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A Worship Model To Blend Cultural Differences at the Los Angeles Spanish-American Seventh-day Adventist Church

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ABSTRACT

A WORSHIP MODEL TO BLEND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
AT THE LOS ANGELES SPANISH-AMERICAN
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A WORSHIP MODEL TO BLEND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AT THE LOS
ANGELES SPANISH-AMERICAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Problem

The membership of the Spanish-American Seventh-day Adventist Church

(SASDAC), in Los Angeles is culturally diverse; it includes immigrants from several

Latin American countries, as well as Hispanics born in the U.S. Currently, the mixture of

cultures, worship traditions, and language brought to the church setting by immigrants do

not blend well with the worship style and language of church members raised in this

country. Hispanics born in this country do not feel confortable in a worship service led in

Spanish and tend to leave the Hispanic church. As a result, the church has lost many

members and tithes and offerings have declined considerably.

Method

The SASDAC needed a method that will help bridge both Immigrant Hispanic

(IH) and American Hispanic (AH) under the same roof. Therefore, a four-element

method was implemented in 2010-2012. The first element was Awareness, intended to bring focus to the reality of the situation. The second element was Preaching, designed to share the vision and promote relevant spiritual growth. The third was Involvement, aimed at the inclusion of both IH and AH in leadership and planning. The fourth was Facility, directed to create a physical environment of worship through a building that will speak to the time and place of the targeted people.

Results

The results are seen in four different areas from 2010 though 2012. Church attendance has gone from 215 to 450 since the insertion of the program. Baptisms have not been less than thirty per year. Tithes have steadily increased an average of $30,000.00 per year. Offerings went from a $40,000.00 budget loss to more than $21,000.00 gain. The majority of the members who have been part of the entire process have witnessed the progress and understood the importance of the model. Those who became members during the implementation of the model have assimilated the model as the way to do church.

Conclusion

The understanding of the diversity among Hispanics in America is of great importance for the success and future of the Hispanic church. Ministries models inclusive of IH and AH are essential for the effectiveness, success and continuity of relevant Hispanic work in America.

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A Project Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to

my mother Angelica Paquini for being motivator and my number one fan

throughout all my academic life.

to my father Rogelio Paquini Sr. for showing me a life of commitment, dedication and

honesty through his example;

to my wife Paola Paquini because without her support, help and prayers through this

trying years this project could not have been completed;

to my three sons Gianni, Gino and Giovanni because they have suffered the absence of

their father on multiple occasions due to this project.

Needless to say, this project would have been impossible without your support, prayers

and understanding.

Thank you!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AH   American Hispanic

IH   Immigrant Hispanic

NAD   North American Division

PUC   Pacific Union Conference

SASDAC   Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church

SCC   Southern California Conference

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

History

Immigration to the United States has been one of the main catalysts of growth for the Hispanic Adventist Church in North America. During the last three decades "Hispanics have become the largest minority group in America and the fastest-growing group in the Adventist Church" (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003, p. 230). The Southern California Conference has been one of the fields most benefited by the event. Nevertheless, according to Passel and Cohn (2009), the political and economical arena has changed. Therefore, the Hispanic Adventist Church in North America faces the need to change its reliance on only immigration in order to continue Hispanic growth and ministry.

Statement of the Problem

The fact that the population of the United States is comprised of people from many cultural backgrounds and languages is not a secret. That is also true for the Adventist church. For decades, efforts to minister to specific ethnic groups, such as Hispanics, have been made. However, the dynamics of Hispanic ministry have changed due to the birth of American born Hispanics. This phenomenon has been "unintentionally overlooked in the distribution of the church's attention and resources" (Rodriguez, 2011, p. 18). Thus, the purpose of this study is to develop and apply a model to reach

Immigrant Hispanics and American born Hispanics in the Spanish-American Seventh-day Adventist Church (SASDAC) in Los Angeles California.

The membership of the SASDAC is culturally diverse: it includes immigrants from several Latin American countries, as well as Hispanics born in the U.S. Currently, the mixture of cultures, worship traditions, and language brought to the church setting by immigrants do not blend well with the worship style and language of church members raised in this country. According to Rodriguez (2011), Hispanics born in this country do not feel confortable in a worship service led in Spanish and tend to leave the Hispanic church. As a result, the church has lost many members and tithes and offerings have declined considerably.

The present study does not address differences among Hispanic groups by country of origin or other ethnic groups. Instead, it provides a model to equip churches for success in reaching American Hispanic people. Since the effectiveness of ministry in Hispanic churches is determined by the ability to adapt to the diverse needs of Hispanic ministry (Johnson-Mondragon, Smith, 2007), this purpose is relevant.

This study discusses the need of a model for Hispanic ministry that creates awareness of the differences among Immigrant Hispanics and American born Hispanics, reflects on the importance of inclusiveness of leadership in the church, identifies the need of a church facility that reflects the people who worship there, and offers suggestions on how preaching can address the needs of both groups of Hispanics.

This chapter evaluates the need for such a model, shows the main elements of the model, and previews future chapters.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to develop, implement, and evaluate a worship model to bridge the gap between worship traditions, cultures, and languages at the SASDAC. One of the main goals is to make the worship service as attractive to Hispanic immigrants as to Hispanics born in the U.S.

Justification for the Project

The demand for a new model of Hispanic worship in SASDAC emerges from statistical data and leadership vision. Both statistical data and leadership vision demonstrate that a more effective model is required. However, the increased urgency requires changes that can be perceived as challenging for the traditional Hispanic worship.

Statistical Data

The SASDAC is the second Hispanic Church established in the North American Division (NAD). The church began in 1905 as a church plant by the Central Adventist Church in order to reach people in the community of Boyle Heights in East Los Angeles (Vasquez, 2000). Since its early beginnings, the SASDAC reached a membership of 1200 by 1990. The growth was in agreement with the rest of the NAD, which recorded a Hispanic growth of 157% by 1989 (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003).

Unfortunately, the growth pattern has changed over the last decade. The amount of Hispanic immigrants coming to the United States has decreased since 2003, and the amount of Hispanic immigrants returning to their homeland has increased since 2001 (Passel & Cohn, 2009). In contrast, since the year 2000, the number of American born Hispanics has doubled and it is estimated that it will triple by 2020 (Suro & Passel October 14, 2003).

If these trends continue without a change in Hispanic ministry, the SASDAC may suffer in predictable ways. Potential damages will include evangelistic stagnation and the inability to reach the second and third generations of American born Hispanics. Also, current church memberships will decrease and some churches will disappear. In the SASDAC the regular worship attendance in 1990 was 700, in 2008 it was 200.

Continued reliance on the same practices of past decades actually decreased the attendance and participation of American born Hispanics. Given current conditions, this is a transitional time to plan and allocate resources for a model that will allow efficient Hispanic ministry for both Immigrant and American born Hispanics.

Previous Models to Reach American Born Hispanics

During the last decade Hispanic churches in the Southern California Conference have employed various ways to reach the issue of generational differences among Hispanics. Sadly, the results have not created an opportunity of transition between the generations or future continuity for the local Hispanic church.

Separate Worship

Some Hispanic churches have found the need to minister to their American born members by creating a separate worship venue from their main worship in the Sanctuary. This method provides opportunity for the English-speaking members to not only participate more, but also engage in worship in their own language (Sanchez, 2006). The downturn of this method is that in the long run it separates the membership and families. Also, it does not provide the "main church worship" to ever be ready for the immigration and cultural changes.

Second Generation Church

The most recent attempt to reach the second generation has been the establishment of new churches catering to the specific needs of the American born Hispanics. This idea addresses the greatest needs of the group of experiential spirituality and interpersonal relationship (Norman, 2003) that in the traditional Hispanic church model would not have the complete freedom to experience. Unfortunately, even though this model could be more effective to reach the American born Hispanic, it requires new resources to be employed in buildings and pastors. In the mean time, the traditional Hispanic church will slowly die.

Expectations for the Project

This project will help to shape a model for the Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist church in order to offer worship services relevant to a bicultural membership. The project will enhance my experience and ability to assist the growth of the English-speaking Hispanic membership. This project will help me as pastor of a bicultural church to have a better understanding of church members from different cultures and generations. The worship model will impact the development of other ministries in the church. In a wider perspective, it is hoped this work will potentially offer help to ministers in similar settings in the North American Division. Additionally, it will become a potential tool for pastors to increase their knowledge and understanding of the needs of culturally and generationally diverse church communities. This project will help to build my understanding of bicultural church communities and equip me to guide other ministers' bicultural churches settings.

Delimitations

This study will only take place at the Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church in Los Angeles. The study is based on statistical data registered by the Southern California Conference regarding tithe, baptisms and church membership, also, data recorded at the SASDAC regarding offerings and attendance. The statistical data used for the study is limited to the SASDAC and will not use information from any other congregation or conference.

Limitations

As noted above, this study is limited to the proposal and field-testing of a model for Hispanic ministry with specific methodological components. These principles and components emerge from a theological foundation, relevant literature and the model experimentation in the SASDAC. A full description of the model implementation appears in chapter four.

Addressing the needs of Immigrant Hispanics and American born Hispanics includes several considerations, many of which are not addressed in the present study. This study does not seek to establish a uniform model for Hispanic Worship. Neither does it attempt to establish a qualitative supremacy over other models of Hispanic Ministry. It seeks only to justify the legitimate need and relevancy of a blending model for Hispanic worship and ministry in America. The primary measure of its success is the level to which it increased the number of people attending Sabbath morning worship and baptisms. The secondary measure is the amount of tithes and offerings given to the church. The tertiary method is the impact that it had on the people who were baptized.

Definition of Terms

Hispanic Ministry, as referred to in this project, is the effort dedicated to reaching people from Hispanic descent. Often times, Hispanic ministry is outreach in favor of only Spanish-speaking people. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this project, it refers to Hispanic ministry reaching out to Spanish-speaking Hispanics as well as their English-speaking children.

Immigrant Hispanics (IH) are the people from Spanish speaking countries who left their homelands to begin living in the United States. Their worldview is based on the language, customs, and traditions of their country of origin. This group is also named as the "First Generation."

American born Hispanics (AH) are the people who are born in the United States from parents who emigrated from Hispanic countries. This group is also known as the "Second Generation." For the most part, American born Hispanics are bilingual, although, English is their language of preference. Their worldview is a mixture of their parent's culture and American culture. Their children, known as the "Third Generation," are also Hispanic, but they are often less Hispanic culturally than their parents.

Description of the Project Process

Theological reflection will be sought on biblical texts where people of different cultures, nationalities, and languages worship God together in unison (e.g., Acts 2; Isa 56:7). Relevant contemporary literature such as journals, articles, and other publications will be studied regarding multicultural ministry, worship models, and generational differences. A profile of the Spanish-American Church will be provided to underline its complex mixture of Hispanic cultures and worship traditions. A representative worship

committee, including immigrant and national church members, will be created to study

the local cultural challenges and to create a worship model to attract both, Hispanic

immigrants from different nationalities, as well as U.S. born church members. In order to

address such issues, the committee will work from a cultural perspective. The process

will be explained in chapter four. The worship model will be implemented for a year and

its effectiveness will be measured in its ability to attract people and increase tithes and

offerings. The project will be completed by December 2012.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR MULTICULTURAL WORSHIP

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 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 17:20-21). God seeks to include every human being in the experience of worship. This chapter is intended to present God-inspired reasons for multicultural worship.

This chapter is divided into three major sections pointing to multicultural worship in the Old Testament, New Testament, and the Writings of Ellen G. White.

Multicultural Worship in the Old Testament

Through history, man has displayed the need to worship. Due to society dynamics and cultural diversity, it is important to understand some of the intricacies of multicultural worship in the Bible. "Worship, to the Old Testament saint, was not a dreary passive experience. It was a dynamic encounter with the living God. It was congregational in its very essence" (Morey, 2001, p. 91). Therefore, the experiences of worship described in this section are not necessarily in a "church setting," but rather in worship experiences in the lives of the Old Testament characters. This section is intended to find the most basic principles of multicultural worship in the Old Testament.

Early Multicultural Worship

God wanted humanity to always keep His story of interaction with man present. "And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26). God used the mechanism of narrative in the Scriptures to show the progressive development of His plan. Part of God's plan for humanity was multicultural interaction in worship. The description of multicultural worship in the Bible starts with a very basic description and develops into a more detailed definition at the end of Scripture. Therefore, the earlier narrations found in the Pentateuch present fundamental elements of multicultural worship. Even though the elements are basic and simple in detail, they are essential in the process of understanding multicultural worship at the end of Scripture.

The Experience of Abram

One of the first narratives where multicultural worship appears is in the interaction between God and Abram in Genesis 12. God shares two things with Abram, first a vision, the promise of a place where blessings will be received. "Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing'" (Gen 12:1-2). The second element, and the one related to multicultural worship is a mission, a plan to share those blessings with people from other parts of the earth. "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3).

The constant element during Abram's journey of faith is worship. Every experience Abram had with God's presence resulted in a worship experience. Then the

Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him" (Gen 12:7). The altars Abram erected on the journey were not only for him and the people with him. These altars became opportunities for the Canaanite people to also worship the God of Abram. "When his tent was removed, the altar remained. Roving Canaanites received instruction from Abram, and wherever one of these came to that altar, he there worshiped the living God" (White, 1890, p. 128.1).

The series multicultural worship elements in Abram's journey led to the appearance of Melchizedek. This obscure and consecrated character appeared with Abram as "the priest of God Most High." His presence occurs after Abram rescues Lot from the kings after the battle at the valley of Siddim (Gen 14:1-12). When the word of Lot's captivity came to Abram (Gen 14:13), he decided to go and rescue him (Gen 14:14). At the end of the rescue effort, Abram returned from his victorious mission. It is then that Abram and Melchizedek met. It is at that moment that multicultural worship takes place.

Different Cultures in Worship

There are several groups of people gathered in this story. First, there is Melchizedek, described as priest of God and king of Salem. The biblical account sets "Salem" as the city of origin for Melchizedek (Gen 14:18). Salem is defined as another name for the city of Jerusalem (Hamilton, 1990, p. 409). The second culture represented in the story is in the person of Abram, who is from the land of Ur (Gen 11:31). Although, the exact location of Abram's hometown is unknown (Walton, 2001, p. 391), there is enough evidence to believe that Ur is not near Jerusalem. Third, there is the king of

Sodom to whom Abram gave back most of the spoils. Finally, the story also shows an Amorite group, who were "Allies with Abram" (Gen 14:13).

In this story there are basic elements of worship represented in a multicultural setting. First we have a minister, Melchizedek, offering a prayer (Gen 14:19). "He knows the real source of Abram's victories, and that is God. Thus doxologies flow not only outward but upward" (Hamilton, 1990, p. 412). The second element is the bread and wine (Gen 14:18). When God affirms his covenant with the people of Israel in the desert he calls Moses, Aaron and his children, and the seventy elders to "worship from afar" (Ex 24:1). It is up on the mountain that they "saw God, ate and drank (Ex 24:11). "Thus, through the erection of places of worship, sacrifices, blood and sacred ceremonial food that the great "marriage" of God and Israel is completed" (Dybdahl, 1995, p. 225). Finally, we have an act of ministry performed by Abram to the king of Sodom who received the benefits of Abram's blessings and protection from God. This story "shows that God still had His faithful ones scattered here and there" (Nichol, 1957, p. 309).

The biblical records move along to the history of Israel as a nation. The elements of multicultural worship are described in more detail and specificity as well. The dedication of the temple by Solomon explicitly allocates a place for foreigners in worship to God. "Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake… when he comes and prays toward this temple… that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You" (1 Kgs 8:41-43). Even though God wanted to establish a nation as the headquarters for his worship, His ultimate dream has always been to have the whole world worshiping Him as the true

and only God. For that reason it is essential to move along the Scriptures to see the development of the description of multicultural worship.

God's Dream: Multicultural Worship

The book of Isaiah was written during a difficult period of history for the people of Israel. "The people of God had fallen deeply into ways of sin… Isaiah warned the people that such conditions could no longer endure" (Nichol, 1957, p. 89).

During the days of the prophet the people in Israel were divided in three groups. Those who were concerned about God, those who were concerned about religion, and those did not care about either. The Israelites had been exposed to pagan practices common to the neighboring nations (Westermann, 1969, p. 8). It is in the middle of that situation that the message of Isaiah becomes relevant to the purpose of this document.

A Human Problem

The division among the Israelites had been accentuated by the influx of foreigners to Israel. Isaiah tried to convey to the people the idea that neither foreigners nor bloodline Jews are better before the eyes of God (Oswalt, 1986, p. 17). Speaking about the foreigners that were ostracized and sometimes blamed for the fortunes of the nation, the prophet shared the following message: "Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, And to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants— Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant" (Isa. 56:6). The message provided an obvious acceptance of those not born as Israelites by God. Also, it is a demonstration that God accepts worship from all people who seeks to honor Him. "The subject is the possibility, only recently opened up, of a foreigner's taking part in Israel's worship" (Westermann, 1969, p. 312). In this message God

accepted foreigners not only to live freely on Israeli soil, but most importantly, to be part of the people who worship Him.

God's Dream

The message of Isaiah continues with God's vision of the place where worship is offered to Him. "Even them I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa 56:7). God's dream for his people in worship had tremendous power through history. The inclusiveness of multiple cultures " influenced the synagogue, the church, and the mosque" (Whatts, 1987, p. 250).

This passage presents several elements of multicultural worship. These elements present internal and external characteristics. The internal worship elements are the keeping of the Sabbath and holding fast to the covenant (Isa 56:6). Just as the Sabbath was a sign of the covenant to Israel in Sinai, it is a part of the new covenant offered to all in Isaiah. This implies a contract for people who understand what it is to be a "worshiping and covenanting congregation, composed of persons who swore fealty to Yahweh in covenant ceremonies" (Whatts, 1987, p. 249).

The first external element is the place of worship, referred as the "Holy Mountain." Commentaries agree that this is a reference to the Messianic kingdom as described at the end of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan 2:35). Such a kingdom is the ultimate goal of God for the end of sin and human history, as we know it. The second element is the "house of prayer." The term is a reference leading to the Temple in Jerusalem. When Jesus expelled the people at the market outside of the temple he said, "It is written, 'My house is a house

of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves'" (Luke 19:46). The third element is described as "offerings and sacrifices." Both of these practices are acts of worship. The fourth element is "all nations." "God had not chosen Israel and given them all that He did in order to shut out the world" (Oswalt, 1986, p. 460).

All these elements found in the passage have a relationship to worship. In God's dream he sees all nations coming to worship, pray, and offer themselves to Him. This event is desired to occur on earth. Nevertheless, it is at the end of time when his dream is going to be fulfilled completely and forever. Jesus, in Luke chapter 13, compared the kingdom to a mustard seed growing into a tree that provides food for all kinds of fowls. Also, Jesus compared the kingdom to yeast spreading and help the dough grow. The growth of the kingdom culminates in the gathering of the redeemed into "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (Rev 7:9).

The prophet summarized the message from God to the people in Israel regarding God's acceptance of foreigners and their opportunity to worship as His own. First, Isaiah established that the political situation is not a reason to not include others in worship. Second, all people are the same, Jews and non-Jews, before the eyes of God. Finally, Isaiah concluded, "the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says; 'Yet I will gather to Him others besides those who are gathered to him'" (Isa 56:8). According to God's dream for his worshipers, "the status of proselytes is to be exactly the same as that of native-born Jews, including the right to present acceptable sacrifices to Yahweh at the Temple" (Whybray, 1975, p. 199).

The inclusion of multiple nationalities in worship found in the story of Abraham shows the ideal of God's dream for His worshipers described in the message of Isaiah. It is evident that when God told Abraham that he would be a "father of nations" (Gen 17:5), God intended to be also a God of nations. The Creator is a God that longs for His creatures to come together and worship Him as one.

Non-Hebrews and God

Even though it might seem as if the Old Testament only included Hebrews, the Bible shares the stories of individuals who played an important part in the story of God and His people. An example of that is the great multitude that left Egypt with Israel on the way to the Promised Land (Ex 12:38). Even though circumcision was required to worship God (Ex 12:48), they chose to follow God. Also, there was Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11), who remained faithful to God, his wife and the king. There was Rahab, a citizen of Jericho and a harlot (Josh 2:1). And there was Ruth, who was a Moabite originally married to a Hebrew (Ruth 1:4). Both women played very important roles in the story of God.

<center>**Multicultural Worship in the New Testament**</center>

The political structure of the world changed from the time of the Minor Prophets to the birth of Jesus. This section is designed to aid in the understanding of multicultural worship during the Greco-Roman period of history. For that reason this section is intended to discover how the development of multicultural worship took place in the New Testament.

The Teachings and Example of Jesus

The entirety of the New Testament surges from two influences. The first influence is "the teachings of the apostles" (Acts 4:42), which was the result of their direct interaction with Jesus. The second influence is the direct teachings and example of Jesus. Paul, the figure in most of the New Testament, exhorts all Christian teachers to abide by the "words of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Tim 6:3). Therefore, it is of extreme importance to examine the words and example of Jesus regarding multicultural worship. The experience of the disciples with Jesus becomes the foundation of the Christian church.

The Example of Jesus

The theme of the New Testament is "God with us." That alone, is the greatest example of a God who is willing to adapt his nature to reach others. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:4). Nevertheless, there are other powerful lessons of God's ideal for his people found in the teachings and examples from the life of Jesus.

The gospels share multiple interactions of foreigner non-Jewis people and Jesus. One of those stories takes place in Samaria. Jesus finds himself at noon under the hot sun with a Samaritan woman by the well of Jacob (John 4:5). To understand the importance of this event it is necessary to understand the relationship between Jews and Samaritans. First, the Samaritans were ill appreciated by the Jews because of their racially impure origins. Jews regarded Samaritans as "dogs." Second, the culture placed women closer to a household appliance more than to a person. Nevertheless, Jesus went out of His way to

interact and minister with that woman. Then, as if to make His point clearer, Jesus stayed

in Samaria three more days at the Samaritan's request (John 4:40).

A more impressive case occurred in the region of Tyre and Sidon. A woman from

a Canaanite town met Jesus on the road and said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of

David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed" (Matt 15:22). As Jesus listened to her

request, he remained silent. The disciples asked Jesus to send her away. "But He

answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt

15:24). Contrary to any logical reaction, this woman came "and worship Him" (Matt

15:25). The result of that interaction was an affirmation of her faith, seen in the healing of

her daughter by Jesus (Matt 15:28). The reason why Jesus chose to meet this woman on

that road was to show his disciples that, "The partition wall which Jewish pride had

erected, shut even the disciples from sympathy with the heathen world. But these barriers

were to be broken down" (White, 1898, p. 400.1).

The Prayer of Jesus

Jesus becomes the intercessor for the believers in His prayer found in John 17.

The Savior prays to the Father affirming His identity as the Son of God and the Christ

(John 17:3). The prayer continues with a plea from Jesus to the Father. Jesus asks for the

unity of the believers in the same way He and the Father are. "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). There are two reasons why Jesus would ask

for the believers to be one. First, because He is the creator of humanity and all creatures

belong to Him (John 1:4). Second, Jesus wants all of His people to be able to live,

commune, and worship together. Jesus knows that if they are going to spend eternity

together, they have to learn to accept each other and worship God together as it is going to be done in heaven.

The Words of Jesus

There is not a more important biblical passage to argue the instruction of Jesus to include all nationalities and cultures in worship than the passage known as the great commission (Matt 28:18-20). The last words of Jesus provide the opportunity to all people to become part of the family of God. "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Instruction to the disciples

After Jesus was resurrected, he gathered His disciples with the purpose of giving them His last instructions before ascending to heaven. The gospel of Matthew tells the story in this way; "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (Matt 28:18). Jesus established His authority and provides validation to the instruction given to the disciples to preach the Good News to the entire world.

Inclusion of all nations

There is no doubt that the intention of Jesus is to include all people in the plan of redemption. The relevant point is that His instruction is originally given to the disciples whom were Jewish men. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19). Jesus had no hesitation to tell His followers to go outside of the Jewish nation to find disciples.

That implies that there was going to be a moment when Jewish and non-Jewish people would have to worship together.

Teach it to all nations

Jesus made sure that his disciples understood that the future of the plan of salvation depended on their commitment to passing on to the world what they had learned from him. The disciples completed the assigned task by "teaching them [all nations] to observe all things that I have commanded you..." (Matt 28:20a). The success of the commission depends on the transmission of the teaching of Jesus to the world.

During the three and a half years Jesus ministered on earth and instructed His disciples he modeled acceptance of all nations to receive His grace. The teachings of Jesus to share the gospel with the entire world were highlighted by His emphatic command to His disciples. The following section describes how the disciples applied the principles of multicultural worship they learn from Jesus in the first century church.

The Disciples and the Gospel to all Nations

When Jesus gave his farewell sermon to the disciples, he gave them a promise, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The words of Jesus were the declaration of the people who will be part of His church. From that moment on the disciples were the igniters of the gospel to the world. This passage is about the proclamation of the gospel "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Nichol, 1957, p. 124).

Once the disciples received the promise of the reception of Holy Spirit they gathered in a house all together. "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were

all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). This is the event that formed the foundation

for the spread of the gospel. Also, this was the first time the disciples were going to

minister without the physical presence of Jesus with them.

A Multicultural Multitude

On the day of the celebration of Pentecost, Jews born in Judah and those born in

other countries dominated by the Roman Empire, were gathered in Jerusalem to

participate. The time of the year made things easier for people to travel to Jerusalem

allowing "the greatest number of people to attend the feast of Pentecost" (Williams, 2002,

p. 39). At the same time, the Bible says, "there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout

men, from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). The promise of the Holy Spirit upon

the disciples became true before thousands of pilgrims visiting for the celebration. The

announcement of the pneumatic arrival was performed by a sound, wind and fire (Acts

2:2).

Same faith but different language

The opportunity was designed by God to allow the disciples to share the teachings

of Jesus. The sound announcing the empowerment of the disciples by the Holy Spirit was

also heard by the multicultural crowd in Jerusalem. "And when this sound occurred, the

multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his

own language" (Acts 2:7). Even though the multitude gathered in Jerusalem was Jewish

by religion, they were not necessarily born in Jerusalem. " How is it that we hear, each in

our own language in which we were born?" (Acts 2:8). The fact they had their own

languages gives evidence they were born in many countries. "This diversity of languages

would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the Gospel" (White, 2005, p.

39). It is likely their Jerusalem born ancestors had been more than one generation before

them. Regardless of their inability to speak the language of the Galileans they were

devout to their ancestor's faith. God enabled the disciples to speak in a language the

multitude could understand. The multitude was "amazed and marveled, saying to one

another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how *is it that* we hear, each

in our own language in which we were born?" (Acts 2:7-8).

Same faith but different nations

The divine providence set the stage to take the first step towards the fulfillment

of Jesus' command to share the message with all nations by His disciples. Even though,

the Jews had been scattered all over the Empire by the exiles and the diaspora, their

religion had been somewhat kept across borders. "Devout men from the Diaspora,

especially at the times of the annual feast found their way to Jerusalem" (Phillips, 1986, p.

44). People from all over the Roman Empire formed the multitude gathered, nevertheless,

all of them shared the same experience on that day. Once the disciples received the Holy

Spirit they were able to speak in a language that was not their own, but was understood

by the visiting crowd. They said, "we hear them speaking in our own tongues the

wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11). The response to the miraculous event was not

well received by some. There were those that credited the manifestation to intoxication

on behalf of the disciples.

The Gospel to all Nations

Peter, filled with the spirit, provided the reality of the situation. He explained that

the happenings were not the result of alcohol ingestion, but the influence of the Spirit of

God. Then, he shared the reason for the occurrence. Peter told the multitude about the prophecy of the Old Testament that had being fulfilled before their very own eyes (Joel 2:28-32). He told about the ministry of Jesus and the miracles He performed and His cruel death on the cross (Acts 2:22-28). Peter invited the multitude to accept the truth about the real identity of Jesus as the "Christ" (Acts 2:36). Once the multitude listened to Peter's sermon and the truth about who Jesus was, "they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:36).

Upon Peter's invitation to repentance, he continued to tell them that God cared for them and their children regardless of their nationality. "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39). The result of that first evangelistic effort garnered 3000 new believers. These believers, who had come from different countries and spoke different languages, gave birth to the first multicultural Christian ministry.

The passage of Acts 2 demonstrates the incredible interest God has for people of other cultures to accept his message and to worship together. If multicultural worship were not in God's plan, He would not have done something as unique and explosive as the event of Pentecost. Those who returned to their homelands took with them the message of Jesus Christ as Savior outside of Jerusalem. "These individuals, reached for the first time at Pentecost, spread out in all directions like ripples on a pond" (Boice, 1997, p. 45).

The disciples followed to the letter the instructions Jesus left them. They waited for the enablement of the Holy Spirit and shared the gospel to people from other countries. The following section presents the dynamics of multicultural worship and the

challenges it presented to the first century church. The church leaders faced those challenges in order to make the now multicultural church more efficient and relevant.

The Multicultural Church in the First Century

Ger (2004) comments that 70 years after Peter's sermon at Pentecost, the church had grown rapidly across the Roman dominated land. The success of the dissemination of the gospel among the different cultures and traditions created challenges that, not addressed, and could threaten the unity and consistency of the message. "The gospel was being preached to Jews and Gentiles alike and they were living together as brethren" (Barclay, 1976, p.113).

Unfortunately, there was a racial barrier to be destroyed. The treatment across nationalities was not fair; "there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution" (Acts 6:1). Also, some Jews believed that if the new converts did not practice the restrictions of the ceremonial law, "the national peculiarities of the Jews… would finally disappear from among those who received the gospel message" (White, 2005, p. 189). The elders got together in order to helped unify the multiple cultural practices of new converts with those of the with the Gospel message. The summit is known as the Jerusalem Council.

Circumcision of the Gentiles Among the Jews, the practice of circumcision was highly regarded as a main spiritual practice dating back to the time of Abraham. Moses validated the practice of circumcision. During the desert journey, on the way to the promise land he wrote, "and when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it"

(Exod 12:48). Some traditional Jews used the words of Moses to base their belief that the only way for non-Jews to enjoy Jesus' salvation was to be circumcised. The more traditional Jews wanted the Gentiles, or non-Jew converts, to adhere to the same practices as the traditional Jews. They said, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5).

The Food

The members of the council encountered another issue causing division among the Christians of the different cultures. First, the animals prepared for food were not killed and prepared the same way Jews were accustomed to. In the Levitical law, it was prescribed that, "whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust" (Lev 17:13). Second, the meat consumed in some cities was meat that had previously been offered in sacrifice to pagan gods. That practice became a divisive force among the believers. Finally, even though the prohibition of not eating meat of strangled animals was not prescribed in the Mosaic law, the principle involved is related to eating blood of animals. The precedence and preparation of meat created division among the believers from different cultures. Therefore the problem would be that animal that were "strangled would not normally be bled, and so their flesh would not be acceptable for food" (Nichol, 1957, p. 312).

Sexual Immorality

It seems that the prohibition of sexual immorality would be out of place in this letter. However, among the Roman culture, having sexual affairs was not seen as a form

of violation of family values. Also, in some pagan religions, sexual intercourse was a common practice in their worship. Jews knew God had commanded adulterers to be stoned (John 8:4). Therefore, it was difficult to accept when new Christians continued to view sexual affairs as acceptable (1 Cor 5:1). "Perhaps this prohibition was implying that immoral church members should not be extended the privilege of table fellowship with Christians" (Fernando, 1998, p. 419). In that way, the three prohibitions would be tightly bound.

The Solution

One aspect of the Jewish culture had to be made clear in order to understand the reason of their conflict with other cultures. Jews had a very high regard for their national identity as the people of God. The leaders of the church had to address the issues dividing the believers of the different cultures before it could become chaotic. The recommendation of the apostle James was to write a letter to all the churches with the agreed terms (Acts 15:19). The letter was sent with Judas and Silas (Acts 15:23). The message was simple but clear, "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality (Acts 15: 28-29). "If God laid on them no further conditions for their salvation, then neither should God's people" (Ger, 2004, p. 214).

It is worthy to observe that the letter with the agreed recommendations did not say for the believers to stop all of their cultural practices. Instead, the council's direction provided a harmonious provision for the believers to worship together. The

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recommendations will allow all believers to continue with their cultural identity and at the same time accepting each other.

The recommendations would help the believers to accomplish three very important things. First, to avoid being targeted by their local governments because of their faith. Second, by continuing their acceptable, Christian, cultural practices, they could avoid being ostracized by society. Finally, they could worship with other Christian believers in community and acceptance. "The outcome was a triumph of love" (Williams, 2002, p. 257). In that way, the believers could share the message of the gospel in a more relevant way to their families, friends, and neighbors. When they received the letter "they rejoiced over its encouragement" (Acts 15:31).

The New Testament is embedded with principles of multicultural worship. Jesus taught his disciples that the Father also accepted other ethnic groups. Jesus' teachings echoed the idea of God's dream as written in the book of Isaiah. His words were exemplified on the road to Samaria, with the Roman Centurion and the Canaanite woman. The experience of the believers worshiping together was what Jesus prayed for. However, in order to be a reality, the disciples had to convey the same principles to the newborn church. It seems as if they started their task with an eruption at Pentecost. The council of Jerusalem was the best example of the young Christian church of their determination to embrace multiple cultures in worship. "When the stumbling block of circumcision had been removed, an effort should have been made to provide a practical *modus vivendi* for two groups of people drawn from such different ways of life" (Bruce, 1988, p. 295).

The lessons drawn from this section are, first, God can equip the believers to be not only accepting of other cultures, but to share the message with them in a way they can

understand it. God sent the Holy Spirit to the expectant disciples on the day of Pentecost that enabled them to speak in different languages. The important point is that the disciples where anticipating the promise of the Holy Spirit and were willing to be used by God. Second, even though all believers seek to be saved by God, it is no guarantee there will be a complete elimination of differences derived from cultural practices. Tradition and culture are two fundamental influences in human behavior. However, regardless of their impact and effect in conduct, they never should be above unity and community among the believers. Third, when differences occur, solutions that benefit everyone should be considered. The elders gathered at the council of Jerusalem did not let their cultural influences dictate the solution. On the other hand, they promoted simple measures that would enhance the relationships among the different cultures. "Hard? Yes, but not impossible! Guided by the Holy Spirit, this seems to be what this first great council of the church achieved" (Boice, 1997, p. 266).

The next section shows principles of multicultural worship that should be applied to maintain unity among the diversity in our time.

Multicultural Worship in the Writings of
Ellen G. White

Two thousand years after Jesus ascended to heaven and the disciples shared the gospel to non-Jews for the first time, the world had gotten smaller. The various forms of transportation had promoted a more diverse society and multicultural worship had become a necessity. Besides the citations mentioned earlier, this section points out elements of multicultural worship from a 19th century perspective seen from the pen of

Ellen G. White. Specifically, it is based on the advice given to the Adventist church on how to build relationships that bring honor to God among diverse cultures.

Worship With People From Other Countries

One of the most basic anthropological principles is that humans gather together with those who look, dress, and behave like them. Christians are not exempt from the consequences of such conduct. At the end of the summer of 1885, Ellen G. White traveled to Switzerland in order to deliver a sermon at the European Union Council. After her arrival in the city of Basel, she encountered leaders of the church reacting to the members from other nationalities. In her address, she shared important aspects of multicultural worship.

Unity in Jesus

The problem seemed to be that the leadership of the Church had difficulty accepting cultural differences among the members of the union. White spoke to that issue and told the congregation that cultural differences should not be an obstacle for the Gospel to be preached. "Though some are decidedly French, others decidedly German, and others decidedly American, they will be just as decidedly Christlike" (White, 1948, p. 180).

Some were in the habit of comparing their nationalities and got to believe that some were better than others. White emphasized the need of the leaders and church members to follow the teachings and example of Jesus regarding relationships and ministry with people from other cultures. "There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of one another. Therefore God wants the

different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment and in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified" (White, 2012, p. 181).

Unity Among Cultures

The cultural differences among the church had hindered the advance of the gospel and the ministry of the church. Ellen G. White realized the need to make the church aware of the problem and gave them a logical and Jesus-led solution. "I warn you, brethren and sisters, not to build up a wall of partition between different nationalities. On the contrary, seek to break it down wherever it exists" (White, 2012, p. 180). She echoes Paul's words on Eph 2:11-22 about being "fellow citizens with the saints."

She reminded the people of the purpose and reason of the church, "we should endeavor to bring all into the harmony that there is in Jesus, laboring for the one object, the salvation of our fellow men" (White, 2012, p. 181). She summarized the message highlighting the necessity of trusting and seeking God as one church. "As workers together for God, brethren and sisters, lean heavily upon the arm of the Mighty One. Labor for unity, labor for love, and you will become a power in the world" (White, 1948, p. 183).

In a letter to written to S. N. Haskell in November 16, 1899, she shared her evaluation of the work in Africa. In her comment she seems disappointed at the results. Perhaps, if the principles shared in Europe four years earlier had been applied, the results would have been much different. She comments, "If the brethren and sisters from America had united with the African believers, songs of joy would have been heard among the heavenly angels, recognizing the human relationship as a union with God"

(White, 1990, p. 400). Apparently, the result of the cultural differences not accepted by the American missionaries prevented the success of the work in Africa.

White understood the challenges of multicultural ministry and worship. She writes in her diary in June 18, 1900, "Changes are continually taking place. In our association with those of different nationality, education, and experience we shall find that it is a life and death struggle to bear forward the gospel in all its purity" (White, 1990, p. 400). Nevertheless, she shows hope for the church. Her advice is that the church must be willing to follow the Holy Spirit's admonitions. "God knows what you can be. He knows what divine grace can do for you if you will be partakers of the divine nature" (White, 2012, p. 188).

Conclusions

From the beginning, God intended for the whole of humanity to worship him. When God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden he intended for them to be the initiators of human population as well as the first to develop a relationship with him as worshipers. The relationship God enjoyed with his new creation was the same he longs to enjoy with all of his creatures. The reason that relationship was broken was the entrance of sin. God wanted to redeem his creatures in order to reestablish his relationship with them. The reason of the plan of redemption is based on the love God has for his creatures. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). It was that love that fuels God's dream of seeing all of humanity worshiping him together.

The following conclusions are drawn from the evidence previously presented.

God Accepts Everyone

God demonstrated his acceptance of diverse cultures in worship through the Old and New Testaments. Abraham was a native of a land far from Jerusalem, where God wanted to establish his nation on earth. Nevertheless, God allowed Abraham to experience relationships with people from other cultures. They witnessed how Abraham was protected, blessed, and directed by God. The example of Abraham led the people from other lands to worship God (Gen 20).

The clearest example of multicultural worship in the Old Testament is found in Isaiah. The message of Isaiah is the divine open acceptance of non-Jews to come and worship God in His House. God shows the prophet his dream where every nation and tongue can come to his house to pray and worship. Even though God maintained the plan of redemption with the Hebrew nation during Old Testament times, his intention was for them to be the evangelists to the world. God intended to have a people not just a local people. That is why he called Abraham father of nations.

Jesus Accepts Everyone

The example of Jesus made evident that God seeks other nations to be part of his kingdom. Even though Jesus did not travel great distances from his home base, his ministry was not limited to the Jews. The Savior, according to the words found in John 4:22, wanted the Jews to be the ones to share the Good News of the gospel to the world. The ultimate goal of Jesus was the worship of truthful worshipers from around the world. Jesus demonstrated his desire with the instruction given to the disciples to go and "be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Disciples Accepted Everyone

The disciples followed the example of Jesus to share life, worship and the gospel with members of other cultures. The result of the disciple's efforts to preach to Jews and Gentiles was incredible. An example of that happened in the church in Iconium, "They went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed" (Acts 14:1). The success of the church in the first century was mostly because of both Jews and Gentiles worshiping together and sharing together.

The disciples worked hard to accommodate the cultural sensitivities of the different groups in the church (Acts 15). They discovered that the church was better served and Jesus was glorified when the church was a place "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3:11).

The Church Should Accept Everyone

The advice given to the church of today by Ellen G. White is to work for the unity and togetherness in the work of the gospel among different cultures. In the 21st century, the world has been shrunk by technology. The message of unity implies that the church has to be able to work not only for the different cultures, but also within and among them. The church, in order to fulfill the message of Jesus, has to be able to be a multicultural church. Also, the church should be just sensitive to other cultures, including other cultures in worship.

At the end of this world's history, when Jesus returns, God's dream is going to be fulfilled as it was given to John on the island of Patmos. "After these things I looked, and

behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Rev 7:9-10) Therefore, every local church should strive to accomplish God's dream of multicultural worship in their community.

CHAPTER 3

MULTICULTURAL WORSHIP IN CURRENT LITERATURE

"Worship is the 'thank you' that refuses to be silenced" (Lucado, 1991, p. 225). In a multicultural world, worship has taken different shapes and styles. Isaiah referred to the multicultural nature of worship with the words, "These I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa 56:7). This chapter reviews contemporary literature on worship as it relates to the elements and varieties of worship. This chapter is divided into four main sections addressing the meaning and nature of worship, worship in multicultural settings, worship among different generations, and worship in Hispanic Culture.

Worship: Meaning and Nature

In order to obtain a solid understanding of worship, it is necessary to define it in its most basic parts. For that reason this section is divided into two main parts that aim to explain basic practices and definitions of the act of worship. The purpose of this section is to describe the meaning and the nature of worship as practiced in Christianity.

Meaning

Several definitions have been attributed to the worship experience. Each

definition provides a description of the emotional and anthropological impact worship

produces in the participant, and showing the importance of worship in the life of the

Church. Turnbull, (2000) declared, "No activity more clearly constitutes the Church than

its worship… worship is the *sine qua non*" (p.1).

Linguistic Definition

Every word used in modern language has ancient roots that help us grasp a better

understanding of the meaning. The word "worship" is not an exception; it comes from the

Old English root "'*weorth'*, meaning, 'honor' and 'worthiness,' and *scipe*, signifying 'to

create.' Kimball (2003, p. 114) defined it as a "shortened form of *worthship*, which

means, 'to attribute worth.'" Worship is the privilege granted for man to recognize God

as the only one worthy of honor. If worship is the essence of life, as man worships God,

man prepares to return to his original purpose.

Biblical Definition

"Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the

earth" (Psa. 96:9). The Old Testament presents various terms that convey the concept of

worship in different contexts. The most common of them is the word *hishtahawa,* which

appears 619 times in the OT and literally means a bowing down. Such as the instance

when Joseph narrated his dream to his brothers, "There we were, binding sheaves in the

field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood

all around and bowed down to my sheaf" (Gen 37:7). It also appears as an act dedicated

to God in community "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people

answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (Neh 8:6). Another word used to depict worship is *kabada*, which appears 170 times in the OT and it is a verb that means to honor as it appears in Psalm 112:9, "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted with honor." In the majority of cases it is used to refer to the worship of God. Prostration was a common act of self-abasement performed before relatives, strangers, superiors, and especially before royalty. Abraham bowed himself before the Hittites of Hebron (Gen 23:7, 12). Mordecai, in open defiance of Persian court etiquette, refused to bow or to prostrate himself before Haman (Esth 3:2). Abraham on his way to sacrifice Isaac says that he is going to worship (Gen 22:5). According to Psalm 66:4, Those who will worship the Lord include "all the earth." The prophet Isaiah foretold that, "all flesh will come to worship before the Lord" (Isa 66:23).

In the New Testament, the word used for worship is *proskuneo*, which means to "kiss toward." The term appears as a verb in the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in regards to the proper worship God expects, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). It appears in the same way when the Spirit moves Phillip to meet the Ethiopian on the road, "So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship" (Acts 8:27). The apostle Paul not only uses the word as a verb, but as a reaction to an experience with God. "And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you" (1 Cor

14:25). John uses the term to describe his experience while receiving the apocalyptic vision as a word only dedicated to use for God. "Then he said to me, 'See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God'" (Rev 22:9).

Nature

Interaction Between man and God

Various authors attribute different meaning and definition to the act of worship. Nevertheless, modern writers agree that the act of worship is derived from the biblical meaning of respect as in bowing down before God and giving him the highest honor. One of the main contemporary worship expositors is Robert Webber (2007), who maintains that worship fulfills the human need to interact with the Divine and its ability to provide satisfaction to various human emotional needs. In other words, worship, is the interaction between man and God in which man needs to recognize God as the only worthy of praise and honor.

Reaction of an Experience With God

Authors such us George Worgul (1990) place worship as an essential part of human behavior reflected in ritualistic repetitious activity. Regardless of the time period worship takes place, it produces a spiritual experience in the participant. It seems that worship takes the nature of the way human beings reflect their experience with God. Webber (2008, p. 40) asks, "How will the world know its own story unless we do that story in public worship?" Louw and Nida (1988) denote that the intention of worship in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, is to emphasize the religious rites to venerate God. Labberton (2007) adds, "In the midst of the world's cacophony of disordered

powers, God calls us to bow before the power that is above all others." The Bible indicates that worship is directed to God as the response from his creatures of their acceptance of His awesomeness, and it is expressed through a humble attitude (p. 115).

Worship as an Expression

The experience of worship derives from the acknowledgment of man, of the greatness of God, and from the gratitude of His involvement in human life. It is also a relationship of love between humanity and divinity. Dawn (1995), describes it as the response to God's willingness to be part of our life. Our connection with our Creator is manifested in the practical relationship between our beliefs and the God we worship. Therefore, in worship, people seek "to celebrate and honor God. To engage and build up the congregation to live out Christian discipleship" (Weber & Hood, 2004, p. 30). In order to be real, the act of worship should be based on the relationship formed between creatures and Creator. The obedience to the dialogue between the creatures and the word of the Creator results in true worship. "We worship God by obeying the Lord. We prove we love Him by our obedience to His Word and to the Holy Spirit" (Simpson, 2005, p. 27).

Worship as a Social Behavior

Worship is associated with social behavior. In the book, *Introduction to Christian worship,* the author indicates that Christian worship "is a repeated social behavior with definite purposes" (White, 2000, p. 17). It could be said that what it is understood as acceptable to God will be reflected in the worship experience. "Worship engages us in the activities that proclaim what we believe, and as we participate, we are formed" (Weber, 1994, p. 65).

As a social activity, Christian worship is rarely practiced individually. It has a mostly social character. Underhill believes that the participant might come alone, but presents himself to God as a member of a great family. The New Testament inserts the concept of a social worship community called *koinonia*. Such community suggests far more than church structure and organization. The term denotes a worshiping community essential to develop a deep relationship with God. It could be concluded that when a community of believers agree on an experience with God, they will also agree on a worship experience.

<p style="text-align:center">Worship as a Transforming Power</p>

In the process of worship, God is met. And as Lowe and Nida (1988) suggest, when that encounter happens, conversion occurs. Labberton implies that when our selfish attitudes are exposed to the worship of the divine, they become scarce before his transforming power. The transforming power of worship is "like checking a compass to keep us oriented toward God and God's purposes for our lives" (Weber & Hood, 2004, p. 30).

Worship has power to change people and communities. Subsequently, Dawn (1995), warns worship leaders with the possibility that people will be affected by the worship experience. The desperation in the participant's heart might be transformed into gratitude. Belcher (2009), continues the warning and considers worship as an activity that goes beyond an emotional exercise. In summary, worship "actualizes both past and future in the present to transform persons, communities, and the world" (Webber, 2008, p. 43).

Summary

Worship is the opportunity provided by God to express our feelings and emotions back to Him. The attitude and purpose of worship depends on several factors: First, our worship response depends in our understanding of who God is. Second, our worship is the reflection of the depth of our relationship with Him. Third, our worship is based on the intention to obey His Word. Finally, our worship is the understanding of the dialogue God has initiated through the gift of salvation, and our acceptance of the gift as a token of His love.

Worship has the power to transform the worshiper. When the believer understands the purpose of worship, it becomes part of the community of believers. It is in the midst of a community seeking God that transformation occurs. The participant is compelled to serve gladly and to share his experience with fellow believers. Worship then transforms the person and the community.

Worship: Multicultural Settings

More than ever there are a variety of cultures and languages embedded in society. Therefore, the church is not exempt from this cultural phenomenon. For this reason, it is important to understand the factors that influence worship in a multicultural setting. This section is divided into two main parts with the intention to describe the reality of cultural diversity and its impact in worship. The purpose of this section is to explain the importance of culturally diverse worship and the benefits of understanding multicultural worship.

The Reality of Diversity

By observing creation, it becomes obvious that God enjoys variety. It was God who made flowers, and birds, clouds, and mountains. If we underestimate the importance of variety in the world, the point of life could be easily missed. God has called us to deal with variety in all segments of life. As previously defined, worship is the response of the creature to the Creator. Therefore, since there is not only one human culture, worship also must be varied. As Elmer (1993) succinctly puts it, "important insights about God and his world go undiscovered if we avoid creative engagement with human diversity" (p. 23).

Culture is expressed in worship

Every culture has its own particularities like food, music, and worship. Lowe and Nida speak to this issue by affirming that all cultures express worship in different ways. Cultures are reflected in the way they worship. Culture should not be seen as a barrier to worship. Davis (2007) proposes that the reason why worship changes from culture to culture is because every culture has its own set of beliefs and religious practices. Culture "impacts values, ethics, sexuality, and virtually everything, including our view of religion and spirituality" (Kimball, 2003, p. 53).

It is logical to think that worship varies from culture to culture because not all cultures have the same religious beliefs. Gibbs and Coffey (2001) alert us to the fact that even among Christian cultures, Scriptures are interpreted differently by every culture. A fundamental part of all cultures is the way in which they come to the image of reality. When the reality that worship is different in every culture is ignored, the impact of the meaning of worship loses its significance. When that happens, "not only has worship lost

its way, but also the fullness of the gospel, the story which worship does, has been lost" (Webber, 2008, p. 40).

A Global Culture of Worship

More than ever travel has become easier and faster, causing distances between countries to shrink. As a result, the experience of different cultures has been facilitated. Cities have become multicultural centers due to the constant migration of people forced by political and economical reasons. Technology, modern media, and the Internet contribute to the fading of cultural borders, leading to the appearance of few cultural differences. The greatest need of the multicultural society is "a love for every kind of person especially those who are different from us, and whom we might even consider to be our enemies" (Clark & Powell, 2007, p. 127).

Importance of Understanding Cultural Differences in Worship

As the cultural borders are seemingly fading, the task of acquiring a deeper understanding of multicultural settings becomes more important to the spreading of the Gospel. For that reason, relevant and contextualized worship must be aware of the language and culture of the focus people. True cross-cultural ministry does not require the abandonment of cultural background or language. On the contrary, effective cross-cultural ministry thrives in the cultural context where it is performed. "The message of salvation is a message of faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a call to a particular set of social relations or to a particular cultural bias" (Lingenfelter, 1996, p. 230).

Exegesis of Cultural Context

It is of great importance to have a clear understanding of the culture of the people to whom ministry is going to be offered. Such understanding is acquired through the study and observation of the customs, traditions, and spiritual practices. Reid (2002) suggests that the reason the Gospel needs to be contextualized is not to force people to be like us, but to make it easier for them to hear the message. "We must learn to exegete our own contexts, because these shape the way we understand and communicate the gospel" (Hiebert, 2009, p. 13).

Since people are the product of their cultural background, it is imperative to understand, assimilate, and adapt to cultural differences. Gibbs makes reference to the idea that assimilation to other cultures calls for creativity that will allow positive interaction with others. Therefore, worship must relate to the people experiencing it within their context. "The first step for a multiethnic church has to be able to understand its surroundings and the need to adapt worship and ministry to it" (Redman, 2002, p. 112).

Assimilating Cultural Differences

Exposure and assimilation of cultural differences provides the opportunity to experience new things and see life in a different light. As a byproduct, the multicultural experience creates the possibility of more complex conflict. The reality that every person is the product of his or her own cultural legacy cannot change. Therefore, assimilating cultural differences in worship is "neither to reject nor to enshrine historic tradition but to forge new forms of corporate worship that take seriously both our histories and contemporary realities" (Belcher, 2009, p. 137).

Navigation Between two Worlds

Hiebert (2009) asserts that people today have understood cultural dissimilarities in society and have managed to deal among those differences. The complexity of the success of multicultural relationships rests on the ability to navigate between multiple cultures in our society. In other words, we need to learn how to live in a multicultural world in order to achieve relevancy. Lingenfelter (2008) implies that the multicultural challenge is to build trust between people who come from different cultural backgrounds to construct a community. "It's difficult to serve someone unless you understand their context" (Elmer, 2006, p. 147).

Learning the Culture

Alan R. Tippet writes about the analysis of anthropology as a necessity more than a luxury. Anthropology is viewed as the study of the characteristics of human behavior. Lingenfelter declares that such study is central to comprehend multicultural worship. Therefore, learning other cultures helps in two ways: first, to aid in the contextualized delivery of the message. Second, learning other cultures is a preventive measure against unintentional insult between members of different cultures. It could be asserted that the importance of learning the culture where ministry is going to take place cannot be overstated. "Understanding cultural differences is a vital part of evangelism; otherwise, one may unwittingly impose one's own cultural form on others in the name of Christianity" (Lowe, 2007, p. 47).

Language vs. Culture

Hiebert (2009) suggests that a common mistake in multicultural ministry is that people believe that when they learn a language they have learned the culture also.

Language is the knowledge of the use and meaning of words. Culture is a collection of ideas, traditions, and practices. While language can be learned in months, absorbing a culture is a process of a lifetime. The process of experience and assimilation of a culture is referred to as enculturation. Therefore, effective contextualized worship is not only in the appropriate language but also in the right cultural context. "A common error in cross-cultural ministry is assuming that people understand us when they hear our words" (Lingenfelter & Mayers, 2003, p. 74).

Lowe (2007) indicates that the passing of information from generation to generation creates the basis of culture. This natural enculturation system affects all areas of life. Language, beliefs and values are passed on as well as standards for behavior. For that reason, our objective must be to construct a community of believers in unity among the diversity. "Yet for all the less than appealing features of cultural and ethnic variety, important insights about God and his world go undiscovered if we avoid creative engagement with human diversity" (Elmer, 2002, p.23).

Summary

Culture is embedded in every word, thought and action of human beings. Culture is displayed in food, music and religion and also dictates values and traditions. Language is the verbal instrument to transmit culture from generation to generation but is not culture in itself. True assimilation of culture means a clear understanding of why things are done and why rites are practiced. Culture is not static but in constant development. Culture gives meaning to life and perspective of the world. The practice of worship can only be relevant when it is within the context of the culture. "Religion, whether we like it or not, is intimately tied to the culture in which it exists" (Tickle, 2012, p. 19).

Worship: Among Generations

God's dream for his people was a relationship that transcended generational

barriers. The Psalmist understood the magnitude of God's intention to relate to his

children when he wrote, **"**For the LORD *is* good; His mercy *is* everlasting, And His truth

endures to all generations" (Ps 100:5). The purpose of this section is first, to explain

some of the most significant generational differences. Second, it is to explain the

challenges of practicing worship among generations. Finally, it is to clarify the

importance of generational diverse worship and the benefits of understanding

generational differences in the experience of worship.

Generational Differences

Throughout the history of humanity there has been an almost incalculable amount

of generations. Each generation has been shaped by a particular set of characteristics.

Each generation has seen the world from a different perspective and has practice religion

in a different way. Therefore, this section is intended to show the impact of the

generational differences in today's worship experience.

Religion Differences Between Generations

 For the purpose of specificity, the focus of this study covers the last four

generations identified in the United States by Howe and Strauss, (1991). The Silent or

Builder generation is recognized as the group born between 1925-1942. The second

generation is the Baby Boomers, born between 1943 and 1960. Members of the third

generation were born between 1961 and 1981 and are known as the Generation X. Finally,

the Millennial generation identifies the people born between 1982 and 2004. The reason

of the study is the fact that "the percentage of Bible-based believers has steadily

decreased since the Builder generation" (Luce, 2005, p. 28).

View of religion for the builder generation

Builders' view of faith is based on what they learn from their parents. This

generation could be titled the "get going" generation. Their life principles and religious

practices are taken from a Christian background. This is the generation that suffered

through the Great Depression and two World Wars. This generation had to learn to bring

stability to their lives. Their church attendance and worship styles depend on what is

accustomed and as Gibbs and Coffey declare, "they do not want to see it change" (2001,

p. 220).

View of religion for the boomer generation

The Boomer generation did not suffer as much as the Builders did. For that matter,

the lack of painful experiences in life, society or economy sprouted in the Boomers a

sense of self-satisfaction. The consequence of this worldview caused the Boomers to

interpret faith as constructed on personal satisfaction. They explore new ideas in other

religions in order to satisfy their intense desire to belong and to feel good. Their spiritual

void is filled by pursuing "health and wellness and, unlike the builders, put pleasure

before duty" (Malphurs & Malphurs, 2003, p. 49).

View of religion for the Generation X

The people of the Generation X have suffered even less from war related issues

and political matters than their parents from the Boomer generation, but have more of

family dysfunctions. This is the first generation that had both parents in the workplace

and coined the phrase "latchkey kids," which is the phenomenon resulting when kids return from school to an empty home. The experience of faith for the Xers is based on what satisfies their needs. Their spiritual experience demands less structure and more attention to family issues. Denomination is not important as long as it has a good cause. The pluralism of spiritual experiences is due to the influence of postmodernism in this generation. The spirituality of the Xers is "marked by a denial of absolute truth, and a greater regard for subjective experience over objective reality" (Reid, 2002, p. 79).

View of religion for the millennial generation

Smith (2008) shares the idea that the Millennials are the generation with the greatest number of members and with possibly the greatest impact in society. Contrary to the Builders whose suffering was due to social and political events, the suffering of the Millennials is caused by broken homes and abandonment. Rainer (1997) and Redman (2002) agree that Millennials are the generation with the fewest ties to Christianity. Nevertheless, the idea of faith for Millennials is reflected in spiritual hunger and the understanding of something real that can be experienced, not only understood or accepted. Millennials seek a spiritual experience that provides them with a "deep sense of belonging in their faith communities, a clear sense that their lives have a God-given purpose, and an attitude of hope that the world is moving in a good direction because of God" (Dean, 2006, p. 22).

Modern vs. Postmodern Perspective of Worship

Our thoughts and perspective are shaped by the accumulation of ideas shared by people in the community. Lingenfelter (2008) agrees that each person is unique and offers variations and differences in thought and perception. As defined earlier, the

consequence of those variations in the individual is called worldview. We are living in a time when members of society are from different generations. Because of the different viewpoints, the church has been challenged to face not only generational differences, but also, worldview differences. Therefore, "The church must embody the gospel within the culture of postmodernity for the Western church to survive the twenty-first century" (Gibbs & Bolger, 2005, p. 17).

Contrast Between Modern and Postmodern Worldview

Worldview is the term used to describe the lenses through which people see the world. Therefore, it is important to see some of the worldview differences between Modern and Postmodern individuals.

Contrast of ideas

According to Jones (2001) the modern worldview is understood to occur during the period starting around 1500 and ending at the beginning of the 2000's. Modernism bases truth on proof of science and logic. In the modern perspective the events that write history are viewed as the result of cause and effect. On the other hand, postmodernism surges as the rejection of anything that was previously established and allows truth to be personal and subjective. If modern worldview is based on logic and scientific proof, in contrast, the postmodern worldview is based on "finding meaning through interpersonal relationships and personal friendships" (Norman, 2003, p, 25).

Contrast of the experience of faith

Faith for the modern thinker is based on facts and information. Religion and denomination are important. Worship, doctrines and music are either right or wrong.

Spiritual practices and religion seek stability, order and structure. In contrast, the desire

of postmodern people is to be involved in the worship experience. Also, postmoderns

want to experience a God who relates to them and understands every area of their lives.

Regardless of tradition and practice, postmoderns are concerned with making a difference

in others. Opposed to the passive and observant modern experience, postmodern

worshipers "prefer to learn through interactive and participatory experiences" (Kimball,

2003, p. 155).

Contemporary (Postmodern) Worship

Worship styles are varied around North America. Styles change according to

denomination, ethnic group and geographical location. Nevertheless, contemporary

"worship trend seems to be more and more toward a more expressive style of worship"

(Elmer, 2002, p. 188). Generational differences are manifested in worship style also. The

reality of our time leads to the importance of understanding postmodern worship.

Therefore, the following sections are intended to guide to the most important elements of

contemporary worship.

Contemporary music

Since postmodern people thrive in creativity of expression, music must be used to

reach their creative minds. Their music does not have one single style. It ranges from old

hymns to new songs and often is of their own creation. For that reason, "music is the

most significant inroad of the Christian faith into the life of youth" (Reid, 2002, p. 138).

The Psalmist had a clear understanding of this principle when he wrote, "Sing to Him a

new song…" (Ps 33:3).

Contemporary sermons

Contemporary preaching seeks to engage not only the ear of the audience, but several other senses as well as their imagination. Jones (2001) emphasizes the importance of communicating the story of God in ways people will understand. Reid (2002) affirms that the contemporary way to do it is through lessons derived from stories rather than from facts. Biblical messages should be illustrated with different kinds of media elements, visuals in order to motivate to participation from the audience. Therefore, "doing church with a passive and silent audience appeals to the older generation but fails to reach those raised in the TV and Internet era" (Gladden, 2003, p. 87). This does not mean the church should do away with all modern practices right now. Nevertheless, in order to be relevant, post-modern practices should be more present in the church experience.

Relationships

Today, people are unquestionably seeking for a place to belong and something to believe in. Richardson (2000) asserts that the message of the Bible is relational, and that the best way to teach it and to share it with others is by building relationships. Therefore, when people come to worship, it is a great way to connect them to one another and with the family of faith. "Much of their lives appear to be centered on creating and maintaining personal relationships" (Smith, 2008, p. 73).

Worship experience

A contemporary worship experience provides opportunities to enhance relationships among them and with God. Such opportunities include live music, drama and other types of art in worship, which allows them to express their talents and creativity

and promotes a multisensory experience. By sharing the leadership in the worship service, says Webber (2008) they will be active and motivated to respond to the old story in new ways. When tapping into their creative nature, it will tend to attract the younger generation. For that reason, contemporary worship "is interactive because God calls everyone, not just the people up front, to participate in worship" (Belcher, 2009, p. 139).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

One of the most difficult tasks in ministry today is to be able to transmit the same message of the gospel in the cultural context of the people receiving it. That challenge becomes even greater when the people are divided generationally. Due to the diverse worldviews among generations attending churches today, ministers need to be aware of the differences and should seek for ways for unity in worship. Since the reality is that the religious experience of most churches today is only relevant to previous generations, efforts should be made to reach across generation in the worship experience. "The church must find relevant ways to teach about the church, its mission, and message. If it does not do a good job of this, this generation will probably find it somewhere else" (Gillespie, Donahue, Boyatt, & Gane, 2004, p. 61).

<div align="center">**Worship: Among Hispanics**</div>

This section is divided into two main parts intended to explain the dynamics of Hispanic worship in the United States. The purpose of this chapter is to define the differences between immigrant Hispanics from American born Hispanics and their worship experience.

Hispanic Identity

A common mistake in identifying Hispanics occurs when people stereotype them when calling them by the majority of Hispanics in the area. For example, Hispanics in Florida are not always of Cuban decent. Neither are all Hispanics in Los Angeles Mexicans. Another term used as identifier is "Latino," although, etymologically, the word "refers to the culture of Rome and its Latin language" (Campbell, 2002, p. 3). For that reason, the terms used in this section will be "Immigrant Hispanics," which refers to people born in Spanish speaking countries who immigrated to the United States, and "American Hispanics," which refers to people born in the USA from Immigrant Hispanic parents.

Immigrant Hispanic

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2009, people of Hispanic origin constitute 16% of the nation's total population. That percentage is about 42 million people. That does not mean that the previous number is only Immigrant Hispanics. Immigrant and American born Hispanics are included in the statistic making Hispanics the largest minority in the country. Consequently, it is important to understand that Immigrant Hispanics are people who came to the United States from a Spanish speaking country. Even though, "all Hispanics may look alike, we are different from each other" (Teja, 1999).

Immigrant Hispanic perspective of church

Hispanics by culture identify with a religious background. When coming to the United States, Immigrant Hispanics find the church a place where they can have a home away from home. When immigrants leave their countries they also leave their families

and friends. The church becomes a place where they can speak their language, eat their food, and practice some of their homeland traditions with people from their own country. So important is the church community for Immigrant Hispanics, that if the community "is not there to receive the newcomers, immigrants have commonly organized in order to build it" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, p. 301).

American Hispanic

A report by the Pew Hispanic Center, conducted by Richard Fry, (2009), indicates that about 52% of Hispanics in America are "second generation." That leads to defining American Hispanics as individuals whose parents immigrated to the United States from Spanish speaking countries and were born in the United States of America. Those whose grandparents immigrated are called "third generation."

American Hispanic perspective of church

The first challenge for American Immigrants in the Hispanic church is lack of identity. Second generation Hispanics do not need the language used in church to be Spanish to feel they belong. In fact, Spanish often times is not their language of preference. Sadly, because of their difficulty with Spanish, they grow up feeling that they don't belong in the traditional Hispanic church. "Hispanics in the Adventist Church were more likely to feel the weight of balancing two cultures: their parents' Hispanic traditions and the traditions of the dominant Anglo society" (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003, p. 173).

Hispanic Worship

For any church in the United States, understanding the Hispanic population is of high importance. "In most denominations, the percentage of Latino membership is four percent or less. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is 12%, which is roughly the percentage of Hispanics in the total population" (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003, p. ii). Pena and Frehill (1998) agree that the importance and practice of worship plays a central role for the transmission of Hispanic culture from generation to generation. Therefore, it is important for the Hispanic church to understand generational differences among Hispanics and how those differences affect faith transition to the next generation. Hispanics understand that their children "are influenced in their beliefs about religion by what they see their parents, peers, and religious leaders doing" (Johnson-Mondragon, 2007, p. 57). Therefore, worship in the Hispanic church must be relevant across generations.

Worship in Hispanic Churches

While religious practices are essential, they are different among Hispanics. Campbell (2002), argues that the style and denomination is based on the country of origin. Suro (2007) agrees, "Mexicans are more likely to be Catholic than are Puerto Ricans, who in turn are more likely to be evangelical than are Latinos from any other country. Larger shares of Cubans than Latinos as a whole are seculars." Regardless of their style and denomination, worship is a fundamental part of Hispanic culture. In the Hispanic world, "religion traditionally has played a greater role in the social life; and daily activity of the people than is generally the case in our culture" (Noble & Lacasa, 1991, p.78).

Language in Hispanic worship

Hispanics tend to participate in worship services not only centered on their denomination of origin, but also performed in the Spanish language. Gibson (1966) declares that the U.S. is the fifth largest Spanish speaking country. According to an article in the *Washington Times*, the majority of Hispanics say they attend churches that have particular cultural features, such as language and traditions. Hispanics "not only maintain strong contact with their homelands but many also retain their original language" (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003, p. 4).

Style in Hispanic worship

Most Hispanics come from Catholic backgrounds. Therefore, their worship style of preference favors a more traditional and conservative style. However, The Latin American worship style is more expressive than its Anglo counterpart. "We have a singular concept that worship is a celebration of God by a congregated people, 'to God's glory and honor'" (Teja, 2009).

Although, worship style is important for the Immigrant Hispanic group, the worship needs of American Hispanics are somewhat different. For example, other than style and language, they have the need to "believe in a God that is active and involved in the lives of people" (Johnson-Mondragon, 2007, p. 47).

Multicultural Hispanic Worship

Taylor (2009) argues that church participation declines by generation. While Immigrant Hispanics function within their language, their children assimilate the culture of this country. When children learn culture from their parents, they assimilate to this culture and language. This phenomenon should not be viewed as a problem, but as an

asset. That implies there is a need for church involvement and worship for both Hispanic groups. Therefore, "it must be acknowledged that one of the great needs of the 21st century church is the need for cross-cultural leadership by ministers who value, foster, and feel comfortable in both cultures" (Marker, 2000, p. 20).

To be a culturally relevant Hispanic Church implies that more than ever it is necessary to understand the need to include immigrants as well as American Hispanics in worship. Gomez and Vasquez (2010) agree that there is a variety of culture and language in the Hispanic community today. This requires "strategies and congregational models be employed to lead the largest number possible to a personal experience of salvation in Jesus Christ" (Sánchez, 2006, p. 238). Therefore, there is an obligation for multicultural worship or inclusion of IH and AH, in order to preserve Hispanic churches.

Summary

Although to some folks, all Hispanics may "look alike," we are as different from each other as one Anglo is from another. Not only are Mexicans different from each other, but also Mexicans are different from Cubans, who are different from Puerto Ricans, who are different from Guatemalans. The same variety is evident in Hispanic liturgy and worship styles. So it's impossible to define Hispanic liturgy in singular terms. Hispanic churches worship usually on the particular flavor of the ethnic community that dominates the membership of any given congregation.

Hispanic churches today must be aware not only of the cultural differences between other Hispanics, but aware of the generational differences in their own church. Since the needs and perspectives of Immigrant and American Hispanics are different,

churches must understand those differences and how to cater to their needs to be relevant and minister affectively.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

The act of worship has been part of all cultures at all times. Worship must be seen not only as a cultural expression, but also as the human response to God that transcends time and culture. For that reason, there are some important elements that must be understood.

Worship is a Response

Worship is the response of what is experienced. Worship becomes the reflection of how God is revealed in people's lives. Human spiritual experience is expressed in the way worship is presented. Therefore, church worship is the personal experience with God expressed publicly.

Worship is Multicultural

Worship in the Hispanic church in America is different than in any other single Hispanic country. In fact, the Hispanic community in this country is an example of the variety of cultures God created. Worship must be relevant in the context of the community. Therefore, Hispanic worship in America cannot be a copy of any other country.

Worship is Best Contextualized

Worship ought to transcend generations and languages, color and culture. God has spoken to people across the ages in a way they can understand. Worship should be the unifying factor across cultures, languages, and generations. Therefore, in order to be

relevant, worship must be practiced in the cultural and social context of the people who offer it. "The sweet fragrance of worship should be everywhere. It should permeate all of society and culture" (Morey, 2001, p. 112).

CHAPTER 4

A WORSHIP MODEL FOR THE SASDAC

"Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been

manifested" (Rev. 15:4). The purpose of this chapter is to share the experience of

implementing a model of diverse Hispanic worship at the Spanish American Seventh-day

Adventist Church (SASDAC) in Los Angeles, California.

This chapter is divided into three major sections designed to describe the model,

to narrate the implementation of the model and to share an evaluation of the model.

The Reasons for the Model

This section has the purpose of describing the active elements of the model

implemented in the diversity inclusive worship and vision of the SASDAC.

Historic Significance

It is necessary for a better understanding of the model to know some significant

historic aspects of the SASDAC. The Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church

is the second Hispanic church organized in the North American Division (NAD). It is

regarded as the "mother" church of all other Spanish churches in the Southern California

Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The earliest recorded information of the Hispanic

evangelistic work in Southern California dates from 1905, "when a group of members of

the Central Seventh-day Adventist Church ventured into East Los Angeles to reach the Hispanic community" (Vazquez, 2000, p. 47). The Spanish American Church was later organized in 1911.

Generational Significance

The church's time of existence has covered several generations as well as locations. Currently, there are several families of church members belonging to three different generations. The effect of multigenerational families has created a generationally diverse church membership. The typical multigenerational family at SASDAC looks as follows. The first group of members belongs to the first generation. This generation is composed of immigrants from Hispanic descent, or Immigrant Hispanics (IH). The IH members prefer communicating in Spanish because it is their native language. The second generation is formed by children of IH, but born in the United States, or American Hispanics (AH).

Immigration Influx

Since the beginning of the Hispanic work in the United States all Hispanic churches such as SASDC have shared one important commonality relevant for this study. They all have benefited by the influx of immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries as the main feeding line for church growth. Interestingly, variants have changed during the last decade. Stiffer immigration laws and economical factors have caused the immigrant influx to decline dramatically. During the past decade there has been a decline on Hispanic immigration. At the same time also, Hispanic church growth has declined. If this pattern continues, now more than ever, a model to care and retain Hispanics

immersed in American culture is necessary for the future of the Hispanic church in America.

Previous Efforts to Reach American Hispanics

This study is not intended to criticize or evaluate past and current models. Nevertheless, it is important for the relevance of this document to mention that there have been several efforts to reach the American Hispanic generations at different levels of the church structure. Unfortunately, the results have not yielded the desired outcome.

One of the earliest efforts conducted at a local church level has embraced the idea that in Hispanic churches every one of the members has to speak in Spanish. American born Hispanics are pushed to learn Spanish. In theory, the idea does not sound so bad. In reality, American-born members find Spanish difficult to learn. Therefore, the sad result of such effort is that American-born members feel excluded from participation and leadership.

Another effort has been holding separate worships services in English and Spanish. This has been tried in successive services as well as simultaneous services in separate locations. Typically, one of the problems with this practice is that many times the pastor has a tendency to care more for one group than the other. This creates segregation between the two groups and results in having two churches in one. There are two reasons why this is counter productive. First, the American segment of the church ceases to be Hispanic. Second, the Immigrant side hardly assimilates to the culture of the second generation. Therefore, the Hispanic church as a whole jeopardizes its future.

One of the most recent plans to reach American born Hispanics has been the creation of youth/young adult churches. Worship and style cater to them but the downside of that model has been time. Since aging cannot be prevented, the problem is finding what to do with the people when they get older. When do young adults finally become adults? The first young adult churches lost their original composition and the surviving ones have become regular churches with a lack of identity and loss of the original purpose.

Implementation of the Model

Even though each one of the parts of the implementation process has a different goal, all of the parts of the implementation of the process were activated simultaneously. For this model to be effective each one of the parts needs to be complemented by the others. The model is divided in four main parts: Awareness, Preaching, Involvement and Facility. A description of how each one of the parts was implemented is detailed in the following sections.

Awareness

Changing a life perspective requires a substitution of information. The determining factor that dictates if a change will be accepted or rejected is based on the way new information is acquired. In order for this model to be successful all new information given has to be provided in a culturally sensitive way.

The Awareness process begins by educating the members of the existence of generational and cultural differences. Those who have teenagers at home are sometimes more scared than aware of the differences between their children and themselves.

The second step in the process is to make members aware that the Bible is a book that shows how God acted in the cultural context of the people. It also shows how Jesus changed the way He communicated in order to convey His message. God spoke to people in their own culture, language and time so that they could understand the message. The story of the Bible is based on the condition of man and the transformation God wants to complete. Therefore, if the church is the medium through which God wants to reach the unsaved, it must be open to speak to people in their own culture, language and time in order to be effective.

Finally, the awareness process leads to a practical way to be a Christian. The church has to be moved from a faith based on religion, tradition and customs to a practical and relational faith. There has to be a purpose why things are done in church. "Because we have always done it that way" is just not good enough. Information is the language of this generation. Therefore, the church must provide the purpose and reasons of every practice in a simple and relevant way.

Immigrant Hispanic Perspective

The practice of visiting churches from different cultural backgrounds is not a common Hispanic trait. Therefore, most of the IH members ignore that there are Adventist churches that worship in a different way than they do even in their same city or Conference territory. Subsequently, their culture becomes the reason for their worship style. A different way of worship is a foreign concept to most members of the IH generation. Also, Hispanic culture is heavily driven by tradition. Perhaps the weight of Catholicism in Latino countries is reflected in Hispanic culture. IH believe that the way

worship was conducted in their countries of origin should be the way every Adventist church should worship.

American Hispanic Perspective

American Hispanics have a different set of basic social needs than the IH. For instance, the need for friendship among AH is not constrained to church where people speak their home language. AH in general, because of their ability to communicate in English and Spanish, have more education, occupy jobs with more responsibility and develop more decision-making skills. Also, they have higher salaries and possess more commodities. For the AH, church is not a place to find people from the same culture or the only place where their friends are. Consequently, church has to be relevant to their everyday lives.

Creating Awareness at SASDAC

Initially, the process of creating awareness was implemented in three stages called Discovery, Connection, and Growth. At the beginning the stages were activated one at a time. Currently all stages continue simultaneously.

Discovery

Since the church was mainly focused on Immigrant Hispanic adults, a process of detecting the different cultures and generations began with the elders. During the second elders' meeting in 2009 it was evident that there were different Hispanic subcultures among the elders. That fact was made available to them and taken to the board meeting. At the board meeting the differences were more apparent due to the members' more evident cultural differentiations.

The next step in the process took place in the business meeting in May 2009. By a show of hands the church witnessed that there were church members born in South America, Central America, The Caribbean, Mexico and the United States. It was an eye opening experience to see that the majority of the members were born in the USA.

During the process of discovering the differences between the member's native cultures and generations, efforts were made to make clear that the differences do not need to be obstacles. If the differences are understood as assets, the results are, first, that the church's diversity creates a stronger bond between the members. Second, members with a wider range of perspectives and gifts help the active ministries. Third, new members coming to the church are also of different backgrounds and generations. The vision shared was based of the writings of Ellen White, "As workers together for God, brethren and sisters, lean heavily upon the arm of the Mighty One. Labor for unity, labor for love, and you will become a power in the world" (White, 1909, p. 183).

Connection

As a result of the findings from the business meeting, in October 2009 the new vision for the church was launched through the sermon series called "Vision 20/20" preached during the months of October and November in 2009. The vision was broken down in three parts reflecting the principles SASDAC would use as existence principles. First, "We all see life from different angles but same purpose." Second, "We all have different abilities that God can use." Third, "Together we can do a better job."

Since its inclusion, the vision statement is present in most church gatherings. Before worship starts on Sabbath morning, it appears projected on the screen. It is also

printed in the program handed out to the attendants. It is projected on the screen before every official leadership meetings.

Growth

Growth is the process of helping all members of the SASDAC become accepting of the differences between generations and cultures. To achieve success in this process, a plan to include generational diversity in leadership and programs is designed and implemented.

The Discovery, Connection, and Growth were originally introduced to the whole to the church in the Vision series. From then forward, all three aspects of awareness are constantly reminded and expanded in sermons and in meetings. Growth is embedded and developed in the next sections of the model.

<div align="center">Preaching</div>

If "awareness" reveals the importance of information, Preaching is the fundamental approach by which information is transmitted in the church setting. Sermons are preached during the Sabbath morning worship, Wednesday mid-week worship and during the youth worship, named CONNEXYON. It is during these services that the majority of the church members are present. Therefore, not only is the objective of the messages to teach the ancient truths of Scripture in a way that is applicable to the needs of today, but also becomes the main tool in transmitting the church's vision, goals and purpose.

The Cultural Challenge

The people of Los Angeles live in a society bombarded with stimulation of the senses. Therefore, it is necessary to engage as many of the individual senses as possible. For that purpose, the sermons are interactive and highly visual. Handouts for the sermons are provided every week in which members can take notes and fill in the blanks. In order to cater to the American and Immigrant groups of the church, the handouts and the multimedia slides shown are bilingual.

The Goals of Preaching

Preaching is of great importance to this model. The sermons preached at SASDAC are part of a series with contemporary themes planned months in advanced. In order to be successful, every sermon seeks to accomplish a triple goal. The first goal is to teach a biblical truth. The second goal is to create a relation between the person and the biblical truth by bringing the individual into the God story. The third goal is to offer a practical or "how to do it" element. Each goal will be explained in more detail below.

Teaching biblical truth

Preaching the Word of God carries the divine responsibility of teaching the eternal truth of God as it was intended to be. As a Seventh-day Adventist Church it is our desire to transmit the fundamental beliefs of our church in a way people can understand. Therefore, every series of sermons preached at SASDAC is based on a biblical passage, a book of the Bible or a biblical topic.

If a serious response from the members is desired, a serious study of the Scriptures needs to be done while preparing. For the Scriptures to be understood clearly,

the teaching has to be clear. In that way, we are able to teach the difficult biblical concepts in simple ways anyone can understand.

Creating a relation to the God story

The message of the Scriptures is of great importance for our salvation. Unfortunately, the narrative and words used even in the modern translations seem to be far away and foreign to our time and day. The challenge is to build a relationship between the ancient story of God and contemporary people. For that reason preaching at SASDAC involves teaching the historical background of the Bible and comparing it with the contemporary experiences of the people.

The practical element

Previously, I stated that one of the goals of the preaching at SASDAC is to present the truth of the Bible in a way the people can understand it. In order to make that possible, it is imperative to make those truths applicable to people's lives. The goal of the practical element of preaching is to provide a solution, an opportunity or a principle that they can practice in their lives as soon as they leave the church.

Involvement

The leadership in most Hispanic churches is heavy on the immigrant side. Some churches have very little or no representation of American Hispanics in the decision making process of the church. Such was the case at SASDAC. Therefore, the necessity to involve members of both groups in leadership and decision-making became a priority. The process of Involvement was implemented in three areas. The first area of involvement of both groups was in the representation in the church board. The second

area is involvement of the youth in the development of the worship and church ministries. The third area of involvement is relationships or "fellowship." The involvement of the different groups and generations is interlaced in all the different areas.

The following paragraphs provide a detailed description of the implementation of each of the three areas of involvement in the SASDAC.

Involvement and Leadership

Once the awareness of the existence of the different cultures within the church was introduced, the task of the formation of leadership team reflecting the different segments of the membership was required. In order to accomplish that task, tradition needed to be broken. Some people believed the members of the church board should be older than 35, referring to the younger group of American-born Hispanics. That comment was answered by the fact that most of our American Hispanic members are professionals and their jobs require critical thinking skills. Also, some of them work as nurses who are responsible for people's lives. These kinds of obstacles led us to investigate the reasons why it is so difficult for Immigrant Hispanic members to release leadership. The following descriptions will help in understanding the obstacles faced in the process of implementing involvement in leadership.

Let us begin with the understanding that everyone needs to experience God and that all people need spiritual nourishment and growth. Sadly, the generational disconnect referred to previously is showcased in the traditional Hispanic church setting, where worship, sermons, and social programs cater mainly to the first generation. Immigrant Hispanics attend church because they seem to find the fulfillment for three distinguishing and basic sociological needs: The safety of refuge, the assurance of respect, and the

availability of resources. As we will discover, that is not necessarily the case for American Hispanics.

The safety of refuge

One of the reasons the Hispanic church has succeeded reaching immigrants is because the church has filled the social and cultural void that emerged when they left their home country. The church community is most likely the place around which their lives revolve. Since friends and family were left when the first generation immigrated, there is a need to be part of a community that is naturally fulfilled by the church. In contrast, American Hispanics have family and friends in the US; therefore, they already belong to a community outside of the church. When an IH member finds himself no longer in a leadership position, the feeling of disconnect from his cultural stronghold appears. That idea will lead us to the next issue presenting obstacles in the process of creating inclusive leadership in Hispanic Churches in America.

The assurance of respect

The language barrier for immigrant Hispanics has forced them to be employed in mostly blue-collar jobs. What makes matters worse for them is that when involved in dialogue with a service provider such as a doctor or lawyer who does not speak Spanish, they have to use their children as interpreters and depend on them for critical information. The result is that when they become active in church and are placed on leadership positions they regain the respect they once had at home. American Hispanics are not only English speakers, but also, more educated than their parents. Consequently, they occupy places of greater responsibility at work than their parents. Contrary to the first generation, second generation people do not perceive the church as the only place where they can

experience respect and satisfaction. Therefore, when an IH ceases to be in leadership at church, he/she perceives that as loss of respect.

The availability of resources

Most programs and ministries in the Hispanic church are geared to satisfy the needs of the immigrant church community. Hispanic tradition dictates that the first place to seek advice outside of the home is the church. Constrained by language, culture and social network, the church becomes the natural place to find help for the first generation. On the other hand, American Hispanics without a language barrier and with a wider social network, have the opportunity to obtain resources from many additional sources. The situation creates a reason to be concerned. The majority of second generations of Hispanics, once they go to college, do not return to the Hispanic church. Sometimes they do not come back to the church at all. Therefore, for the IH, loosing the opportunity to make decisions on what ministries and services to offer at church endangers the main source of help and resources.

The leadership of SASDAC is rather fascinating. The dynamic of the leadership has changed because of the diversity of Hispanic subcultures and places of birth of the members. For many decades the leadership was mostly immigrant members. Today, the ratio is almost 1:1. The goal for the leadership is to become balanced as the demographic representation demands. For the last three years there has been an increase in membership. The increase has also brought a change in two aspects of the demographics of the church. The first change is the amount of American born Hispanics, which has gone up. Second, the amount of professional people has increased. Therefore, the leadership has been slowly changing to reflect the membership.

Involvement and Worship and Ministry

The most difficult part of the process of implementing diverse involvement was in worship and in church ministries. In the minds of most traditional Adventist Hispanic members, specifically those who were Adventist before immigrating to America, church should be the way it was back in their countries when they left. That view affects worship style and church practices in a way that becomes an obstacle for change. Also, it becomes an obstacle for inclusivity of the diverse cultural groups and generations in worship and ministry. The following paragraphs describe the elements that made diverse worship and ministry possible at SASDAC.

Improvement vs. ceasing

Since the plan started in 2009 the church leadership has worked under the principle that everything can be better. The experience of the church during the previous years had been that because the church was old, it had passed its time and it was destined to die. That resulted in a maintenance effort. There was no desire to do anything new or to make changes. Also, a sense of fear invaded some of the leaders. They thought that if change was going to happen they would no longer be useful. For those reasons the first stage was to improve the ministries of the church, not terminate them.

The first task was to observe each one of the ministries and how they operated. At that time, the church was only operating with basic church ministries. Before adding any more ministries, the existing ones needed to be strengthened. The second task was to instruct and motivate the leaders to improve their ministries. In October 2009 when the vision was launched, the leaders were prompted to invite other people to help in their ministries. Also, the church in general was invited to get active in the existing ministries.

In February 2010, the Growth 101 classes were launched. There were a total of three classes. Each class was divided into three sessions. The first class, 101 was design to experience the vision of the church in a practical way. The message taught during the first class was, "God created you for a purpose." The message of the second class was, "To grow spiritually you need to use your talents to serve others." The message of the third class was, "Serving others to share Jesus." The average attendance at the classes was 115 members.

The series "Mirrors" was launched in June 2010 with the purpose of encouraging all church members to get involved in the ministries of the church. Before the church year began, a meeting with all the people involved in the church was held in September 2011. More than 200 people already involved in ministries attended.

Adding vs. subtracting

The number of people involved in ministries since 2009 has increased. As a result, the ministries of the church have improved. One of the ministries that has benefited from the involvement of new leaders was children's ministry. Since the summer of 2010 the children's church program was introduced. Children's church occurs once a month during the worship time with the purpose of offering a worship service designed for children. The program includes biblical lessons, music, crafts related to the lesson and a snack. The program has grown from 40 kids under the age of 12 to over one hundred. The program is possible because there are more than fifty volunteers from all ages helping the children learn about Jesus.

The involvement of new members has helped to add new ministries to serve the church and the community. Since January 2010 the church has added several ministries to

serve the church and the community such as the Food Bank, student tutoring, and Employment Bulletin. These ministries involve members from high school age to seniors. Adding new leaders gave the opportunity to create new ministries and the new ministries gave opportunity to involve more people.

Cooperation vs. competition

Before 2009 the lack of vision for the church and the bleak future prevented the involvement of new people and creation of new ministries. The people involved in the ministries that were active tried to keep their ministries alive. Consequently, they acted as if their ministry was independent of the church. Also an apparent attitude of competition among the ministries was present.

Since 2009 when the vision for the church was introduced, the ministries began to work together for a common mission. The leaders meeting in September 2011 demonstrated not only that their efforts were giving fruit, but that more is accomplished when they work together.

By January 2012 there were more than 300 people involved. These people have abilities not used before in church but they have an incredible amount of talent. The majority of these people do not participate from the front. They are people whose involvement and participation is essential in front and behind the scenes. We have developed new ministries such as graphic design and video editing. For example, our communication department has 16 members, all under the age of thirty. They are in charge of the church website, bulletin, and video streaming of worship services as well as other technology-based responsibilities.

Worship

      The style of worship determines the group of people to be reached. Since the goal of SASDAC is to be a multigenerational Hispanic church, it is necessary to include all the generations in the worship service. Worship style is more than music selection, as we often think. The style of the worship comprehends the elements and rhythms of the liturgy. Therefore, the elements of the liturgy must reflect purpose and relevance creating an opportunity to create a relationship between the people and God.

      We are living in a multimedia-oriented epoch. Today, people are used to flip channels to what they think is most attractive, relevant and suitable. The worship style must be streamlined and purposeful. Unnecessary elements only deter the worshiper from the experience. Also, the selection of words used by the worship leaders should not require an "Adventist" dictionary to be understood; it does not require one to sacrifice Adventist principles or beliefs. As described in the preaching section of this chapter, the message should be simple and relevant to all people in attendance.

      The worship style at SASDAC is a "blended" worship service. There are elements of traditional worship intermingled with elements of contemporary worship. For example, the divine service starts with a call to worship followed by an invocation and a hymn. Then, the welcome includes people exchanging handshakes and hugs. After the welcome, one of the five different praise teams lead out with two or three songs before the sermon. The songs are most of the time sung alternating between English and Spanish and words between songs are also bilingual. The praise teams include youth and adults. A group comprised primarily of senior citizens forms one of the praise teams, while earliteen girls form another. Offerings are collected at the end of the sermon followed by a blessing.

Since the implementation of this service style, attendance doubled and offerings and tithes increased. By eliminating preliminaries, 30 minutes per worship service have been reclaimed for worship. The average sermon lasts 40 minutes.

Due to the diverse age of the several praise teams members, the musical styles also differ. The groups use different instruments to accompany their songs. The instruments used vary from piano and keyboard to saxophone and drums. Since January 2012 the church has a band that leads the congregational hymns as well as the prelude and postlude.

Involvement and Relationships

The involvement of members in the different ministries has created new relationships between them. Some of the new members in SASDAC started coming because they were asked to help in a ministry and then developed relationships with other members.

Involvement and participation in the various ministries increases the members' spirituality and strengthens fellowship. After worship, lunch is served for more than two hundred people each Sabbath. In order to make that possible, lunch teams were formed. Every week, one of the 15 different teams prepares lunch for our friends and members. People come to church to hear the message, but stay in the church when they build relationships. After having lunch at church, the need for Bible studies arose. Today, there are between 20-30 Bible studies given every Sabbath after lunch.

The Facility

The appearance of the facility is extremely important. The first impression people get with the facility is a reason for people to come back to the church. In February 2009, the church had pieces of the ceiling falling off. Light fixtures on the platform were hanging by frayed wires. The carpet was badly stained and ruined. The people sat in old pews that emitted an awful odor. The remodeling process was designed to occur over a period of five years. Each part of the process is described in the following paragraphs.

The Platform

The project of remodeling the sanctuary was launched in October 2009. With the Thanksgiving offering in November 2009, the platform or stage of the church was remodeled. Twelve-foot projection screens were placed on either side of the platform. The lighting on the platform was properly installed and ambient color lights were set up on the back of the platform. When the platform was completed the reaction of the people was positive and supportive.

The Sanctuary

The next part of the remodeling process took place in the interior of the sanctuary. The carpet needed to be replaced. The church chose to change the color to reflect the original colors of the church. This provides a warm and modern environment while enhancing the light coming from the stained glass windows.

The most challenging part of the process was the seating. In July 2010 SASDAC was able to acquire the chairs used at the General Conference session in Atlanta. The old pews were donated to two churches in Mexico when the new chairs were installed in

August 2010. By February 2011 the sanctuary had been painted, carpeted and refurnished. The capacity of the SASDAC sanctuary is for 650 people.

The Rooms

The building is a three-story facility. With the growth of the children's ministry and the increase in regular attendance, it became necessary to provide better accommodations in the rooms and hallways of the church. The process to paint the walls and tile the hallway floors took place from May 2009 to January 2010. The classrooms for the Sabbath school classes and ministries are designed to provide opportunity for audiovisual teaching equipment. All rooms have either a flat screen TV with computer connection capabilities or a video projector.

The Exterior

Currently the church is waiting on a permit to be approved by the city that will allow the remodeling of the parking lot and green areas. In 2009 we filed for a permit to remodel the parking and retrofit our outdoor lighting system. Currently, we are waiting on the City of Los Angeles to grant the construction permit.

The appearance of the sanctuary needs to reflect the people we want to reach. Since SASDAC is intended to be multigenerational and multicultural Hispanic church, the entire facility needs to reflect the people of the community. The church has blended elements of the traditional church such as stained glass windows along with the two video projection screens. There are elements of the traditional Hispanic worship with elements of contemporary worship. There is equipment to translate sermon to English for those who need it, and all printed materials are bilingual. We want to make sure the

environment is conducive to a worship experience as well as to a connection with the

times and needs of the current generations.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

The purpose of this chapter is to share the conclusions of implementing a model of diverse Hispanic worship at the Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church (SASDAC) in Los Angeles, California. This chapter reports the outcomes and an evaluation from the implementation of the model.

Evaluation of the Model

This section presents an evaluation of the model starting with the year 2008. The reason why the evaluation starts with 2008 is because it was the year prior to the implementation of the model. The following three years, 2009, 2010, and 2011 will show the development of the model. This section is divided into four parts; Attendance, Baptisms, Tithe, and Finances. Each part will help contrast the time before the model was implemented with the years of implantation.

Attendance at Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church

There are three reasons for electing attendance as a measurable result. First, attendance is the most visible of all the variables of evaluation of the model. Churches are often regarded as successful when attendance is great, even though attendance numbers do not necessarily reflect ministry effectiveness. Second, attendance numbers will help to show people interested in becoming part of the church. The more people in attendance,

the bigger the possibilities for potential members. Third, when attendance increases, the probability of increment in giving and word of mouth advertisement increases also.

During the first year of implementation of the model attendance on Sabbath morning registered around 225. Therefore, a dramatic increase in attendance will support the effectiveness of the model.

Attendance Before Implementation of the Model

SASDAC, as described in chapter 4, is a church that has been in existence for a century. In its peek, during the 1980's and 1990's, there were 600 to 700 people attending Sabbath worships regularly. During the decade of the 2000's attendance began to decrease, reaching its lowest point in 2008. According to some members who attended during the low years, 190 people attended at times. On the first Sabbath of March 2009, there were 215 people.

The model was first introduced in June 2009. Therefore, the year 2008 will be used as the reference point for the results of the implementation of the model. That way results may be compared with numbers from before and after implementation.

Attendance During the First Three Years of
Implementation of the Model

Before the model was introduced, the accommodations for seating at the church were pews. Pews made the work of calculating an exact number of seats extremely difficult. When the model was implemented, the seating furniture had been changed to individual chairs. Today, the SASDA has room to seat 640 people.

During the first three months of implementation of the model, the church attendance for Sabbath morning services averaged 300 people. By October 2009,

attendance had reached peek numbers of 430. After a year of implementation, the

attendance was 460. A year later, in April 2012 attendance reached 500 as shown on

Figure 1. On special Sabbaths like Easter or Christmas, there have not been enough seats.
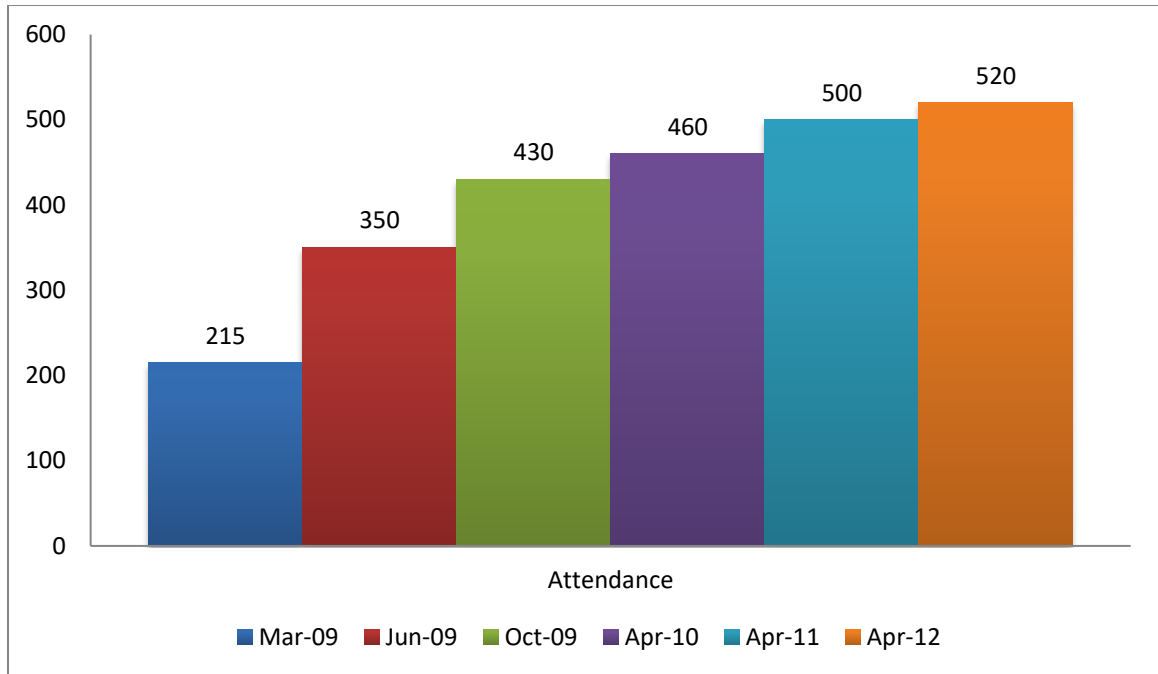
Figure 1: Attendance

The lack of seats at times has been discouraging to visitors. For that reason, we

have created two special programs. The first, Youth Sabbath, takes place during the

second Sabbath of every month. This is a program only for youth. At that time seats are

freed up and youth get a chance to develop their leadership skills in a safe setting among

their peers. The second is Children's Church, which takes place on the third Sabbath of

every month. Both programs are held in the multipurpose room during the Sabbath

worship morning time. Both programs create room in the main sanctuary to accommodate more people.

The next attendance goal for the church is to add a second worship service. When attendance reaches the 600 mark, a second service is planned to accommodate more people.

Baptisms at Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church

This section is not intended to indicate a number of baptisms that would qualify a church as growing. What this section is intended to do is to compare the total of baptisms at the SASDAC from before the implementation of the model and the first three years of implementation. The total number of baptisms per year will aid in recognizing the effectiveness of the mission of the church and its ministries during the implementation of the model.

Baptisms Before Implementation of the Model

According to the Southern California Conference Secretary reports, during the 80's and 90's, SAC had been one of the churches with the highest yearly number of baptisms in the Pacific Union Conference. The consistency of baptisms from 2000 to 2008 had been rather erratic. The lowest number of baptisms in the first decade of the 21st century came in 2008. When comparing membership and baptism numbers during these same years, the numbers do not appear to correlate. This phenomenon is best observed in 2006 when there were 60 baptisms, but the net membership only grew by 30 members. In spite of the number of baptisms, members continued to leave the church.

The number of baptisms could be associated to the way people related to the church, or perhaps on how the worship service attracted them, or on how the ministries

appealed to their needs. It seems that people decide to become part of the church when one or two of the following happens. First, when the ministries and worship services are relevant to their needs. Second, when they become part of the community by building relationships. For that reason, the model implemented at SASDAC is geared to accomplishing both.

Visitors are attracted to SASDAC when the worship is relevant. Also, visitors continue to attend SASDAC when the church ministries provide for their needs and offer the opportunity for them to get involved. When that happens, it is easier for visitors to become active members in the church.

Baptisms During the First Three Years of Implementation of the Model

Figure 2 shows that baptisms at the end of 2009 were 37. The number of baptisms in 2010 was 47. In 2011 the number of baptisms was 38. In 2012 the number of baptisms was 29.

It seems that the implementation of the model helped to reverse the trend of decreasing baptisms. The number of baptisms for the last three years has gone back to the number of baptisms recorded during the years before the decline. Also, membership has grown accordingly.

The largest number of baptisms in the last decade occurred during the years of 2003 and 2006. It is apparent that the economy, housing market, apostasy and irrelevant ministry affected the growth of the church during those years.
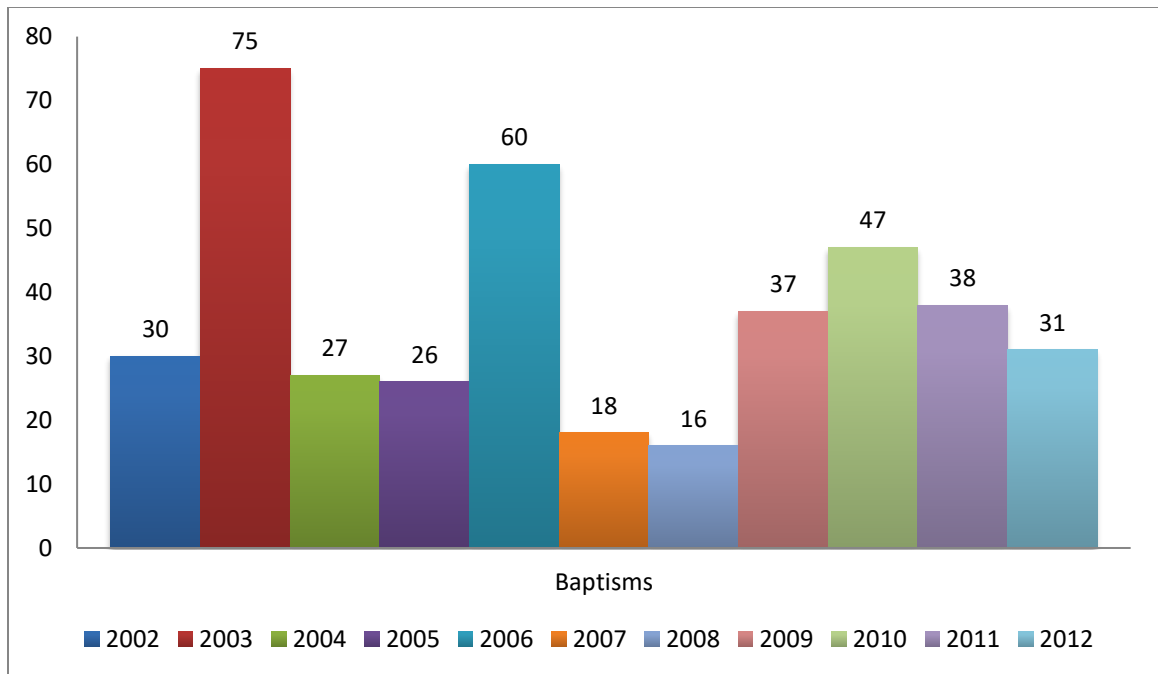
Figure 2: Baptisms

During the last decade, 2003 and 2006 were the years with the greatest number of baptisms. During both years the number of baptisms doubled from the average. The only explanation for those results is that there was a greater effort on evangelism.

An interesting discovery made with the application of the model was that when compared, the number of baptisms and the growth of attendants, there are more new people attending than those people being baptized. There are two explanations for that phenomenon. First, there are people coming to our church who decide to come because they enjoy the church community and worship, but have not become baptized yet. Second, people who were already Adventist, but were looking for a church that offered what the model at SASDAC offers, are attending our church.

Tithe at Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church

Today, different from past years, tithe is the measuring of growth that the Seventh-day Adventist church uses in the Southern California Conference for pastoral assignments and line of credit for loans by the Pacific Union Conference. With the application of the model, tithe figures may be attributed to three main factors:

Spiritual Maturity

In traditional Adventism, tithe is usually a reflection of the member's spiritual maturity. When a member has understood and accepted his responsibility as a member of the church and the blessings received by God, he becomes a faithful tithe-returning member. The tithe experience with people from a postmodern perspective becomes even more significant when they pay it. Not only are they spiritually matured, but also believers and supporters of the vision, purpose, and mission of the church.

Happiness Indicator

Often, tithe is a reflection of a member's involvement in the church's ministries. Also, tithe could increase according to the level of happiness with events, management, and plans of the church.

Socioeconomic Indicator

Tithe increases may also be attributed to the higher earning power or socioeconomic level of the new members attending the church.

With these factors in mind, tithe is used in this section as a measurement of the member's involvement in the church ministries and their spiritual experience at the SASDAC.

Tithe Before Implementation of the Model

It is surprising that even with the diaspora of the early 2000, tithe did not decrease more than $100,000 in a year, as it has happened in other Hispanic churches in SCC with less total yearly tithe. There are two possible explanations for the occurrence. First, the members that left the church were not as faithful returning the tithe. If that is true, then it is possible that their unfaithfulness is one of the reasons why they left SASDAC in the first place. Second, there is the slight possibility that some members that left the church continued to pay tithe. Third, a more realistic possibility is that members who left the church during those years were mostly Immigrant Hispanic. As explained in chapter 3, Immigrant Hispanic members tend to make less money on average than their American Hispanic counterparts. Therefore, the tithe base was not as affected. Also, American Hispanic members have deeper roots in Los Angeles and the need for relocation was not as great.

What is interesting to note, is that Figure 3 shows the lowest years of tithe are 2007 and 2008. These two years also records the lowest number of baptisms and lowest record of attendance, as seen in Figures 1 and 2.
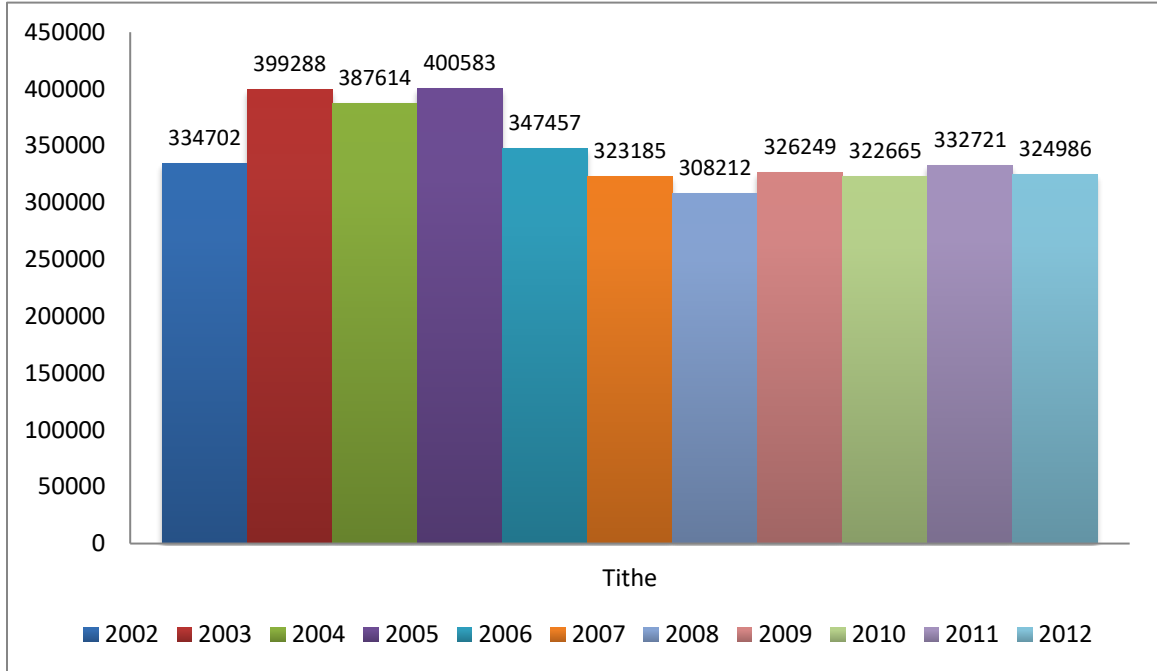
Figure 3: Tithe

Tithe During the First Three Years of Implementation
of the Model

Tithe is related to member's income. Unfortunately, this number is also affected

by employment and the economy. Regardless of external factors, tithe at SASDAC

showed an increase during the first four years compared to the year before the

implementation of the model.

Figure 3 displays that the tithe recorded at the end of 2009 was of $326,249.00. At

the end of 2010 it was $322,665.00. At the end of 2011 the tithe recorded was

$332,721.00. The totals reflect an average gain of $18,999.00 compared to 2008 when

tithe totals for the year were $308,212.00. The years prior to 2007 and before the

implementation of the model showed greater tithe than the years during and after the implementation of the model. There are a couple of possible causes. First, the economy in Southern California was better. Unemployment was at a lower rate than during the years of the implantation of the model, when it was at its highest point. A second possibility is that the years before 2007 were just before the housing market bubble. When the economy changed many faithful members bought houses in other areas and moved away from the SASDAC.

Finances at Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church

Finances or offerings are the measuring of growth the local church uses to calculate its monetary stability. The measure of a financially healthy church answers to the question, does the church have enough money to pay its bills?

Finances Before Implementation of the Model

Just as with the attendance, baptisms and tithe, the finances of the church in the years before implementation of the model where found lacking. The amount of offerings given seems to be related to the amount of baptisms. Observing years 2003, 2006, and 2010, we discovered that those are the years ending with the highest amounts of gains in the local budget during the decade. Now the same is true of the results for the years 2005, 2007, and 2008; these are the years with least number of baptisms and the greatest loss.

As mentioned above in the Tithe section, added to the departure of members, the losses in 2007 and 2008 could be the reflection of the state and nation wide financial difficulties. At the end of 2008 the church budget showed a loss of $40,000.00. Once the model was implanted, the amount of offerings also increased. At the end of 2012 church

budget was not only met, but also provided enough room for savings and improvements of the facility and equipment.

One different element during worship that was implemented with the model was that the time to collect the offerings and tithes was moved from before the sermon to right after. One of the reasons behind it was the amount of people showing up for the worship time. More people were there at the end of the sermon than at the beginning of the worship. The increase in attendance and baptisms were major factors in the increase of offerings during model implementation, as previously discussed. When the church budget is exceeded by offerings received it is perceived as gain. When the budget is not reached it is considered a loss. In the following Figure "0" represents the budget met. Figure 4 shows positive numbers as gains or amount above budget, and negative numbers as losses or below budget.
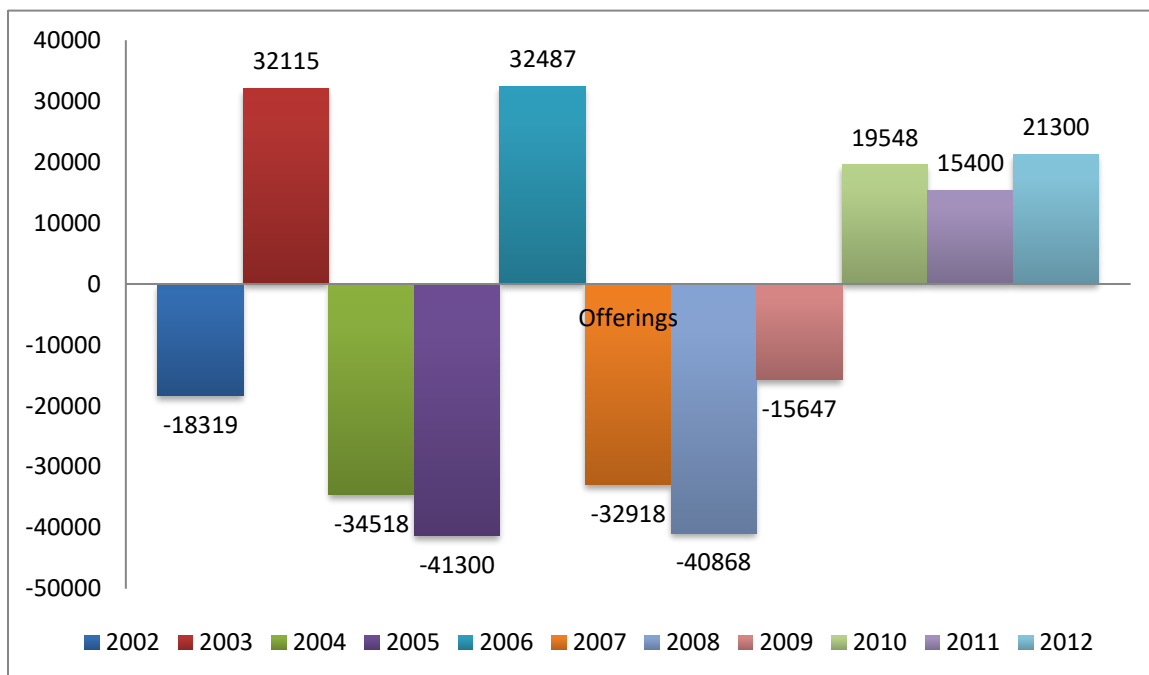
Figure 4: Church Budget

The experience at Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church is intended to show a model of transition between a traditional Hispanic Adventist church in America and a Hispanic Adventist church that is relevant to the times and the needs of the Hispanic community in America. The experience of the every Hispanic church is different because of the type of community they serve in. The SASDAC serves in Los Angeles, California, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the United States. Also, it is one of the cities with the most media and technology influence in the country. Consequently, the ministry at SASDAC has to consider those factors in how it serves the community surrounding it.

There are three principles learned in the process of implementing the model in the SASDAC. The first principle learned is that although change is necessary, change has to

be applied with a purpose. The second principle is that when the church members accept the differences among the members, it deepens their relationships. The third principle is that when opportunities are open for people to serve, people will serve. The following paragraphs will explain these principles in more detail.

Change has to be Applied With a Purpose

The members at SASDAC wanted to change. They knew that if things continued as they were they had little hope to continue existing. The problem was that they were afraid to change anything. Their thinking was that if they changed the wrong thing or the wrong way things could get worse. Unfortunately, they had lost all hope with the previous leadership.

For the benefit of the change process all change was explained in detail. An effort was made to explain the reasons for the change, the benefits of the change and how the change was going to be implemented. In some occasions Bible passages and Spirit of Prophecy texts were used to explain the principles behind the changes.

The reality is that some people have trouble accepting change. Resistance was expected and it was present in some form when changes were made. Fortunately, most resistance disappears when the results are favorable. Therefore, in order to experience the most favorable results, change has to be made with a purpose and has to be calculated.

Accepting Differences Promotes Deeper Relationships

At the beginning of the process the church was divided in groups that worked independently and with personal agendas. Most of them had the survival of the church in mind. Unfortunately, their lack of cooperation among the different groups helped the church's demise more than its success.

The goal of the people was the same, but their lack of awareness of it prevented their accomplishment. When the vision was cast and the differences among them were revealed not as obstacles but as assets their efforts began to be more productive. Also, the ministries of the church became more effective and new relationships were developed.

The truth is that most of the new relationships formed did not turn into long-term friendships. Nevertheless, those relationships are strong enough to be able to work together for a common goal. That is enough to move the church forward and be more efficient.

Opportunities to Help Move People to Serve

There is a norm in churches that the 20% of the church work for the 80%. The new ministries created at SASDAC provided opportunities for people who did not know their abilities and talents to be able to serve in the church. Two great examples of that are the communications department and the music ministry.

The communication department was the first ministry to introduce the use of technology on a regular basis. First, a Webmaster position was required. Then a graphic design team was put into place. Then, a video recording and editing team was needed. To make those teams efficient people with experience and desire to learn were needed. Today, most of the people involved in the communication department were not involved in any other ministry. In fact, most of the church members do not know who made the graphics for the screen presentations, videos for announcements, or the bulletin.

With the introduction of the praise team, the music ministry created opportunities for more people to get involved than merely a pianist and one person leading hymns.

Today, there are five different praise teams and a full band of musicians alternating turns leading the worshiping every Sabbath.

All these people involved would not be active unless opportunities to serve were created. That helps the church reach others and makes the ministries of the church more efficient.

Results

Gathering of data showing how many IH and AH where attending the church before and after the implementation of the model was not possible. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence in the results of the implementation that indicate a major change in the reality of both IH and AH worshiping together at SASDAC. Through personal observation I discovered that out of the 150 plus youth that had been part of the Sabbath School group from 1998 to 2001, while I was youth Pastor, there were less than ten belonging to the AH group attending at the beginning of the implementation of the model. The following evidences will help in identifying growth in the AH sector of the church.

The first evidence is the ratio of 1:1 in leadership between IH and AH members of the church board. At the beginning of the implementation of the model there were no AH younger than thirty-five in the church board. The fact that there was a balance in leadership at the end of implementation indicates a large pool of young leaders available. Therefore, reflecting the make up of the church at the end of implementation.

The second evidence is that at the time when Connexyon, the English youth service reached its peak, there were more that 150 English speaking youth attending. That indicates tremendous growth of the AH group. Some of this youth in this group were children of IH members who came back to the church after having left or were attending

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other English churches. The growth became more apparent when the need to offer sermon outlines, projection slides and worship songs in English and Spanish appeared. Also, some of the AH youth who came to church was more educated than their IH parents.

The third evidence is the increase on children attending the church programs. All of the Children's ministry program were done in English. The Vacation Bible School in 2009 had around 40 kids attending. The attendance grew to 197 kids in VBS 2013. The number of new kids indicates a greater number of younger families. Also, the increase in the number of kids indicates an increment of AH attending church.

The fourth evidence is the increase in musical groups leading praise during worship. The church had one group at the beginning of the implementation of the model. At the end there were five different groups leading worship. The groups reflected the composition of the church. One was composed of earliteen girls and another by senior people. The rest were mainly youth and young adults mostly from the AH group.

The first evidence is the addition of new ministries to the church. Ministries such as website developing, video taping and editing, graphic design and translation require not only knowledge of the language but technology skills characteristic of young people.

Summary

The SASDAC was a church that had been declared as having completed its life cycle by two pastors previous to the implementation of the model. Therefore, a model that could be relevant to the type of congregation, the location and time of existence was needed. The results after three years of implantation are just a sample of what can be done in the future of any church in similar circumstances. The increments on attendance,

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baptisms, and finances are basic areas of church growth that demonstrate the simplicity of

the model implementation and measuring of its efficiency. The one-size-fits-all model of

Hispanic ministry needs to be changed to models that are relevant to the time, people, and

place.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to share conclusions of implementing a model of diverse Hispanic worship at the Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church (SASDAC) in Los Angeles, California. This chapter is divided in three major sections designed to provide a summary of the project, to offer conclusions from the implementation of the model and to share recommendations for future applications of the model.

Summary

The model implemented at the SASDAC in Los Angeles originated from the need to provide a more efficient way of reaching English-speaking Hispanics in Spanish churches. In current schemes of Hispanic ministry, Spanish is the primary language used. Since the second generation of AH are primarily English speaking, they remain as outsiders in ministry events. It has been observed that continued reliance on the same ministry methods of past decades actually decreases the attendance and participation of American born Hispanics.

The Need for a Model to Reach American Hispanics

As seen in Chapter 1, statistics show that one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States is Hispanics. Nevertheless, neglecting the first generation of Hispanics or IH would be a fatal mistake by the church. Given current conditions, this is a transitional time to plan and allocate resources for a model that will allow efficient

multicultural-Hispanic ministry for both Immigrant and American born Hispanics. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop and apply a model to reach Immigrant Hispanics and American born Hispanics in the Spanish-American Seventh-day Adventist Church (SASDAC) in Los Angeles California.

<center>Biblical Basis for the Model</center>

Scripture offers a great number of instances when multicultural ministry took place. The description of multicultural worship in the Bible starts with a very basic description and develops into a more detailed definition at the end of Scripture. The Old Testament presents the time when, "men began to call on the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26). One of the first narratives where multicultural worship appears is the interaction between God and Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3). The experience of Abraham leads to his family becoming the people of God. Israel was to become the beacon sharing God's blessings to the nations as promised to Abraham. It was promised to Abraham that his family will be a blessing to the nations. Also through his family, "…that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You" (1 Kgs 8:41-43). It is to Israel that God shares his dream of a multicultural group of worshipers, "… for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 56:7).

The New Testament continues with the theme of multiculturalism. Jesus, in his intercessory prayer said, "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). Then Jesus commissioned the disciples to take the message of the gospel to the entire world. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;

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and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Finally, the Scriptures present a vision of what God sees in the future, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Rev 7:9-10).

Two thousand years after the disciples shared the gospel to non-Jews for the first time, the world has gotten smaller. The various forms of transportation have promoted a more diverse society and multicultural worship has become a necessity. Ellen G. White realized the need to make the church aware of the problem and provided a logical and Jesus-led solution. "I warn you, brethren and sisters, not to build up a wall of partition between different nationalities. On the contrary, seek to break it down wherever it exists" (White, 2012, p. 180).

<center>Current Literature on Multicultural Worship</center>

Experts in the areas of worship, culture, missions, and generational characteristics agree on three primary human needs; the need to worship, the need to have a cultural identity and the need to be accepted. Worship is the response of men to the experience of God. Each culture in history has experienced God in the context of daily life. Since the first cultures appeared on the planet, the need to worship someone or something has been present.

How to experience culturally relevant worship counts as much as the need to worship. Worship reflects the period of history in which it takes place, the culture

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characteristics and the age of the people practicing it. The dynamics of worship in the Hispanic church, in particular in the SASDAC in Los Angeles, require a clear understanding of these principles. The differences across generations, especially between AH and IH in the church, are the greatest challenge in worship. Therefore, multicultural worship in the Hispanic community is essential for the fulfillment of those basic needs.

Worship Model for the SASDAC

The effect of multigenerational families has created a generationally diverse church membership. The typical multigenerational Hispanic family is composed of Immigrant Spanish-speaking parents and American born English-speaking children. Due to the dynamics of growth of Hispanic Adventist churches in Los Angeles, Hispanic worship is held primarily in Spanish. The leadership is predominantly composed of IH and the ministries cater mostly to their needs. This practices leave the AH generation, specially the non-Spanish-speaking group, outside of participation and leadership.

The model implemented at SASDAC seeks to include AH and IH in a cohesive experience. The model is present in a four way model. First, the Awareness process begins by educating the members of the existence of generational and cultural differences. During the process of discovering the differences between the member's native cultures and generations, efforts were made to make clear that the differences do not need to be obstacles. Second, if awareness reveals the importance of information, Preaching is the fundamental approach by which information is transmitted in the church setting. Therefore, the objective of the messages is to teach the ancient truths of Scripture in a way that is applicable to the needs of today, becoming the main tool in transmitting the church's vision, goals, and purpose. The third element of the model is Involvement. The

first area of involvement of both groups was in the representation on the church board.

The second area is involvement of the youth in the development of the worship and

church ministries. The third area of involvement is relationships among members. The

involvement of the different groups and generations is interlaced in all the different areas.

Finally, the appearance of the Facility is extremely important. The first impression people

get with the facility is a reason for people to come back to the church. The goal is to

create an environment conducive to a worship experience in connection with the times

and needs of the current generations.

<div align="center">Outcomes and Evaluations</div>

The results used to evaluate the functionality of the model are taken from the

years 2009 through 2011. There are four elements considered in the evaluation:

Attendance, Baptisms, Tithe, and Offerings Compared to Budget. Each part will help

contrast the time before the model was implemented with the years of implantation.

Attendance

There are three reasons for electing attendance as a measurable result. First,

attendance is the most visible of all the variables of evaluation of the model. Second,

attendance numbers will help to identify people interested in becoming part of the church.

Third, when the number of people in attendance increases, so does giving and word-of-

mouth advertising.

Baptisms

Aside from doctrinal content, the number of baptisms could be associated with the

way people experience the church, how the worship relates to them, or on how the

ministries appeal to their needs; which in turn creates a sense of commitment that motivates them to share their experience with the gospel. If these elements are present, the individual most likely will want to become part of the church membership. Therefore, the number of baptisms helps to identify church growth.

Tithe

Tithe is one of the measures of growth that the Seventh-day Adventist church uses in the Southern California Conference. The administration currently uses tithe, to finance pastoral assignments and to extend lines of credit for loans by the Pacific Union Conference. With the application of the model, tithe figures may be attributed to three main factors: Spiritual maturity, level of happiness with the church, and socioeconomic level. With these factors in mind, tithe is used in this section as a measurement of the members' involvement in the church ministries and their spiritual experience at the SASDAC.

Finances

Finances or offerings are the measuring of growth the local church uses to calculate its monetary stability. The measure of a financially healthy church answers to the questions, does the church have enough money to pay its bills? Is the membership supportive of the ministry? Are the people committed spiritually to invest in the Kingdom?

The increments on attendance, baptisms, and finances are basic areas of church growth that demonstrate the simplicity of the model's implementation and measuring of its efficiency.

Conclusions

The Need to Bridge Across Generations

The reality of SASDAC in Los Angeles is a microcosm of the Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist church in North America. Due to technology availability and information accessibility, the differences between generations of Adventists are more evident now than 50 years ago. Among Hispanics, the differences are even greater between American born and Immigrants. Therefore, it is of primary importance to identify ways to bridge both groups of Hispanics in order to minister to the growing Hispanic community in America in the future.

Change is Possible

The SASDAC was established in 1911. Many traditions and a heavy historical baggage had to be lifted in order to set the project in motion. Since the cycle of the life of the church was on a low at the time of implementation, acceptance was not without an obstacle, but more easily taken than if the church had a presently successful ministry. Now, even the most resistant members have seen the positive results of the project and they are more open to accept change. The challenge now is to create a permanent culture of change and adaptation to the times and the demands of a successful relevant ministry.

The Church Wants to be Successful

In the hearts of all active church members there is the desire to be part of a successful church ministry. Unfortunately, there are certain factors that prevent them from trying something new, even if they know what they are currently doing does not work. Some of the factors are fear, church culture, lack of vision and lack of awareness.

Fear

One of the realities of church members is that new ways to do ministry are not explored due to the fear of leaving what they have known. There is a level of comfort on staying with what has been done that prevents new ways from being experimented. The opportunity to reach more people while trying new approaches is set aside due to safety and comfort offered by the already known. The church provides one element of stability in their lives already changed by immigration. Nevertheless, ministry change should not be forced or random, but guided with a definite purpose, adequate preparation, and instruction.

Church Culture

Every group of people creates its own culture by experiencing activities, events, forms, and practices over time. The same process in ministry forms the culture of the church. The problem does not reside in the church's culture itself, but when the culture of the church becomes an impediment for change. The formation of culture in a church is inevitable. However, the same church culture should be an indication to what needs to be improved and the direction of the church ministry to follow, not an impediment for success.

Lack of Vision

The history of the local church could be one of the greatest obstacles for the church's ministry success. SASDAC was founded in 1911. When a church has been around for as long as SASDAC has, it is easier to live on the past glories rather than striving to create new ones. Past successes without vision tend to shift the attention to the former success, limiting the ability for success in the future. It is of great importance to

have a church vision and present it constantly. In that way, all past successes are milestones on the path to achieve the vision, not just distant memories.

In order to find the new vision for the SASDAC we met with the elders to discuss what areas of the ministry needed more help, what needed to change. Once we established the priorities, we brainstormed for ideas on how to act. It was decided to begin with the most visible and apparent elements. For example, in the remodeling of the facility we started with the stage and backdrop of the church. As people came into the sanctuary during the first months of the application of the model, they witnessed things beginning to change. Also, in the inclusivity area we begin with the worship structure. Before the implementation of the model, there were a few songs offered during the time between Sabbath School and the main service. Unfortunately, that was the time when hardly anyone was there. With the implementation of the model, the praise groups, which are mostly composed of young adults, were assigned to sing during the main service right before the sermon. With changes like these it became apparent that the church was moving and adults as well as youth were included in the main service.

Unawareness

Often times, church leadership sees the need to change the ministry approach. Unfortunately, there is no awareness or knowledge of what can be done to create and effect change. In turn, the church remains the same and change is just a dream. One of the factors that help the project at SASDAC was the information shared with the leadership and the members before and during the change process. The church needs to be made aware of possibilities and options available, as well as to how to implement the new elements. It is more positive and successful when the church makes informed decisions.

Recommendations

Even though these recommendations are the result of the implantation of this project, there is much to be done in the process of bridging the gap between generations in the Hispanic church in North America. There are several other elements that could be developed, improved and implemented. However, the model presented in this document proved worthwhile in the SASDAC and therefore should be considered by the Southern California Conference President and Hispanic Region Director, and the North American Division Multilingual director.

Recommendations for the SASDAC

The progress over the past years has been great in comparison to the starting point. Nevertheless, the road ahead presents many challenges yet. One of the challenges is static behavior. It is possible that the recent success will create an atmosphere of comfort and give birth to a desire to stay put. Since society is a dynamic environment, constant adaptations and changes are needed. Therefore, staying as is, without investing in change and adaption, will only insure retrocession and stagnation as it was in the past.

Another important challenge is continuity of the vision. It appears that among Hispanic churches the pastor turnaround time is shorter than in other groups, averaging three and a half years. That being the case, it is important that the vision transcends pastors. In other words, when the new pastor arrives the vision is so engraved in the membership and leadership of SASDAC that the pastor has to adapt to it and grow with the congregation. On the contrary, if the new pastor is accustomed to the traditional way, the church will suffer more going back than going forward. For that reason, it is recommended the church board establish the following:

First, to seek a balanced representation in all decision-making committees. The church is composed of IH and AH. Most of the IH are adults and over thirty-five years of age. Most of the AH are under the age of thirty-five. A balanced representation requires as close as possible of the same number of adults, male and female and young people. In that way, the decisions will be made in a more democratic fashion involving a group that represents the church in its entirety, not just a segment of it.

Second, to create a program to promote continuation of the church's vision even after pastoral changes. As stated before the tenure of ministers in Hispanic churches is three and a half years. Usually a system at any given church ends with the arrival of the next pastor. To ensure than an effective system remains the church has to implement a program to give the system continuity in spite of pastoral change. That will help the church to be consistent and the new pastor avoiding the time consuming task of discovering the assets and make up of the church.

Third, to ensure that the vision is shared with the leadership elected every ecclesiastical year. These recommendations should be recommended by the church board and voted on at a business meeting. Visions die when they are forgotten. Even if the current leadership has accepted and understood the vision of the church, it does not mean the next leadership will. The vision has to be constantly present for the leadership and the membership. Therefore, administrative efforts need to be made to preserve the vision from one leadership to the next.

Recommendations for the Southern California Conference

The success of the local church is reflected in the success of the Conference. The Conference should be supportive of effective models even if they are not conventional.

Creativity and productivity often times work hand in hand. Therefore, if pastors work with a ministry model that is efficient and productive, their creativity should be rewarded with longer tenures because their churches continue to grow and maintain dynamism rather than stagnation. Also, interaction and sharing of models among pastors within the conference should be encouraged. In that way, ministers whom creativity is not their strongest asset may be motivated to observe and adopt effective models. As well, pastors who are creative and successful should be encouraged to share their models with others. If the conference implements a collaborative ministry policy upon hiring, the ministry culture will be more innovative and cooperative. Regarding the model at SASDAC, if not shared with the entire conference, it should be openly shown and made readily available to the Hispanic region. Personally, I will schedule a conversation with the Conference President and Hispanic Region Director in order to explain the model and to offer to share its principles and methodology with my colleagues in Southern California Conference.

Recommendations for the Pacific Union Conference

Since the Pacific Union is one of the fields with the greatest Hispanic constituency in the NAD, there should be an effort to find effective models across the Union to be shared and help the rest of the churches. Perhaps, with the diversity of communities across the union the models could be enhanced and best applied to accommodate the different needs. The first step would be to have the Union Hispanic coordinator share the models with all Hispanic coordinators at the Conference level. It will be my responsibility to contact the Union Hispanic Coordinator in order to share the

model results and experience sharing it with the pastors at SCC. That will create an opportunity to share it with the other conferences within the Pacific Union.

Recommendations for the North American Division

As stated before, the Hispanic community in North America is growing rapidly. The bulk of Hispanic growth is generated by the second and third generations of Hispanics born in the USA. Therefore, the current Hispanic ministry model should transition from being IH centered to IH-AH inclusive. Models such as the one implemented as SASDAC should be available to the different levels of Hispanic ministry. Presentations at ministerial events, such as the Hispanic Ministerial Council, should be available to make all Hispanic pastors aware of the possibilities for ministry across generations, especially models that present the greatest ease for application. Those who have successfully implemented IH-AH inclusive models in local congregations should make the presentations. Personally, I will write and submit an article to *Ministry Magazine* in order to make the model available to pastors and administrators across the North American Division field.

The model presented in this document is designed to be a transitional model. For that purpose the following recommendations are given:

Continuation

The four elements of the model presented in chapter 4 should be continued but not be final. The future success of Hispanic ministry at SASDAC and other similar churches depends on the four foundational elements: Awareness, Inclusivity, Facility and Preaching (see Appendix A). However, these elements are not intended to be final. There is room to improve each one, and to add other elements that will help in the inclusivity

and transition of the Hispanic church. The leadership of the SASDAC is committed to continue to work towards efficiency and relevancy without sacrificing principles. As in any other church setting where this or other similar models are implemented, there should be a continuous display of the vision in all areas of church ministry and the facility.

Observe Church Culture

Every church has its own culture. Even among Hispanic churches there is a particularity within every church community. Therefore, before any type of change is suggested, it is of great importance to understand the cultural makeup of the church membership and surrounding community. Discover what are the ethnic makeup and generations present in the membership. It is important to identify which are the largest group and the most influential. Also, the cultural make up of the community outside the church needs to be ascertained. Learning this important information will help determine, with clarity, the vision and target of the church. Therefore, the process will be better guided and the church will be more informed.

Practice Caution

As with any road, not all roads have the same conditions. Likewise, on the path to a successful ministry it must be understood that not all Hispanic churches will respond to change in the same way, nor will they adjust to the changes at the same speed. When implementing the model it is necessary to observe each part of the process cautiously. It will be best to take a little longer in the process than to rush through the changes and be set back and be forced to start again. Positive reaction from the leadership and evident results are great indicators of the successful assimilation of the elements of the process.

When successful application has been achieved, the same process will be demanded for the next step in the process.

The Future

At this time the SASDAC has expanded its community outreach and influence in the neighborhood. The food bank that started in January 2013, now serves close to 1,000 families on a monthly basis. Looking at the number of baptisms and projection of growth, the leadership is beginning to explore a second service. Since the congregation has not experienced a double service in the past, a second service is another element of change that will require the careful application of the four elements in the model.

APPENDIX

Vision Statement of the Spanish American Seventh-day Adventist Church:

Translated from Spanish "REACH non-believers, in order to INTERACT with other

Christians to help them GROW in their faith, and to challenge the growing to

DISCOVER their ministry and HONOR God with their life."

Preaching is an essential element for the implementation of this project and

church vision. The following information is intended to describe some of the series that

were integral in the sharing of the vision for the SASDAC.

Series: "Vision 20/20" Preached on September 12-26, 2009

The purpose of this series was to create awareness of the need of a Vision for the

church. Since the church had had a rich past decades before, and at the time of the series

it was in its lowest point, it was time to create a new goal rather than to live on past

glories.

The series was based on Numbers 13. It departed from the point when Moses

sends 12 spies on a reconnaissance mission to Canaan. On their return two spies had a

vision of what God could do with them in spite of the obstacles. Twelve spies were afraid

of the obstacles. Since the people believed the twelve instead of the two they ended up

wandering the desert for forty years. Thus, showing the danger of not having a mission.

Topics:

1. "Vision to Succeed", preached September 12, 2009. This message presented the need

to have a vision.

2. "Knowing who you are", preached on September 19, 2009. This message showed the importance of understanding the make up of the church to become more effective on reaching the goal and vision

3. "Knowing your challenges", preached on September 26, 2009. This message showed the importance of identifying the obstacles between you and your goal.

Series: "Mirrors" Preached on May 15 though June 19, 2010

The purpose of the series was to share the Vision statement already approved with the congregation and what it meant in a practical way.

The series was based on the Gospel of Luke. It showed how each part of the vision of the church was reflected in the life of Jesus and how as a church could fulfill the vision.

Topics:

1. "What do I see?" preached May 15, 2010. This message presented the need to understand who we are in an honest way and how people can see Jesus though us.

2. "Growing like Jesus" preached on May 22, 2010. This message showed the way Jesus' growth was not only spiritual, but also had a physical and social and intellectual growth. A balanced growth in those four areas promotes healthy entities.

3. "In the Family of Jesus" preached on May 29, 2010. This message had the purpose of showing the importance of belonging to a family, especially the family of God. Like all families, although there are common ties, there are also differences. Jesus longs for unity among the diversity in his family.

4. "Just like Jesus" preached on June 5, 2010. This message had the purpose of creating awareness that, past, perceptions, and prejudices are not obstacles for someone to be transformed by Jesus.

5. "Serving like Jesus" preached on June 12, 2010. This message was intended to motivate people to use their gifts, talents, abilities and passions to serve someone else.

6. "Sharing Jesus" preached on June 19, 2010. This message showed that the result of our experience with Jesus is Jesus being reflected on us.

Series: "C.S.I." Preached on August 14 though September 11, 2010

The purpose of the series was to share the Vision statement with a focus on service trough relationships: Connect, Serve, Impact. The series was based on the Paul's epistle to the Corinthians Chapter 13.

Topics:

1. "Power to Connect" preached on August 14, 2010. This message had the purpose of showing that love is the only way to have true connection with God and other people.

2. "Power to Serve" preached on August 21, 2010. This message had the purpose of showing that love is the catalyst of service.

3. "Power to Love" preached on August 28, 2010. This message had the purpose of showing that love is the reflection of Jesus in us.

4. "Power to Believe" preached on September 4, 2010. This message had the purpose of showing that love is acquired through a relationship either with God or with other people.

5. "Power to Wait" preached on September 11, 2010. This message had the purpose of showing that love is provide the power to be patient and not to let God work.

Series: "Essentials for 2011" Preached on January 8 though March 5, 2011

A topical series with the purpose of sharing the Vision in a practical way presenting ways in which it can be part of who we are.

Topics:

1. "Essentials for life" preached on January 8, 2011. This message had the purpose of creating awareness that life cannot be lived to the fullest without certain essentials.

2. "Living by Grace" preached on January 15, 2011. This message had the purpose of showing that we have not earned anything we have. It all belongs to God and our responsibility is to be grateful for the blessings he has given us.

3. "Spiritual Connection" preached on January 22, 2011. This message had the purpose of creating awareness of the importance of spiritual growth.

4. "Connecting with others" preached on January 29, 2011. This message had the purpose of creating awareness that life cannot be lived alone, that life is best lived when others are part of it.

5. "Solid Foundation" preached on February 5, 2011. This message had the purpose of showing the Holy Scriptures as the basis for our vision and life experience.

6. "How to make decisions" preached on February 12, 2011. This message had the purpose of showing the importance of purposeful decision making and that every decision we make today, affects the next generation.

7. "Investing your life" preached on February 19, 2011. This message had the purpose of

showing that we are God's creation with our differences and qualities and that we are to share our gifts for God serving others.

8. "Tell God you love Him" preached on February 26, 2011. This message had the purpose of showing that the best way to tell God we love Him is when we serve the needy and the helpless.

9. "Be who God made you to be" preached on March 5, 2011. This message had the purpose of motivating the people to fulfill the vision of God in their lives and in that way fulfilling the church's vision.

Series: "Family 2012" Preached on June 2 though June 16, 2012

A topical series with the purpose of sharing the Vision of the church taking the family setting as the background and image of the purposes of God.

      Topics:

1. "A Relationship" preached on June 2, 2012. This message had the purpose of showing the relationship and similarities of the church to a family. When the family is healthy, so is the church.

2. "What God Says" preached on June 9, 2012. This message had the purpose of showing God's plan for the family and it's relationship to the church.

3. "Everyone Needs One" preached on June 16, 2012. This message had the purpose of showing the need to belong to God's family even when we don't have a blood family.

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