul adapted himself to Jews and Greeks without compromise by not seeking his profit, but the gain of the many, that they may be saved. Needless to say, Jesus' and Paul's attitude tells believers that they can live among those considered weaker than themselves without being judgmental or being influenced by their lifestyle.

The church must be like Christ in its relationships with one another. As Christ emptied Himself and adapted to the people's needs, everyone within the church should accommodate one another. If the church wants to succeed in its mission to win the new generation of men and women, special efforts are required to achieve this goal. First, Christ's message of humility, as Paul and John proclaimed it, must be considered. Second, the church must be an institution that helps restore people's lives. No matter who they are or where they come from or live, church leaders should accommodate their message to the members' circumstances as Christ did. As Ellen White (1946, 483) stated: "By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the ablest discourse."

Intergenerational Interaction in the Old and New Testament

Society and institutions such as schools, workplaces, or healthcare systems classify people according to their age groups. For specialists in church gatherings, there are three views of church's family gathering: Family-integrated, that is, a worship service for everybody; family-based, separated worship services according to age, but with a

shared focus; and family-equipping, a mix of both previous systems (Jones 2019, 42–43). However, the biblical church gathering is a scripturally ordered household of parents, children, indeed, all generations, who can come together regularly.

The children of Israel and the early Christian church knew what it meant to be part of the family of God. Both were communities of grandparents, parents, and children living in families and worshiping God together without age segregation (Exod 10:8–9). The paradigm of bringing the whole church together is typically presented as an intergenerational faith community or family and community-based process (Allen and Ross 2012, 114). God's guidelines for intergenerational gatherings are clear and precise. In light of the Scriptures, what lesson can the church draw from an intergenerational community model in Israel and the early Christian church?

The Old Testament and Intergenerational Interaction

The Holy Scriptures describe God as a relational and communal God who eternally exists in a plural form as Elohim or the Godhead. God created humans to live communally (Gen 1:1, 26; 2:22). The communal spirit was born when God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18 NIV). The God who was satisfied with His works of creation also saw the need for man to have a communal life. God's action in giving man an appropriate helper becomes a fundamental principle for humans to live in relationships with others. This principle is so true that each must watch over the other. Solomon explained that idea so well: "Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up" (Eccl 4:9–10 NKJV).

Abraham and the Concept of Intergeneration

Fathers and mothers know how precious and priceless it is to pass on their cultural and religious heritage to the next generation. King Solomon said, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6). This principle, suitable for the formation of children in the family circle, should also be valid to help young people educate themselves and participate in church activities. The Old Testament emphasizes the parent's role in shaping young people's character. As clearly expressed in God's statement to Abraham from Gen 18:18–19, "Abraham will indeed become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Gen 18:18–19 NKJV).

The covenant of God is not limited to either one person or a generation. As with Abraham, God's people are bound to teach future generations about the God of the covenant. God had chosen Abraham to make him the Father of a great nation. However, Abraham and his sons' obedience were necessary for God to fulfill his promise in Gen 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–9. Indeed, God made the covenant with Abraham, renewed it with Isaac, and confirmed it with Jacob (Gen 26:3–4; 28:13–14; 1 Chr 16:16–17; Ps 105:9).

It is interesting to note that Isaac grew up knowing the true God. He also knew how to present himself and approach the God of the covenant. According to Gen 22, Abraham and Isaac were on Mount Moriah to worship the God of promises. Having noticed that there was fire and wood, but the lamb was missing, Isaac asked his father where the sacrificial lamb was (Gen 22:7). This question implies that Isaac was instructed accordingly in his father's faith. Everything Isaac had learned from his father,

he passed on to Jacob, who did the same to his twelve sons, who went to Egypt and became a great nation (Gen 26:27; Exod 12:37).

<p style="text-align: center">Israel and Intergenerational Community</p>

God called His people, the children of Israel, to share their faith, culture, and values with future generations so that they were able to develop a deep sense of belonging. In Israel's religion, parents had the sacred duty of bringing their children and grandchildren to the Lord and telling them the story of their deliverance and what God had done for them (Exod 12:25–27). How would the children grow in faith if there was no one to teach them? How would they come to know the God of their Father if they had not developed a relationship with Him? And how would they have a relationship with God if they had not been taught how to do so?

In Exod 10:8–9, Moses understood the spirit of belonging and wanted to ensure that the whole people—parents, children, grandparents, and great-grandparents—an intergenerational community, went out of Egypt to worship God. To Pharaoh's question, "Who will be going? (Exod 10:8), Moses wisely answered, "We will go with our young and old, with our sons and daughters… for we must hold a feast to the Lord" (v. 9). Kirk (2003, 17) reinforced this idea by stating, "When God set His people Israel in order, he placed each individual within a family, each family within a tribe, and each tribe within the nation. No generation was excluded, no child was left out, and no older person was put aside. Within each tribe were the components of the family; they were a community."

The God of the covenant, or the One who called Israel out of Egypt, makes no distinctions between persons. God calls everyone to be part of His people, whether adults

or children. God speaks to them through Moses. He always addresses His message to the whole community, not a select age group or a particular generation (Exod 14:1).

Israel is known or identified by several names: the Israelites, the people of Israel, the children of Israel, the community, and the congregation. For example, " The Lord said to Moses at Mount Sinai, speak to the Israelites and say to them" (Lev. 25:1–2, NIV). "Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord" (Exod 15:1, NLT). "So the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? (Num. 11:4 NKJV). "Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, "Come before the Lord" (Exod 16:9 NIV). "Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together and said to them" (Exod 35:1 NKJV). Whenever one of these names is used, it refers to the whole people. Even though "intergeneration" is absent in biblical authors' writings, those passages refer to Israel as an intergenerational community.

In the Old Testament, Israel's worship was intergenerational (Glassford 2008, 71). For example, Deut 29:10–11 is about an intergenerational community. All generations stood before the Lord to listen to Moses' farewell message. Moses spoke to them and said, "All of you are standing today in the presence of the Lord your God— your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, together with your children and your wives, and the foreigners living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water" (NIV).

Another passage of 2 Chr 20:1–29 carries a similar implication. All the people of Judah gathered together during Jehosaphat's reign. Facing the attacks of the Moabites and

Ammonite armies, Jehosaphat, King of Judah, invited all the men of Judah, including "their little ones, their wives, and their children," that is, all generations, to pray and implore God's intervention (2 Chr 20:1–4, 13).

At all special events, feasts, and holy assemblies or ceremonies, all age groups were present (Exod 12:3; 16:1; 17:1; Lev 18:1; 19:2; Num 14:5; Deut 29:10–12; 1 Kgs 8:5; 2 Chr 20:3–5; Neh 8:2–3; 12:43). Everyone, including children, grew up in the community with a deep sense of serving the Lord (Exod 12:26-27; 2 Chr 20:13; Neh. 8:3). As reported in the passages above, activities between generations or intergenerational activities had a distinctive feature in the Old Testament religion. Pridmore (1977, 28–29) stated, "The religion of the Old Testament is not an individual adult affair to which a child's relationship is uncertain, but a communal and corporate life of faith and obedience to Yahweh in which the child has his own rightful and unquestionable place."

Developing and nurturing the next generation would be at the heart of the Old Testament's religious community. In such a society or community, generations interact. In other words, "parents are exerting an influence to mold society and uplift future generations" (White 1952, 172). Children only repeat what they learn from their parents. As it says in Psalm 145:4, "families of this time will praise Your works to the families-to come. They will talk about Your powerful acts" (NLV). The prophet Joel said, "Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children, and their children another generation" (Joel 1:3 KJV).

The New Testament and Intergenerational Community

The first-century Christian church was made up of members of all generations. Like the Israelites in the Old Testament, the New Testament church was an intergenerational community. New Testament authors showed the presence of all ages or the need for intergenerational interaction throughout their writings.

A Community for All

The synoptic Gospels stress that Jesus, during His earthly ministry, had a good relationship with little children and interacted with them. For example, in one of his conversations with the disciples, Jesus referred to the children and used their character and spirit of humility to explain to His followers the moral consequences of becoming a disciple (Matt 18:1–5; Mark 9:33–37; and Luke 9:46–48). Accordingly, in terms of the intergenerational community, He wanted to communicate wisdom to his disciples: "The most childlike disciple is the most efficient in labor for God" (White 1898, 379).

In intergenerational interactions, Jesus always looked favorably at children and blessed them. For Jesus, all ages must have the opportunity to hear the message of the kingdom of God because adults and children are candidates for the kingdom of God. Parents also enjoyed bringing their children to Jesus so that He could bless them. Jesus rebuked all those who tried to stop the children from coming to Him: "Let the little children come to me, said Jesus, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:15 [NIV]).

In the book of Acts, Luke reported that all ages or generations used to meet in houses. While meeting in homes, believers engaged in the following Christian activities: breaking bread and eating together (Acts 2:46–47); teaching and sharing the good news

(5:42); worshiping and ministering to one another (20:7–12), and testifying and discussing (28:23). It is important to note that believers' houses served as a familiar meeting place for worship and fellowship.

House Churches

According to Acts 2:46–47, believers met together daily in the temple court or house churches except for ages. Parents gathered to worship, break bread in their homes with children, and eat together with glad and sincere hearts. Miles (1990, 12) stated, "Children observed the faith commitments of their parents in real, concrete ways." The book of Acts presents the church as a community of faith guided by the Holy Spirit's power (Rodríguez et al. 2022, 1477). Allen and Ross (2012, 114) stated, "The church is where Christians grow each other into Christ." The New Testament refers to believers meeting habitually in a family or small group setting. This house-church, in Greek, "*oikos*" (Acts 2:46 AKJV), originated as a fraternal and sincere Christian fellowship group (2:42). Believers, with their families, met in each other's homes to worship, celebrate, break bread, testify, discuss, and minister to one another (2:46–47; 5:42; 10:23, 27–48; 20:7–10; 28:23 KJV).

The New Testament emphasizes intergenerational activities in all the house church gatherings and other spiritual settings. In Acts 16:14–15, Lydia, a seller of purple in the city of Thyatira, was baptized with her entire family, which probably consisted of her servants and her children. The other people of the New Testament who came to Christ with their whole families included Cornelius (10:24, 44); Paul and Silas' jailer (16:31–33); Crispus (18:8); Aristobulus (16:10); Narcissus (16:11); and Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:16).

Luke also reported in Acts the story of a young man, Eutychus, who fell out of a window while attending a meeting where Paul was preaching until midnight (Acts 20:7–12).

The Need for Intergenerational Relationships

In Paul's letters, it is interesting to note why the church needs intergenerational relationships.

The Body of Christ

God does not expect all believers to be the same in the church because the generations that form the community are different. As a result, there are differences in experiences and the ability to do the work of God. Paul pushed his thoughts further on the intergenerational community by saying that all are members of the body of Christ, regardless of their social status, ethnicity, and gender (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 10:17; 12:27; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11).

Paul's letters to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Ephesians highlight a parallel between the believer's physical body, including several members with different functions, and the believers' community in Christ as a spiritual body (1 Cor 12:12 in Acts 27; Eph 4:15 in Acts 16). The body has many organs working together to keep the person healthy. The same principle applies in the case of the church. The diversity of many members is not contrary to the body's unity. Peter called this body "the flock of God" (1 Pet 5:2), where community members live in unity and harmony.

According to Paul's body of Christ metaphor, every generation is essential and must feel the need to serve the body. Each constituent element, whether adults or young people, is necessary for the congregation's proper functioning within the spiritual organism that constitutes the church of Christ. As Paul clarified, "Just as our bodies have

many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other" (Rom 12:4 in Acts 5). In light of this passage, Paul promoted an intergenerational community, as Glassford (2008, 84) stated, to value, nurture, and employ each individual's gift in the church of Christ, from young to old.

<center>Working Together</center>

The word of God must be preached to the whole world regardless of race, gender, and age. Therefore, God's work in the lives of believers is not confined to a particular age group. Paul favored intergenerational settings in which all generations interacted and worked together. He understood the need to train and involve young people in the church's leadership. He mentored Timothy and Titus, his beloved sons in the faith, and instructed and empowered them to care for younger and older generations (1 Tim 1:1; 5:1–3; Titus 1:4–5; 2:2–7). In 1 Tim 4:12–16, Paul encouraged Timothy to be a good role model for believers of all generations despite his young age. In Tit 2:1–6, Paul also urged older and experienced believers to coach, train, and teach young people without experience.

In Eph 4:4–6, Paul's teaching is clear and vital to the believers' unity. Aware of the fact that believers, both Jews and Gentiles (2:11–17), are all members of one body, Paul went on to say: "There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:4–6 NKJV).

In Paul's mind, everything to do with salvation, the church, and God's kingdom is

based on unity. Aware that the unity of Christians is so essential, Paul used the word

"one" seven times in this passage to emphasize the unity of spirit that should reign among

believers. When believers go to church, they must remember that they are united because

there is one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and God the Father (Eph 4:4–6).

Likewise, the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members are part of the

same family in Christ. As was the case for believers in Paul's time, God wants the

Dedham members to live in mutual love and help each other. The future of this

congregation depends on how the generations interact. The church will not be influential

unless the older and younger generations are willing to work together. How can parents,

children, and church leaders use their differences to serve God and each other and

promote harmony or unity among church members?

The Power of Oneness and the Mission of the Church in John 17

Reaching the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus understood how much believers

must demonstrate supernatural unity throughout all time. He emphasized that this unity

would affect the world. The church is made up of members of different ages and

characters, and Jesus prayed to His Father to make them one:

> That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may
> be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You
> gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and
> You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that
> You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. (John 17:21–23
> [NKJV])

Unity in Diversity

The church is one body with many members. Following the scene where Jesus

symbolically washed the disciples' feet (John 13:1–30) and instructed the apostles (1416),

31

He prayed. This prayer, found in John 17:1–26, was alled the High Priestly Prayer and the prayer of consecration (Klink 2016, 1054).

John 17 is traditionally broken into three parts. In the first part, vv. 1–5, Jesus emphasized His consecration for the work He was about to undertake. In the second part, vv. 6–19, Jesus prayed for His disciples. The last part of the prayer (vv. 20–26) is related to future believers. Jesus prayed for people who would believe in Him through His disciples' words. In His final intercessory prayer, He also revealed the importance of unity: "That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21 [NKJV]). This prayer teaches believers how the gospel unites them to their Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and one another. What a brilliant and incredible statement!

One in Spirit

Each church member belongs to the one body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), and their spiritual unity must be manifest in their way of living. Christ's unity for the church is the same kind of unity He, the Son, had with the Father: As you are in me and I am in you (John 10:38; 17:21–23). Similarly, the harmony between the church's two main entities, first-generation Haitian immigrants and second-generation Haitian Americans, must reflect the divine model of unity. It is this spiritual unity that must be reproduced among church members. In light of John 17, Jesus prayed not for uniformity but for unity.

It is worth noting that the words "all" and "one" appear together in the same sentence in John's passage. Thus, the emerging idea suggests believers represent a united and stable church in the Holy Spirit after baptism (John 17:21; Eph 4:5).

In their statements, John and Paul suggest that a united church would provide an environment where members can work together despite their differences (John 17:21–23;

Rom 12:4–5;1 Cor 12:12). The oneness of those who believe in Christ is significant to the church's mission. Jesus made it clear that the world will believe in Him if His disciples love or have unity among them (John 13:35). The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to send to His disciples, can help church members maintain unity and get along. Still, they must be willing to do their part to maintain peaceful relationships.

In Eph 4:1–6, the apostle Paul insisted on the unity and maturity of the body of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. He urged the Ephesian Christians to live a life worthy of the calling they have received through the Holy Spirit. He continued:

> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:2–6 NIV)

The Holy Spirit is also present in the church's-corporate life, inspiring unity, worship, and service. He is ultimately responsible for the existence of the church of Christ. With the Holy Spirit's power, Paul appealed to men and women in the church to unite through humility. In Phil 2:1–2, the apostle Paul stressed that all Christians should be united in Christ through the Holy Spirit's power: "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind" (Phil 2:1–2 NIV).

The unity that Paul wanted to see in the life and service of the Philippians demands genuine humility and a setting aside of all self-interest. This concept of oneness is also present in Acts, where Paul, addressing the Athenians, proclaimed the God who caused the race to spring from one man. He said:

From one man, he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. "For in him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring." (Acts 17:26–28 NIV)

With this model, the Haitian church leaders in Dedham must strategically use all the opportunities to encourage younger and older generations to work and worship together. This association will help promote or share the Adventist message with Dedham's community. Indeed, promoting intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church will be one of the best ways to maintain a warm and friendly atmosphere among leaders, the youth of the church, and family members. Moreover, this spirit of working together will help the whole congregation's spiritual growth and effectiveness in the missionary work in the Dedham locality.

Ellen G. White's Teaching on Christian Unity

The difference in view or lack of understanding between the younger and older generations within the same church is remarkable today. It threatens the church's proper functioning. The church should function as the human body. Ellen White, in her writings, speaks about the church in its relationship to God. According to White (1980, 3:21), "The children of God constitute one united whole in Christ, who presents His cross as the center of attraction." As an appointed agency of God to advance His kingdom, the call to church members to work together must be taken seriously (White 2005, 9).

It is a fact that society separates people according to their age, gender, or social status. However, the church is one of the significant institutions where various generations come together to worship and minister. This intergenerational church should reflect the oneness between the Father and the Son, as Jesus mentioned in John 17:21–23.

Such relationships are essential and allow church members, including older and younger generations, "to be united in the closest bonds of Christian fellowship" (White 1872, 446).

The Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church is called to follow the biblical model of unity by drawing on Ellen White's writings. The church is at a turning point in its history. Now, more than ever, Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members must combine their efforts and work together. As Ellen White (2001) stated: "In union, there is strength. In discord and disunion, there is only weakness. God wants His people to counsel together, to be a perfect whole, a united church in Christ. Press together, press together, press together. Do not let Satan cast his hellish shadow between brethren. Press together; in unity, there is strength" (2002:374).

It is essential to note that the God of the Old and the New Testaments is the God of unity whose fundamental objective is to see His people live harmoniously (Ps 133:1; John 17:21–23; 1 Cor 1:10).

Although Christ is one with the Father, White (1956, 1148) clarified that they are two distinct persons. Indeed, the unitary God is also the God of diversity (1148). As partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4), Christ's disciples are called to be one without compromising their personality (1956, 1148). Furthermore, White (1956) wrote, "The perfection of the church depends not on each member being fashioned exactly alike. God calls for each one to take his proper place, to stand in his lot to do his appointed work according to the ability given him" (1090).

It is not God's will to create a church with a single generation. Christian churches operate according to the intergenerational model from their Old Testament roots. In that specific community, people of all ages are considered integral. Adults and children

gathered together in most of the activities and worship services. By bringing the older and

younger generation together within the church, the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist

Church would provide benefits and blessings on various levels. When well trained, the

church would become more assertive, and the youth would bear the burdens left by the

older members. Looking toward the future by focusing on youth leadership,

White (1882) stated,

> We can but look anxiously upon today's youth as those must take these burdens, and
> upon whom responsibilities must fall. They must take the work where others leave it;
> and their course will determine whether morality, religion, and vital godliness shall
> prevail, or whether immorality and infidelity shall corrupt and blight all that is
> valuable. It is the way the standard is carried now that will determine the future. (128)

Like all other Haitian churches in America, the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist

Church is experiencing a language crisis. The Haitian youth do not benefit from the

religious service held in a language they cannot comprehend. Growing up in America and

speaking English, the contemporary youth style differs from the traditional form parents

and church leaders adopt in their Haitian-based services. The youth do not feel

comfortable worshiping and participating in social and missionary activities with adults,

which is a factor in their disengagement from church activities. As White (2002) wrote,

"the church is languishing for the help of young men who will bear a courageous

testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God's people

and increase the power of the church in the world" (25).

Since the older and younger generations at Dedham Seventh-day Adventist

Church have difficulty worshiping, working, and doing ministry together, promoting

unity and harmony would help the church fulfill its mission.

Jesus' prayer in John 17 and Paul's message in Phil 2:2 inspired White (1855,

1946, 1956, 1957, 2002) to encourage church members to achieve all facets of unity,

including unity of purpose, unity of action, unity of spirit, unity of thought, unity of faith, and being of one mind.

The members of the intergenerational community are the whole body of Christ. They are unified in Christ, who is the golden chain that, according to White (1980), "binds believers together in God" (21). However, as the members of the generations within the church move further in following Christ, it is clear that they find themselves struggling to remain close to each other. Thus, White (1915) confidently claimed, "True religion unites hearts, not only with Christ but with one another, in a most tender union" (484). Therefore, it is incumbent that the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church requires its members to work intergenerationally, appreciate diversity, and restore unity throughout all age groups.

Summary

Intergenerational interaction is a typical feature that supported both communities, Israel's people in the Old Testament and the Christian Church in the New Testament. This perspective was fundamental for both biblical congregations to be corporate bodies. God is the one who called the children of Israel through a covenantal system. He also called the Christian believers through the blood of Jesus Christ to bring the message of salvation to a fallen world. Adults and children had the same privilege before God and should be treated equally. Both communities emphasized intergenerational interactions because they understood that their attitude toward children should reflect their relationship with God.

God is the one who initiates the relationship with human beings. He reveals Himself to them, uses their language, and accommodates their boundedness. His will is to

see His people live and work together as one body to proclaim the gospel to everyone. Harmony among Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members is crucial to proclaiming the gospel to Dedham residents and surrounding areas. The church is a unique entity. There must be no divisions among its members. In light of Scripture and Ellen White, intergenerational interaction is vital for the church's successes and survival. It will establish the legacy of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church in Dedham, Massachusetts, made up

of first-generation Haitian immigrants and second-generation Haitian Americans, is in the

middle of an argument attributed to a language barrier, intergenerational family

dysfunction, and a deep Haitian cultural background. As a result, different problems

surface and disrupt the harmony that should reign in the church when the Dedham

Seventh-day Adventist members come together to worship and pray. Relevant literature

and studies will be considered to understand the conflict between generations in the

Dedham Church. These include (1) the impact of intergenerational conflict on Haitian

immigrant families, (2) the ministry to second-generation Haitian immigrants, and (3) the

process of bringing generations together in ministry.

**Impact of Intergenerational Conflict on
Haitian Immigrants**

Once settled in a foreign land, Haitian families must maintain and reinforce

kinship ties back home. Still, the reality on the ground may not be what they would like.

Pierce and Elisme (1997, 49) suggested that "working with Haitian families presents a

distinct challenge in engaging persons." Their interaction with others, especially

communication between the generations, is not always smooth. Therefore, learning about

Haiti's history and culture is necessary to understand what generated the problem.

The Haitian Historical Experience

Pierce and Elisme (1997, 51) stated that the Haitian nation was born out of the revolution of those who worked hard for French plantation owners. These hard workers of Saint Domingue fought to the last drop of their blood against the French colonial forces led by General Donatien Rochambeau at the fierce battle of Vertières in November 1803 (Dubois 2012). As a result, on January 1, 1804, Haiti became the first independent Black republic, the second independent State in the Western Hemisphere.

Emerging from this glorious beginning (Pierce and Elisme 1997, 51), Haiti has struggled to be accepted as a free nation. Unfortunately, France, England, the United States, and the Vatican did not recognize Haiti's sovereignty. According to Deibert (2017), Dubois (2012), and Girard (2010), France fined Haiti one hundred fifty million francs to acknowledge its independence. For strategic and socio-political reasons, United States President Thomas Jefferson refused to recognize Haiti as a sovereign nation to protect slavery in the United States (Mckay, Hill, and Buckler 2012). Likewise, it took decades for the Vatican to acknowledge the independence of Haiti (Robinson 2007; Dubois 2012).

Nevertheless, the assassination of Dessaline, the country's founding father, paved the way for division and instability. Conflict and competition for power have finally led two significant figures of Haiti's independence to fight and split the country into two parts. Christophe controlled the fertile northern plain, and Pétion governed the country's western and southern provinces (Girard 2010, 65). This spirit of domination and division brought confusion and instability, significantly impacting Haitian families. The power struggle has not ended. Haiti has experienced ongoing political instability, dictatorship,

ineffective political leaders, and political violence; all these factors have made Haiti a miserable and unproductive country (Stepick 1998). Dubois (2012) called it a "failed state" (7).

Haitian leaders have historically done nothing to improve the most vulnerable families who have suffered much from a social and psychological perspective. As a result, the country has never known a period of stability and social change. Pierce and Elisme (1997) pointed out that the political and economic isolation of Haiti "set the stage for the development of much of its turmoil" (52). As a result, people started moving and immigrating to foreign lands, especially the United States.

<center>Haitian Families in the United States</center>

For Zéphir (2004, 67), Haitian immigration to the United States must be understood regarding the various events linked to Haiti's history: "Haitians have come to the United States because they feel compelled to leave their country as they have no other way to survive" (67). Stepick (1998, 5) suggested that some Haitians were asylum-seekers fleeing political persecution in their home country. They were searching for a better life or higher education and professional opportunities. When entering a country whose language, customs, and climate differ from their homeland, Haitian immigrants must adapt to the new reality of life for their well-being and their families. Their struggle to survive is a reality that they face every day. Details of pain and suffering are added from everyone whose story helps explain Haitian immigrants and families in the United States.

The literature identifies many significant periods in Haitian migration to the

United States. For example, during the first decades of 1900 until the U.S. Marine occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934, the number of Haitian migrants did not exceed 5000 (Zéphir, 2004). However, many factors explain why migrations happen much more often. First, many Haitians left the country to escape the dictatorship of the Duvalier regime (1957–1986). Second, the 1991 military coup d'état that eliminated Jean Bertrand Aristide, the first democratically elected president, coerced more to leave. Finally, the catastrophic earthquake in 2010 caused many Haitians to leave the country for refuge in the United States (Laguerre 1984; Dubois 2012; Zimra 1993; US Congressional Research Service 2011).

As Buchanan (1979) stated in his article, Haitian immigrants have come from all sectors of Haitian society: the elite, middle class, the urban proletariat, and the peasantry. During their immigration experience, Haitian families remain rooted in their past. Wherever they go, stressed Zéphir (2004, 23), they bring their baggage of the past, including "their values, culture, aspirations, beliefs about who they are, and where they are going as a people." The United States is one of Haitians' leading destinations, with significant numbers living in metropolitan areas such as Miami, New York City, Boston, and Orlando (US Census Bureau 2018).

<center>Haitian Population in Massachusetts</center>

The 2018 U.S. Census Bureau reported that the total population of Haitian immigrants currently in the United States exceeded 1,000,000 inhabitants. There are over 84,500 Haitian immigrants live in Massachusetts (US Census Bureau 2018). According to Zéphir (2004, 103), more than 70% reside in the Boston Metropolitan area, including Mattapan, Dorchester, Roxbury, Hyde Park, and Roslindale. The rest of that Haitian

population could also be found in other places such as Malden, Everett, Lynn, Randolph, Milton, Canton, Avon, Brockton, and Taunton. According to Zéphir (2004), the Boston Haitian presence dates to the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In 2018, 62% of the Haitian population in Massachusetts consisted of children, youth, and millennials (US Census Bureau 2018). It also corresponded to the age groups of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. Therefore, what was happening within the church would only give an impression of the family setting. In this environment, according to Hummert (2013), communication or interactions involving different age cohorts or age groups, such as parent and child, grandparent and grandchild, would be classified as intergenerational. However, contact or interaction between individuals from the same generation or age cohort, such as siblings, is described as an intragenerational relationship (Hummert, 2013).

Intergenerational Relationships

The critical aspect of immigrant family life is intergenerational relations, which, according to Foner and Dreby (2011, 546), "help shape the contours and trajectories of individual lives and affect involvements. outside the confines of the family." Swartz (2009) further said that familial norms of responsibility and closeness generally characterize intergenerational relations. These relations, in the words of Foner (2009), are characterized by "an intricate tangle of attachments and divisions" (1). For Suarez Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, and Todorova (2008), members of immigrant families are connected by strong emotional bonds. Even young people, subject to parental constraints and obligations, consider their affection, loyalty, gratitude, and responsibility sacred to their immigrant parents.

Other literature pointed out or highlighted some changes in the relationship between children and immigrant parents. For example, Foner and Dreby (2011) found that children of immigrants have trouble following their parents' traditional heritage. This culture clash is generational dissonance—the divergence between immigrant parents who want to adhere to their learning system and traditional and cultural beliefs. Yet, at the same time, their children endorse dominant Western values (Choi, He, and Harachi 2008; Rumbaut and Portes 2001).

Some scholars have suggested that this acculturation gap could hurt parent-child relationships (Chung 2001; Lee, Su, and Yoshda 2005). Others say it could also increase family conflict and weaken bonding between parent and child (McQueen, Getz, and Bray 2003). However, it is a common issue for Haitian immigrant families in the United States. Haitian immigrant parents may consider their educational system and cultural values much more efficient. They present them as a model, even when these values and customs are obsolete and no longer applicable since they left their home country, as Foner (1997) mentioned.

<center>Intergenerational Conflict</center>

According to Foner and Dreby (2011), discipline and parental authority are leading sources of conflict in immigrant communities. For example, Haitian parents are authoritarian. They believe they have the sacred right to control and redirect their children with rigor and, sometimes, even corporal punishment. In their view, it is an effective way to implement the parenting role (Colin 2001). Haitian parents in a foreign country must know the American discipline system and child protection laws. They must also learn

how to manage their parenting roles and responsibilities without violating U.S. laws and creating tensions or conflict within the family.

Unlike American culture, Haitian families operate from a patriarchal system. In that society, men have power over the entire family and embody "the superior and the universal" (Jablonka 2019, 98). In such a structure, men are in control and stand as the household's primary income provider (Colin 2001; Sultana 2012). They govern, rule, and make daily decisions accordingly. Colin (2001) further said that "socio-political and economic life centers around men" (21). In Haiti, the role of women is to stand beside the men, take care of the house, and watch over the children, who are expected to be unquestionably obedient to their parents. Thus, respect for elders is very significant. However, the life system in the United States is different regarding the authoritative parenting style, parenting role, and children's independence.

The daily struggle of misunderstanding the first generation of Haitian immigrants or non-speaking English parents and the American-born second generation has considerably developed. In addition, the authoritarian attitude of parents who are also church leaders has created tension between the ages existing within the church. As a result, the reality of daily life for Haitian families provides crucial clues regarding the changes and challenges that the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church has faced.

Ministry to Second-Generation Haitian Immigrants

The Haitian population in Massachusetts is relatively young. About 62% are under forty and are comprised of children, teens, and Millennials (US Congressional Research Service 2018). The Haitian churches reflect this reality, especially Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dedham, Massachusetts. Thus, how do these youth identify themselves in the Haitian community? How do they handle the use of Haitian

languages during services? What do the leaders do to keep them in the church? In other words, how do church leaders minister to second-generation Haitian immigrants?

<center>Generational Changes</center>

Flore Zéphir (2001), a well-known Haitian American linguist, discussed and analyzed the severe problem of ethnic identification among second-generation Haitian immigrants. Their parents (first-generation) are very proud to be Haitians. Therefore, they attach themselves to everything from Haiti, including their culture and language (61). As the daughter of Haitian immigrants and raised in New York City, one of the largest Haitian populations in the United States, Zéphir understood the implication of ethnic identification. However, she found that second-generation Haitian immigrants are highly diversified. They fall into the following groups: "The Haitian-American born and raised, Haitian born and American raised, American born and Haitian raised, Haitian born and raised, and Haitian foreign-born and foreign raised" (Zéphir 2001, 6). She said this arrangement would determine "the multiple identity choices of the second generation." (7).

Suppose the need to be identified as Haitian was essential for first-generation Haitian immigrants. In that case, that purpose is no longer valid for the second generation. Second-generation immigrants claim to be Haitians. However, the fact remains that people do not accept them because they are fluent in English with no accent and do not speak Creole very well (Zéphir 2001, 64). The main challenge afflicts them is their biculturalism and ability to adapt to the two different realities of life. They can even balance the tradition of their parents' practice and the country they call home (Waters

<center>46</center>

1994; Zhou 1997; Schwartz and Unger 2010). However, this does not prevent them from feeling pressured to identify with the Haitian community.

Haitianness in the Second Generation

At home and church, Haitians are committed to preserving their style, custom, language, or, in other words, "their Haitianness" (Zéphir 2001, 66) and educating others to do the same. Nevertheless, there was a generational conflict in attitudes and traditions in Haitian immigrant families living in American society. According to Woldemikael (1989, 101), first-generation Haitian immigrants think the younger generation is confused. They do not know which way to follow and are losing their Haitian culture and tradition. The future of the Haitian community and churches, especially Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Southern New England Conference, is at stake. Determining whether we do enough to have the younger generation stay in the Haitian community as families or church leaders is crucial. The main question is this: Who should take on the responsibility of keeping them in their Christian faith?

Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation

For first-generation Haitian parents or church leaders to work out a plan to reach the second generation, one must understand the second generation's development in the socio-cultural context. There is no doubt, as is the case for all other immigrant groups, that second-generation Haitians are particularly crucial for the Haitian churches, including the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. Because second-generation Haitians are the future of the Haitian community in the Southern New England

Conference, how would the transition occur when we recognize that the Haitian church was uniquely designed to meet the Haitian French and Creole-speaking needs? However, as second-generation Haitian Americans became more acculturated in the American culture, it was inevitable that the Haitian church became less relevant to this generation.

Identity Concern

In most Haitian churches in the United States, religious activities or worship services are done in French or Haitian Creole. As a result, second-generation children born in or brought early to the United States find it challenging to participate in regular activities due to the language barrier. Woldemikael (1989) pointed out that "the younger generation has its personality formed in the new surroundings. It has a Haitian and American background, with the Haitian identity giving way to the American identity over time" (106).

Woldemikael (1989) continued to say that many second-generation youths faced difficulties that pressured them to abandon their Haitian identity (106). For example, they feel uncomfortable going to Haitian churches because of the use of French and Haitian Creole in services, the dress code, parents, and church intransigence. They are even thinking about searching for new groups to be involved in. However, the worst scenario is they give up their faith and no longer attend church anywhere.

Technology Generation

Pastors, church leaders, and parents must know how much this generation can affect them. Cooksey (2017) called the children of this generation "superpowers." A group born in the digital era has grown up with digital information and the aptitude to use

new communication technologies (22). She continued to say that the children of this generation are funny, quick-witted, and self-assured, and they are finally on the path to success in whatever they choose to pursue (31).

Cooksey (2017) went further: "These young people do not accept defeat; they are unique, questioning, and sharp" (36). As White (2017) pointed out, "this generation is Wi-Fi enabled" (41). A social scientist believed smartphones have "radically changed every aspect of teenagers' lives" (Twenge 2017, as cited in Barna Group 2018, 15). This author argued that, despite these young people being physically safer because of the time spent in their rooms playing on their phones, these teens are psychologically more vulnerable (16). Should the Dedham church leaders work to oppose them? Or do they have the ability and largeness to meet their spiritual needs? How do they minister to them?

<center>Ministering to the Second Generation</center>

Living around Boston, the youth of Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church is not immune to the significant challenges faced by young people of this generation. Even though they grew up in a fundamentally Adventist family with very active parents at church, there was a time they walked away from the church and even from God. The secular environment they are living in affects them and sometimes leaves them confused. They were tired of the rules and authority and wanted to live their way. They always point the finger at their parents or church leaders and do not hesitate to blame them by saying, "You lost me" (Kinnaman 2013, 9)

Problems of the Second Generation

Kinnaman (2013) highlighted these young people who claim to be former or nonactive Christians. Yet, they maintain the church's influence from their earliest upbringing and express their frustrations and disappointments over its current situation. Kinnaman addressed the issue in three main areas:

The first main area he covered is the church-dropout phenomenon. In this faith development problem, young Christians raised in a church do not consider themselves a part of it when they become adults. The second main reason young people disconnect from the church is that it is irrelevant and overprotective. Finally, the last area is what the church should do to help those considered nomads, prodigals, and exiles return and renew their relationship with God and the church (Kinnaman 2013, 19, 92, 202).

The second generation is looking for a church where people are not judgmental and hypocritical, where leaders who know what they are doing, preach about God's amazing grace and love, practice what they preach, and respond effectively to their spiritual needs. However, when they realize they are not welcome or are not involved by the older generation, they feel abandoned and rejected. Therefore, they seek every opportunity to withdraw from the church. They complain, saying: "The church is not adequately preparing the next generation to follow Christ faithfully in a rapidly changing culture" (Kinnaman 2013, 21).

Dudley (2000) reported that some youth perceived the church as irrelevant because the services do not meet their spiritual and intellectual expectations. According to a 10-year study on why teenagers leave the church, Dudley found that many young people said they got tired of sitting at a church with "nothing for their age" (62). Others

expressed frustration because they believe "the church concentrates too much on rules and what a person should do rather than on a person's spiritual life" (64).

Dudley and Kangas (1990) stated, "Adventist youth are seeing the church through the people and are perceiving the rules through the people who make them" (46). The authors argued that many young people did not believe their relationship with the church mattered. Instead, they think "all that matters is their relationship with Christ" (46).

Involvement

One of the practical ways to integrate the youth into the church is to encourage them to get involved. Karl Haffner (2004) reported that "people learn at a much deeper level when they participate rather than watch" (28). He gave a list of ideas for pastors and church leaders to get all age groups involved in the church activities. He suggested the following:

> The various committees operating within the church must consist of people of all age groups. Youth need to get involved in leadership roles, especially Sabbath School, Pathfinders, praise, and worship tea.m. It is also advised to form small intergenerational groups to meet older and younger generations to promote dialogue and the church's well-being. (Haffner 2004, 31)

There are tremendous benefits to church leaders in building youth ministry. First, there is generally more youth than adults according to population demographics. Second, any future for church growth is founded in a vibrant children's ministry that grows into a youth ministry. Third, there is a need for church leaders to expand the church membership and convert more people to Christ. Thus, it is fundamental to invest in youth ministry to secure church growth and the growth of Christianity (Gane 1997, 64). Finally, involving youth and young adults in intergenerational church ministry could allow them

to develop leadership skills. They may be able to lead Bible studies, participate in service projects, or take on other leadership roles within the church.

Youth Mentoring

In general, youth need mentors. Youth mentoring is usually described as a relationship between mentor and mentee in which "there is an emotional connection and in which the mentor offers guidance and other forms of support to the young person" (Dubois and Karcher 2014, 4). Youth mentoring is essential. Frequently, as Bishop (2004, 115) stated, the mentor (who needs to be experienced) "can influence kids' lives in ways that family members can not." The literature points out some reasons why youth mentoring is good. According to the author, youth mentoring instills values kids can not find in their family system. It can help young people improve self-confidence and decrease self-centeredness. It is also a better way to train kids and help them develop excellent leadership skills" (Bishop 2004, cited in Tetz and Hopkins 2004, 116–17).

For Gehrke (1988), mentoring is a powerful means of development and learning. The concept of mentoring is not as new as you might think. For centuries, it has been used in many spheres of society. For example, Socrates was the mentor of Plato. Aristotle was the mentor of Alexander the Great; Mentor, the teacher, and guardian of Telemachus, the son of Ulysses (Homer 1964, as cited in Gehrke 1988, para. 2); Elijah, the mentor of Elisha (2 Kgs 2:1–9); and Paul, the mentor of Timothy (2 Tim 2:1–4).

For McEachrane (2011), children, youth, and young adults must be trained to be responsible church leaders and perform church duties. Furthermore, the author emphasized the importance of having an excellent mentoring program, which can positively influence the lives of young people. Ellen G. White (2002) believed that many

Christian youths could accomplish good work if Church leaders invested in them. She

further said the parents' sacred responsibility is to help young people "fulfill God's

purpose for them" (225). The church must be where the youth can find guidance,

direction, and role models to enhance their Christian faith. The platform for future church

leaders is set to mentor Christian principles as the following reference frame.

Bringing Generations Together in Ministry

Over the past decades, constant changes have occurred in a society that has

divided families and separated age groups, not only in the educational and health system

but also in all other aspects of our everyday lives (Allen 2005; Merritt 2007). This

separation in our society is even visible in the entertainment industry, providing content

that targets specific audiences. Television programs show that what interests parents may

not involve their children. This reality settles in the church. Church leaders tend to plan

activities for each age group separately. The older generations also tend to sing traditional

songs. They have fixed ideas about how the youth should live, think, and behave.

Nevertheless, faith-based communities should be where all generations come

together regularly and interactively (Allen 2005; Merritt 2007). Thus, how do Dedham

church leaders make all ages—youth, young adults, and adults— work together? Or How

can the church family bring the generations back together?

Promoting Intergenerational Worship

Our places of worship today are made up of people of different generations.

However, many church leaders do not understand that generational differences and

misunderstandings put their churches at risk (Menconi 2010). Therefore, there is a need

to develop a new mechanism to facilitate a strong relationship between the generations at

the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. As Menconi indicated, any attempt to prioritize one generation at the expense of another puts churches at risk (iii). According to Menconi, God's will is to see the generations evolve side by side; these relationships are important to Him (6). Not surprisingly, the Bible promotes intergenerational interaction and describes the assembly of Israel in the Old Testament and the Christian community in the New Testament as intergenerational congregations (Gen 7:1; Exod 10:9; 16:2; 17:1; Num 14:7; Josh 24:15; Acts 16:29–34) where grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren gathered together to worship, pray, and serve God (Harkness 2012).

Those who explore intergenerational ministry models in the church understand that living together as a single entity or bringing the generations back together in ministry is one of the biggest challenges for believers' communities (Martineau, Weber, and Kehrwald 2008; Chechowich 2012; Allen and Ross 2012). It is interesting to recognize how things have changed and how quickly and radically our churches have been fragmented by different generations of people sharing the worship place and regular services, but these are essential for founding and strengthening individual faith.

Martineau, Weber, and Kehrwald (2008) skillfully addressed the issue of putting different age groups together in the same room for intergenerational learning, which provides an opportunity to gather the whole church to "learn, pray, celebrate, and share" (3). Furthermore, they said, "learning about our faith all together has a profound and positive impact on the life of the community" (3).

We live today in a society where it is hard for people of different generations to interact, but Martineau, Weber, and Kehrwald (2008) believed that the church's future is at stake without a strong community sense. According to them, great things happen when

church leaders are able "to bring all generations together, allow them to minister to each other, and to help each other grow" (12). The vital question to ask is how we get started. How do we get youth and older generations involved in working together in ministry?

Bringing generations together in ministry is not easy, especially in a world dominated by "age-segmented and age-focused activities" (Amidei, Merhaut, and Roberto 2014). Therefore, the authors promoted faith formation, which aims to strengthen intergenerational faith transmission in the congregation and in extended families (1). In addition, the authors present the vision of a group that is becoming more intentionally intergenerational through the church's life based on the five essential components that are significant for every Christian community: "caring, celebrating, learning, praying, and serving" (7).

Allen and Ross (2012), two experts in this field, stressed the importance of intergenerational faith experiences in terms of "bringing the generations together for ministry and worship as well as most other gatherings" (17). Their book is divided into four sections and is well organized. Its material benefits church leaders and emphasizes that "intergenerational faith experiences uniquely nurture spiritual growth and development in both adults and children" (46). Therefore, it is in the interest of each Christian community to have their churches become intentionally intergenerational. Regardless of how church leaders determine to minister to and with the different age groups within the church, it is relevant and helpful to understand each generation (Allen and Ross 2012).

Allen (2018) noted that church leaders who want to promote an intergenerational the church needs to adopt a theology of accommodation. This new approach can help them think carefully about how church practices reflect older and younger generations.

According to Allen, it is the role and responsibility of the leaders of the church to review and adapt the type and style of "liturgy, language, music, media, participation, space, illustrations, and examples used within church gatherings wider church life" (58).

Changing Worship Style

Churches that successfully engage in intergenerational worship must find the proper method or strategies to promote new approaches to ministering to all generations. Change always comes with new ways of doing things. Based on the study of congregations and the plan to attract both older and younger generations, Rendle (2008, 55–69) suggested that intergenerational ministry is a way of seeing. He highlighted the importance of being flexible in the church's worship, leadership, and decision-making strategies involving people of different age groups (65).

McIntosh (2002) adopted new approaches that accommodate or link multiple generations. In adapting, connecting, or making generations work as one church, the author suggested two blended worship services with different ideologies, such as "traditional and contemporary services" (216). The two models given by McIntosh showed how the two ideologies work together in one service (Figure 2).

In the traditional service, which may apply to the older generation, musicians may be limited to playing the organ and piano for hymns conducted by a song leader. However, in the current service, a praise team directs praise songs accompanied by a small band, not limited to instruments. Furthermore, these two ideologies align with different age groups (216). However, the younger generation may favor a new service.
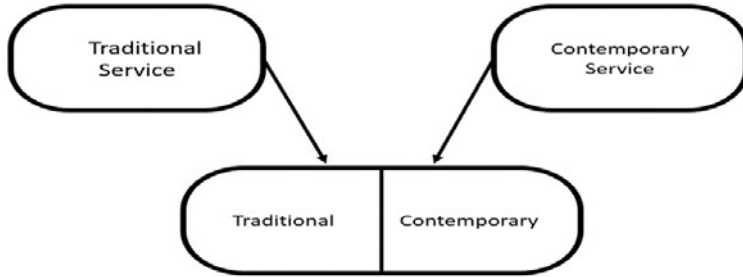
Figure 2. Two parts of one service. Data from McIntosh (2002, 216).

The blended service (Figure 3) is the worship in which pastors and church leaders find a way "to work with all generations in the same church without ignoring any of them" (211). Beck (1998) called this form of worshiping together " worship" (31), in which members of both generations feel safe and comfortable. Blended service or corporate worship makes the church worship experience more efficient. Pastors and church leaders are advised to implement this model, which "ought to reflect a balance of traditional and contemporary styles in music, participation, relationships, and dialogue" (McIntosh 2002, 219).
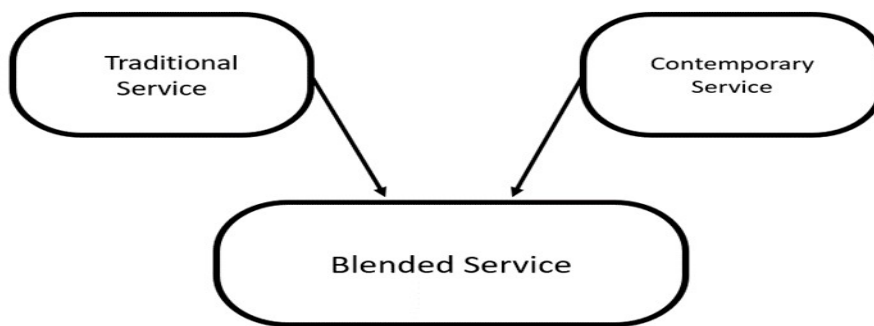
Figure 3. Blended service. Data from McIntosh (2002, 216).

Linking Generations

Talking about blending the traditional and the contemporary into multigenerational worship, McIntosh (2002, 218–221) provided steps to combine or link the generations into one church.

1. Get the senior pastor's support: The pastor must focus on both generations in his church. He must adapt his leadership and be able to communicate with all members regardless of their age groups.

2. Get the support of lay leaders: They must be willing to team with the pastor and embrace his strategic and long-term plan to bring the generations together.

3. Help the congregation see the opportunities and needs: Create a favorable atmosphere that allows dominant generations to reach out to the other generations.

4. Stress biblical concepts of love and acceptance: Teach members the importance of accepting each other, serving one another, and submitting to each other.

5. Establish an alternate worship service or a new venue in which blending can be practiced.

6. Educate the generations to understand each other: Preach about each generation's strengths and values during worship services and other activities.

7. Foster common-ground experiences and activities when all generations spend time together.

8. Organize a new-member task force with representatives from each generation.

9. Encourage Boomers and Busters to take leadership, that is, to develop a partnership between older and younger generations for balanced leadership within the church.

The linking or binding of all generations at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church worship would demonstrate diversity and unity. In understanding the motif of cross-generational worship, Robles (2010) reported the importance of teaching each generation to appreciate and celebrate generational diversities (61). The encouraging connection between the ages is a significant concern for the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Intentional Intergenerational Ministry

The Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church's future and growth depend on the degree of cooperation and harmony between first-generation Haitian parents or church leaders and the second generation. Furthermore, the second generation is regrouping youth and young adults from Haiti or who were born and raised in the United States. As Baxter (2010) pointed out, "an intergeneration approach to ministry can transform the church" (16). It is a new approach that can generate a constructive dialogue between the generations and facilitate the church's progress in many ministry contexts. When the older generations work side-by-side with the younger generations, it is a benefit for spiritual growth for all. Their cooperation should be characterized by dialogue and a spirit of tolerance in which everyone can "learn with and from each other, build community, share faith, pray, celebrate, and practice the Christian faith" (Roberto 2018, 99).

By using French and Creole, as is done by the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is not easy to bring the older members together with the English-speaking or younger generations in one service. The English-speaking or younger generations say that do not understand what the older generations are doing, mainly when French is used in some services or activities.

Inappropriate intergenerational relationships are becoming more and more visible among the members of Dedham. The community spirit within the church tends to disappear because of inequalities and social cohesion. Intergenerational ministry should bring generations together. According to Roberto (2009), "bringing generations together within the church provides assistance, opportunities, and blessings on a variety of levels" (para. 2).

The mission of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church can only be accomplished by engaging all ages or generations in service and ministry to the community, especially to those who are spiritually vulnerable and in search of the truth. Merhaut and Roberto (2014) promoted intergenerational ministry because it helps connect generations and builds relationships as they gather together to worship God and go out to serve their neighbors. The intergenerational ministry also helps to build teamwork within the church (137).

Summary

This literature review, although not exhaustive, aims to understand better the lack of communication in Haitian families and how it affects intergenerational relationships within the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. A detailed literature review was conducted in connection with Haitian reality. Pierce and Elisme (1997, 59) stated: "Haitian attitudes toward themselves, their country, and their interaction with others are colored by their history, culture, and migratory experiences."

A profile of the first-generation Haitian immigrants was brought to light, emphasizing how Haitian families remain rooted in their past. Their Haitianness, including their values, culture, aspirations, and beliefs, creates a gap, hurting parent-child

or youth-church leader's relationships. At its deepest levels, the issue of bringing the

older and younger generations together in service and ministry is at the heart of

discussion among prominent researchers and church leaders. Foner and Dreby (2011),

Choi, He, and Harachi (2008), Rumbaut and Portes (2001), Chung (2001), and Lee, Su,

and Yoshda (2005)) observed that making older and younger generations work together

in a community where intergenerational dissonance exists is not as easy as some people

might think. The generation gap, language barrier, and the use of traditional music in the

worship service are significant factors that affect the harmony and the proper functioning

of activities within the church.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Introduction

The Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church, like many other Haitian churches of the Southern New England Conference in the United States, showed a systematic structure without any concern or any philosophical awareness of intergenerational conflict. However, intergenerational dissonance, a clash between parents and children or older and younger generations over cultural values, is a frequent issue for immigrant parents and their U.S.-born or raised children (Rumbaut and Portes 2001, 206), especially among the Dedham -day Adventist church members. In addition, the tensions surrounding the generation gap, language barrier, and even worship style have caused conflict between generations, disruption, hurt feelings, and pain of rejection.

This chapter addresses the research design and the data-collection strategy used in small group activities. This research design seeks to develop, implement, and evaluate a pastoral care approach to addressing and solving intergenerational dissonance between the older and younger Haitian members of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. The research questions guide this study: How do the generation gap, language barrier, and traditional music in the worship service at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church affect the harmony and the proper functioning of activities within the church? How can older and younger members work and worship together without hurting anyone?

Research Design

Once I identified the research question or questions, I had to pick appropriate research methods. According to Maxwell (2005), decisions about research methods depend on the specific context and issues the researcher is studying and other design components (79). Traditionally, researchers in Practical Theology have used qualitative approaches as viable methods of inquiry (Swinton and Mowat 2016, 28).

Type of Research

For Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem (4). According to Merriam (1998, 5), this research method is a canopy concept covering several inquiry forms that help participants, including the researcher, understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena. Social phenomena refer to the individual and external influences that affect people's behaviors and opinions (Patton 1990, 70). As part of this research, the social phenomena also refer to the lack of accommodation for older and younger Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church members. To understand intergenerational dissonance better, I chose to bring a qualitative approach and presented accurate descriptions of experiences in the social, cultural, and familial contexts.

Qualitative research attempts to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and interaction (Merriam 1998, 6; Patton 1985, 1). As Sensing (2011) stated, qualitative research is grounded in the social world of experience and seeks to make sense of lived experience (57). Polit and Hungler (1991) also asserted that qualitative studies are tools used in understanding and describing the world of human experience.

Qualitative research allows the researcher to pursue two significant goals. First, academic or professional goals are focused on understanding something. These goals can substantially contribute to (1) understanding the participants meaning, (2) understanding the particular context, (3) identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, (4) understanding the process, and (5) developing causal explanations (Merriam 1998, 11; Maxwell 2005, 22–23; Sensing 2011, 57). Second, the practical goals are essential to justify or provide reasons for the research. In addition, as Hammersley (1992, 28) noted, the researchers' goals inevitably shape the description, interpretations, and theories they create in their research.

Unlike quantitative researchers seeking causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations (Hoepfl 1997). Although it has been claimed that quantitative researchers attempt to disassociate themselves as much as possible from the research process (Winter 2000), qualitative researchers have come to embrace their involvement and role within the research. In addition, the strength of qualitative research derives primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific problems or people, and its emphasis on words, rather than on numbers. In addition, qualitative research methodically seeks answers to questions by examining various social environments and the individuals who inhabit these settings (Sensing 2011, 57).

Qualitative Data Collection

As field research, this study was conducted in one of the churches of my targeted field. Thus, data were collected from several Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church members, one of the 17 Haitian churches and companies of Southern New England, and

one of the six Conferences of the Atlantic Union in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Data Collection Methods

The basic idea of collecting data in any research study is to address the research question and the situation under examination (Swinton and Mowat 2016. 53). Qualitative research uses various data collection methods, including observations, textual or visual analysis, and interviews (Silverman 2000). According to Swinton and Mowat (2016, 60), interview data collection is crucial for qualitative research. Dörnyei (2007, 132) noted that researchers often collect qualitative data through interviews and questionnaires. These interviews involved unstructured and open-ended questions intended to elicit participants' views and opinions.

Participant Recruitment

I used a sampling procedure to determine the recruitment procedures for participants needed to answer the research questions. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the researcher purposefully selects or recruits participants who have experienced "the central phenomenon or the key concept being explored in the study" (173). As part of this research, the participants were active members of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dedham, Massachusetts. In addition, they were individuals of both generations: first-generation Haitian immigrants who were parents and leaders attached to their culture and language, and second-generation Haitian Americans who grew up in the United States and feel more comfortable with English and American culture.

The strategy for this research was to find members of both older and younger generations interested in participating in the different steps of the study, from setting up small groups to completing questionnaires. This sample or specific group of individuals was the best individuals to help me understand the problem and the research question (Creswell 2003, 185). Therefore, the recruitment of these individuals, men and women aged 18 and older, was essential to the success of this study.

I used different methods to recruit appropriate participants, including local church services, recruitment questionnaires, and telephone. Upon completing the recruitment process, the participants received a consent form. This form contained basic information regarding the purpose of the study. It also had the principles or criteria to participate in this research study. Furthermore, I provided the forms in French and English to maximize research results. Each participant had to sign the consent form and complete the questionnaire electronically in the chosen language. The study was conducted from a representative group of participants of both generations and was divided into small groups.

Research Technique: Small Groups

This research was designed as a qualitative study based on small groups and activities involving a sample of Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church members. Small groups of six (6) members were formed and operated for at least four sessions.

According to Gladen (2011), a small group is "a group of people who meet around special interests or ministries of the church" (27). Based on that definition, the small groups were a good model for intergenerational cells with healthy adults, young adults, and youth within the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. In addition, the meetings

were conducted in different languages, such as Haitian Creole and English. Therefore, participants could express themselves in the most comfortable language, along with a translation system for support.

<div align="center">Small-Group Structure</div>

The gatherings were not structured like regular church services. Instead, the group members formed small circle groups during their activities at the church's fellowship hall once a week.

The structure may facilitate an increase or decrease in the flow of communication. The wheel (Figure 4) is an example of a centralized system where participants have trouble interacting and talking with others. In contrast, the circle (Figure 5) is an example of a decentralized group in which group members found it more practical to tackle complex problems. This structure was more likely to form in groups when the research goal was a collaboration or excellent communication (Gladen 2011, 57).

Figure 4. Wheel small group structure.
From Leonard (2012, fig. 13.1)

Figure 5. Circle small group structure
From Leonard (2012, fig. 13.1)

Small-Group Activities

The meeting would have three parts:

(1)   Devotional habits emphasize the relationship of the group members with God. In this part, the group members learned how to read and interpret a specific Scripture to find God's special message for each of them and connect with Him to be transformed. It was one of the most critical moments in the group's activities. This part lasted 30 minutes.

(2)   Transitional exercises in which older and younger generations shared their disagreements and personal histories from where they had been to the new experience they were living. This part lasted 30 minutes.

(3)   Debriefing was the last 30 minutes. At this stage, the whole group started an open discussion to illuminate all the hidden treasures of the day's topics. In a positive sense, the members could leave the meeting feeling differently than when they came in.

The session ended with powerful praise and prayer.

I, the church pastor, encouraged closed small groups with 6 participants per group. Activities in these specific groups focused on building trust, intimacy, and mutual aid or solidarity-based support. From day one, a memorandum of understanding or a consent contract was signed by each participant stating that the individual was willing to participate in the study throughout the research period.

All the participants agreed to meet for one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes on two occasions. They also committed to being present at the activities unless there was a significant incident and kept confidentiality within the group activities because honesty is one of the keys to growth. They also had to agree to participate in the group while being careful not to dominate and to treat one another respectfully, especially in disagreement or conflict. As a closed group, no new members could be added during the activities.

Therefore, every age group worked to meet their spiritual growth and discover their spiritual gifts. On two occasions after the regular church service, spiritual and social activities occurred in the sanctuary or the church fellowship hall. These activities were appropriate for creating a group ministry full of healthy small groups to bring harmony into the church (Gladen 2011, 56). In addition, I used the small group research method to generate ideas for investigation or action in new fields.

I put people into groups to create environmental conditions for a more spontaneous expression of each one and to facilitate the interaction of everybody. A moderator led the activities and stimulated discussion around my selected subjects. These small groups operated as (1) seeker groups that focused on evangelism, (2) support groups that emphasized fellowship and worship, (3) service groups that focused on helping people, and (4) growth groups that were dedicated to nurturing, discipleship, and

in-depth Bible study (Warren 1995, 146). These intergenerational small-group ministries were practical, authentic, and spiritual. Throughout the activities, the group members found ways to reflect the church's vision to influence lives, love, and support each other.

A small group permits excellent flexibility in collecting data, which is not usually achieved when applying an instrument individually, allowing interaction among the participants. Thus, according to Krueger (1994) and Morgan (1988), a small group inquiry study is worthwhile for generating an opportunity to collect data from the group interaction, concentrating on the researcher's interest.

Evaluation Criteria for Qualitative Research

All the research was concerned with ethically producing validity and reliable knowledge. Therefore, this study followed a set of evaluation criteria for qualitative research, which Guba and Lincoln (1981, 151) called "criteria for trustworthiness." Generalizability, validity, and reliability are three issues that must be addressed to ensure the project's credibility and knowledge of the experiences being examined. Together, these three issues are referred to as trustworthiness (Sensing 2011, 214).

Generalizability

Generalizability defines how the findings can be generalized from the study sample to the entire population (Polit & Hungler 1991, 645). Therefore, generalizability focuses on the researcher's ability to analyze and understand circumstances rather than collecting representative data in this qualitative study. Thus, this research study was made on a sample population of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church. However, the results will be applied to a broader population due to the familiar notion of generalizability.

70

Validity

Validity issues have always been present in qualitative research and refer to the tools, processes, and data (Van Manen 1990). I emphasized qualitative validity "to assess whether the information obtained through the qualitative data collection is accurate" (Creswell and Plano Clark 2018, 211). In many ways, validity in this research was concerned with the accuracy and truthfulness of scientific findings. That is the degree to which the results match the research questions. As Ratcliffe (1983) suggested, validity must be assessed as something other than reality (p. 149).

Reliability

Reliability refers to how this study was consistent or whether the same results were obtained by repeating the survey. Reliability in this study was predicated on the idea that there was a single reality concerning the Haitian community's members and that doing so "would repeatedly give the same results" (Merriam 1998, 205).

Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research is an issue of accountability. Under FDA regulations, any researcher who has researched with participants has come under the "Human Subjects Protection" process managed by the Institutional Review Boards (IRB; Lincoln and Tierney 2004). Therefore, I provided the pertinent information required by the IRB. In addition, I gave the participants a guarantee that the data received from the SurveyMonkey survey would not be disclosed. Once I received the approval, I explained the nature of my research project and initiated the research study.

Data Analysis

Despite the diversity of qualitative research methods, researchers often obtain data through participant's interviews or survey questions. Wa-Mbaleka et al. (2021, 186) stressed that "research data are any information collected for analysis to produce original research results." Thus, data analysis is an essential step in the qualitative research process. I used SurveyMonkey, enabling participants to use any mobile device, including smartphones, laptops, or desktops. This software was also used to facilitate, collect, and analyze data collection.

Data analysis is always the heart of any research project. According to Swinton & Mowat (2016, 165), the analysis should always be firmly linked to the research question and carried out simultaneously with data collection. The research questions remained strong throughout analysis and reflection in this practical theology study, especially the pastoral care approach. Moreover, they seemed to be well formulated questions about the collected data.

Indeed, the data analysis began when I collected the survey questions from the small group members. Then, I treated the data and carefully managed the qualitative analytic reasoning processes by applying a descriptive phenomenological approach. Finally, the descriptive phenomenological analysis explored the participants' view of the study under investigation (Smith, Jarman, and Osborn 1999).

Summary

The present chapter, as discussed above, results from careful qualitative research conducted in the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church Dedham, from April 16, 2022, to April 30, 2022. This research study used small groups and unstructured and open-

ended questions to collect data. The results were based on the study's credibility,

viability, and reliability. After exploring and analyzing the data through SurveyMonkey, I

will provide a complete description of the implementation intervention in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF THE INTERVENTION

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This chapter includes the narrative of intergenerational small group activities, which was a way to encourage the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church members to live their Christian faith and experience the five biblical purposes of a mission-driven church: fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, and worship. In addition, this chapter will present a brief account of the implementation of the intervention and an analysis of the data collected.

Research Objectives

I, the church pastor, invited the church leaders and the congregation to participate and collaborate for the complete success of the study. Their response was positive and encouraging. Several reasons explained the enthusiasm of the members to participate in this project—first, the lack of intergenerational communication needed to be addressed. The second reason was the French or Creole language used at church services. Consequently, second-generation Haitian Americans born or raised in the United States speak fluent English and have difficulty understanding and participating actively in church activities. The third reason, not the least, was the inability of the church members to pursue or experience the purpose of a mission-driven church (listed above).

Settings

The participants agreed to attend all the small group sessions, which were well-planned and organized to be attractive, exciting, and unforgettable experiences. Unlike traditional church programs, the small group structure and settings differed from conventional ones. Nevertheless, the environment was friendly. The seats were settled in a circle to facilitate good conversation and a genuine spirit of decentralization among the members. As a result, all the participants were very relaxed. Everyone could express themselves adequately in the language they felt much more comfortable.

The participants met and formed small intergenerational groups under my supervision at the beginning of the activities. Older and younger generations collaborated and worked together. A mobile translation system was set up to facilitate good communication and accommodate both generations. It was like the day of Pentecost. There were no complaints. Participants of both age groups, even though they spoke their respective languages, Haitian Creole or English, could understand each other through the translation system.

At the end of the small group sessions, a questionnaire was given to the participants. The survey results were collected through intergenerational small group activities. They allowed me to discover that Dedham church members feel that involvement in church activities and good communication between generations are vital for the unity and growth of the church.

In light of the research questions, the hypothesis is that harmony between older and younger generations can be reached through blended church activities. It can also be achieved using a based-structured translation system in a small intergenerational group.

In this model, I limited the number of participants to focus on building trust, intimacy, and responsibility between group members.

Implementation Process

It was challenging to make both generations sit together to work for their spiritual growth without fear. The language barrier between older and younger generations and the intergenerational dissonance remained a crucial problem. Hence the importance of encouraging intergenerational small group activities and using a translator system to accommodate or facilitate everyone's participation. The activities were carried out in Haitian Creole and English as stated in the protocol.

The intergenerational small group activities were intended to be practical, authentic, and spiritual. In their interaction, the older and younger group members engaged in a mutual dialogue according to the church's vision: to influence lives, love, and support each other. The atmosphere was friendly. It is an undeniable truth that a warm, loving, and non-judgmental church makes members want to come and stay. Unfortunately, people sometimes leave the church, not because they do not believe in God anymore, but because they do not feel welcome (Dudley 2000, 61).

The activities undertaken in the intergenerational small group ministry were intended to help members of both generations worship and understand the importance of working together while serving one another. With the full support of the church leaders, I was very selective in choosing activities. The translation system and the small group activity model for the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church were implemented on April 30, 2022. Nevertheless, participants met on April 16 and 23 for intergenerational small group activities, which had three major parts.

First Meeting

The first meeting was called on April 16, 2022, after the worship service. The activities followed this model:

Personal Study: The Biblical Concept of Service

In this part, I assigned a Bible verse to the participants. They were invited to focus on 1 Pet 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (NIV).

This activity was unique and personal. Each group member was asked to find a quiet place to be alone with God through the Scripture. This activity aimed to help each participant discover God's message through deeply personal meditation. Ten minutes were given to the group members to read and study the text by themselves while avoiding a hasty conclusion. However, before asking group members to find a quiet place to meditate individually, I taught everyone in a previous meeting how to carry out this personal Bible reading. It was a good exercise that allowed the readers to discover God's voice speaking to their hearts. After this personal exercise, all the group members got together for a debriefing.

Transitional Exercise: Bridging the Generation Gap

The participants were divided into five small groups of six people. Each group consisted of first and second generations. After giving instructions for forming the groups and reiterating the principles of confidentiality and mutual respect among group members, both generations got to work. Participants from both age groups were offered the opportunity to reflect on thorny issues and find sustainable solutions. An old French

proverb, "Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait!"—"If youth only knew, if age only could!" (*Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, 2022, Merriam-Webster, s.v. "Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait!," https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/si %20jeunesse%20savait%2C%20si%20vieillesse%20pouvait%21), was given to them to meditate, discuss, and apply in the church context.

The members then joined groups with a spokesperson who initiated positive and informative discussions. When they came back as a large group, the appointed spokesperson for each group gave a short report of the group's resolution. For 50 minutes, this activity helped participants acknowledge the presence and importance of the two generations within the church. The translation system allowed younger and older members to use their familiar languages and share their ideas and suggestions without fear and limitation. This activity was also a practical way for group members to achieve their purpose: connect both generations, minister to each other, worship and pray together, make disciples, and start working on a master plan to share the gospel with the residents of Dedham and the surrounding areas.

Worship

The last 30 minutes were reserved for debriefing and prayer. The leaders or spokespersons summarized what was discussed in their groups. As participants interacted during the activities, they began to feel the spirit of change. They realized they were distant from each other. Still, because of the translation system, second-generation Haitian Americans could put their voices together with their Haitian parents and church leaders to sing, praise, and pray. In this blended worship, both traditional and contemporary hymns were used. Participants were happy to worship God and celebrate

the spirit of unity around them. They committed to continue to work together and decided to be part of the next session.

Second Meeting

The second meeting took place on Saturday, April 23, 2022, after the worship service in the church fellowship hall. Participants of both generations experienced the joy of being together again and understood how distant they were from each other. Everyone showed more determination to work together because the previous activities helped them understand the importance of promoting intergenerational harmony within the church. I followed the same structure as in the first meeting.

Personal Study: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

The proposed topic for this session was mutual encouragement. The day's Scripture reading was 1 Thess 5:11: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are doing" (NIV). For about twenty minutes, each participant, alone with God through the text, took the time to read and meditate on this passage. Then, they tried to interpret the text in the context of encouraging and building each other up. This personal reading experience or the participant's ability to discover the meaning of Paul's message was helpful in the debate carried out in the small group discussions.

Transitional Exercise: From Mutual Encouragement to Ministry

The participants were divided into small groups of six. The seats were settled in a circle to maintain good communication and a spirit of equality and unity among the group members. A moderator or spokesperson was designated to lead a lively debate on mutual encouragement. For at least 40 minutes, the discussion was open among group members,

who were able to share their concerns and make positive and helpful suggestions to support each other mutually. In light of Paul's appeal to the Christians of Thessalonica, each group member committed to encouraging one another and maintaining intergenerational harmony. They understood that mutual encouragement was the foundation of a healthy church.

Both generations agreed they should spend time consolidating their relationship if they wanted a healthy, substantial, growing church. However, they believed that the church would never succeed if its members did not support the five biblical purposes of a mission-driven church: fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, and worship. Nothing discourages a church more than not knowing why it exists (Warren 1995, 87).

Nevertheless, this session provided a time for sharing and connecting with unconnected people. Throughout the debates, the older or younger participants did their best to keep their minds focused on good relationships among group members. Furthermore, they were committed to informing and forming disciples of all age groups for personal and church growth. They also agreed to support nontraditional evangelism by organizing activities and reaching out to unchurched Dedham residents.

Everyone was aware of involving both generations in this missionary work. They finalized the master plan of evangelism, which was significant for the church's progress, harmony, and stability. Finally, they agreed to work hard to nurture the spiritual life of the group members. They also decided to support intergenerational prayer services and all other practices to maintain good harmony within the church.

Experiencing the Presence of Jesus

All the groups got back together. The appointed spokespersons of the groups gave short reports and shared the groups' plans for ministering in that specific situation. The

spirit of unity among group members allowed them to get closer to Jesus and each other. At the end of this session, all the participants realized that the more Jesus was the key focus of the group's activities, the better the members experienced His presence.

The participants were happy to participate in this project. First, everyone who attended the meeting filled out the survey. Then, in a spirit of friendliness, they put their voices together, sang beautiful songs in French and English, and prayed to God to keep the same energy within the church.

Findings and Analysis of the Survey Data

The participants were allowed to complete an electronic survey of 21 questions at the last small group meeting. The first four questions referred to personal information. Then, in questions 5 to 17, called general inquiries, I asked participants to answer questions based on the Likert scale: "Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree." Finally, the participants were invited to share personal reflections on the small group activities in the last four questions.

The purpose of this survey model was to help me understand the lack of harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church through data collection. It was also a means by which I examined the participants' points of view and the importance of a translation system in bringing the two generations together.

Demographics of the Survey Groups

This study was designed for older and younger generations who are members of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church, one of the Haitian churches of the Southern New England Conference. As the pastor and researcher, the protection of the participants was essential. Therefore, I followed the best practice of qualitative research, such as

informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, academic integrity, inclusive language, and continuous evaluation and assessment (Sensing 2011, 34–38). Thus, the Executive Secretary of the Conference mentioned above consented to me to conduct the study.

Population Size

After discussing the project with the church board, I put posters on the bulletin boards to inform all members. A few weeks before starting the project, I announced from the pulpit that I was doing a research study to promote intergenerational harmony. I asked those who wanted to participate to stay after the service. The church leaders were very involved in recruiting volunteers. After providing all the necessary information, including the minimum age, duration of the study, and activities undertaken in small groups, the recruitment of volunteers had indeed begun. The members were very excited to get involved. Although 40 church members initially committed to attending the research activities, ten could not join this research project due to personal reasons. Therefore, 30 people from both generations could participate in this research program.

Gender

As part of this qualitative research, participants were recruited from both older and younger generations. Therefore, no one was forced to participate in the two main aspects of the research work, such as small group activities and interviews. Instead, the recruitment process was done in person by the church treasurer and the Personal Ministries Director at the church right after the worship service. As presented in Figure 6, of the 30 participants, 55.17% were male, and 44.83% were female. It does not reflect the gender reality of the church, where there were always more female members than males.
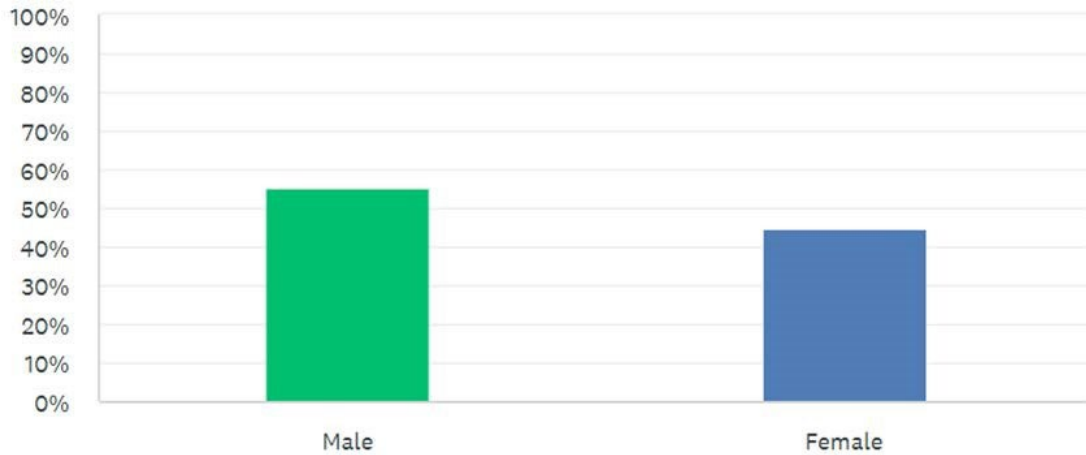
Figure 6. Gender (question 2). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Age Range

The age group targeted in this research was 18 years old and higher. The age distribution of participants was as follows: 17.24% were Generation Z (18-24 years old), 13.79% were older Millennials (35-44 years old), 37.93% were Generation X (45-54 years old), 27.59% were younger Boomers (55-64 years old), and 3.45% were senior citizens (65+ years old). In addition, the survey showed that a significant age group, the younger Millennials (25-34 years old), was noticeable by their absence, as seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Age range (question 1). Data from SurveyMonkey.
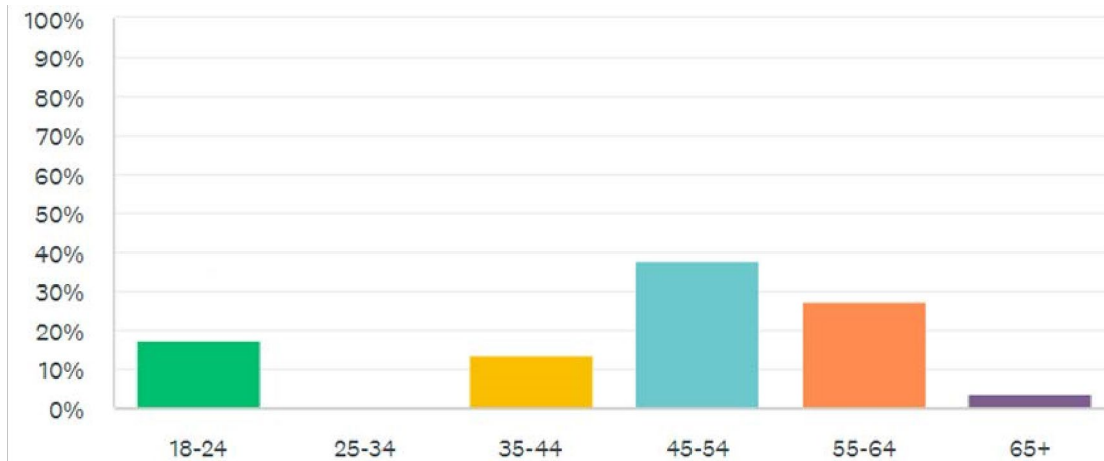
Denominational Affiliation

The participants were baptized and integrated into the Adventist church. Therefore, as Figure 8 showed, they were not new members but people who had gained knowledge of their church and community through the years they had been baptized. They were divided into four groups: 17.86% were participants who had been baptized ten years or fewer, 21.43% were those who had been baptized 11 to 20 years, 39.29% were members who had been baptized 21 to 30 years, and another 21.43% were members who had been baptized over 31 years.

Participants were active members and occupied various positions in the church. For example, according to Figure 9, of the 30 members, two were in personal ministries, two in health ministries, two in education, four in music, three in community service, three in youth ministry, three in children's ministry, and eight in the eldership or diaconate. On the other hand, three participants skipped that information or were recruited as regular members with no leadership position.
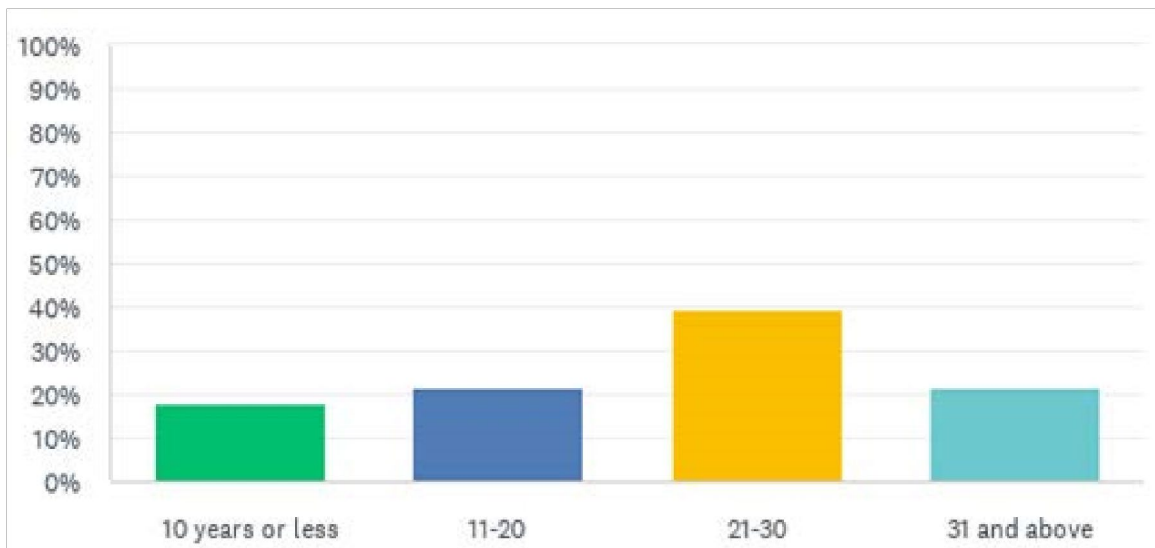
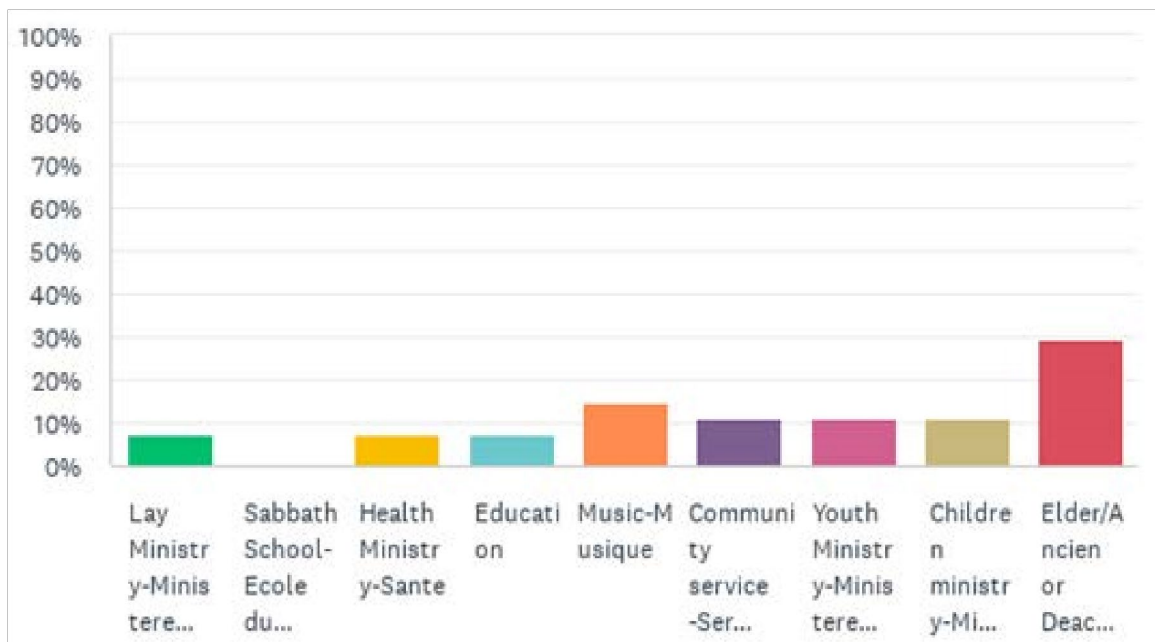Figure 8. Denominational affiliation (question 3). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Figure 9. Ministry (question 4). Data from SurveyMonkey.

General Questions

My central interpretation in this section was based on the phenomenological analysis. Therefore, I focused mainly on understanding the participants' points of view and how they made sense of their experiences (Smith and Nizza 2022, 31). I also used this method as a valuable tool to observe whether intergenerational group activities brought members together for better harmony within the church.

The survey questionnaire addressed the problem from several aspects. First, it reviewed first the social side of the church, which is an essential aspect of the investigative process. Second, it assessed the participants' degree of involvement in church affairs. Third, the survey underlined the importance of members' relationships and church leadership's interest in encouraging and training them to work together. I also stressed the importance of intergenerational small group activities and the role of the translation system in facilitating good communication. Finally, I highlighted the participants' reflections on intergenerational small-group activities.

Social and Cultural Aspects

The survey explored whether Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church has developed a sense of belonging (see Figure 10). The findings from the Likert scale showed that 51.72% of the participants strongly agreed that belonging is a fundamental motivation or human emotional need to affiliate with others and be socially accepted. However, the response was centered on getting acceptance, consideration, and support from group members and providing the same attention to other members.
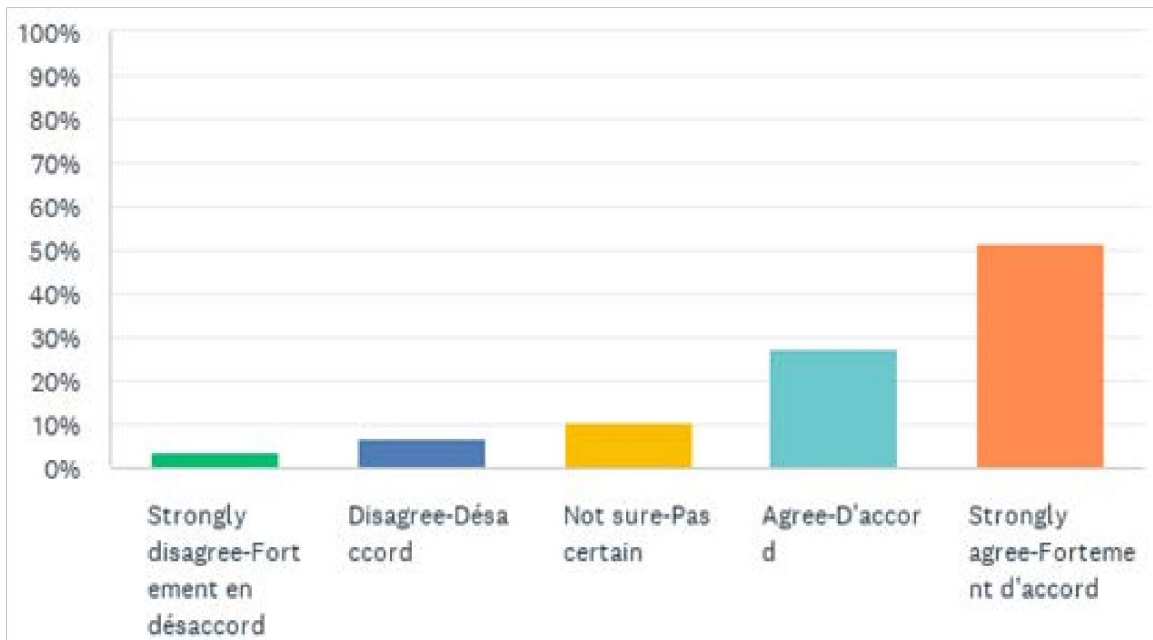
Figure 10. Sense of belonging (question 5). Data from SurveyMonkey.

In questions 6 to 8, the participants were asked about cultural and linguistic issues that might affect the mutual understanding between the two generations (Figure 11). According to question 6, at least two-thirds of the participants recognized or strongly agreed that Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church faces a problem with culture and language. However, in question 7, an unprecedented 67.86% also believed or strongly supported that, in light of the Bible, language and culture should not be an obstacle to maintaining harmony within the group or church members. Further, 31.03% agreed, and 48.28% strongly agreed that the church must do all it can to foster a pleasant environment among the members.

Q. 6

Q. 7

Q. 8
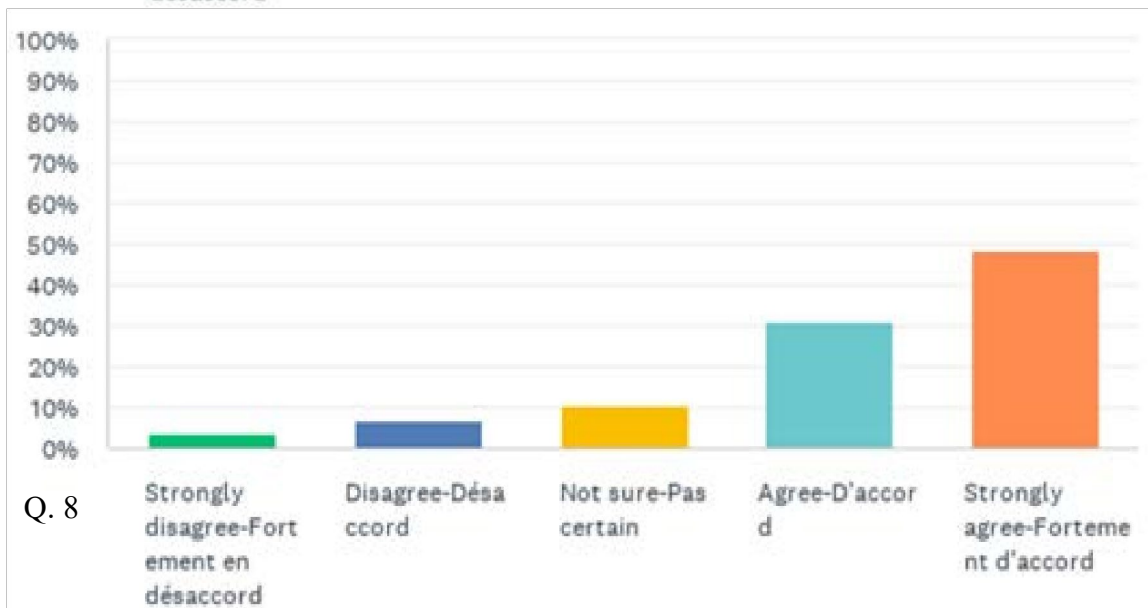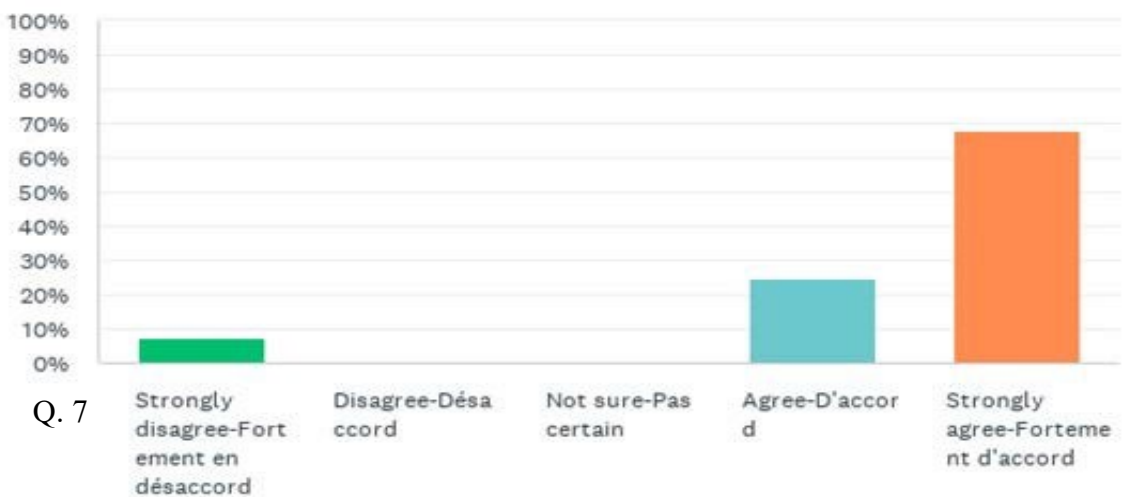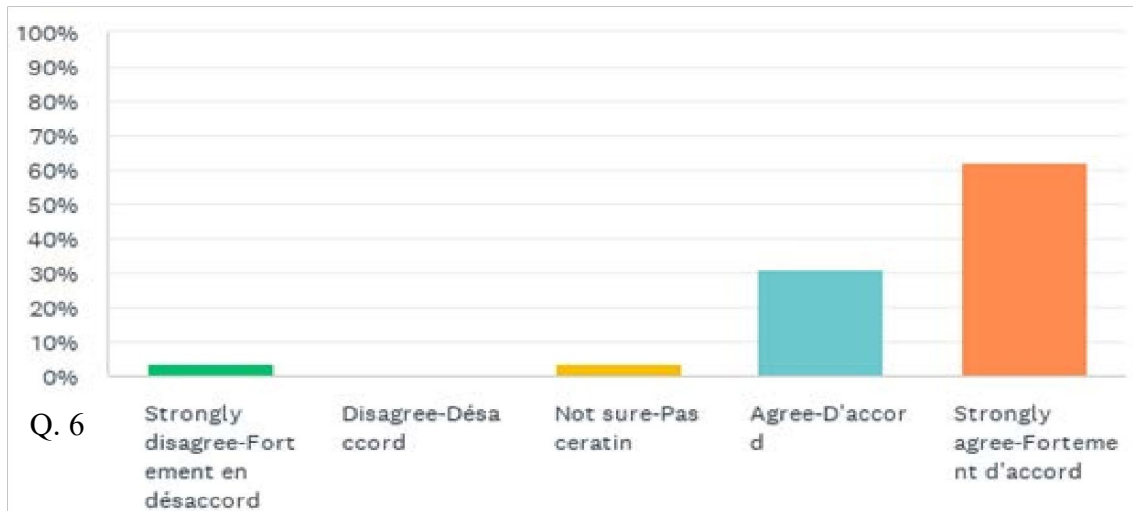
Figure 11. Cultural and linguistic issues (questions 6-8). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Involvement of Participants

Questions 9 and 10 highlighted the importance and role of each member regardless of age group. The findings showed that a reasonable percentage of participants believed that the pastor and church leaders wanted all the members to participate in the activities by their ideas or suggestions. Although there would be intergenerational differences within the church, most participants agreed that the church leaders valued their skills and abilities (see Figure 12).
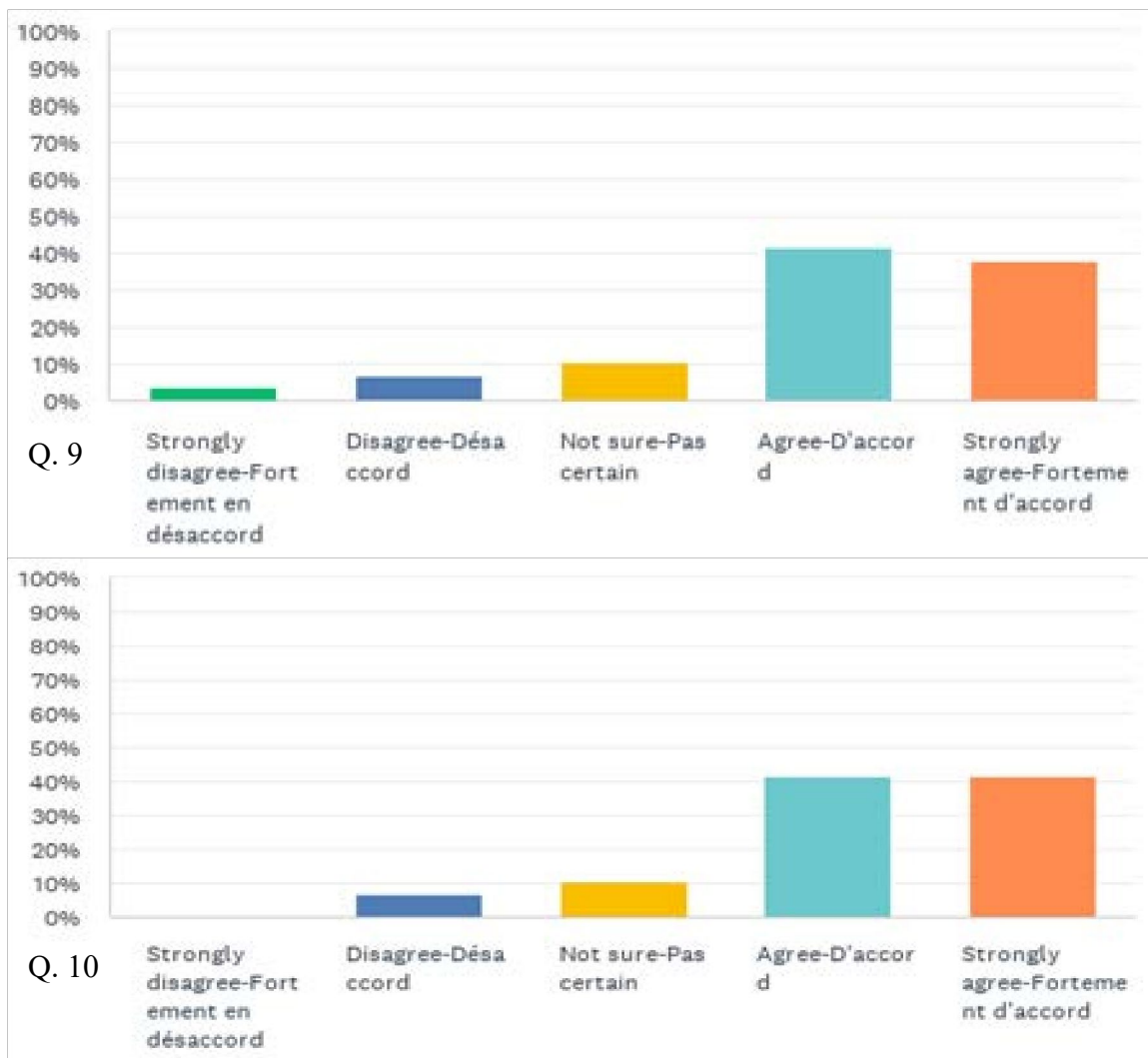
Figure 12. Involvement of participants (questions 9-10). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Church Members Relationship

The survey inquired about building relationships among Dedham Seventh-day church members (see Figure 13). Questions 11 to 13 emphasized a healthy and life-changing relationship among church members. About 89.65% of the research participants either agreed or strongly agreed that church leaders are responsible for encouraging members to build, deepen, and maintain friendships, which is crucial for church growth. Question 12 indicated that 86.21 % of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that church leaders must train members to care for one another.

Question 13 showed that 86.20% of the research participants agreed or strongly agreed that the church had done its best to make each member an accomplished disciple-maker. However, like the early Christians in Acts 2:42, the participants needed to connect with other members and reach out to those who needed to know the Lord.

Q. 12

Q. 13
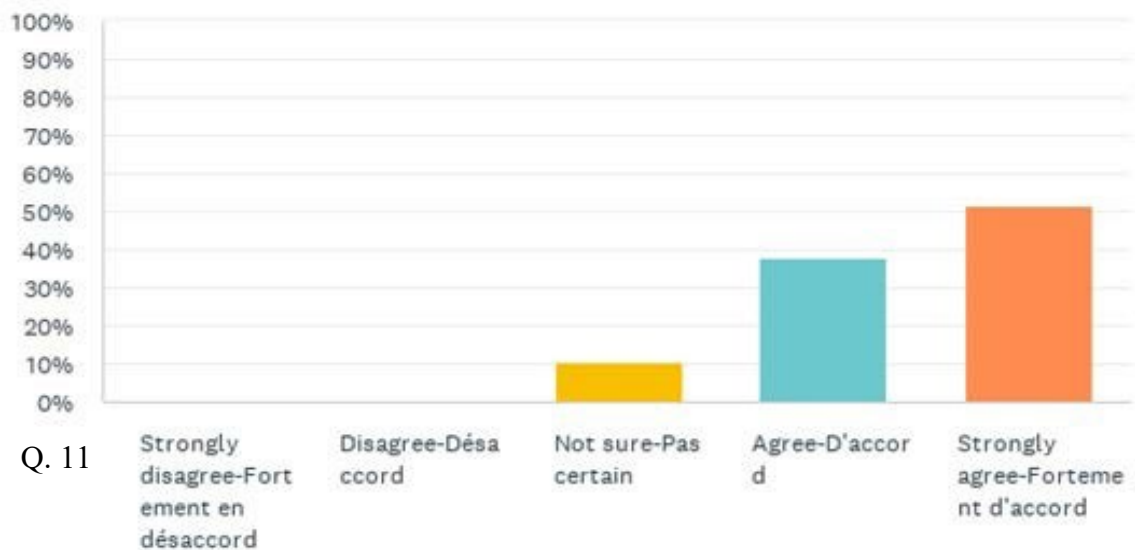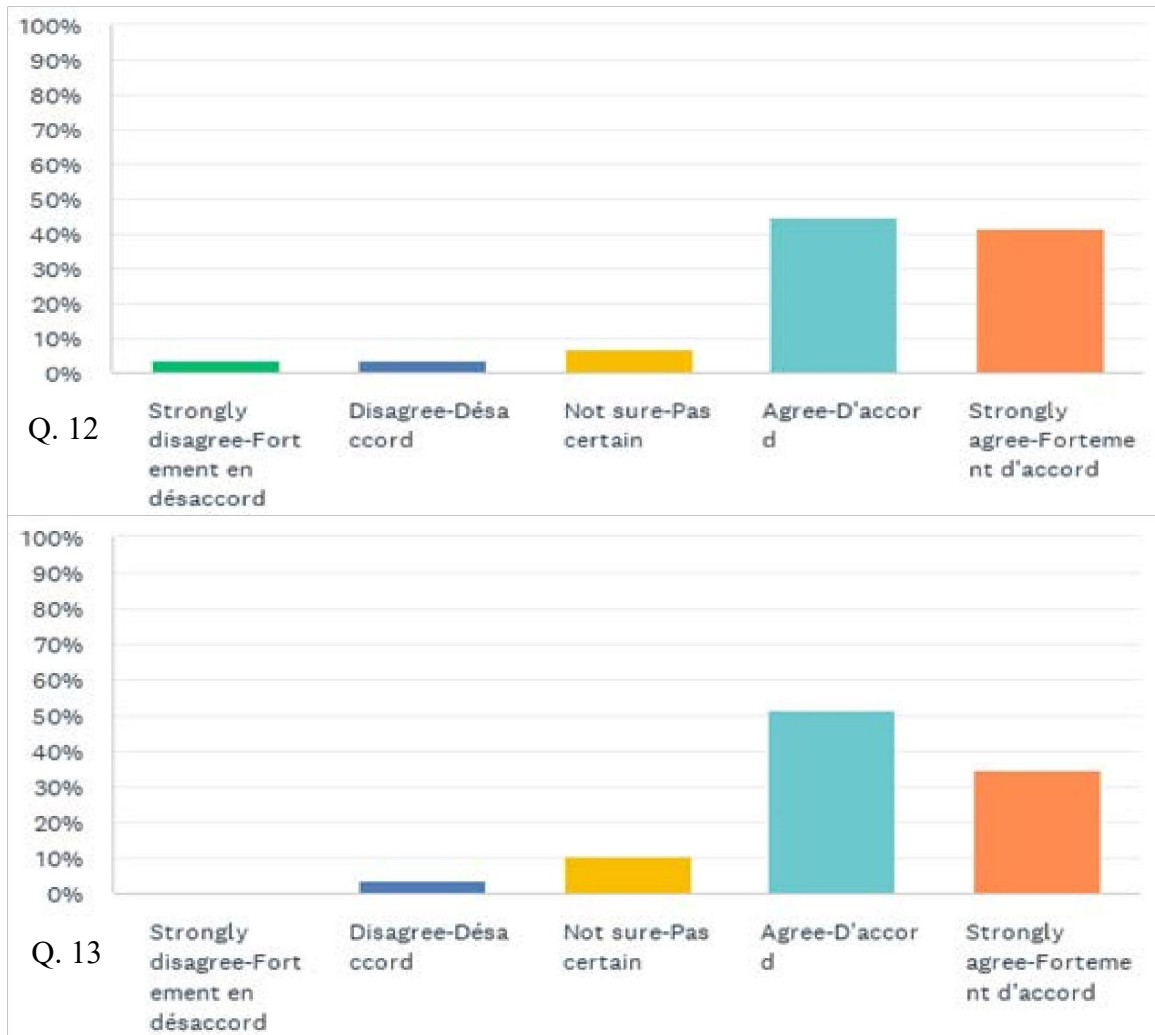
Figure 13. Church members' relationship (questions 11-13). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Small-Group Activities

Findings showed that more than 89% of the research participants agreed or strongly agreed that small group activities were vital to building a solid and supportive church. They provided opportunities for both generations. They also contributed to forming a more prominent church family, experiencing working together, and closing the generational worship gap (Amidei, Merhaut, and Roberto 2014, p. 85). (see Figure 14).
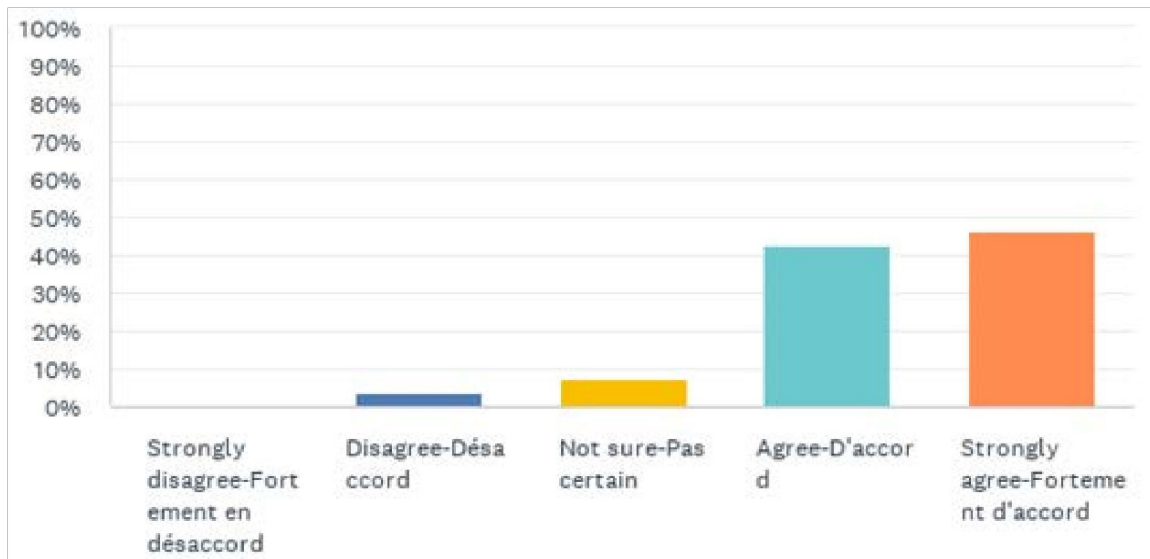
Figure 14. Bridge the Generational worship gap (question 14). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Living in harmony with one another was the primary purpose of intergenerational

small-group activities. The meetings were different in that all age groups met, prayed, and

studied together. According to question 15, 92.86% of the interviewing participants either

agreed or strongly agreed that intergenerational group activities are vital to maintaining a

spirit of solidarity and ministering to one another. Key findings from question 16 showed

that most participants (85.71%) favored the small group activity concept. They also

agreed or strongly agreed that the church needed to cultivate this concept in a context

where members would be challenged and supported in applying what they had already

learned (see Figure 15).

Q. 15 Strongly disagree-Fortement en désaccord | Disagree-Désaccord | Not sure-Pas certain | Agree-D'accord | Strongly agree-Fortement désaccord

Q. 16 Strongly disagree-Fortement en désaccord | Disagree-Désaccord | Not sure-Pas certain | Agree-D'accord | Strongly agree-Fortement d'accord

Figure 15. Intergenerational small group activities (questions 15-16). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Translation System

As the demographics of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church have changed, the use of French or Haitian Creole is a great challenge for young people. Interpreting languages for church services has become increasingly common as the

church tries to be more welcoming. Question 17 addressed this issue and showed that 93.1% of the people surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the church should become more inclusive with the translation system (Figure 16). In providing interpreters, church leaders would help reduce confusion, improve communication between older and younger generations, and thus, reflect better the Pentecost spirit through a blended service.
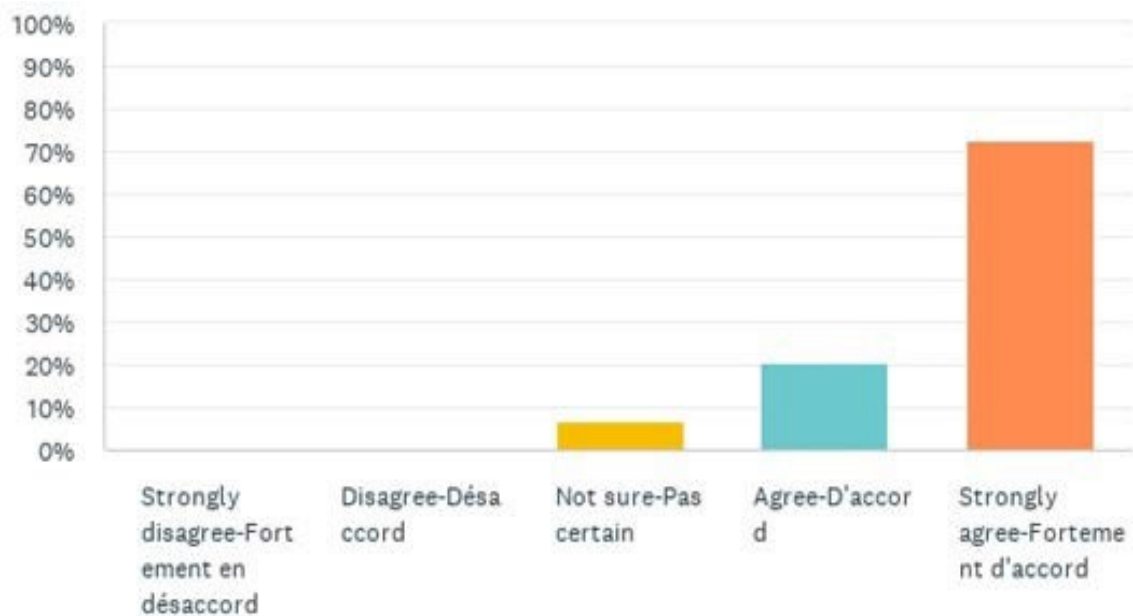
Figure 16. Translation system (question 17). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Personal Reflection

Questions 18 to 20 referred to the personal reflection of the participants on the activities in small groups. Unlike Likert scales, answering these three questions allowed the participants to select one or more options from a list of answers I defined. They submitted their opinions on the importance and benefit of small group activities. In question 18, it is essential to note that the participants' ideas regarding generational

growth through small group activities were diverse. For example, a group of participants

(46.43%) believed that generational change would happen through increased dialogue

between the generations. In another group, 42.86% opted for open communication, and

only 10.71% supported the idea of promoting the cultural values and trends of the older

generation (see Figure 17).
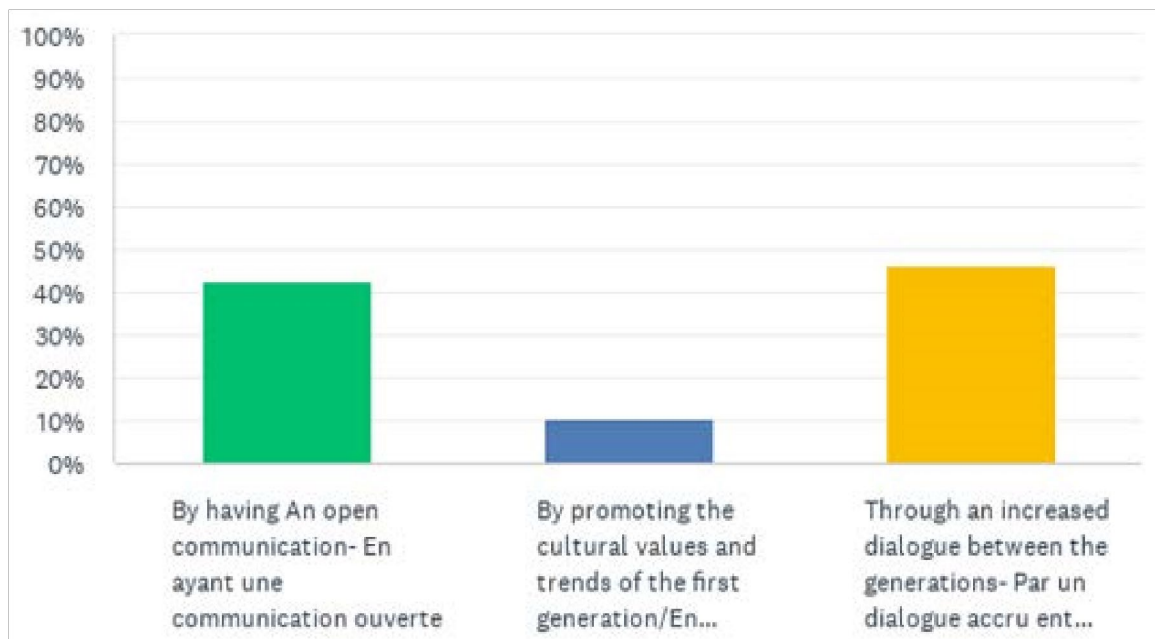
Figure 17. Personal reflection (question 18). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Several participants reacted to the need of both generations to continue working

together. They welcomed the concept of small groups and saw it as a way to maintain

intergenerational harmony through them (see Figure 18). Accordingly, question 19

showed that 44.44% of the interviewees thought about increasing trust. In addition,

33.33% would be for freedom of opinion and expression and 11.11% for a better

understanding cultural values and social interaction norms.
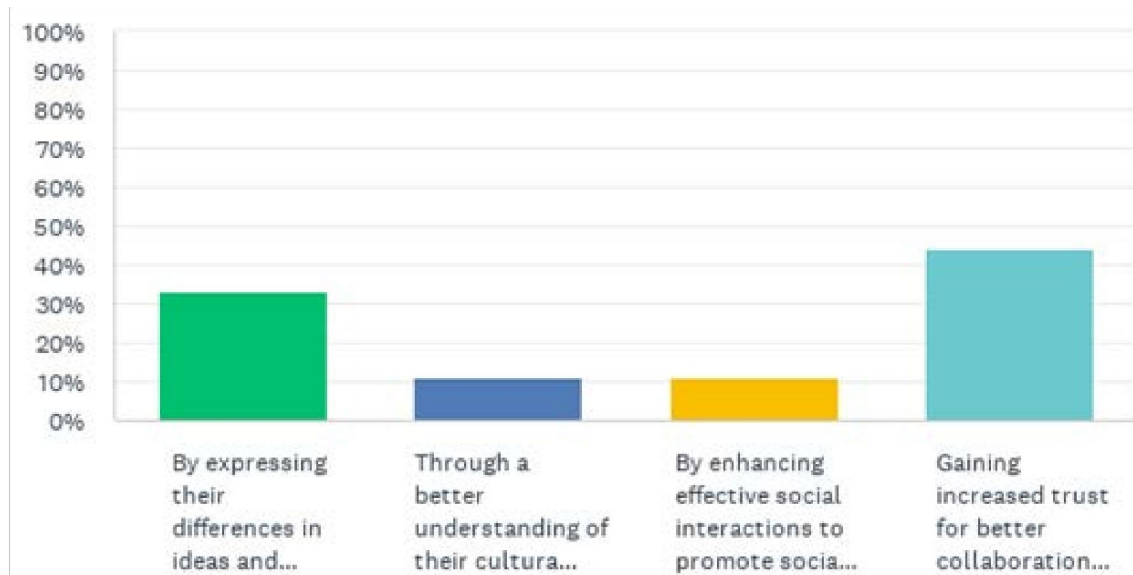
Figure 18. Intergenerational harmony (question 19). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Both generations enjoyed participating in these small group activities. Furthermore, they expressed their point of view on the long-term effects of those activities (see Figure 19). Of the 30 participants, 42.86% emphasized mutual respect and acknowledged the experiences and abilities of youth and older generations. In addition, 36.71% favored helping the older generation learn new technology, and 21.43% supported bridging the gap while accepting each other for who they are.

The answers to the last question of the survey questionnaire in Figure 20 showed that the participants had carried out the intergenerational small group activities adequately. In addition, the personal responses of the participants are uncontested evidence that the small group concept was pertinent and met the needs of the participants. Therefore, this program can be perceived as the beginning of an effective ministry involving older and younger generations.
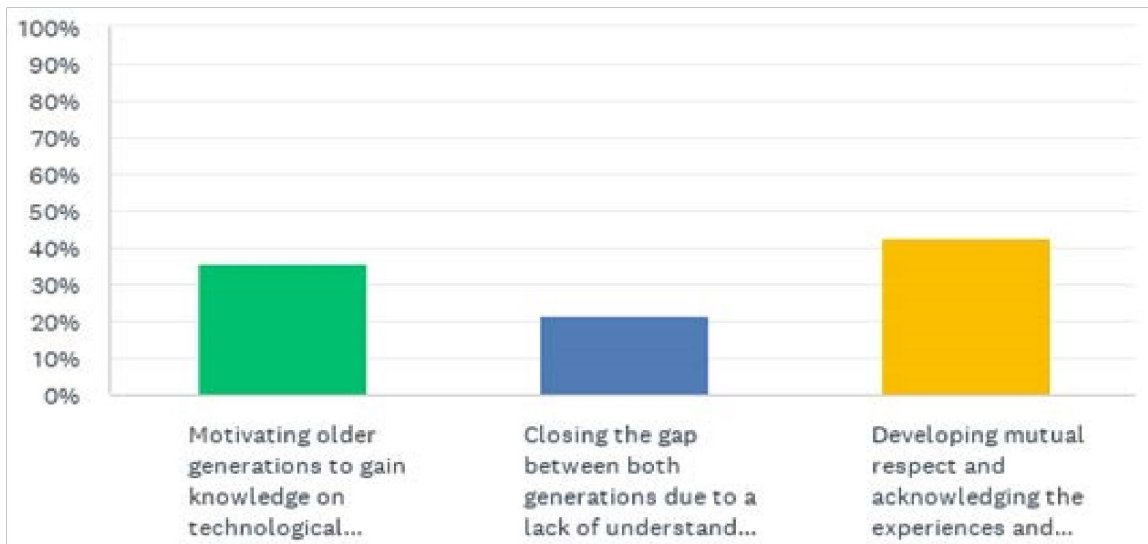
Figure 19. Long-term effects (question 20). Data from SurveyMonkey.
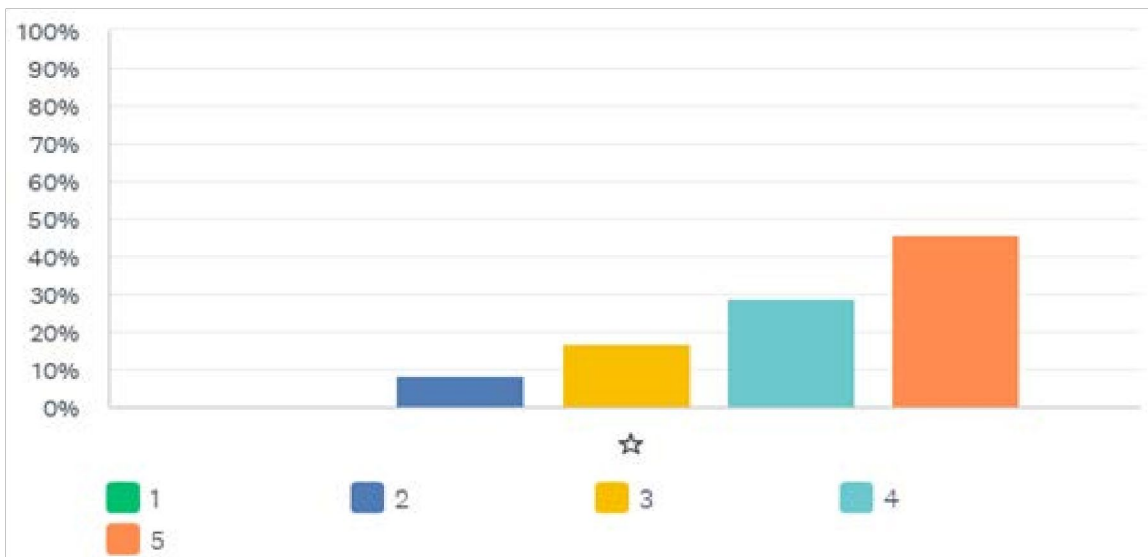
Figure 20. Rating scale (question 21). Data from SurveyMonkey.

Summary

This chapter presented a narrative of the intervention implementation based on intergenerational small-group activities. All age groups gathered in one place and

97

participated in this research. The participants were eager to collaborate, learn from the small group experience, and contribute to changing the current environment within the church.

Responding to the survey questions, the participants strongly supported intergenerational activities within the church. They also strongly endorsed promoting intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church. For them, it was one of the best ways to maintain a warm and friendly atmosphere among leaders and youth of the church and family members. Thus, implementing or developing the small group concept at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church would make both generations worship and work together. It would also make them minister to each other.

The survey monkey analysis data showed that a specific age group, the younger Millennials, was not part of the program. Therefore, a strategic plan is relevant and essential to the church as I highlight the effectiveness of intergenerational small group activities. In addition, this strategic plan is vital to address the lack of participation of the younger Millennials in the church's spiritual life.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study aimed to develop and implement small group activities to involve older and younger generations of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. The fundamental goal was to make both generations worship, fellowship, and work together for their full spiritual development and to reach out to unchurched Dedham residents and the surrounding areas. This chapter is comprised of two sections. The first part is the conclusion, which includes a summary of the previous chapters and the evaluation and the learning process in promoting intergenerational harmony among church members. The second part deals with recommendations for an effective intergenerational ministry in the church and my personal growth.

Conclusions

The Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dedham, Massachusetts, has been called to make a difference in the lives of its members, whether they are old or young. The church and the Haitian churches of the Southern New England Conference need to be a channel of hope and peace where all ages can work, worship and do ministry together. It is the church's responsibility to bridge the gap that has existed and still exists within the church.

Summary

Promoting harmony between generations at the Dedham Seventh-day Church in Dedham, Massachusetts, was a significant challenge in reducing the tension among older and younger members. It was a rewarding experience recognizing that it was not an easy task to make both generations sit, worship, and work together for the glory of God. Each age group stayed in its comfort zone, grumbling against one another. Nevertheless, most youth and young adults of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church are concerned about the lack of openness and vision. They complained about the church leaders because they did not make the church's spiritual and social activities joyful and unforgettable experiences. As a result, they decided they would leave the church and join English-speaking churches if things did not improve.

This study sought a connection or harmony between older and younger Dedham Seventh-day Church members through intergenerational small group activities. This research work has almost reached completion. However, further research still needs to consider many other aspects or areas of study and learning.

Theological Reflection

Making or encouraging both generations to sit, worship, and work together is spiritual and has a biblical foundation. Intergenerational small groups are part of a biblical pattern in the Old and New Testaments. The Bible indicates that the Old Testament intergenerational small group model began with God, who is relational and communal (Gen 1:1, 26). God has worked through small groups for millennia. The need to use small groups is a logical extension of God's existence within the divine form of

small groups (Gane 1997, 125). Although the term "small intergenerational group" is not used in Scripture, neither is the word "Trinity" (McBride 1997, 14).

Nevertheless, the concept of groups is evoked further in the Old Testament record of God's chosen people, the children of Israel (Exod 10:8–9). As seen in chapter 2, God has always referred to Israel as an intergenerational community from the entire nation to the smallest family unit. In this community-based, intergenerational assembly, the children of Israel of all ages joined together to worship and serve God.

The best description of the small intergenerational groups in the New Testament is in Acts 2:42–47. The Scripture described the life of the community of believers, which included all generations. They were always together, breaking bread in their homes, eating, praising God, and sharing the good news. These small groups of Christian believers had a distinct role in the early church's rapid growth (Hudson 2017, para. 2). Small groups were foundational to the early church, and purpose-driven groups (Gladen 2011, 38). The same spirit characterized the functioning of small intergenerational groups at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. Like the early church, these small group members gathered together. All the activities were biblically based and emphasized each member's growth and spiritual development.

Literature Review

Chapter 3 emphasized the Haitian cultural problem, the most challenging aspect of parent-child or youth-church leader's relationships at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. The literature review showed that culture, Haitian parenting styles, and language barriers remained significant factors that create a gap and prevent older and younger generations from working together. The literature review also emphasized blended

service, in which traditional and contemporary music must be used for the best interest of both generations.

Methodology

Chapter 4 included important information about the intervention research, which was taking place in my field settings and required an understanding of social phenomena. A qualitative approach was used to voice those of participants whose views are rarely heard. The participants were informed about the importance of the study at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church and invited to be fully engaged in the research process. The process was well-planned and well-explained.

The chapter also detailed the intervention procedures to assess and evaluate the implementation of intergenerational small-group activities. From an inductive approach, the researcher sought to understand the social phenomena of the lack of harmony among the generations at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. Collecting and analyzing data in a reliable and sustained manner was also considered to understand the problem better.

Intervention Implementation

In chapter 5, the discussion was on the narrative of the implementation of the intervention. Again, a model of intergenerational small group activities was used to promote harmony among church members. The small group activities focused on working together and ministering to one another. The participants valued the opportunity to be part of this study. They supported the intergenerational small-group model. According to them, this model was one of the best ways to unite all generations for a common purpose: worship, fellowship, discipleship, and evangelism.

Participants were enthusiastic, and their dedication to engaging in these intergenerational small group activities exceeded my expectations. Throughout the two working sessions, the quality of the debates was strengthened by a friendly atmosphere that marked the meetings. Those who could not speak because of language barriers and fear of being judged or expressing themselves were very active and considered these meetings a way for spiritual and personal growth. There was room for everyone, and participants were attracted to the learning and inclusion of the circle setting.

A translation system was implemented throughout these activities to facilitate communication and unity among young and older adults. In addition, a questionnaire, well-designed in English and French, was distributed to every participant to collect relevant data. The analysis and interpretation of this data would help identify and address all methods that would be helpful for members to worship and work together.

Evaluation and Learning Process

Through a well-designed qualitative research questionnaire, I collected data. I showed the impact of bringing all the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members together based on the intergenerational small group activities. I also found some important and exciting information that ensured the project's credibility and why further study is needed.

Accommodating older and younger generations is still in process at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, the significant activities undertaken within the framework of small intergenerational groups were used to gather, work, worship, pray, and bless one another. The program was adequate and intentionally brought both generations together for ministry, worship, and most other gatherings.

It was initially not without challenges for second-generation Haitian Americans to get along with their parents or church leaders within the church. Cultural issues, traditional hymns, and language barriers were significant obstacles to bringing the two generations together. Nevertheless, in light of the two working sessions, the participants, after discussing the church's primary mission to serve and build each other up, understood how important it was to unite all the church members.

Unfortunately, before undertaking this project, I ignored that those who did not understand French and Haitian Creole also needed to be fed. As a result, the church did not attract youth and young adults, especially the missing age group, early Millenials. No effort was being made to improve the situation. Second-generation Haitian Americans felt lost during church services, played with their phones, and had no interest in church activities. However, a translation system in church services has changed the atmosphere because adults and youth could worship, fellowship, and do things together. Through a blended service, a mix of traditional and contemporary styles, both generations actively participate in everything that happens in the church. This change made me believe that the time has come to address this misunderstanding and promote intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church. I have also learned to be more vigilant and come to the following conclusions:

1.   The lack of harmony between older and younger generations in the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church would have been at the root of misunderstanding and conflicting relationships in the Haitian family environment.

2.   Haitian parenting styles and culture could have played a crucial role in intergenerational conflict within the church.

3.   It is necessary to facilitate intergenerational activities for a greater sense of connection and purpose of belonging.

4.   Intergenerational activities provided opportunities to bridge generations of Dedham SDA Church through interactive activities and shared experiences.

5.   The intergenerational activities reinforce the concept of brotherhood and the church's unity. The Bible makes it clear that unity is a gift of Christ to the church. As the apostle Paul said in 1 Cor 12:12, "for as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."

6.   Bringing the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members together would benefit both generations. It could also help the church achieve its mission by reaching out to the unchurched residents of Dedham and its surrounding areas with the support of youth who speak fluent English.

7.   The research revealed that the age group 25–34 is missing or inactive, requiring a more concise and in-depth study.

8.   The research also revealed the potential for the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members to be positively impacted through constructive dialogue between older and younger generations.

9.   Intergenerational activities can positively impact the church community by fostering stronger relationships, sharing wisdom and experience, strengthening faith, breaking down barriers, and encouraging greater involvement and participation.

10.   Youth involvement in intergenerational ministry at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church is already producing results that benefit the youth and the older generations within the church. Details on youth involvement can be found in Appendix E.

Recommendations

Realizing the importance of maintaining a warm and friendly atmosphere between members of the same family or between older and younger generations at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist church, one of the best ways to get it done is to implement small groups in church activities. Therefore, I would recommend this implementation mechanism to promote unity or harmony to the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church and other congregations facing the same challenges according to their methodology and operating system.

Model of Spiritual Pastoral Care

In light of Acts 20:28, the pastor and leaders of the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church takes complete responsibility for watching over all the members that the Holy Spirit has made the leaders their overseers. Therefore, they need to work hard and in synergy to develop a pastoral action plan to make the members work and grow together. Boren and Tillman (2002) clearly stated: "No Christians can grow strong and stand the pressures of this life unless they are surrounded by a small group of people who minister to them and build them up in the faith" (33).

Koinonia Fellowship

This small group model will function in the members' best interest based on what Gane (1997) called a Koinonia fellowship. A community of persons practicing Christ-like lives toward one another by creating a safe environment (127). In this new setting, older and younger generations, sitting in the shape of a circle, will share their struggles and victories, sorrows and joys. Both generations will be able to work to enhance their

spiritual growth and discover their spiritual gifts. The members will be instructed to be open, noncondemning, and respectful towards others through such groups.

The Circle Setting

Working with church members in groups efficiently and appropriately promotes intergenerational harmony by helping them become a healthy church. This structure differs from the church's traditional service settings. For example, I organized the church into small groups during my presentation in one of the church's activities. I limited the number to 10 individuals per group. Each group gathered in a circle to promote harmony and good communication. This circle structure emphasized decentralization and spiritual growth. Furthermore, it allowed the group members to be involved effectively and have a more intimate and relaxed atmosphere, fostering prolonged conversation. This holistic approach is also presented as a model which can be helpful to church members regardless of age.

The holistic nature of the circle group model complemented my authentic spirituality by emphasizing the importance of oneness and connection for now and always. Fall and Levitov (2001, 5) stressed the importance of a unity circle. For them, this symbolism meant oneness and harmony and reminded members of their interrelationships.

I recommend this unity circle, which will be used extensively with positive results in regular church meetings. Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members can participate actively in church programs through this unity circle. I also recommend that a translation system be used to reverse the language barriers and unite the generations for a common purpose: serving the Lord and advancing His kingdom. There is power in the

circle setting. It is the responsibility of the members to blend into the bonds of Christlike unity (Eph 4:13, NIV), for as Ellen White (2001) said, there is strength in agreement or unity (2:168).

<center>The Benefits of Intergenerational Ministry</center>

My work and experiences have led me to conclude that people of all ages can benefit from intergenerational ministry and should actively seek opportunities. Therefore, as part of my pastoral responsibilities at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church, I intentionally have and will continue to preach sermons on intergenerational ministry throughout 2022 and beyond. These messages have proven to be a powerful way to encourage understanding, respect, and cooperation between different age groups within the church. A list of sermon topics that I have preached and am scheduled to preach relative to intergenerational ministry needs are listed in Appendix F.

These sermons are essential to developing a healthy and vibrant church community. A healthy church supports the following five significant goals in small groups: Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church needs to grow warmer through fellowship, deeper through discipleship, stronger through worship, broader through ministry, and larger through evangelism (Gladen 2011, 39–40).

The most meaningful interactions in life come from small group contacts. It is also true both inside and outside the church. Through family and neighbor interaction and local fellowship and support groups in the church, one of the most important benefits of belonging to a small group is developing deep interpersonal relationships among different age groups. According to Gane (2005), "Small groups offer a way of creating positive personal relationships" (128). In addition, small groups will help leaders and church

<center>108</center>

members emphasize four biblical truths regarding how each member is very reliant upon other Christians:

1) Comfort one another – 1 Thess 4:18

2) Encourage one another – 1 Thess 5:11

3) Confess sins to one another – James 5:16

4) Spur one another on – Heb 10:24

The small group system at Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church can be where members, especially young people, share their experiences personally with others. It should be a place that allows each of them to be challenged by applying the principles of Scripture to their lives. Finally, it should be a place where they can gain support to live a Christian life.

According to the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church's mission in the Dedham area, members who love Christ believe Jesus' words about sharing the gospel with others. All generations are ready to minister by sharing their faith with passion and giftedness. Due to the small group activities, church members will be more passionate about the mission. Barriers are removed, and the members generously give themselves to fulfill the work of God. Accordingly, Dedham's Personal Ministries leaders and church members, especially members of small groups, will reach the unchurched through a well-prepared, non-traditional, and traditional evangelism program. The main objective of this evangelism plan is to see youth, young adults, and older people empowered to fulfill a personal life mission in Dedham and the surrounding areas.

The church pastor and leaders, together with the members, will work diligently to conduct what Sahlin (2004, 72) called "touch ministries" toward the residents of Dedham.

They will focus on non-traditional evangelism, whose objective is to reach out to the residents without urging them to attend church. Regardless of the race and social status of those working in the area, their spiritual needs should be the priorities of church leaders. Personal Ministries, including Youth and Hospitality ministries, come with a new evangelism system. Every year, they organize a luncheon at the church fellowship hall and send food with a specific English book to all business staff in the neighborhood. It is one of the best ways to communicate with these unchurched people.

In addition to the annual luncheon program organized for business owners and staff around the church, new approaches and programs must be considered to see how the church can finally play an active role in the community of Dedham. Church leaders will work with existing organizations to address social issues such as drugs, alcohol, and the racial problem of the day. They will continue to participate in the effort of town officials to address climate change in light of science and prophecy. Finally, even though customs and languages differ, the church pastor and leaders must encourage church members to show radical hospitality when the Dedham residents visit the church. The church must have harmony among age groups to achieve this missionary goal.

Collaboration is valued over working alone (White 1946, 99). Church leaders' involvement will contribute to the church's spiritual growth by connecting members to God, themselves, the community, and the world live a life associated with the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, meditation, transformation, and sanctification. Parents and church leaders need to make room to allow the little ones and youth to know Jesus personally and be baptized. They will also work tirelessly until the opening of a new church that can meet the needs of the Dedham community. As Ellen White (2002) said,

"Let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members but for unbelievers" (72).

APPENDIX A

IRB PROTOCOL

Title and Purpose of the Study: Promoting intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church of Southern New England Conference

This project addresses the lack of connection among older and younger Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members. In addition, it will pave the way for establishing a theological basis with a pastoral care approach to promote intergenerational harmony among church members.

Subject: Older and younger generations who are active Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members from 18 years old. The first group, parents and leaders, holds to the Haitian culture, most of whom do not speak English. In contrast, the second group includes young people born and growing up in the United States. They speak English and live according to American culture.

Recruiting: As part of this research, participants will be recruited from older and younger generations. No one will be forced to participate in the two main aspects of the research work, such as small group activities and interviews. The recruitment process will be done in person at the church, by phone, or by email.

Voluntary Participation: Participation will be voluntary, and members are free to leave at any given time without any penalty.

Consent: All participants will be asked to sign an informed consent form and complete the questionnaire electronically in the chosen language, English or French.

Procedures: Once a week, for one hour and thirty minutes over four weeks, older and younger generations will be gathered in small groups at the church's fellowship hall to build good relationships, trust, mutual assistance, and solidarity-based support. During their activities, the participants, facing each other, will sit in a circle to

allow good communication. The activities will have three aspects and help implement intergenerational harmony intervention.

In the first part, devotional habits, the participants will learn the secret of being one-to-one with God through meditation. During the second part, the transitional exercise, participants from both generations will share their disagreements and personal histories and exchange ideas without fear of being judged. Finally, the last part will allow participants to understand the importance of working and praising God together and leave the meeting differently as they came in.

Risk: There are some challenges in conducting research studies among older and younger generation Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church members. The potential risk is not greater than average as participants may disagree based on their cultural background. However, the intergenerational small group ministries will help group members work together and support each other.

Data: The researcher will collect data from the SurveyMonkey system.

Securing of Data: The researcher will open an account with the SurveyMonkey app to ensure the collected information. Participants will have the formal guarantee that the data received from the SurveyMonkey app will be highly protected and not be disclosed.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Demographics

Select the answer that applies to you **Question**

Title

1.	Age Range -*Tranche d'age*

○ 18-24
○ 25-34
○ 35-44
○ 45-54
○
○

55-64 65+

Question Title

2.	Gender-*Genre*

○ Male
○ Female

Question Title

3.	Years of Baptism-*Années de baptême*

○ 10 years or less
○ 11-20
○ 21-30 31
○ and above

Question Title

4. Participating in What Ministry -*Participation dans la vie de l'eglise?*

○ Lay Ministry-*Ministere Personnel*
○ Sabbath School-*Ecole du Sabbat*
○ Health Ministry-*Minsitère de la Santé*
○ Education- *Éducation*
○ Music-*Musique*
○ Community service-*Service Communautaire*
○ Youth Ministry-*Ministère des jeunes*
○ Children ministry-*Ministère des enfants*
○ Elder/*Ancien* - Deacon/Diacre

General Questions

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check the appropriate box to specify your answer-*Veuillez cocher la case appropriée pour préciser votre réponse.*

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) *Fortement en Desaccord* (FD), 2 = Disagree (D) *Desaccord* (D), 3 = Not Sure (NS), *Pas Certain* (PC), 4 = Agree (A), *D'accord* (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), *Fortement d'accord* (FA)

5. Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church develops a sense of belonging - Dedham Eglise Advenitiste du 7eme jour developpe un sentiment d'appartenance.

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

6. I am fully aware of the challenges facing my church in terms of cultural and language barrier- *Je suis pleinement conscient(e) des défis auxquels mon église est confrontée en terme de barrière culturelle et linquistique.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

7. In light of the Bible teachings, cultural and language issues should not be an obstacle to the harmony of church members-*A la lumiere de la Bible, les problemes culturel et liguistique ne devrait pas etre un obstacle a l'harmonie des membres de l'eglise.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

8. My church does many things to foster environments that promote generational understanding and harmony - *Mon église fait tout ce qu'elle peut pour promouvoir la compréhension et l'harmonie générationnelles.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

9. In my church, regardless of your age group, the Pastor and church leaders always welcome everyone's ideas and suggestions-*Dans mon église, peu importe votre groupe d'ages, le pasteur et les dirigeants d'eglise accueillent toujours les idees et suggestions de chacun.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

10.   The church leaders value members skills and abilities-*Les dirigeants d'eglise valorisent les compétences et les capacités des membres.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

11.   Church activities and programs are designed to encourage the members to support each other-*Les activités et les programmes de l'église sont conçus pour encourager les membres à se soutenir mutuellement.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

12. The church leaders train members to care about one another and know one another's needs. *Les dirigeants d'église forment les membres de l'église à se soucier les uns des autres et connaitre les besoins des uns et des autres.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

13. My church gives me the opportunity to connect with people as a disciple maker-*Mon église me donne l'opportunité de me connecter avec les gens en tant que personne qui fait des disciples.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*

Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

14. The intergenerational small group activities are significant in bridging the generational worship gap-*Les activités des petits groupes intergenerationnels sont importantes pour combler le fossé du culte générationnel.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

15. The intergenerational small group activities provide an excellent venue for supporting each other-*Les activités des petits*

groupes intergenerationnels offrent un lieu ideal pour se soutenir mutuellement.

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement désaccord*

16. The small group model should influence the regular church services-*Le model des petits groupes devrait influencer les services réguliers de l'église.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

17. The translation system facilitates a better communication and harmony among generations in the church-*Le système de traduction rend possible une meilleure communication et harmonie parmi les générations dans l'église.*

- ○ Strongly disagree-*Fortement en désaccord*
- ○ Disagree-*Désaccord*
- ○ Not sure-*Pas certain*
- ○ Agree-*D'accord*
- ○ Strongly agree-*Fortement d'accord*

My Reflection on Small Group Activities

Please select all that apply-*Veuillez selectionner toutes les réponses applicable*

18. How small group activities can help generations grow? Please select all that apply! *Comment les activités en petits groupes peuvent-elles contribuer à la croissance des générations ? Selectionnez tout ce qui s'applique !*

- ○ By having An open communication- *En ayant une communication ouverte*

○ By promoting the cultural values and trends of the first generation/*En promouvant les valeurs et tendances culturelles de la premiere generation*

○ Through an increased dialogue between the generations- *Par un dialogue accru entre les générations*

19.   How small group activities can facilitate intergenerational harmony? Please select all that apply! *Comment Les activités en petits groupes peuvent elles contribuer a l'harmonie intergénérationnelle ? Veuillez selectionner tous ceux ui s'appliquent !*

○ By expressing their differences in ideas and viewpoints-*En exprimant leur differences dans des idees et points de vu*

○ Through a better understanding of their cultural values - *Grâce à une meilleure compréhension de leurs valeurs culturelles.*

○ By enhancing effective social interactions to promote social norms – *En encourageant des interactions sociales efficaces pour promouvoir les normes sociales.*

○ Gaining increased trust for better collaboration and support-*Gagner une confiance accrue pour une meilleure collaboration et un meilleur support.*

20.   What long-term effects can these small group activities have on both youth and older generations? Please select the best choices. *Quels sont les effets à long terme ces activités en petits groupes peuvent elles avoir sur les jeunes et les personnes plus âgées ? Veuillez Choisir tous ceux qui s'appliquent !*

○ Motivating older generations to gain knowledge on technological information to enhance effective social interactions - *Motiver les générations plus âgées à acquérir des connaissances technologiques pour promouvoir des interactions sociales efficaces.*

◉ Closing the gap between both generations due to a lack of understanding of perspectives and criticisms-*Comblé le fossé entre les deux générations en raison d'un manque de compréhension des perspectives et critiques.*

○ Developing mutual respect and acknowledging the experiences and abilities of both youth and older generations - *Développer le respect*

mutuel et reconnaître les expériences et les capacités des jeunes et des générations plus âgées

21.   How would you rate intergenerational small group activities on a scale of 1 to 5; 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest? *Comment évalueriez-vous les activités des petits groupes intergenerationnels sur une échelle de 1 a 5; 1 est le plus bas et 5 le plus élevé?*

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

APPENDIX C

INVITATION FLYER

Intergenerational Small Group Activities
Activités intergénérationnelles en petit groupes

FOCUS GROUP

Join one of our small groups
Rejoignez l'un de nos petits groupes

Venue/ Lieu:
Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church
410 Washington Street Dedham, MA 02026

The activities will take place to promote intergenerational harmony by helping and praying for each other-Les activites se feront pour promouvoir 'harmonie intergenerationnelle en s'aidant et en priant les uns pour les autres.

Let's grow and work together!
Grandissons et travailions ensemble!

Dates: **April 16,2023**
April 23, 2023
April 30, 2023

Hosted by/Presenté par:
Pastor Yves Gerald Francis

Contact information: Cell (978)-514-5456
Email: yvenafranc7da@comcast.net

Participants are requested to wear their masks and keep social distancing!
Les participants sont priés de porter leur masques et de respecter les distances sociales!

APPENDIX D

SNEC SECRETARY EXECUTIVE LETTER

December 15, 2021

RE: Pastor Yves Gerald Francis

Institutional Review Board
Andrews University
4150 Administrative Drive, Room 322
Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355

Greetings Review Board:

We hereby give consent for Pastor Francis to conduct the study, "Promoting intergenerational harmony at the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Southern New England Conference."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cesar Perozo
Cesar Perozo
Executive Secretary
Southern New England Conference

APPENDIX E

Youth involvement

Youth involvement in the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church activities
Energy and Enthusiasm: Youth and young adults brought and continue to bring great energy and enthusiasm to the Dedham Seventh-day Adventist Church community. Since we started with this intergenerational ministry movement, the youth, and young adults are often eager to participate in activities and events and can inspire others to get involved.
Creativity: The young people of Dedham SDA church are very creative and bring new ideas and perspectives to the church community. For example, they are now proposing new approaches to traditional church activities or new activities that help to engage younger community members.
Outreach: Youth and young adults are excellent church community ambassadors, especially when reaching out to other youth and young adults in the area. As a result, they are more likely to socialize with their peers and invite them to church events or services.
Volunteerism: The Dedham Church has many young people enthusiastic about volunteering and community service. They are eager to get involved in service projects or other initiatives that benefit the church and the wider community.
Leadership: Our youth and young adults are demonstrating that they have the makings to be great leaders within the church community. They now serve in the church's various ministries, including leadership positions for elders, youth, and family ministries. They are role models for other young people and bring a fresh perspective to church leadership.

APPENDIX F

Schedule of Sermons on Intergenerational Ministry

Schedule of sermons on intergenerational ministry
Saturday, April 16, 2022: "Building Bridges Across Generations" Psalm 145:4 - This sermon can focus on the importance of creating connections between different generations in the church.
Saturday, April 23, 2022: "Learning from the Past, building for the Future" Joshua 22:24 - This sermon can focus on intergenerational harmony requiring respect for tradition and openness to new ideas.
Saturday, April 30, 2022: "Passing on the Faith" Deuteronomy 6:6-7 - This sermon can focus on passing on our faith to future generations. It can emphasize how younger generations need the\ guidance and support of older generations to deepen their faith and grow their relationship with God.
Saturday, August 13, 2022: Love One Another" John 13:34-35 - This sermon can focus on how Jesus commands us to love one another regardless of age, race, or other differences.
Saturday, October 8, 2022: "Love Your Neighbor" Matthew 22:39 – In this Scripture, Jesus teaches \to love your neighbor as yourself." This principle can be applied to intergenerational relationships within the church, emphasizing the importance of showing respect, kindness, and love to people of all ages.
Saturday, January 14, 2023: "Unity in Diversity" – 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 This sermon can focus on the idea that we are all part of the same body of Christ and must work together and appreciate each other's differences. It can highlight how intergenerational harmony can create a diverse and vibrant community that reflects the beauty of God's creation.
Friday, March 10, 2023: "A Church for All Generations" Deuteronomy 29: 9-12 - This sermon can focus on the idea that the church should be a welcoming and inclusive space for people of all ages. It can highlight how intergenerational harmony can create a sense of belonging and community.
Saturday, March 11, 2023: "Growing Together in Faith" Ephesians 4:16 - This sermon can focus on how intergenerational harmony can help the church community to grow together in faith. It can emphasize the importance of learning from each other, supporting each other, and working together to deepen our relationship with God.
Wednesday, March 17, 2023: "One Body in Christ" - 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27 – In this Scripture, Paul writes about how the body of Christ comprises many parts, each with its function. He emphasizes the importance of unity and working together for the common good, regardless of age or background. It can be a great starting point for a sermon on intergenerational harmony, highlighting how each generation has strengths and perspectives to contribute to the church.
Saturday, October 14, 2023: "Living in Harmony" Romans 12:16 - This sermon can focus on the biblical command to live in harmony with one another and how that extends to different generations. It can emphasize the importance of listening to each other, valuing each other's perspectives, and working towards common goals.

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