INTEGRATING WORSHIP PEDAGOGY INTO NEW MEMBERSHIP CURRICULUM
FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

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INTEGRATING WORSHIP PEDAGOGY INTO NEW MEMBERSHIP CURRICULUM FOR
THE LOCAL CHURCH

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Abstract

A review of current research reveals there is a deficit in several models for new membership classes among Christian churches. In reviewing the current model examples the introduction and explanation of worship to new members as part of the new membership curriculum is missing. This deficit has implications toward churches that are having challenges with church membership. One of the challenges includes members grasping the importance of worship and its impact on members assimilating into the local church body. To address the gap in literature and the challenges with understanding worship, research examining local church curricula and performing class observations of a church's membership classes are necessary. In response to what is necessary, this thesis project produces two critical elements. The first critical element is a rationale for including the topic of worship within a church's new membership curriculum. The second critical element is that this thesis project provides an explicit curriculum guide that integrates worship principles and pedagogy, which produces the New Members Unified Curriculum Guide. Greater effort needs to occur to help new members understand the relevance of worship for assimilating into the life of a church and the importance of developing a lifestyle of personal and corporate worship. This thesis project provides tools to encourage the efforts of local churches to address systematically new church members and their understanding of worship.

Keywords: corporate worship, worship curriculum, church assimilation, worship pedagogy, church membership, worship participation
Dedication

To my heavenly Father and my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

I am overwhelmed with emotion simply because you love me and for which I am eternally grateful. My response in reverence of you is to fulfill the words of Psalm 57:7, "My heart is fixed, Oh God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." What lies ahead you know and for the sake of worship, I am dedicated to follow.

In memory to the spiritual influences of Evelyn Newbill, May Lou Washington, James Elwood Washington, Jeanne Holmes, Sister Ruby Mitchell, and Pastor Hattie Dotson

They trained me in the ways of the Lord and nurtured every gift that God gave me to use for His glory.
Acknowledgements

As a psalmist, teacher and worship leader, the journey of following the instructions of the Lord has led me to this particular point in time. My passion for serving the Lord and ministering to people needed additional preparation and a paradigm shift in my own thinking with regard to ministry, church membership, and worship. Because of this project, as I move forward in both my personal ministry and commitments to my local church, my litmus question will be, "Am I where the Lord wants me to be in order to fulfill my divine purpose of worshiping God in spirit and in truth?"

Coming to this realization would not have been possible without the leadership and spiritual examples of the following people: Dr. Vernon M. Whaley, Dr. Rodney Whaley, Dr. L. Lavon Gray, and Dr. Robert Morgan. All of your teachings and guidance provided invaluable preparation over the past eight years. I am now able to go forth and share the truth and authenticity of worship with others regardless of the denomination. Today, I understand that denominations are not barriers but opportunities to share the wonder of what worship is and how we can all live a lifestyle of worship that glorifies God.

Dr. Donald Ellsworth and Dr. Paul Rumrill are trailblazers for the Truth. Your patience, understanding and contributions to this research project occurred with excellence. You encouraged the research and supported my efforts every step of the way. Thank you for believing in my vision.

Thank you Stephanie Pritchard and Dr. Ossie McKinney. While there are some out in the limelight making things happen, there is always someone behind the scenes enabling processes to flow unhindered. Your grace and support has been valuable. I am grateful for every time you extended yourself to ensure that I would complete this project and the D.W.S. program.
Chaplain Leona Ryan, I am forever blessed to have you walking alongside me in ministry. Thank you for your wisdom and listening to my thesis ideas and helping me navigate the excitement for teaching others to be true worshipers.

This project would not have been possible without the support of Associate Pastor Reverend Jerome Glover, Reverend Lisa Mims, Deaconess Tjien Johnston, and Reverend Adam Parker. Each of you provided opportunities and spiritual encouragement that enabled me to "finish strong" with this project and to stay the course of fulfilling the calling on my life as a worshiper.

I am a better person in Christ because of my family and very close friends. Thank you Desmond Newbill, Patricia Leakins, Mary Taylor, James Washington, Sr., Gail Washington, Cheryl Williams, and Crystal Wynn. You constantly provide a listening ear every time the Lord directs my path and always ensure that I have the physical, emotional and mental tenacity to move according to His will.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statistics are revealing that churches are increasing the element of new membership classes as part of their local church. For example in April and May of 2012, 1,066 Southern Baptist Convention pastors participated in a survey that focused on new membership classes. The research disseminated the matter of new member classes into four categories with the following results:¹

- 57% of the churches had no membership classes. There was nothing for the new members even if they requested some level of training.
- 7% of the churches had available membership classes, but they did not encourage new members to attend. The class was more or less an option among many in these churches. Church leadership had no systemic plan to move new members toward the classes.
- 21% of the churches had membership classes and encouraged new members to attend. While attending the class was not a requisite for membership, the class was a high priority with the leaders. They exhorted the new members to attend.
- 14% of the churches required the new member class to be a member of the church. Not coincidentally, these churches tend to have the highest assimilation rates.

With more churches including new membership classes, church ministry is evolving in order to be relevant and grow their congregations. Churches today are more interested in building their ministry through relationships versus programs. There is a desire to empower their members to serve within their church and outside within the community. There is also more discussion about evangelism and edification for the sustaining of both the local and global church.

In relationship to membership, there is an understanding that there are specific purposes of the church in order to be relevant and experience church growth. The purposes include evangelism, discipleship, mutual support and encouragement, and community outreach and

service.\textsuperscript{2} Together these purposes have relationships that begin with worship and become interdependent upon one another. Maintaining these purposes hinges on worship being the source of spiritual power influencing all areas of ministry. As a result, the connection between church purposes and growth occurs.

In the content of many churches' membership orientation classes, relevance, growth and purposes tend to be highlighted. Author, Rick Warren, provides a list of important questions that should be addressed by a church’s new membership class. By reviewing the list, one can see how answering these questions provides an opportunity for new members to become oriented about a particular church’s relevance, growth expectations and purposes. The list is as follows:\textsuperscript{3}

1. What is a church?
2. What are the purposes of a church?
3. What are the benefits of being a member?
4. What are the requirements for membership?
5. What are the responsibilities of membership?
6. What is the vision and strategy of this church?
7. How is the church organized?
8. How can I get involved in ministry?
9. What do I do now that I am a member?

In examining several examples of church membership orientation outlines and manuals, there is evidence of churches attempting to answer all of the above questions. For example, Brookland Baptist Church of Columbia, South Carolina membership class content includes the

\begin{itemize}
\item[2] Ibid., 72–73.
\end{itemize}
conversion experience, Christian growth, the meaning of church membership, basic Baptist beliefs, stewardship, and the tithe. Another example is the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Their new members’ manual covers the history of the church, pastoral ministries, Christian formation forums, the sharing and caring ministries, stewardship, evangelism, memorials and thanksgiving, and administration.

In reviewing the content offered for a church’s membership orientation, a pattern begins to emerge. The topic of worship and the role it serves to support a church's purpose is missing, or the use of worship refers to music instead of principles and pedagogy. To help address this need, an introductory curriculum on worship and membership needs to be developed. This particular curriculum would support the engagement of new church members in the life of the church through transformational worship. The purpose of this thesis project is to demonstrate the importance of an introduction to a new membership curriculum that integrates worship principles and pedagogy.

**Background of the Problem**

Many churchgoers are not aware of the definition of worship or even their role as a worshiper. Their understanding of worship tends to occur through bits of information expressed by worship leaders and senior pastors during corporate worship. However, many churchgoers are in need of a deeper understanding of what worship is and how it shapes their lives as members of their church. They need an understanding of how their personal worship has a bearing on experiencing true and authentic worship.
Statement of the Problem

Due to a growing emphasis on worship, many churches are more interested in accentuating audience-based worship instead of performance-based worship. More churches are interested in members who participate in weekly worship versus attending worship services as spectators. In order for this to occur, church members need education about the importance of authentic worship, both personal and corporate. If church members lack education on this subject, then their church assimilation, participation, and growth in the local church body may be hampered. This problem could be addressed via a worship component in a new member curriculum. New member classes would be a start because in a survey conducted by LifeWay Research, two thirds of the 5,000 individuals surveyed do not attend regular classes for adults like Sunday school, Bible studies or other small group activities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project is to encourage churches to integrate worship pedagogy in the new member orientation curriculum. This new addition to the curriculum would help new members orient into the worship life of their church. The introduction of worship principles and pedagogy as part of the new members’ orientation class will help address some common issues that arise with corporate worship. Craig Gilbert identified one of these issues when he wrote, “Most if not all of the people attending worship at [our] church have learned whatever they know


about worship by observation alone.”⁶ Another issue is participation during worship. Often church members will engage in corporate worship by being observant or as attendees who have been invited to listen and at times sing along when asked by worship teams.⁷ This is an issue because worship entails a willing response to God who initiates and reveals himself. Worship does not entail being a spectator or being prompted by someone to respond to God with worshipful acts. In addition, churchgoers sometimes confuse an emotional response to music with experiencing the true presence of God. This is an issue because while music can elicit emotion, worshipers need to be able to discern when they are experiencing the true presence of God.

**Significance of the Study**

A growing number of Christian churches have a gap in the understanding of personal and corporate worship. There is also a gap in the understanding of the role of worship in the life of the church. Furthermore, there is a breach in the new member’s understanding of his or her role in the life of the church as a worshiper. Bearing in mind the aforementioned gaps, addressing them through education on worship is needed. An initial start to addressing these gaps can begin through the membership class curriculum having an embedded introductory worship component. Enhancing the membership curriculum will better prepare the hearts of believers to engage in acts of worship and encourage spiritual growth.

The purpose of new membership classes is to afford opportunities for integration into the life of the local church through personal interactions and relationships with a focus on the mission and vision of the church. The integration of introductory worship principles and

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⁷ Ibid.
pedagogy will add to the education experience of new members. This is significant because “education is a vital ingredient to an effective church program.” As part of the membership curriculum, introducing the content of personal and corporate worship practices as part of the new member’s experience will add to the idea of education, relationship and needs being addressed. “We need to 'reach out and teach' with a 'reach out and touch' attitude. Relationships do not develop only through education and knowledge. They develop as the churches identify with the needs of people.” The review of literature reveals how one of the important needs of new church members is to develop a worship lifestyle. This worship education will have long-lasting implications on their personal and church lives.

In addition, encouraging people to embrace personal and corporate worship through the membership classes will help address the issue of retention or the "back door" phenomenon of church members. By introducing worship early to new members, they will begin a path that will enable them to identify how worship encompasses all of life both within and outside of the church. The urge to want to gather corporately for worship will also be reinforced. The outcome to this idea is that new members will eventually be disciples who have been spiritually transformed by worship.

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9 Ibid.
Research Questions

The following three questions are addressed by this project relating to new members’ orientation classes with regard to worship:

1. What is the current content used in an orientation class for new members?
2. Is the subject of worship addressed for new members?
3. How does the inclusion of a worship component augment the assimilation of new members into the worshiping community?

Working Hypothesis

The introduction of worship pedagogy is needed in the new member orientation curriculum and in the membership classes of the local churches. There is an interdependent relationship between understanding what worship is and the participation of church members in the life and work of their local church body. This directly impacts the spiritual growth and assimilation of church members.

Research Method and Plan

The research for this thesis project will involve active participation in local churches. The local churches currently have a pastor, or a designee that oversees the discipleship programs which includes the churches’ mandatory new membership classes. The new membership classes occur in person as well as in an online format. Working with each local church, an intense review of the membership curriculum will occur. The review will determine how worship principles and pedagogy are embedded in the curriculum. Also, the discipleship teachers will be shadowed in order to observe them during actual classroom presentations with new members. This will enable the opportunity to experience the current new membership curriculum and to
observe how worship is incorporated into the learning process. At the completion of shadowing the discipleship teachers, the local churches will receive an enhanced new membership curriculum guide that contains embedded worship principles and pedagogy.

**Definition of Terms**

*Assimilation*

For this thesis project, assimilation relates to new church members. By definition, assimilation is the process by which members of a church become integrated into the life of the church through intentional involvement in ministry, fellowship, spiritual growth and service.

*Back Door*

The “back door” concept describes how new members sometimes enter through the front door of the church and quietly leave the church without anyone following up or noticing.

*Church Member*

The following definition applies when referencing the phrase church member: A member of the Christian community, or of a particular Christian denomination or congregation; a person who belongs to a church.

*Curriculum*

In this thesis project, the developed curriculum is an explicit curriculum. Explicit curriculum entails the topics to be taught, the identified "mission" or purpose of the specific topic covered and the knowledge and skills that successful church members will acquire from the taught curriculum.
Evangelical

For the purposes of this project, evangelical is defined as “any of the classical Protestant churches or their offshoots, but especially in the late 20th century, churches that stress the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, personal conversion experiences, Scripture as the sole basis for faith, and active evangelism (the winning of personal commitments to Christ).”¹⁰

Local/Christian Church

“The local church is a group of people who are united with Christ through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ and repentance of sins and who have been united with one another by Christ’s baptism of them into His body by the Holy Spirit. These individuals have then obeyed Christ in receiving the outward physical sign of the basis for the forgiveness of their sins (the death and resurrection of Jesus) and their baptism by the Spirit, namely water baptism by immersion. A local church is led by pastors, served by deacons, administers the ordinances (baptism and the Lord’s Supper) and is governed congregationally under the headship of Jesus Christ by His Word. Local churches…seek to exposit the Scriptures in preaching, exalt the Savior in worship, equip the saints in discipleship, and evangelize sinners as their mission.”¹¹

Membership

Membership relates to a person in a local church that actively participates and purposefully joins with other believers to carry out the purpose of the church as a unified body.


**Worship**

The biblical definition of worship is defined as Shâchâh (shaw-khaw) in Hebrew (Old Testament). The means to be prostrate in homage to royalty or God, to bow down, fall down, do reverence, or make to stoop. The biblical definition of worship in Greek (New Testament) means Prôskunēō (pros-koo-neh-o). This is defined as to kiss, to fawn, crouch, to prostrate oneself in homage, do reverence to, or adore.

With regard to application, "Worship involves all that is inside a person, all that is outside a person, and all that takes place within the corporate assembly of God's people."¹²

**Corporate Worship**

"Worship refers to [the] self-expression of a particular church community in a public celebration of its faith. It has both vertical and horizontal dimensions: one's relation to God and one's relationship with fellow worshipers. It is an expression of adoration and praise to God in community."¹³ Another definition as it relates to corporate worship is described as, "To worship is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community. It is breaking into the Shekinah (glory) of God, or better yet, being invaded by the Shekinah (glory) of God."¹⁴

**Assumptions**

In conducting this thesis project, there is an assumption that one is already familiar with the issues or challenges facing churches about church membership acquisition and retention. It is

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assumed that people already understand the significance of membership classes for the effectiveness of church ministry and growth.

With regard to application, there is an assumption that all new members of churches attend membership orientation classes. With that said, there is also the assumption that everyone who joins a local church desires to grow and be a part of a worshiping community.

**Limitations**

For this thesis project, there are specific limitations taken into consideration. This project provides a new membership curriculum guide designed to include an introduction to personal and corporate worship for membership orientation. The suggested curriculum guide is not intended to include an exhaustive examination of worship but will provide a foundation for new members that can be expounded upon by a church in future small study groups.

This project is not designed to address a particular church denomination and that denomination’s efforts for worship. However, the principles and suggestions to address worship can be adapted to suit the needs of a particular affiliation. One should take into account that further study and assessment may be required in order to meet the specific needs of a particular denomination.

This thesis project is not designed to provide a complete solution to the problem of membership assimilation. However, this is designed to provide a bridge to members assimilating into the life of a church. As active worshipers, there is the understanding that members will establish a communal relationship in their church and outside of their church within their community. This may also have an impact on increasing membership retention.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, the approach to the literature review focuses on what is being said about the essential elements that directly relate to the subjects of church membership and worship. This approach is necessary because there is virtually no literature on the topic of integrating worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum. However, several scholarly materials discuss church membership along with its challenges such as assimilation and evangelism. There are also several scholarly materials on the topic of worship, including understanding what worship is and how to educate others about its importance to the church body.

Church Membership

Church membership has its challenges. For example, Kurt Willems, author of Does Church Membership Still Matter?, provides some insight about church membership and its relevance to the twenty-first century. Willems asserts that church membership should focus more on the mission of God as a community where one day God will restore and make all things new as reflected in the book of Revelation. This will help address the 19.6% of United States citizens that consider themselves to be in a category called "nones."15 This category of people considers themselves to be a religious person that is spiritual but religiously unaffiliated. These individuals are more concerned with kingdom work and less focused on being a part of church committees and church meetings.

In the journal article, Loose Connections: What's Happening to Church Membership?, Amy Frykholm shares another challenge occurring with church membership today. She

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introduces sociologist Robert Wuthnow's term called loose connections as applying to a current trend happening with church membership. People, especially young people, prefer to make informal connections that occur through networks instead of through institutions like churches. This is due to the occurrence of geographical transience and technological shifts. “Although churchgoers still have friends at their local congregations, they now have loose ties with friends, organizations and information sources that span the globe.”\textsuperscript{16} Frykholm shares that due to the development of the trend with loose connections, churches are going to have to develop new ways of thinking when it comes to church membership. Frykholm believes contemporary churches will need to be more intuitive and more spiritual in nature.\textsuperscript{17}

Similar to the previous authors, Irma Fast Dueck, Associate Professor of Practical Theology at Canadian Mennonite University, has similar beliefs as to the challenges churches are facing with church membership. Although Dueck's \textit{Getting All Wet: Baptism and Church Membership} is written to address church membership being directly tied to baptism, the author provides significant details that further address the plight of church membership as a whole. For instance, Dueck describes the presence of a "post-commitment" culture. Meaning churches want to appear to be hospitable so fewer demands are placed on church members and at times it is hard to tell the difference between members and non-members. In contrast, there are churches that recognize the existence of the post-commitment culture; however, higher expectations of church members are encouraged.


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 21.
Dueck also shares how opposing arguments "contend that belonging is relational and does not need to be linked with a bureaucratic agenda." Dueck deepens the discussion by asserting that Christendom is in rapid decline. She shares how there are claims that today there is post-Christendom due to pluralism and radical relativism. She further asserts that church membership has its issues due to people seeing a church as an institution. In today's society, "the institutions people once trusted (church, police, health care, education, etc.) have all become suspect." Because institutions are seen in such light, membership and Christendom is declining.

According to Keith M. Wulff, Coordinator of Research Services for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), another challenge is the sermon or the pastor. Through research, he asserts that church membership is declining due to the pastors of churches. He shares his research in an article called, Are Pastors the Cause of the Loss of Church Membership? Wulff provides an analysis of data beginning in 1982 where he chronologically demonstrates a direct tie of the sermon to people returning for future church services. His argument represents several denominations such as Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian. In one study on Baby Boomers, 45% of them were no longer active in the church 15 or 20 years later after 1982. He shares that in one study by Ida Smith-Williams of Research Services from 1990 to 2001, Presbyterians lost about 9% of their membership.

To support his thoughts about membership declining due to the pastors of churches, he cites additional data from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2003. He shares how just 36% of first time attendees return after a first visit to a church because of the quality of the sermon. Also, Research Services in 1998 stated that 65% of new members mentioned the quality of a sermon

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19 Ibid., 41.

having an influence on returning to a church. 21 All of this is interesting to note because the preached Word is a vital worship practice.

As the article progresses, the author makes the logical argument that people join the church because of the pastor or the pastor’s sermon and leave for the same reason. He performed a ten year study of an American Lutheran Church and found that membership declined due to the pastor’s sermons. Wulff cites another study by Hoge from 1994 where respondents admitted leaving their churches due to the pastor. He closes his argument by stating, "Visit a number of congregations and listen to a variety of preaching. I am sure if you do you will agree that a sound study looking at the role of preaching in the decline of membership is long overdue." 22

The challenges with church membership seem to point to an overall lack of understanding of authentic worship and its purpose when people assemble as a church body or join a church. The authors’ discussions of the challenges with the "nones," loose connections, confusion around baptism and membership, the post-commitment culture, the decline of Christendom, and a pastor's weekly sermons being tied to a person's commitment to church membership all point to a glaring issue. These challenges exist in large part because church members are lacking in their understanding of what is true worship, God's expectations of worshipers and the overall role of worship in the life of a believer. The discussed challenges by the authors reinforce that there is a greater need for individuals to be taught the principles of true worship and its relationship to personal and corporate worship as a believer and church member. This can begin with new members by integrating worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum.

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., 6.
While there are challenges with church membership, there are efforts to provide solutions. For instance, Chuck Lawless delves into the importance of new member classes. In his book, *Membership Matters*, he presents information on churches that have been effective with their church members in the areas of membership and assimilation. Lawless tackles the importance of relationships, the challenges for church leaders, and getting people to join the church. The author provides guidelines for membership classes for current members, new believers, and transferred church members.

Lawless's research on church membership reveals church leaders’ purposes for new membership classes. The purposes include providing orientation to the church in general, teaching about the church’s basic doctrine and offering opportunities for new members to get involved in the ministry of the church.\(^{23}\) Specific elements of a curriculum for a membership class includes the history of the church and basic beliefs about the Word, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin, salvation, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The classes can also include topics about the spiritual disciplines, evangelism, the vision of the church, supporting the church through giving and opportunities for service.\(^{24}\)

Lawless's information acknowledges the issues with church membership such as the influence of the pastor that Wulff spoke of, expectations of church members and the importance of establishing relationships to combat loose connections as described by Frykholm. In Lawless's *Membership Matters*, he suggests developing an expectation pentagon and having a plan or process to support church members with ministry placement. Because individuals matter, he further shares insight on what to do once a membership class is completed. As part of membership, people need mentorship and discipleship. Lawless believes the key is one life at a

\(^{23}\) Chuck Lawless, *Membership Matters: Insights from Effective Churches on New Member Classes and Assimilation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 50.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 57.
time guiding and showing members how to live further reinforcing that membership matters because individuals matter.

As a follow-up to Membership Matters, Chuck Lawless shares information about trends with church membership, in an online article called, 9 Trends in Church Membership and Assimilation Processes. Lawless who is the Dean and Vice-President of Graduate Studies and Ministry Centers at Southeastern Seminary and a Professor of Evangelism and Missions, describes some 21st century trends in the church. He mentions how in his close to twenty years of studying churches, there are changes occurring with church membership and the process of members assimilating within the church body. More specifically, he is noticing the trends among newer and younger congregations. His presentation of the nine trends covers the areas of membership classes, the "back door", church discipline and membership issues.

One trend is that "more churches are emphasizing membership, including requiring a membership class." The purpose is for leaders to get to know their members and members to be held accountable. Another trend is that "churches are doing their homework before admitting members." This has become necessary as a result of members moving from church to church and possibly bringing undesirable baggage to a new congregation. There is a current trend of churches working on closing the “back door.” Lawless mentions how small groups and mentoring are "essential discipleship strategies for closing the back door." There are current debates around the elements of church membership that pertain to the church covenant and even the process of church discipline. Virtually all of Lawless's trends have a direct impact on church membership and the content of membership classes.


26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.
Based on the works of Chuck Lawless, to address the challenges with church membership, churches are incorporating membership classes along with members experiencing mentorship and discipleship. However, the literature reveals that these efforts are not making the subject of worship a vital solution to addressing the challenges with church membership. While it is good that churches recognize the existence of challenges with church membership as a whole, there is still room for educating church members in a deeper manner. Addressing the challenges with church membership can begin with educating members about their purpose as worshipers and what that entails when one belongs to a church body.

**Assimilation**

Joining a church and becoming an active part of the church body takes assimilation. To reach potentially interested church-goers and members, churches are becoming innovative about assimilation. As an example, Danny Von Kanel in his journal article called *Assimilation: The Touch, See & Hear Approach to Integrating People into Your Church*, provides insight on the assimilation work of three specific churches: Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Highland Park United Methodist in Dallas, Texas and Idlewild Baptist Church in Tampa, Florida. Von Kanel shares how the churches successfully use the touch, see and hear approach for people to integrate and serve in the body of Christ. It is important that people experience visits in their homes, personalized receptions, and individualized attention when coming to a church as a new member.

Physical touch is necessary for church members to experience contact with other people in the assimilation process. For example, Idlewild Baptist Church’s invitation counselors provide a physical touch. Von Kanel mentions how visual techniques are helpful to enhancing assimilation for church members. Highland Park, for instance, sponsors a special event called
Discovery Sunday and provides visual displays that give information about the church’s ministries. According to Von Kanel, the “hearing aspect of assimilation is critical to integrating people into church life.”

As an illustration, Coral Ridge has team members that intentionally speak words of care and interest to their visitors and believes this is critical to reaching people.

In summation, Von Kanel writes, “The more a church uses the senses to engage people in what they are about, the greater the possibility exists for keeping, integrating, and nurturing people in church life.”

Thom Rainer, founding dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, provides insight on churches that are successfully engaging their church members in his journal article, Assimilation: High Expectations. During his research, Rainer discovered the importance of a pastor being in his position for more than 9 years as the average for high assimilation churches. Also, expository preaching has an effect on the churches attendance and ministry involvement. Churches that close the "back door" place emphasis on the Bridger generation (people born between 1977 and 1994), which is the second largest generation in America's history. Similar to Dueck, Rainer noted that a major theme among high assimilation churches is there are high expectations for church members.


29 Ibid., 38.

30 Ibid., 39.
Charles M. Stone Jr., a teaching pastor at Crossroad Grace Community Church in Manteca, California provides four steps to avoid dropping the Assimilation Baton. He compares the assimilation process of church members to a relay race that needs to have a successful handoff and it covers four steps. The first step is to throw out an outreach net, offer a sampling event as a second step, and create a Velcro process, which is a series of classes (or small group meetings) that last long enough to help new people begin to "stick" to the church. The final step entails linking new members to a "greenhouse," where through Sunday School ministry or small group ministry members have an opportunity to feel a sense of belonging, gain ownership and experience spiritual growth.

Just like church membership, assimilation is not without its own challenges. John S. Powers, pastor of First Baptist Church, in Norfolk, Virginia and author of the journal article, *Assimilation: 8 Myths of Church Membership*, shares how many churches have adopted some repetitious mythological membership models from generation to generation. Several of these mythological models have had little impact on assimilation. According to Powers, there are erroneous patterns that churches either have engaged in or have accepted about church membership. These erroneous patterns have occurred from generation to generation weakening the church’s impact on those who believe and follow Jesus Christ.

Powers identifies eight specific myths that are undermining the assimilation process of church membership. His first myth identifies how volunteerism is equated with the church, which is an organization. As a result, church attendance is highly impacted with research

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showing that more than 50% of church members are absent every Sunday.\textsuperscript{32} Another example of a myth is programs outweigh purpose. This is a challenge because people will become loyal to a program and forsake a ministry’s purpose. Another myth discussed is the idea that “membership cannot have expectations placed on it.”\textsuperscript{33} Similar to the authors Dueck and Rainer, Powers debunks this myth and expresses the need for expectations to be given to church members.

Through his discussion of the eight myths, Powers encourages churches to address the mythical models of church membership so that church members will be "free to discover the true joy of serving the Lord and ministering to one another."\textsuperscript{34}

\textit{Evangelism}

Church membership and assimilation are connected to effective evangelism. For instance, in \textit{Church Wake-Up Call}, the authors William and Le Etta Benke share insight on specific issues related to outreach. Issues have arisen during the 21st century and it is in large part due to America's major cultural changes. These changes are challenging churches’ traditional values and Christian influence. In response to this, the authors do not focus on the problems, societal trends and programs to address the issues. Instead, they present strategic basic principles and an easy-to-implement management process to help with the challenges facing our churches.

\textit{Church Wake-Up Call} sheds light on evangelism and its connection to worship and ministry. This is important because the church can become "so engrossed in activities that sight of its real purposes becomes clouded or lost."\textsuperscript{35} Echoing the author, John S. Powers’s concern


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 19.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 20.

regarding programs versus purpose, the authors, Benke and Benke, delve deeper into the importance of purpose versus programs. Specifically, they demonstrate how evangelism is a by-product of purposes within the church that are interdependent and mutually supportive. This idea is presented through what the authors identify as five purpose categories that are worship, evangelism, discipleship, mutual support and encouragement, and community outreach and service. Worship, as one of the five purposes, is at the top of the interrelationship because worship is the "source of spiritual power impacting all areas of ministry." Outreach and evangelism begin with worship as the source of the relationship.

To help support assimilation and evangelism, the authors, Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin present effective strategies for evangelism and assimilation in their book, Finding Them, Keeping Them. When a church considers evangelism, five specific strategies can unite and balance a church's efforts to bring people into the "front door" of the church community. The strategies are the following: 1) Be present in your community, 2) Proclaim the gospel, 3) Persuade people to accept Christ, 4) Help people progress in the Christian life and 5) Help people produce new believers.

Furthermore, McIntosh and Martin present five assimilation strategies to effectively help members join the church and become active members in their church. The strategies are the following: help people develop friendships, help people become involved, help people belong, help people work together, and help people grow in their faith. Also, churches that effectively win and sustain new members have a plan for progression evangelism. This plan involves three key ministries. Ministry number one is a new believer's orientation that introduces new believers to the faith. Ministry number two is an orientation for new members, yet they are challenged to

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36 Ibid., 72.

37 Ibid., 73.
commit to their church. Ministry number three focuses on discipleship and motivates people to grow in their walk with Christ.

McIntosh's and Martin's evangelism and assimilation strategies relate to William and Le Etta Benke's presentation of the church's five interrelated purposes: worship, evangelism, discipleship, mutual support and encouragement, and community outreach and service. McIntosh and Martin help answer the question of how to flesh out the interrelated purposes. There are specific actions and elements of ministry needed in order for worship to successfully be at the root of evangelism.

Based on the literature, the efforts of churches to address assimilation and evangelism seem to be pointing in the right direction with church membership. For instance, the authors William and Le Etta Benke are on the right path of encouraging people to understand the role of worship and its impact on evangelism and ultimately church membership. The other authors' suggestions of church actions such as having high expectations, encouraging people to focus on their purpose and helping people to grow in their faith all lend to what is needed to address assimilation and evangelism. However, people who seek to join a church and be active still need a greater understanding of how all of this directly connects to one's comprehension of worship. Meaning, if one seeks to assimilate or evangelize, is the motive because of church membership? Or, is the motive to fulfill the true purpose of worship as a believer? The proper motive would need to be taught and reinforced with church-goers who seek to be active in their churches.

**Spiritual Growth & Membership Classes**

The expected outcome for church members is spiritual growth and a relationship with God that is Christ-centered. In *MOVE* by Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, they delve into what 1,000 churches reveal about spiritual growth and the truth about church. "The purposes of
our churches - our commission, as church leaders - [are] to help people in our congregations to become disciples who obey Jesus by loving God and loving others."\(^{38}\) To gauge this purpose, the authors share their research findings from their REVEAL Spiritual Life Survey, which is a tool that was implemented with over 1,000 diverse congregations yielding more than 250,000 responses from church members.

In terms of church membership, the authors present information on four segments of church members representing a spiritual continuum. The four segments are Exploring Christ, Growing in Christ, Close to Christ and Christ-centered. The authors compare this segmented continuum to the "progression of an entering freshman class to eventual graduation. The paths of individual students will be unique. Some may transfer or drop out; others may change their major fields of study more than once. But, in general, the class will progress as a group through similar but varied learning experiences and graduate..."\(^{39}\)

*MOVE* provides a background approach for membership classes in that at least four types of attendees will participate in a church's class. Through classes, or paths, their spiritual growth will cover the following areas: spiritual beliefs and attitudes, personal spiritual practices, organized church activities and spiritual activities with others.

This knowledge helps determine the essential content to embed into membership classes. The author's work and research assist with supporting the importance of including the essential content of worship pedagogy into membership classes. Doing so will help church members spiritually grow toward loving God and loving others.

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\(^{39}\) Ibid., 26.
"Joining a church used to be an act of conformity in our society. You joined a church because everybody else did. Now the rules have changed and conformity is no longer the motivating factor...Instead, membership is now an act of commitment,"\textsuperscript{40} writes Rick Warren, the author of \textit{The Purpose-Driven Church}. Warren demonstrates the importance of church membership by making clear connections to the need for members to experience spiritual growth and required membership classes.

Warren's work helps demonstrate the connections of church membership to the need for membership classes and the role of worship. Warren discusses the benefits of church membership such as how membership provides a spiritual family to support and encourage church members in their walk with Christ. He also shares the need for personalizing the purpose of the church and establishing required membership classes. Similar to the authors Dueck, Rainer and Powers, Warren expounds on the importance of expectations and provides details around church members growing in their commitment. Just like the authors Hawkins and Parkinson of \textit{MOVE}, Warren presents the growth of church members as a process, more specifically as involving five circles of commitment that entails a life development process. Warren's continuum entails members growing from unchurched to regular attendees to members to maturing members to eventually lay ministers. While members are spiritually growing, they are moving from knowing Christ to growing in Christ to serving Christ and finally sharing Christ.\textsuperscript{41} They become a follower of Jesus Christ, or a disciple.

Through \textit{The Complete Book of Discipleship} by Bill Hull, the subject of discipleship is thoroughly discussed from a biblical, historical and modern approach. There are several ways in

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{warren1} Warren, \textit{The Purpose Driven Church}, 312–13.
\bibitem{ibid1} Ibid., 130.
\end{thebibliography}
which discipleship has become convoluted over time and Hull seeks to clarify and define discipleship. He presents the concepts of classic discipleship, spiritual formation, and environmental discipleship. Hull also makes the distinction of defining the terms disciple, disciple-making, discipleship, and spiritual formation. He clearly connects all of the terms to the importance of being conformed to Christ's image.

There are stages to a person's discipleship as well as personal approaches to disciple-making. The process of one's spiritual transformation is directly tied to the role of spiritual disciplines in a disciple's life. Furthermore, the growth of a disciple is connected to experiencing small group instruction even though the group of disciples will encompass a broad spectrum of spiritual maturity.

Hull's work on discipleship helps define an approach to teaching a disciple about worship. According to Hull, "a disciple...is the normal Christian who follows Christ." The normal Christian who follows Christ will need to be conformed and transformed to the image of Christ. As a disciple, a normal Christian who follows Christ will need to be mentored and participate in worship. Disciples, or followers of Jesus Christ, through instruction, need to learn that, "Worship becomes a key part of discipleship because, in worship, we break ourselves out of the habit of interpreting all events in God's story as centered on ourselves. We learn to think of ourselves as participants, as supporting cast, as servants who focus on the drama's main character: the triune God we serve."

Discipleship Essentials written by Greg Ogden is dedicated to helping individuals grow in their walk as disciples of Jesus Christ. To be a Christian means being a disciple of Jesus Christ."

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43 Ibid., 219.
Christ. Because of this truth, Ogden presents basic information a disciple needs in order to practice a life of spiritual disciplines, to comprehend core biblical and theological truths, to develop his or her character and lifestyle, and to engage the church and world through specific actions. The author covers this information by fleshing out the need for disciples to grow up in Christ, understand the message of Christ, become like Christ, and serve Christ.

On the subject of worship, Ogden dedicates an entire chapter to the subject of worship in connection to spiritually growing in Christ. Ogden shares a reading called *Handling the Trauma of Holiness* by Darrell Johnson. Johnson writes, "If it is true that the 'chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever' (Westminster Shorter Catechism), then fundamentally the church is a worshiping community." He also affirms the understanding of worship with regards to the need for being authentic. Johnson states, "...authentic worship of God is a function of our affirmation that He is here and our understanding of who He is."

When the topic of spiritual growth is addressed with supporting church membership, a pattern begins to emerge. A review of the literature in this area reveals some authors are introducing the understanding of worship and the need for members to experience spiritual growth. For example, an element of spiritual growth entails following Jesus Christ and being a disciple. Also, the author, Greg Ogden is on the appropriate path with tying discipleship to worship. Based on the overall literature, more churches are discussing the ingredients for a church member's spiritual growth. Yet, membership classes discussing spiritual growth need to be explicit and make the concrete connection of spiritual growth being essential to fulfilling one's purpose as a worshiper. There is still a need to demonstrate through instruction how

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45 Ibid.
spiritual growth in action represents acts of worship and fulfills God's expectations as the One who created man for worship. This helps support the need for local churches to integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum.

**Worship**

The subject of worship is directly tied to a member's experience with assimilation, evangelism and spiritual growth. Because of this, understanding the theology of worship is necessary. David Peterson demonstrates the biblical theology of worship in his book called *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*. Peterson, an ordained minister of the Anglican Church of Australia with a Ph.D. from the University of Manchester, presents a guide on the biblical teaching of worship in relationship to the Old Testament, New Testament and the Gospels. With regard to principles of worship, "Jesus is not the focus or object of worship in [John] 4:23-24 but the means by which the Father obtains true worshippers from every nation." He further informs that worship entails adoration that expresses awe and grateful submission. Worship is service rendered to God and deemed as acceptable. Worship is also reverence or fear of the Lord that is reflected in a total lifestyle that honors God.

Peterson discusses what worship is and its significance to a Christian's life. He helps support why understanding worship and practicing worship is important. He writes, "Vitality and meaning will not be restored to Christian gatherings until those who lead and those who participate can recover a biblical perspective on their meetings, seeing them in relation to God's total plan and purpose for His people." When the church gathers together, vertical and

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47 Ibid., 21.
horizontal dimensions occur, which is a part of God's plan. According to Peterson, God ministers to the people, the people respond to God and the people minister to one another, thus creating a cyclic triangle. As a result, those who are gathered together will express their devotion and service to God.

In *For the Glory of God*, Daniel I. Block establishes a clear foundation of worship based on the Scriptures and furthers the application of worship to today's Christian practices. As a Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament, Block states that worship is a complex matter that encompasses all of life. He presents this concept in dimensions called The Dimensions of Devotion, The Dimensions of Biblical Worship and The Dimensions of True Worship. The Dimensions of Biblical Worship elements are one's life, cultic service and disposition. Life includes a person's home, community, work and play. Cultic service involves hearing the Word of God, a verbal response to God and an active response to God. A person's disposition will include fright, reverence and trust.48

Through The Dimensions of Devotion, Block expounds on Peterson's explanation of devotion. The Dimensions of Devotion entail the heart/mind, the person and resources.49 In other words, true worship involves worship from the inner being, the whole person and all of one's resources as a life lived in devotion that is wholehearted and full-embodied. He further states, "True worship involves a covenant commitment rooted in the heart and extending to every aspect of one's being."50 In practice, this relates to Block's The Dimensions of True Worship, which

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 102.
involves loving, walking, fearing, keeping and serving God, YHWH. In true worship, a person loves God, walks in the ways of God, fears God, keeps God's commands and statutes and serves God with their entire heart/mind and being.

**The Application of Worship**

When it comes to the personal application of worship, Michael Walters, the author of *Can't Wait for Sunday*, justifies and answers the following questions: Why does worship matter? Why do we do what we do on Sunday mornings? Why do we worship? He covers these questions by fleshing out some salient points. Worship ascribes worth to God. Worship is an activity initiated by God with His creation in order to maintain a relationship. Worship enables people to experience intimacy with God.

Just like Peterson's mention of worship including a response, Walters, chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Houghton College, describes four essential kinds of worship responses. When people worship, they remember, anticipate, celebrate and serve. Peterson also makes a point of relating worship to the spiritual health of a church. He states, "Our ability to produce healthy, vital churches where people are discipled and inspired to win others to Christ will be seriously undermined if worship is not properly focused."

With regard to the practice of church worship, *The Worship Sourcebook* encourages creative, theologically sound, and contextually appropriate worship practices. *The Worship Sourcebook* provides central themes that encompass the Christian faith in the practice of worship. Christians believe in one God, in one Lord who is Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit.

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51 Ibid., 103.


53 Ibid., 87.
These beliefs tend to shape one's practice of worship. The deepening of the practices of worship tends to occur when people gather for a worship service. For instance, the elements of a worship service include an opening, confession, assurance, proclaiming the Word, prayers for the people, offering, baptism, profession of faith, the Lord's Supper and a closing.

*The Worship Sourcebook* also expounds on what is Christian worship and provides essential principles. Christian worship is biblical, dialogic, relational, covenental, Trinitarian, communal, hospitable, caring, and welcoming. Christian worship is in, but not of, the world as well as generous with an excellent outpouring of ourselves before God. Christian worship is also expressive and formative. In practice, Christian worship is not stingy, but is instead like the perfume that anointed Jesus' feet. Christian worship in practice is a lavish outpouring of our love and praise to God who has created and redeemed us.54

In *Worship Matters*, Bob Kauflin, provides information to help people understand biblical worship, personal worship and corporate worship. Kauflin, with experience as a songwriter, arranger, and a director of worship, offers some insight about corporate worship. He calls this gathering, a worshiping community. According to Kauflin,

A worshiping community is made up of individuals whose lives are centered around the Savior [as] they worship together each week. A worshiping community expects to encounter God's presence not only on Sunday morning but every day. A worshiping community recognizes that passionate times of singing God's praise flow from and lead to passionate lives lived for the glory of Jesus Christ.55

Kauflin further identifies reasons for gathering together to worship. People need encouragement and support. God receives greater glory from the gathered people. The people receive the teaching and care of God's pastor-shepherds. The people are reminded that they have

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been drawn apart from the world and drawn together to God. Kauflin also mentions the relevance of worship and church growth. Worship when done right leads to church growth that involves more people understanding the gospel, embracing personal godliness, being involved in their church and having a heart for the lost.

Sally Morgenthaler is a worship consultant for Denver Seminary and Pathways and the author of Worship Evangelism. Morgenthaler speaks to worship's ability to transform a person's life. When a person has a true encounter with God, a person will have a changed heart and a changed life. If a person experiences the presence of God, that person will be transformed from the inside out. She uses Gerrit Gustafson to define worship evangelism. Worship evangelism involves calling the whole world to the wholehearted worship of God and the fusion of the power of God's presence with the power of the gospel.\(^{56}\)

Morgenthaler also discusses paradigms about worship and their effect on evangelism, which directly relates to the importance of teaching people about worship. She writes, "Until we as pastors and worship leaders make it a point to 'fill in our gaps' with the intentional, dedicated study of worship, church after church will be held hostage by our ignorance. Until we put worship back in its rightful place as the number-one activity of the church, our churches will be malnourished and lacking in the spiritual power necessary to do God's work."\(^{57}\)

Robbie F. Castleman, an associate professor of biblical studies and theology at John Brown University and the author of Story-Shaped Worship provides a study on biblical and historical patterns of worship. Worship is shaped by a story and that story begins in the Bible.


\(^{56}\) Ibid., 93.

\(^{57}\) Sally Morgenthaler, Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers Into the Presence of God (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 50.
Castleman writes, "Worship is how God's people serve the maker of heaven and earth. Liturgy is the rhythm and design of this work through which all worshipers join together to please God." There are biblical patterns that began in the book of Genesis that have shaped the liturgy of worship. Evidenced in the Scriptures, what has influenced biblical worship is the initiation and mediation by God and the people's response to God for His grace and favor.

According to Castleman, worship is connected to work and witness. She writes, "When the church enters into worship through Christ, focused on God's glory by the mediation of the Spirit, God's people learn better how to center on God's glory as the intention of the church's mission, which is also mediated by the Son through the Spirit. This God-centered focus can help sustain a believer's contribution to the work and mission of God for a lifetime."  

Josh McDowell, author of The Last Christian Generation, expounds on the topic of 21st century youths and how this particular generation struggles with the church and being Christlike. Youth today have a distorted view of Christianity, the truth, reality and the true church. Interestingly enough, these distorted views are not just applicable to today's Millennials but to previous adult generations as well with regard to a lifestyle of worship.

He provides a suggested blueprint for the foundation of the Christian faith that can be addressed in a curriculum that includes the subject of worship. He suggests that individuals need to be reintroduced to God as the God of redemption, relationships, and restoration. As a response to who God is and as acts of reverence, individuals are to live a life that practices worship of God and a life of faith, prayer, and making Godly choices. He further expounds on the building of a true foundation, which includes an individual being able to live Christlike in today's culture.

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58 Robbie F. Castleman, Story Shaped Worship (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 34.

59 Ibid., 115.
Examples of living Christlike are the following: knowing God's will for one's life, knowing one's gifts and talents and how to use them, understanding and making sense of the Bible, and developing a heart of worship. McDowell labels this approach as "True Foundations - Living Truth for Lifelong Growth." He further sheds light on an appropriate educational model that avoids imparting cold theological facts about God that can be learned mentally only to be regurgitated orally. Instead, a better educational model develops material "that can be used to induce a relational response to who God is and what He does for us. The point of the process is not merely to stuff [a person's] head but to change their [life]. And that is what the God of redemption, relationship, and restoration is all about!"  

In *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship*, Vernon Whaley writes about worshiping together and presents specific principles of corporate worship. Whaley, author and Dean of the School of Music at Liberty University, discusses the elements of corporate worship. Similar to Walters, he expounds on the need for a person to have a personal relationship with God that is full of worship, or reverence to God. According to Whaley, there are specific characteristics that describe genuine worship such as when people exalt the Lord and when worshipers are edified. He also demonstrates how worship is biblical and historical when considering the development of the church body.  

Like the author McDowell, Whaley's work is helpful to understanding the need to educate people about worship. He writes, "We need to capture a vision for teaching and admonishing, instructing and training, and nurturing and maturing people as worshipers." He  

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61 Ibid., 94–95.

calls this ministering worship. There are key topics covered in membership classes and Whaley makes a connection to those topics. Topics such as evangelism, giving, prayer, preaching, and serving are addressed through the lens of worship. This is helpful when determining how to integrate worship pedagogy into membership curriculum and classes.

**Teaching Worship**

Kathleen Chapman, with more than thirty years of experience in children's ministries, shares some insight on worship and teaching worship to others. In her book, *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship*, she states how the word worship is overused, misused and sometimes abused. Chapman goes on to say, "My research revealed that worship is more than singing or going through some weekly church ritual. Worship is more than completing a page in a church lesson book or reading prayers aloud in a church service... [it is] more than loving God...worship [is not] about me at all." Citing A.W. Tozer, she writes, "Worship is to express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of our Father which art in heaven." 

With regard to teaching about worship, Chapman mentions that salvation and worship are the two most important areas that need "translating" in our teaching today. In order to help people know God intimately, she suggests teaching people the names of God and the attributes of God. Chapman encourages teachers to ask questions that help people grasp the definition of worship. For example, who is God and what does worship mean to them? Furthermore, when teaching about worship, Chapman mentions the importance of focus. In order to help a person

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64 Ibid., 22.

65 Ibid., 64.
practice focusing on God, questions need to be deliberate. Another powerful and helpful tool is silence and physically changing position while learning. This is all helpful toward a person developing a worshipful relationship that loves and serves God.

John D. Witvliet writes, "One of the goals of practices-oriented pedagogy must be to expose the profound connections between the mechanics of liturgy in any culture and the theological commitments they reflect and shape," in his article, *Teaching Worship as a Christian Practice*. In teaching worship as a Christian practice, Witvliet identifies four modes of worship: mechanics, style, form, and meaning and purpose. Exemplary courses, from a practice point of view, focus on the connections among the four modes and demonstrate how to move easily and coherently among them.

When teaching worship, Witvliet believes juxtaposing particular moments in worship with either key theological themes or biblical texts is helpful. He further states that teaching about the connection of worship to God needs exploration. As an illustration, for introductory courses at Asbury Seminary, semester courses are based on questions such as, "If the gospel is a comprehensive story remembering God's activity from beginning to end, what impact should this have on Christian worship?" Witvliet also shares that effective courses might begin by helping students perceive their past and current participation in worshiping communities at a deeper level. Witvliet addresses the need for teaching worship to include training for participation. He mentions that a "practices-oriented approach calls for transforming courses from being mere


67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.
introductions to the discipline of liturgical studies into a kind of training camp for ‘full, conscious, active participation’ in worship as part of a faithful Christian communal life.”

Clarice M. Bowman, with experience as a Jonathan Fisher Professor of Christian Education and Worship at Bangor (Maine) Theological Seminary and author of the Living Art of Worship, writes that providing worship guidance to help people sustain their fellowship with God is the first business of the Church. Worship guidance needs to be constant with a systematic effort. In 1949, Bowman asked a poignant question that seems to apply even today when she wrote, "Protestantism came into being on the platform of allowing people to worship God and read their Bible themselves. But to what extent do Protestant churches today really teach their people to do either?" In an effort to teach people, Bowman shares how a church created booklets for their preparatory membership class that included background information on church worship customs, hymns, and symbols. However, more effort was needed.

"Adults need to be taken by the hand and taught to worship...How many have a "spectatoritis" (entertain-me-if-you-can) psychology carried over from movie theatre and football mind-sets?" Bowman uses Søren Kierkegaard's description to support her question. Church-goers view the minister and choir as the chief actors, the people as the audience and God in the wings prompting the chief actors. By teaching people about worship a shift can occur. Meaning, the people are the chief actors, the minister and choir are in the wings prompting the people and the audience is "the great God before Whom each worshiping heart must play his part...not

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69 Ibid.


71 Ibid., 348.

72 Ibid., 350.
merely in the worship period but in all-time Christian living.”

The only way for this to occur is through helping adults understand what worship is and how to worship.

In *Teaching the Faith, Forming the Faithful*, the authors Gary A. Parrett and S. Steve Kang discuss the elements of congregational curriculum and introduce the acronym CORE, which means Comprehensive, Orthodox, and Renewing Essentials. The goal is to “touch the entire life of the community through instruction that is accessible to all with the objective to transform lives, individually and corporately.” Parrett and Steve share how CORE content needs to be experienced in a “wide variety of contexts that are a part of the church’s life, both when we gather together and when we disperse throughout the week.” This can also occur during educational and formative ministries in the church and during formal instruction in classroom settings.

Together they share how the churches have three great tasks, which are to consistently engage in worship, formation (or teaching) and outreach (evangelism, or work and witness in the world). Each of these tasks overlaps as an interrelationship with worship and formation having a greater overlap than worship and evangelism. Parrett and Kang suggest that certain instruction or topics be a mandate. The topics include baptism (preparation, confirmation and recollection), the gospel, and faith (Apostles’ Creed, Lord’s Prayer and Decalogue).

The authors also suggest a content overview that covers six sessions as a membership course. Session one is a review of the gospel and an introduction to local church membership, the

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73 Ibid., 351.
75 Ibid., 133.
76 Ibid., 337.
77 Ibid., 391.
universal church and the membership covenant. Session two explores the beliefs of the church. Denominational distinctives are covered in session three. Session four provides an overview of the history, vision, church’s bylaws and values of the congregation. Session five covers the privileges and responsibilities of membership. Session six focuses on matching a person’s gifts with opportunities within the church and how to take one’s place in the church body.78

Parrett and Kang acknowledge that although there are critical decisions made around the content and material taught in the church, consideration needs to be given to individual learners. Each person in a church class has specific needs, gifts, and experiences. They also advise to remember the work of the Holy Spirit in the learning process in order to avoid precluding what God may want to do in teaching and transforming lives.79

Overall, among the authors pertaining to worship and the application and the teaching of the subject, clarity begins to form. The effort to teach worship is necessary and needs to occur systematically for church members. There are key principles for worship presented by Witvliet and Whaley that can be systematically unified with the membership courses suggested by Parrett and Kang. In reviewing the literature, the position of the authors asserts strongly the need for the education of church members to include the principles of worship. All of this is helpful toward encouraging local churches to integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum.

78 Ibid., 394.
79 Ibid., 237.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The topic of integrating worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum is a new approach to increase the understanding of worship and its impact on the life of a believer. Based on the reviewed literature the subject of worship seems to be tied directly to the spiritual growth of individuals who make the decision to follow Jesus Christ and join a local church. For instance, William and Le Etta Benke, authors of Church Wake-Up Call, shared how worship is one of church's vital purposes. Greg Ogden, author of Discipleship Essentials, justified clearly how worship is directly tied to one's spiritual growth in Christ. Michael Walters, author of Can't Wait for Sunday, described how a focus on worship relates to developing people to be disciples and to the overall spiritual health of a church.

With worship's significant role, a need to examine how worship is addressed in the local church is necessary. This chapter provides an outline of the objectives and the method of research that was utilized for this study. The description of the participants is detailed as well as the procedural format that was utilized to address the thesis project's research questions. This chapter concludes with how the data was gathered and analyzed for this thesis project.

Research Objective and Design

The specific objective of the research was to determine how a local church addresses the subject of worship and its principles as part of the new membership curriculum and presentation. The process to achieve the objective entailed a qualitative approach that is descriptive in nature. This approach was necessary to determine the content of new membership curriculum utilized in
a local church. This type of research method also supported determining how local churches integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership classes.

**Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The purpose of the research was to gather information pertaining to the thesis project’s research questions, which were the following:

1. What is the current content used in orientation class for new members?
2. Is the subject of worship addressed initially for new members?
3. How does the inclusion of a worship component augment the assimilation of new members into the worshiping community?

The working hypothesis for the thesis project was the following:

The introduction of worship pedagogy is needed in the new member orientation curriculum and in the membership classes of the local churches. This is because there is an interdependent relationship between understanding what worship is and the participation of church members in the life and work of their local church body.

**Participants**

When planning a qualitative research study, explicit consideration should be given to precisely articulating the population of participants that the study is investigating and for which the findings of the study are meant to apply.\(^\text{80}\) This study, with regard to population, applied to the local church. The exact number of subjects to be included in the sample was a minimum of

three local churches as participants. The selection for determining a representative sample from the population was based on the following criteria:

- The local church needed to have new membership classes as a part of the church's membership program and offerings.
- The local church needed to have active new membership classes with people as participants/attendees.
- The local church needed to have a specific curriculum or educational tool in use as a guide for the church's new membership classes.

Although the study's focus was on the delivery of content versus the people as participants, acknowledging the attendees of the new membership classes was helpful. The attendees needed to be adults ages 18 and up who had recently joined the local church. The adult learners needed to be new members who were attending the local church's membership classes. The attendees could cover a range of Christian experience from new converts to a mature believer. They could also cover a range of church membership experience from unchurched to non-member regular attendees to former members of a local church community.

Setting

The setting for the observations occurred at each local church. More specifically, one setting was a church multi-purpose room with rows of chairs. The multi-purpose room also had a projection screen for a PowerPoint presentation. The second setting was a church classroom that contained several round tables with chairs. The third setting was a church meeting room that held a round table with multiple chairs.

Instrumentation

"Qualitative research is distinguished by the fact that it places the researcher at the center of the data-gathering phase, and indeed the researcher ultimately is the 'instrument' by which
information is collected. The researcher may be guided by written outlines of what to consider in an observation or content analysis, but these are only accessories to be used by the principle data collection tool: the researcher.

Besides the researcher, for this thesis project the additional instruments used for data-gathering included four accessories: (1) the church artifact, or new membership class curriculum (2) a curriculum analysis tool (3) observation field notes and (4) an observation reflection tool.

Each local church shared a curriculum that provided the structure and the lesson content for each church’s new membership classes. All combined, the curricula provided twenty-five lessons for review that was utilized to address the research questions that pertained to the content covered in new membership classes.

A curriculum analysis tool was utilized to address the research questions with regard to the local church's new membership class content as depicted in each church's artifact. The curriculum analysis tool, labeled as the "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool," contained twenty-one criteria represented in three categories: Bible Content & Usage, Worship Content & Usage and Curriculum Content & Participant Needs. Appendix A provides an example of the actual curriculum analysis tool.

Observation field notes and an observation reflection tool utilized during actual observations at the local churches helped to address the research questions as well. The observation reflection tool, labeled as the "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool," contained twenty-one criteria represented in three categories: Bible Content & Usage, Worship Content & Usage, and Instruction to Meet Participant Needs. Appendix B provides an example of the actual observation reflection tool.

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The criteria utilized for the curriculum analysis tool and the observation reflection tool were adapted from an example shared by J. Dan Boulton in the document called *How to Evaluate Sunday School Curriculum* that was published by Great Commission Publications. Great Commissions Publications is a ministry of the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Committee on Discipleship Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in America.\(^8\) The criteria utilized in the observation reflection tool also included adapted information from a document titled *Evaluating & Choosing Curriculum* published by Church Publishing Incorporated written by Sharon Ely Pearson.\(^3\) Church Publishing Incorporated is a "provider of liturgical and musical resources for The Episcopal Church, along with works on church leadership, pastoral care and Christian formation."\(^4\)

**Research Procedures**

There were four major steps involved in the research procedures. Initially, eight local churches were contacted to determine participation in this thesis project. Out of the eight local churches, three local churches were able to participate in the research due to time, availability and active individuals participating in new membership classes. For the thesis project, it was noted that each local church required new members to attend the church's membership classes. The local churches had a specific designee that was responsible for overseeing the implementation of the churches’ new membership classes.

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Step 1: An initial meeting occurred with each local church's designee to introduce the thesis project and share information about the goals of the research. During the initial meeting, each designee was provided a letter and a document labeled "Church Presentation – Thesis Project Overview". Appendix C provides a sample copy of the letter and the actual church presentation provided in a folder for each church designee. In response to committing to participating in the thesis project, each church designee provided an artifact which was a copy of the church's curriculum that would be used to guide the presentation and instruction for the new membership classes. While meeting with each designee, dates were established to indicate an opportunity to attend and observe the new membership classes for at least three sessions.

Step 2: Prior to attending the new membership classes, each church's artifact was reviewed in order to analyze the content and information that would be presented during new membership classes. The "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool" was used to analyze the curriculum content.

Step 3: To determine how the subject of worship was incorporated into the learning process for the adult learners, attendance occurred at each local church's new membership classes. The "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" was used during the membership classes.

Overall, step 3 and step 4 afforded the researcher an opportunity to analyze, observe, and acquire field notes and reflections. These steps helped to determine how worship principles were integrated into each church's curriculum and new membership classes.
Data Gathering and Analysis

"Nonparticipation observation is a relatively unobtrusive qualitative research strategy for gathering primary data about some aspect of the social world without interacting directly with its participants." Nonparticipant observations and the generation of field notes were the main method for gathering data in this study. Nonparticipant observations occurred on-site at three local churches totaling ten observations that resulted in seventeen hours of nonparticipant observations during the months of October 2017, January 2018, and February 2018. The "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" was utilized to summarize the nonparticipant observations that occurred at each local church.

The definition of qualitative content analysis is the systematic reduction (i.e. condensation) of content, analyzed with special attention on the context in which the content was created, to identify themes and extract meaningful interpretations of the data. This study utilized qualitative content analysis as a secondary method for gathering data. Also, there is a general understanding that content analysts strive for a unit of analysis that retains the context necessary to derive meaning from the content. Quality content analysis researchers should err on the side of using a broad, more contextually based unit of analysis rather than a narrowly focused level of analysis. As a result, the broad unit of analysis for gathering data focused on two areas: current content taught in the membership classes and if the current content taught addressed the subject of worship.


87 Ibid., 263.
The use of qualitative nonparticipant observations and content analysis were based on a purposive sampling, or a deliberate selection of a group of people because of their relationship to the thesis topic. Purposive sampling was used because (a) the research objectives were aimed at a very finite, specific, well-defined group; (b) only certain people had the knowledge and expertise related to the research topic; and (c) most of the population of interest was small in size and therefore feasible to study in its entirety.\textsuperscript{88}

As part of the data analysis of the content both in print and through observations, themes and patterns were identified. Inferences, interpretations and implications were also derived from the content analysis and class observations.

\textit{Explicit Versus Implied}

For addressing the research questions, the researcher was interested in explicit terms and information. The opportunities to analyze, observe, and acquire field notes and reflections were based on the curricula and classroom instruction incorporating the exact usage of specific terms as being explicit versus implied, or inferred. Also, the use of explicit terms and information, based on the criteria identified in the "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool" and in the "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool," were indicated as evident when utilizing the tools for gathering data. Implied or inferred terms and information were indicated as partially evident when utilizing the tools.

For example, when analyzing a curriculum, the researcher identified when the exact term, "worship," was specifically stated. If the exact term, "worship" was not specifically stated but the information related to the definition of worship or the practice of worship, then the criteria and

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 197.
relevance to the research questions were considered as implied, or inferred without being stated directly.

**Research Goal**

A research goal is a broad plan for achieving a desired result that considers what data need to be obtained, based on the needs of all those involved in the qualitative inquiry. The researcher was motivated to encourage local churches to integrate worship principles into their new membership curriculum. The data needed for this to occur entailed examining church curricula and observing how the subject of worship was taught in membership classes.

By observing how local churches addressed the subject of worship in both their new membership curricula and classes, a plan of action could be determined. The plan would include the creation of a unified curriculum that could be implemented as part of the local churches educational and spiritual programming for new members. This would help local churches integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum. This would further help address the needs of church members understanding the role of worship in the life of a believer and its relationship to the spiritual growth of the local church, especially in the area of church membership.

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CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine how the subject of worship is addressed in a local church's new membership classes. Based on the purpose of the study, greater emphasis of the data focuses on worship and its evidence in the church's curricula and in membership classes. By making this determination, churches can be encouraged to integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum.

This chapter begins with a brief description of the participants in the study. This chapter then provides an overview of the current content taught in membership classes. Data shows how each church curricula and the instruction in new membership classes addressed biblical content, meeting the needs of their participants and the subject of worship.

The data is descriptive in nature along with percentages to reflect the criteria of the "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool" and the "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" used as instruments in the study. Based on the data from the instruments, emerging themes and patterns pertaining to worship are also identified in this chapter. The chapter concludes with generalized findings and worship research findings based on some of the reviewed literature.

Description of Local Churches and Participants

Each local church had new membership classes as a part of their church's membership program. New membership classes had been occurring for more than ten years for each church. There were active new membership classes with participants. All of the local churches had a specific curriculum as a guide for their new membership classes.

The participants during the class observations were adults ages 18 and up who had recently joined the local church. They attended their local church's new membership classes as
part of the church's membership process. Some attendees had recently joined their local church. Some of the people had made a commitment to the church; however, they had yet to experience officially joining their church through a process called The Right-Hand of Fellowship. This was due to the need to complete the church's new membership class program prior to officially joining the church.

The participants represented a range of Christian experiences. Some of them had received salvation, experienced baptism, and had leadership roles in their previous church. Then there were some participants who had yet to experience baptism, or to experience being a Christian leader.

**Curriculum Analysis**

*The Local Church's Curriculum Topics*

Local Church #1 curriculum guide titled, "New Image Membership Resource Guide," provided specific topics to help new members engage in the new image membership process. The resource guide centered on a theme called Mature Christians and provided a systematic flow of topics for classes that related to the theme. Figure 1 depicts the actual flow of topics as presented in the resource guide.

Local Church #2 curriculum guide titled, "New Members Class Outline and Classes," provided specific topics and subtopics to be shared with new members. The class outline focused on a specific purpose. The purpose was to help new members become acquainted with the Holy Bible and what it teaches about the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Figure 2 depicts the order of topics as presented in the class outline.
Local Church #3 curriculum guide titled, "New Members Manual," provided specific class topics to help new members fulfill Psalm 119:105, which states, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The manual emphasized God and a new member's commitment to walking God's way by following His Word. Figure 3 depicts the overall topics as presented in the manual.

![Diagram of New Image Membership Resource Guide Successive Weekly Topics]

*Figure 1: New Image Membership Resource Guide Successive Weekly Topics*
Figure 2: New Members Class Outline and Classes

- Conversion
  - God’s Purpose
  - We Were Created for God
  - Prayer

- Church Membership
  - Two Ordinances of the Baptist Church

- Stewardship and the Tithe
  - Giving
    - God the Greatest Giver
    - God Expects Us to Support His Work

- Church Leadership
  - Explanation of Church Ministries

Figure 3: New Members Manual & Class Topics

- The Wonders of The Bible
  - God the Father - Tri-Unity
  - Jesus the Son
  - The Holy Spirit

- The Ordinances - Baptism and Communion
  - The Birth and Growth of the Church
  - Sin
  - The New Birth

- Prayer
  - Giving and Stewardship
  - The Return of Christ
  - Walking God’s Way - Part One
  - Walking God’s Way - Part Two
**Combined Curriculum Analysis Tool Results**

The "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool" provided results that determined if specific criteria were evident for all three of the local churches. The combined Bible content and usage criteria for all three church curricula represented 94.4% of the analyzed content as being evident or explicit. 95.8% of the church curricula were explicit about content designed to meet the participants' needs. 4.8% of the church curricula were explicit about worship content and usage (see fig. 4).

![Curriculum Analysis Criteria](image)

*Figure 4: Combined Curricula Analysis Results*
Individual Curriculum Analysis Tool Results – Bible Content & Usage

The "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool" was used to determine evidence of Bible content and usage for each local church. Local churches #1 and #3 curricula evidence as being evident or explicit was 100%. While the local church #2 curriculum analysis for Bible content being explicit was 83.3%. A display of the results is in figure 5.

Each local church curriculum was analyzed to determine the evidence for each specific criterion for Bible content and usage. Local churches #1 and #3 demonstrated explicit evidence for all six criteria. Local church #2 demonstrated explicit evidence for 5 out of 6 criteria for Bible Content and Usage. A display of the results is in figure 6.

![Criteria for Bible Content & Usage](image_url)

*Figure 5: Individual Local Church Curriculum Analysis Results (Bible Content)*
Individual Curriculum Analysis Tool Results – Curriculum Content & Participant Needs

The "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool" was used to determine if each local church’s curriculum was designed to meet the needs of their participants. Local churches #1 and #3 curricula demonstrated explicit evidence for meeting their participants’ needs in all criteria, which was 100%. While the local church #2 curriculum analysis for developing explicit content to meet the needs of their participants was 87.5%. A display of the results is in figure 7.

Each local church curriculum was analyzed to determine the evidence for each specific criterion for curriculum content and participant needs. Local churches #1 and #3 demonstrated explicit evidence for all six criteria. Local church #2 demonstrated explicit evidence for 7 out of 8 criteria for curriculum content meeting the participants’ needs. A display of the results is in figure 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Bible Content &amp; Usage</th>
<th>Local Church #1</th>
<th>Local Church #2</th>
<th>Local Church #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The church’s curriculum teaches that the Bible is the Word of God.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The church’s curriculum guides students in their personal faith.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The church’s curriculum encourages Bible study skills.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The church’s curriculum helps participants comprehend the meaning of a passage being studied.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The church’s curriculum encourages participants to use the Bible.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The church’s curriculum contains the major themes of the Bible such as creation, sin, judgment, redemption, and resurrection.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Actual Local Church Curriculum Analysis Results for Bible Content & Usage Criteria
1. The content encourages participants to consider the practical implications of the concepts and to make the connection to their personal lives.

2. The content provides opportunities to meet the spiritual needs of the participants.

3. The content provides opportunities to meet the fellowship needs of the participants.

4. The content provides opportunities to meet the emotional needs of the participants.

5. Participants are encouraged to apply the content to the Scriptures along with guidance from the Holy Spirit.

6. Participants are encouraged to personally respond to the content.

7. The content provides spiritual training for the participants.

8. The content in the curriculum relates to the participants' church, community and the world.

**Figure 7: Individual Local Church Curriculum Analysis Results (Content & Participant Needs)**

**Figure 8: Actual Local Church Curriculum Analysis Results for Curriculum Content & Participant Needs Criteria**
**Individual Curriculum Analysis Tool Results – Worship Content & Usage**

The "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool" was used to determine evidence of worship content and usage for each local church. Local churches #1 and #2 curricula results were 0% for displaying explicit evidence of the criteria. While the local church #3 curriculum analysis for worship content being explicit was 14.3%. A display of the results is in figure 9.

Each local church curriculum was analyzed to determine the explicit evidence for each specific criterion for worship content and usage. Local churches #1 and #2 did not have explicit evidence for any of the criteria (0 out of 7). Local church #3 demonstrated explicit evidence for 1 out of 7 criteria. A display of the results is in figure 10.

![Criteria for Worship Content & Usage](image)

*Figure 9: Individual Local Church Curriculum Analysis Results (Worship Content)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Worship Content &amp; Usage</th>
<th>Local Church #1</th>
<th>Local Church #2</th>
<th>Local Church #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The church’s curriculum contains a component for worship.</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The church’s curriculum teaches the belief, “People are created for worship.”</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The church’s curriculum guides presents a clear definition of worship.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The church’s curriculum includes specific worship principles.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The church’s curriculum helps participants understand God’s expectations of worship.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The church’s curriculum contains examples of worship practices.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The church’s curriculum encourages participants to use the Bible to study and understand what authentic worship is and how that applies to a lifestyle of worship.</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10: Actual Local Church Curriculum Analysis Results for Worship Criteria**

With the focus of the thesis being concerned with integrating worship pedagogy into new member curriculum, the researcher examined the criteria for worship content and usage to determine the data for being partially evident (implied) and not evident (not explicit/implied). The overall results revealed that worship content and usage for the combined curricula of all three churches were 66.7% partially evident and 28.6% not evident upon analysis (see fig. 11).

Each local church curriculum was analyzed further to determine data for partially evident and not evident for each specific criterion for worship content and usage. Local church #1 curriculum analysis revealed 5 out of 7 criteria were partially evident and 2 out of 7 criteria were not evident at all. The local church #2 curriculum analysis revealed 4 out of 7 criteria were partially evident and 3 out of 7 criteria were not evident at all. Local church #3 curricula analysis revealed 5 out of 7 criteria were partially evident and 1 out of 7 criteria was not evident at all. A display of the results is in figure 10.
Among the combined twenty-five curricula lessons, the actual use of the word, "worship", appeared 9 times. The word, "worship" explicitly occurred 5 times in curriculum guide #1, 2 times in curriculum guide #2 and 2 times in curriculum guide #3.

![Figure 11: Combined Curriculum Analysis for Worship Content & Usage Criteria](image)

Although the information presented in each curriculum was largely partially evident (implied) pertaining to worship content (fig. 10), the researcher determined the information produced further results. An additional analysis of the curricula determined the curricula supported integrating worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum by laying a foundation for specific worship principles (see Appendix D), though not evident (explicit).

The analysis measured against specific worship principles revealed a theme and pattern of information that could be adapted to address the principles of worship explicitly in each curriculum. The findings were as follows:
• The content was aligned with Biblical theology for each curriculum.

• Each curriculum addressed the nature and character of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

• Each curriculum utilized the Word of God as its source of information to address each topic.

• The content in each curriculum provided specific Scriptures to flesh out each topic and support the spiritual formation and growth of each participant.

• Each curriculum addressed developing a relationship with God.

• Each curriculum addressed the gospel of Jesus Christ.

• The subject of salvation, baptism and Communion were addressed in each curriculum.

• Each curriculum addressed the need for holiness and obedience as a part of one's Christian walk.

• Each curriculum introduced elements of spiritual disciplines such as prayer and giving as actions of a Christian believer, which are examples of worship practices.

• Each curriculum acknowledged the essence of the spiritual, fellowship and emotional needs of those who choose to live a life according to God's expectations as revealed in His Word.

New Membership Class Observations

Initial Observation Impressions

Local church #1 utilized their church's curriculum over the course of three days for 2 hours per session. The method of instruction was lecture mode with participants sitting in rows of chairs. A PowerPoint presentation was utilized as a visual aid and each participant had a copy of the New Image Membership Resource Guide in order to follow along with the presenter.

Local church #2 utilized the church's curriculum to orient new members over the course of four days with 1.5 hours per session. The method of instruction was discussion mode with
participants sitting at round tables with chairs. The presenter had a copy of the *New Members Class Outline and Classes*. New members took notes on what was presented. They also took notes on the discussions that occurred between the presenter and the participants as well as the discussions among the participants themselves.

Local church #3 was observed utilizing the church’s curriculum for three days. One session occurred for 2 hours and two sessions occurred for 1 hour 30 minutes each time. The method of instruction was discussion mode along with interactive activities that were embedded in the design of the curriculum to facilitate class discussion. Participants sat at oblong tables with chairs. Each participant had a copy of the *New Members Manual* in order to complete the activities for each lesson and to follow the flow of instruction.

**Combined Observation Reflection Tool Results**

The "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" provided results to determine if specific criteria were evident (explicit) during the observations for all three churches. The combined Bible content and usage criteria for all three church observations represented 100% of the presented content as being evident or explicit. 83.3% of the observed criteria were evident (explicit) for the instruction meeting the participants' needs. 4.8% of the observed criteria were evident (explicit) about worship content and usage (see fig. 12).
The "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" was utilized during classroom observations to determine the explicit instruction of Bible content and usage for each local church. All of the local churches' instruction with regard to explicit biblical content was 100%. A display of the results is in figure 13.

Each classroom observation was analyzed to determine explicit evidence for each specific criterion for Bible content and usage. Each of the local churches demonstrated explicit evidence for all six criteria. A display of the results is in figure 14.

*Figure 12: Combined Local Church Observation Reflection Results*

**Individual Observation Reflection Tool Results – Bible Content & Usage**

The "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" was utilized during classroom observations to determine the explicit instruction of Bible content and usage for each local church. All of the local churches' instruction with regard to explicit biblical content was 100%. A display of the results is in figure 13.

Each classroom observation was analyzed to determine explicit evidence for each specific criterion for Bible content and usage. Each of the local churches demonstrated explicit evidence for all six criteria. A display of the results is in figure 14.
Figure 13: Individual Local Church Observation Results (Bible Content)

![Criteria for Bible Content & Usage](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Bible Content &amp; Usage</th>
<th>Local Church #1</th>
<th>Local Church #2</th>
<th>Local Church #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. During the observations, the instruction included teaching the participants that the Bible is the Word of God.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. During the observations, the instruction included guiding participants in their personal faith.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. During the observations, the instruction included helping participants comprehend the meaning of a passage in the Bible.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. During the observations, the instruction included participants using the Bible.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. During the observations, the instruction covered the major themes of the Bible such as creation, sin, judgment, redemption, and resurrection.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. During the observations, the instruction included encouraging participants to practice bible study skills.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14: Actual Local Church Observation Results for Bible Content & Usage Criteria
**Individual Observation Reflection Tool Results – Instruction to Meet Participant Needs**

The "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" for each local church determined explicit evidence of instruction observed to meet the needs of their participants. Local churches #2 and #3 instruction demonstrated explicit evidence for meeting their participants’ needs in all criteria as 100%. The local church #1 observation for explicit instruction to meet the needs of the participants was 50%. A display of the results is in figure 15.

Each local church’s presentation of content yielded data that determined explicit evidence for each specific criterion relating to the instruction meeting participant needs. Local churches #2 and #3 demonstrated evidence for all eight criteria. Local church #1 demonstrated evidence for 4 out of 8 criteria for instruction meeting the participants’ needs. A display of the results is in figure 16.

![Criteria for Instruction to Meet Participant Needs](chart)

**Figure 15: Individual Local Church Observation Results (Instruction & Participant Needs)**
### Individual Observation Reflection Tool Results – Worship Content & Usage

The "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" provided data for the worship content and usage for each local church. Local churches #1 and #2 observations were 0% for instruction displaying explicit evidence of the criteria. While local church #3 data for worship content being explicitly taught was 14.3%. A display of the results is in figure 17.

Each observation based on the reflection tool was analyzed to determine the explicit instructional evidence for each specific criterion for worship content and usage. Local churches #1 and #2 did not have explicit evidence for any of the criteria (0 out of 7). Local church #3 demonstrated explicit evidence for 1 out of 7 criteria. A display of the results is in figure 18.

![Figure 16: Actual Local Church Observation Results for Instruction to Meet Participant Needs Criteria](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Instruction to Meet Participant Needs</th>
<th>Local Church #1</th>
<th>Local Church #2</th>
<th>Local Church #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. During the observations, the instruction encouraged participants to consider the practical implications of the concepts and to make the connection to their personal lives.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. During the observations, the instruction allowed opportunities to address the spiritual needs of the participants.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. During the observations, the instruction allowed opportunities to meet the fellowship needs of the participants.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. During the observations, the instruction allowed opportunities to meet the emotional needs of the participants.</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. During the observations, the instruction encouraged participants to apply the content to the Scriptures along with guidance from the Holy Spirit.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. During the observations, the instruction allowed participants to respond personally to the presented content.</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. During the observations, the instruction provided spiritual training for the participants.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. During the observations, the instruction allowed opportunities to share/demonstrate how the content related to the participants' church, community and the world.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 17: Individual Local Church Observation Reflection Results (Worship Content)

![Criteria for Worship Content & Usage](chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Worship Content &amp; Usage</th>
<th>Local Church #1</th>
<th>Local Church #2</th>
<th>Local Church #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. During the observations, the instruction included sharing a specific component for worship to the participants.</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. During the observations, the instruction included sharing the belief, “People are created for worship.”</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. During the observations, the instruction included presenting a clear definition of worship to the participants.</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. During the observations, the instruction included sharing specific worship principles with the participants.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. During the observations, the instruction included helping participants understand God’s expectations of worship.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. During the observations, the instruction included providing participants with examples of worship practices.</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
<td>Evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. During the observations, the instruction included encouraging participants to use the Bible to understand what authentic worship is and how that applies to a lifestyle of worship.</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Not Evident</td>
<td>Partially Evident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18: Actual Local Church Observation Results for Worship Criteria
With the focus of the thesis being concerned with integrating worship pedagogy into new member curriculum, the researcher examined the instructional criteria for worship content and usage to determine the data for being partially evident (implied) and not evident (not explicit/implied). The overall results revealed that worship content and usage in the form of instruction were 57.1% partially evident and 38.1% not evident (see fig. 19).  

Each local church observation tool was reviewed to determine data for partially evident (implied) and not evident (not explicit/implied) for each specific criteria for worship content and usage. Local church #1 revealed 4 out of 7 criteria were partially evident and 3 out of 7 criteria were not evident at all. Local church #2 revealed 3 out of the 7 criteria were partially evident and 4 out of 7 criteria were not evident at all. Local church #3 revealed 5 out of 7 criteria were partially evident and 1 out of 7 criteria were not evident at all. A display of the results is in figure 18.  

Among the combined ten observations totaling 17 hours, the actual use of the word, "worship" spoken as part of the instruction occurred 11 times. The word, "worship" spoken during instruction occurred 7 times at local church #1, 0 times at local church #2, and 4 times at local church #3.
Similar to the curriculum analysis for each local church, the information presented during class instruction was largely partially evident (implied) pertaining to worship content (see fig. 19). However, the researcher determined the information regarding instruction produced further results. Additional review of the observation tools occurred and determined the instruction presented supported integrating worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum by laying a foundation for specific worship principles (see Appendix D), though not explicit.

Further examination revealed a theme and pattern of instruction of the content taught at each local church, which could be adapted to explicitly address the principles of worship. The themes and patterns were the following:

- The instructional content was based on Biblical theology and emphasized by each presenter.
- The instructional content and the information shared with participants addressed the nature and character of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

![Figure 19: Combined Local Church Observation Reflection Results (Worship Content)](image-url)
• The instruction for the participants at each of the local churches included the Word of God as its source of information to support the taught content.

• The instructional materials included specific Scriptures to support the lesson topic.

• The instruction supported the spiritual formation and growth of each participant.

• Each presentation included content that addressed developing a relationship with God.

• The instruction addressed the subject of salvation, baptism and Communion for participants.

• The instruction at each of the local churches addressed the need for participants to live holy and be obedient to God's Word as a part of demonstrating one's faith.

• The instruction at each of the local churches introduced elements of spiritual disciplines such as studying God's Word, prayer, and giving as actions of a Christian believer, which are examples of worship practices.

• Each instructional presentation acknowledged the essence of the spiritual, fellowship and emotional needs of those who choose to live a life according to God's expectations as revealed in His Word.

### Connections to the Literature Review

**Generalized Findings**

In the article, *Are Pastors the Cause of the Loss of Church Membership?*, the author, Keith M. Wulff, presented an argument on how church membership is potentially linked to the Word preached by the pastor. During the observations at the local churches, it was noted that several of the attendees made the decision to join the church because of the pastor's preaching of the Word and the pastor's approach to developing relationships with congregants. Some of the attendees used words such as likable, approachable and friendly to describe their pastor, which influenced their decision to join the church.

Chuck Lawless in *Membership Matters* shared the importance of membership classes including an orientation to the church, the teaching of a church's basic doctrine and opportunities
for new members to get involved. In analyzing the curricula and the nonparticipant observations, Lawless's suggestions were elements in each of the church's data findings. All of the churches presented information to help participants understand their church. All of the churches addressed the basic doctrine of several topics in their membership classes. For example, local church #1 and local church #3 addressed Christian doctrine topics on The Trinity, Sin, and Justification; local church #2 covered the doctrine topics of Prayer, Redemption, and Faith; and local church #3 shared the doctrine topics of the New Birth, The Sacraments, and The Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The research study connected directly with Greg Hawkins’s and Cally Parkinson's four segments of church members. For instance, local church #1 membership class encompassed all four segments of church members: exploring Christ, growing in Christ, close to Christ and Christ-centered. Though not described in these terms, while observing the classes, attendees were asked to personally identify as to whether or not they had experienced salvation, been baptized, had prior Christian experience or no Christian experience. Individuals also shared if they had prior leadership roles in a previous church community.

**Worship Findings**

David Peterson in his book, *Engaging with God*, shared the need for worship and the practicing of worship to include a biblical perspective when members meet. He also shared how members need to see themselves in relation to God's total plan and purpose for His people. The curricula analyses and the observations shared and taught members about their importance to God and His purposes for people. However, the data revealed that this was not explicit in making

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a direct connection to worship. This information in most cases was implied or had to be inferred by the reader or listener.

Daniel I. Block shared the Dimensions of True Worship in his book, *For the Glory of God*. The dimensions entail loving, walking, fearing, keeping and serving God. The data from both the curricula analyses and observations from each church addressed these particular dimensions. Meaning, there was written and verbal evidence shared with new members about loving, walking, fearing, keeping His Word and serving God. Yet, the data revealed that although these actions are considered to be essential to true worship, this was not explicitly shared with attendees. Block's Dimensions of True Worship were implied or the responsibility was on the reader or listener to infer the application to worship.

*The Worship Sourcebook* shared the importance of worship practices being creative, theologically sound and contextually appropriate. The book shared how one's corporate worship entails confession, proclaiming the Word, prayer, offering, baptism, a profession of faith and the Lord's Supper, or Communion. These worship practices were evident in each local church's curriculum and a part of the instruction presented in each local church's membership class. However, the data revealed that the majority of these practices were not explicitly described as acts of worship. The reader or listener had to be able to infer or make the application that the areas presented were in fact practices of worship.
Summary

In his article, *Teaching Worship as a Christian Practice*, John Witvliet mentioned how teaching about the connection of worship to God needed exploration. The researcher agreed with this statement and sought to explore the subject of worship with a focused lens on church membership classes. The instruments that included each local church curriculum and observation field notes helped to determine if there was evidence of local churches addressing the subject of worship in new membership classes. More specifically, the use of the "Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool" and the "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" enabled the researcher to gather specific data that could encourage the need for local churches to integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum. The following chapter will discuss the interpretation of the research findings.

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91 Witvliet, *Teaching Worship*. 
CHAPTER 5: SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the purpose and procedure for this study. After which, the chapter addresses the research questions based on the research findings. Unexpected findings of the study are explained and the relationship to the data is provided. This chapter addresses limitations, the implications of the research findings, and concludes with recommendations for future research.

Summary of Purpose and Procedure

The purpose of the research was to determine how worship was addressed for new members in the local church. More specifically, research was conducted to determine how worship as a subject was addressed in new membership classes. The research occurred with gathering data through examining a local church’s membership curricula and by the researcher physically attending new membership classes at local churches. The intended outcome was to encourage local churches to integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum.

Summary of Findings Based on the Research Questions

Interpretation of the Curriculum Analysis Data

Research question number one was, "What is the current content used in the orientation class for new members?" Based on the curriculum analysis, the design of each curriculum intended to lay a foundation for a new member's spiritual walk. Emphasis was placed on salvation, the Christian Church's two ordinances and growth with one's participation in the local church. The variety of topics presented in each curriculum seemed to relate to a specific focus.
For example, the curriculum content for local church #1 focused on encouraging new members to become mature Christians. The curriculum content for local church #3 focused on encouraging new members to walk God's way as a result of experiencing a new birth with the expectation for the return of Jesus Christ. Based on the Life Development Process mentioned in *Purpose Driven Church*, the curriculum for each local church provided content to lead people to Christ and to understand the purpose of church membership with a focus on knowing Christ. The content also reflected the Life Development Process for growing people to spiritual maturity.92

Research question number two was, "Is the subject of worship addressed initially for new members?" The curriculum analysis revealed that the subject of worship is not explicitly addressed at all for new members. This supports Craig Gilbert's claim that, "Most if not all of the people attending worship at church have learned whatever they know about worship by observation alone," in his article, *A Key Shaping a Congregation*93. However, the researcher notes the specific topics of each curriculum lesson could easily be aligned to address or include worship as a component.

Research question number three was, "How does the inclusion of a worship component augment the assimilation of new members into the worshiping community?" The data results from the curricula analysis were not able to produce an explicit or implied answer to this question.

**Interpretation of the New Membership Class Observations Data**

Research question number one was, "What is the current content used in the orientation class for new members?" The curriculum for each local church was utilized and completely

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92 Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 144.

followed by the instructors. The instruction covered topics such as conversion, baptism and prayer. Based on the research question and that the curriculum for each church was followed, the focus reflected the same interpretive findings for the curricula analysis as mentioned above. Meaning, the instruction that new members received was tailored toward laying a foundation for each member's spiritual walk. This was evident by the data results in figure 12 representing 83.3% for the explicit instruction meeting the needs of the participants.

Also, the content covered for all three churches through observations reflected Amy Frykholm's belief in her article, *Loose Connections: What's Happening to Church Members?* and Irma Fast Dueck's article called *Getting All Wet: Baptism and Church Membership*. For instance, in the literature review Frykholm shared how contemporary churches need to be more intuitive and more spiritual in nature to address the trend of new members forming loose connections with their church.94 Dueck shared the need to present new members with higher expectations versus presenting fewer demands in order to appear hospitable.95 The instruction for the new members covered the topics as reflected in each church's curriculum; however, the new members were exposed to each church's expectations and demands pertaining to their life as a believer, not just a church member. This was because each church presentation exemplified a strong emphasis on biblical content. All three local church's data for addressing the biblical content criteria explicitly was 100% (see figure 13). The strong use of biblical content and the topics covered provided opportunities to clearly demonstrate the requirements of being a believer. New members were also given opportunities to understand that their roles in their church would be valued and encouraged.

Research question number two was, "Is the subject of worship addressed initially for new members?" Similar to the curriculum analysis, the subject of worship did not occur during any of the ten days of observations. The curriculum for each local church did not have a specific component for addressing the subject of worship, yet there were opportunities for the instruction to be adapted or altered do so. In the literature review, Kathleen Chapman, author of Teaching Kids Authentic Worship, shared that salvation and worship were the two most important areas that need "translating" in our teaching today.  

Although the church observations addressed salvation, none of the observations specifically or explicitly included the topic of worship. All three local churches did not share a specific component for worship (criterion #1) in the new membership classes (see fig. 18).

Research question number three, "How does the inclusion of a worship component augment the assimilation of new members into the worshiping community?" The data results from the new membership class observations were not able produce an explicit or implied answer to this question.

Summary of Unexpected Findings

When the research began for this study, the initial focus was to answer the research questions, which supported the overall intention of this study. The research questions were the following:

1. What is the current content used in orientation class for new members?
2. Is the subject of worship addressed initially for new members?
3. How does the inclusion of a worship component augment the assimilation of new

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96 Chapman, Teaching Kids Authentic Worship, 64.
members into the worshiping community?

The overall intention of this study was to determine how worship was being addressed in new membership classes in order to encourage churches to integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum. At the initial design for gathering data, the research entailed gathering explicit data pertaining to the subject of worship in order to address the research questions.

Originally, the design of the "Local Church Analysis Tool" and the "Local Church Observation Reflection Tool" were intended to gather explicit information about the presentation of the subject of worship in the local church curricula and new membership classes. However, during the first introductory meeting with the representative for local church #1 and the first class observation that occurred at local church #1, the researcher realized the need to adapt the tools to include the presentation of worship as implied versus explicit.

With the addition of gathering data to include the subject of worship being implied, there was a stark contrast to the explicit data for the three local churches. For example, the combined curricula analysis results for the inclusion of explicit worship principles or pedagogy was low at 4.8% based on the criteria for data gathering. However, once the data gathering included instances of worship principles or pedagogy being implied, though not explicit, in the curricula, the results were 66.7%. The evidence of the criteria for worship being addressed in the curricula as implied represented a 61.9% difference in the findings (see fig. 11).

When examining the criteria for worship addressed during the observations, the combined observation results for the explicit instruction of worship principles or pedagogy for new members was a low 4.8%. However, when the data gathering included implied instruction of worship principles or pedagogy for new members, the data result was 57.1%. This represented
a 52.3% difference in the findings for the combined local church observation reflection results (see fig. 19).

**Implication of Research Findings**

The implication of the research findings suggests that worship, as a subject, needs to be addressed in both the curriculum and classes for new members in a local church. The glaring reality from the research revealed that the integration of worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum is not explicitly occurring during new membership classes. As a result, local churches need to become proactive to strengthen its membership offerings and programs for new members. This will help create informed worshipers who have a solid foundation on why, what, and who they are as believers grounded in the Creator's purpose for worship. There is a need to remember the importance of being proactive and not reactive with regard to new members, especially when churches are facing several challenges with membership in the areas of assimilation or the "back door" phenomenon. John S. Powers, author of *Assimilation: 8 Myths of Church Membership* wrote, "Proactive people know that effectiveness often depends on adopting changes, whereas reactive attitudes are confined by the viewpoint, 'that's the way we've always done it'."97 The lack of worship pedagogy integrated into new membership curriculum signals that churches need to adopt some change.

The implication of the research findings further suggests there is a need to critically evaluate how we are addressing the overall purpose of worship and its application to church members. Research Services of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reporting on a random sample of persons in the United States in 2003 stated that 36% of first time attendees return after a first

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visit to a service because of the quality of the sermon. The other top reasons were the friendliness of the people, 32% and the overall worship experience, 30%.\(^9\) Worship has value and certainly needs to be explored.

Among churches, there is an understanding that the weekly service tends to be the teaching and equipping time for church members.\(^9\) Because a church's worship experience has an influence on prospective new members, more effort needs to be made to include the subject of worship as content for membership classes. Attending new membership classes to learn about a church's mission, vision, programs, and beliefs is fine. However, churches must take it another step further and examine the relevance of the mission, vision, programs, and beliefs to mankind's ultimate purpose of worshiping God. The following ideas are practical suggestions, raised by this research study, to help address the concept of churches integrating worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum.

**Make the Biblical Connection**

Church members need opportunities to examine the Word and make a biblical connection to their weekly worship. They need to be able see visually through the Word how worship was a vibrant thread throughout the sixty-six books. The Word can help demonstrate for members its influence on their personal and corporate worship today. Meaning, there is a need for members to see how the Word validates what they do as worshipers living out God's purposes to experience a divine relationship with Him.

Through the Word, they can discover that God’s desire to have a relationship with His creation is the main purpose for gathering as worshipers. Members can experience through Bible

\(^9\) Wulff, “Are Pastors the Cause,” 2.
study how worshiping God is both an act of obedience and faith. They can also experience verses in the Bible that demonstrate how worship was an opportunity to express a heart of reverence and awe for the Almighty God, an action still desired by God today. They can read examples of worshipers that came together to pray, sing, kneel, stand, hear a sermon, and participate in communion in order to reverence God. They can read Scriptures that depict when people gathered to glorify God, worship was sacred, which was pleasing to God. Overall, members can make the biblical connection and application to today. They will understand how, "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, [and] to devote the will to the purpose of God." 100

**Encourage a Paradigm Shift**

Members have a variety of reasons for why they join a church. One of those reasons includes experiencing a variety of church programs for the purpose of spiritual growth. As stated by the authors William and Le Etta Benke,

But in reality a wide divergence will often be found between the typical programs that collectively comprise total church ministry and the spiritual purposes for which it exists, once they have been properly defined. Part of the problem is that most churches never get around to defining in specific terms the purposes and the program objective into which purposes must ultimately be translated. Often programs and ministries are sustained because they have always been that way. They become institutionalized on the basis of time and tradition and are never critically reviewed or challenged as to current relevancy. 101

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The recommendation is to critically review and challenge the relevancy of church programs against the litmus of God's purpose for mankind, which is worship. Prospective members need to be encouraged to not simply look at the church's programs but to look through the lens of fulfilling their divine purpose of worship. People need to ask the following question when joining a church, "How will joining this church enable me to fulfill my divine purpose for worshiping God?" This is a shift in thinking because people tend to join a church based on the church suiting their needs. However, the paradigm shift requires thinking in terms of satisfying what God desires. "Ultimately...man is to enter God's presence and unashamedly worship God, looking upon His face while the ages roll. That is why man was created; that is man's chief end."102

Implement a Unified Curriculum for Membership Classes

Chuck Lawless wrote, "An effective membership class lays the foundation for church members to participate fully in the life of the church. [An effective membership class can] raise the standards of church membership; promote standards through an intentional class - and then expect people to live up to them."103 According to him, the church may well become stronger than it has ever been. If that is the case then ensuring that the subject of worship is covered during membership classes becomes more important to the spiritual life of a church member.

The kind of curriculum many churches use for membership classes can lead church members into believing that membership is based on a list of do's and don'ts as a believer. They receive instruction about sin, baptism, Communion, the church covenant, and stewardship. However, the implication is deeper. Irma Fast Dueck, author of the article, Getting Wet, wrote,

102 Tozer, The Purpose of Man, 34.
103 Lawless, Membership Matters, 91.
"In our culture the language of church membership quickly gets reduced to a list: a list of prerequisites needed so one can enter an institution, or a list of jobs to be filled by those who have taken on the responsibility of membership. Sadly, membership language has become synonymous with membership dues and membership statistics, and it has contributed to a sense of exclusivity, of distinguishing between those who are in and those who are out. The language of "church membership," merges with the language of "church institution," which sounds like "constitution," which means bylaws and bureaucracy. The result is a diminished sense of the church as the body of Christ, a living organism."\textsuperscript{104}

Based on the data revealing a lack of explicit worship content integrated into new membership curriculum, one can see how a relationship with God can easily cross the line of doing works as a means of salvation and achieving a feeling of belonging in a local church. To counteract this, church members need to be exposed to essential worship principles that reflect the purpose for which man was created and that was worship. Integrating worship pedagogy into the new membership curriculum can help establish uniform standards for teachers and leaders and assure doctrinal compatibility with the church's position.\textsuperscript{105} This approach can also assist new membership programs with being purpose-oriented, because "...programs that are not purpose-oriented are like rudderless ships adrift at sea. They tend to become an end in themselves, rather than a means to an end-namely the reasons for which the church exists."\textsuperscript{106}

To support churches with adopting change and integrating worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum, this thesis project includes the development of an explicit curriculum guide (see Appendix E). The example is a new member's unified curriculum guide and serves as

\textsuperscript{104} Irma Fast Dueck, “Getting All Wet,” 42.

\textsuperscript{105} Benke and Benke, Church Wake-Up Call, 120.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 126.
an illustration for how a church can integrate worship pedagogy or principles into a new membership curriculum. The unified curriculum guide reflects the overarching topics that were presented in the curricula of the three local churches in this study. The design contains seven sections: Class Content, Class Outcomes, Application of Worship Principle(s), Personal Application, Biblical Scriptures for Application, Essential Vocabulary, and Essential Statements. The developed unified curriculum for new members provides a specific model for how churches can demonstrate through explicit instruction the interrelationship with worship and spiritual formation as described by the authors Gary A. Parrett and S. Steve Kang in their book, *Teaching the Faith*.

**Limitations**

A limitation in this study could be the use of local churches as the participants. For the purpose of gathering data, focus was placed on the content and the delivery of the content versus the adults who attended the classes. Including the new members as part of the study could have helped address research question number three, "How does the inclusion of a worship component augment the assimilation of new members into the worshiping community?" However, the purpose of the study was to discover how the subject of worship was addressed in new membership classes due to the present gap in the literature regarding new membership curriculum including worship content. This is why the focus for the participants in the study centered on the local churches' content in the new membership curricula and classes.

Also, the number of churches, the number of observations, and the geographical location of the churches could be seen as narrow or limited for the purpose of this study. Specifically for this study there were three churches in the researcher's local area and ten observations totaling
seventeen hours of time. Initially eight churches were contacted which would have increased the number of observations. The limitation of the number of churches was due to the criteria of the local churches as participants. Meaning, the five churches that were not a part of this study did not respond to inquiries, have membership classes as a part of their church's membership program, did not have active new membership classes, or did not have a specific curriculum or educational tool in use for new membership classes. The limitation of the geographic location, meaning local churches versus non-local churches, was largely due to accessibility to attend and observe the implementation of new membership classes.

Lastly, the level of the researcher's understanding of the subject of worship in its given context, along with biasness and the trustworthiness of the data could be seen as limitations to the study. Some would criticize the subjectivity that is inherent in interpretive work in that no research is free of the biases, assumptions, and personality of the researcher. We cannot separate self from those activities in which we are intimately involved.  

In constructing this study, the researcher was intentional about decreasing potential threats to the qualitative inquiry. The research goals were appropriate and attainable and the sample of the study met the criteria. A sufficient literature search occurred, although integrating worship pedagogy into membership curriculum presented a gap in the literature on this topic. The research questions were answerable and the data was described accurately. Multiple data sources were utilized to include artifacts, observations, field notes, and tools for gathering the data. Patterns generated by the data were included in the research findings. Also, the use of a curriculum analysis tool and an

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observation reflection tool helped the researcher to avoid selective observations, which can create observer and confirmation biasness.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The limitations and implications of the research both lend toward recommendations for future research. The recommendations are the following:

1. A natural next step based on the findings involves addressing one of the initial research questions created prior to the implementation of the research study. There is still a need to determine how the inclusion of a worship component augments the assimilation of new members into the worshiping community. A longitudinal study could occur to include actual interviews of new members. The longitudinal study could focus on their experiences as worshipers and their assimilation experiences over the course of time.

2. This study was limited in size due to the number of church participants. The entire research project could occur again in order to deepen the credibility and dependability of the current study. The number of churches could be increased and research teams could be established in different locations occurring in more than one state. This would help establish similar studies with all of the research teams agreeing with the findings of a larger study. This would also help solidify the "believability" of the current study due to similar findings in a larger sampling.

3. Research could determine the role instructors have on new members understanding the importance of worship and its direct tie to their growth as believers. Teachers of new membership classes could be identified for conducting a quantitative study. The teachers could answer questions on surveys and assessments to gauge their understanding of worship and its
impact on church member assimilation. The teachers could be shadowed in order to observe actual classroom presentations to determine if their level of understanding worship affects the understanding of worship for new members. This is important because this additional research could answer the following question: Is the subject of worship not addressed in new membership curriculum due to the lack of understanding by church leaders and/or instructors?

(4) A comparative study could occur between groups of churches to determine the impact of including worship as a subject in new membership curriculum. The control group would be new members attending classes with the "usual" version of curriculum that most churches utilize, which may have a low evidence of worship content. The second group would have new members attending classes utilizing a curriculum that heavily implies worship content, though not explicit. The third group would have new members attending classes being exposed to a unified curriculum that contains explicit worship principles. The research would entail examining the effect the spiritual growth and understanding of worship has on a new member's role and assimilation into a given church.

(5) A theoretical study could occur to develop an underlying theory as to why there exists a gap in the literature on the subject of worship in new membership curriculum. Several resources speak on which elements to include in membership classes, yet very little, if at all, is said about one of the elements being worship pedagogy. Michael Walters, author of Can't Wait for Sunday wrote, "All churches employ some basic model or rubric by which to structure worship...all worship is liturgical...all worship is expressed using various forms, images, and actions. Good liturgy aims at enabling people to engage in biblical worship."\textsuperscript{109} If that is the case, then why is worship pedagogy not embedded into the fabric of new membership assimilation?

\textsuperscript{109} Walters, Can't Wait for Sunday, 83.
Why is church leadership not acknowledging the need to deeply expose church members to the significance of the subject of worship and its impact on the church body and experiences for church members? A theoretical study could help shed some light on this phenomenon.

**Conclusion of Research Findings**

Earlier in Chapter 1, the researcher wrote, "Church members need education about the importance of authentic worship, both personal and corporate." To address this issue, the researcher's purpose was to encourage churches to integrate worship pedagogy into their new member orientation program. To do this, conducting research on the content shared with new members who attend membership classes was necessary.

The research revealed that new membership classes are addressing one's personal belief in God and spiritual formation or development. Local churches are also using membership classes to share their expectations and values on commitment to membership. However, the data findings revealed that there is a need to help members make a connection to understanding what worship is and how worship is directly tied to their belief in God, spiritual development, and commitment to the local church. Because the data revealed that there are some principles of worship being presented as implied versus explicit, there is room to maximize what members are exposed to as far as content. The membership classes offered at local churches could benefit from explicitly integrating worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum.

Rick Warren, author of *Purpose Driven Church*, shares five tasks that Christ ordained for His church to accomplish. The first and foremost task is to love the Lord with all your heart. "The word that describes this purpose is worship. The church exists to worship God."\(^{10}\) Since

\(^{10}\) Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 101.
this is true, then the local churches have a greater work to accomplish, especially in our membership classes. For many, this is where they receive their first impression of God's expectations for believers. Because of this, local churches need to be diligent about ensuring believers receive information about salvation, the gospel, our ordinances, and a church's covenant as well as an integrated worship pedagogy as a part of their instruction. This will help deepen their experiences as they become members who are spiritually well-rounded worshipers equipped to fulfill the additional tasks Jesus Christ ordained for His church (ministry, evangelism, the Great Commission and discipleship).
CHAPTER 6: APPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter begins with a clear rationale for why churches should integrate worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum. The chapter also provides biblical details about God, Moses, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles teaching worship to people who were new in their spiritual walk. Their actions have an application to what can occur in today's membership classes. The biblical details in this chapter are intended to help churches further understand the significance of integrating worship pedagogy into their new membership curriculum. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the biblical precedence for teaching worship to new believers.

A Rationale for Integrating Worship Pedagogy

There is an essential rationale for integrating worship pedagogy into a church's new membership curriculum. There is biblical precedence for teaching worship to new believers. In the Bible, there is strong primacy for teaching worship to individuals who are new in their relationship with God or new to the Church body. This was modeled and established by God between His chosen leaders and His chosen people. Each time God established a relationship with His creation, the first thing He did with His "new members" was teach them principles of worship.

The Word of God provides explicit worship principles and practices that can be easily shared with today's church members (see Appendix D). Demonstrating for members biblical evidence of worship has the potential to address some of the challenges facing our churches especially in the areas of church membership and the practice of worship principles. Churches are struggling with membership in the areas of assimilation, evangelism, spiritual growth, and the understanding of what is worship. Yet, the underlying solution to the challenges regarding
church membership and the practice of authentic worship principles begins and ends in the Word of God.

Worship Instructions Given by God

God has always been concerned about His creation, man, and His relationship with man through worship. God has always been concerned about His people being taught how to worship Him and to live a life transformed and dedicated to Him. Throughout Scripture, at the core of a relationship with God was worship.

The first precedence begins in the book of Exodus. In Exodus, a worshipful relationship began between God and the Israelites with Moses as their leader. God in Exodus chapter 3 told Moses of His plan to deliver the Israelites from their oppression under the Egyptians and in verse 12 told Moses, "When you have brought the people out of the Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." Then in verse 18, God gave the words that were to be said to the king of Egypt, "The Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God." As the biblical account goes, the king of Egypt did not immediately set the Israelites free. However, Scripture notes that each time Moses spoke to the king he said, "Thus says the Lord: Let My people go, that they may serve Me." The meaning of “serve” in Exodus 8:1, 8:20, 9:1, 9:13, and 10:3 indicated the Israelites' role with the Lord would be that of a worshiper. Eventually the Israelites were freed from the oppression of the Egyptians and God used the leadership of Moses to teach the Israelites how to properly worship Him. God established His expectations of His worshipers when He told Moses in Exodus 19:5-6 to share the following words with the Israelites: "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above
all people: for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” God did not intend for the Israelites to be ignorant worshipers as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

God provided instructions for His "new members" and taught them the first principle that worship begins with obedience and is central to worship. God's first set of instructions to His gathered and chosen people were the Ten Commandments. God instructed them as worshipers to have no other gods before Him, to not make any carved images to worship, or to take the name of the Lord in vain. They were to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. They were to honor their mother and father, not murder, not commit adultery, not steal, not lie against their neighbor, or covet anything of their neighbor.

God further provided instructions to teach His new people the principle that worship is covenantal, transformational, and requires a living sacrifice. In Exodus 20:24 it states, "An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen..." In addition to keeping God's Ten Commandments, as acts of worship they were to offer sacrifices in places where God would appear and bless them. In response to God's instructions Israel agreed to obey God in Exodus 24:3-8 (see Appendix F).

Soon after the people's demonstration of a commitment to God's way of living and a life of worship, God spoke through Moses and provided instructions again. God was not just interested in acts of sacrifice but their inner man as well. God provided the principles that authentic worship requires a sacred space, requires order, and involves a routine. His instructions for the principles of worship focused on their spiritual motives and a specific place of worship called a sanctuary. Exodus 25:1-9 records,
Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats’ hair; ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.

God's instructions for a sanctuary were highly relevant to worshiping Him because His presence would be in this sanctuary. This was another level of newness in the relationship the Israelites had with God. God wanted His people to know that as a principle, worship is relational and the wonder of Him demands their worship. He instructed the people to establish a holy place where His presence could dwell among the people. This holy place would be a tabernacle where worship would occur. God even gave specific commands as to what was to be in the tabernacle. As part of His holy place, or tabernacle there would be an altar of burnt offering and a bronze laver. In the holy place of the tabernacle, there would be gold, a table of showbread, and an altar of incense. The Ark of the Covenant would be in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle.

In the book of Exodus from chapters 25 to 31, God delineated specific commands about the tabernacle. To teach them the principle that worship brings revelation of His presence, He gave instructions for the role and care of every artifact in the tabernacle. He provided clarity about the role of the people during worship in the tabernacle, which included the establishment of priests, who would minister to the Lord. He further gave instructions concerning the proper attire for tabernacle worship and the acts of worship that were to occur daily in this place of reverence.
Application and Implication of God’s Instructions

God had a chosen people and He clearly had expectations for His new relationship with the Israelites. God did not want His people to be unaware of what He considered to be the proper way to serve and worship Him as believers of the true and living God. His instructions were principles of worship that related to Him, the heart of the people and their interactions with one another. In today's membership classes that is very similar to discussions regarding having a right relationship with God through salvation and obeying the Word of God. God's instructions further relate to what new members learn today with regard to fellowship and brotherly love as believers in God.

God provided instructions pertaining to acts of worship and a place of worship, establishing more worship principles. This is because He understood that all of this was new for His chosen people. He wanted His people to be informed about how to show reverence, respect and awe of Him when engaging in worship where His presence abided. In response to God's instructions, Moses and the people of God engaged in a worship ceremony that included altar worship and the reading of God’s Word. It is important to note that without God's instructions, they would not have known what to do so that their worship would be proper and receptive by God. This was due to the newness of a relationship with God as His chosen people. Though it is different now, in today's membership classes that would be very similar to discussions pertaining to the subject of repentance, baptism, the role of the pastor and church leadership. This would also be similar to membership class instructions around the importance of studying God's Word, and what should occur when members gather for weekly worship.
Worship Instructions Given by Moses

The people of Israel were soon to possess the Promised Land. Once again, they were embarking upon something new. The first newness for them was their membership into God's family. The second newness for the Israelites was their entering into God's designated home as His worshipers. To prepare them for this transition, Moses basically gave sermons to the Israelites as a reinforcement of God's commands since He had saved the original Israelites from Egyptian rule. In Deuteronomy 4:5-10, Moses reminded the people of his role as their leader and reminded them of God's principles for worship (see Appendix F). As part of their fear, or reverence of God, Moses reminded the people to not forget the principles of worship that God had taught them once they possessed the land. By maintaining God’s principles for worship, they would be wise and be an example for the people who were not Israelites, or God's chosen people. Their obedience involved a commitment of their heart.

The Israelites were embarking on another new beginning with God in a new place. Moses was concerned about their worship and shared additional worship principles with them. Moses instructed the people on the principles that worship is communal and reproducible. He instructed them to share God's instructions or commands with their children and grandchildren including their acts of worship and their place of worship.

Moses further provided advice about worship that would not please the Lord and its consequences. He instructed the people on the principles that worship requires holiness and involves and equals submission. In Deuteronomy 4:15-19, 39-40, Moses gave the Israelites detailed advice (see Appendix F). He reminded the people of God's first command to have no other gods before the Lord God. Moses admonished the people to not worship the sun, moon, stars and the host of heaven, but instead to worship the Lord their God. By keeping God's
statutes and commandments there was a benefit to the Israelites relationship with God. Their lives would be well and long for them and their children.

In Deuteronomy chapter 6, Moses shared with the Israelites the principles that worship is a lifestyle and a part of God’s cycle of life. He provided the Israelites with the greatest commandment that became the Israelite's profession of faith. He gave clear instructions: their obedience and way of life were to be dedicated to God. In other words, they were to live a life of worship. They were to live a life that honored, reverenced and acknowledged daily their Lord God who had delivered them out of Egypt and had remained true to His promises to His chosen people. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25 Moses said,

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates...When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your son: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers. And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.’

The people's obedience to God's instructions, which were principles for worship, would enable them to be found as righteous in the sight of God. God would see them as a holy people, dedicated and consecrated for His service. The additional layer to their keeping of the great commandment was that their life of obedience would be an example for their children to emulate as well.
Following after God's heart, Moses too emphasized to the Israelites the importance of a righteous relationship with God. Moses wanted the people and their children's children to enjoy all of the benefits of God's deliverance and fulfilled promises as a result of living their lives dedicated to the Lord God. They were advised to love the Lord with all their heart, soul and strength. They would do this is by keeping God's statutes and commandments as a consecrated group of believers set apart for daily worship.

**Application and Implication of Moses' Instructions**

The Israelites were about to embark on another new phase of their relationship with God. God was fulfilling the promise He had made to their forefathers regarding the possession of a land flowing with milk and honey. There would be people in this land not familiar with God's ways and worship expectations, but the Israelites were to remain faithful. They were to be people who feared and worshiped God as He desired and commanded. They were to also share God's instructions to their future generations.

Moses' actions were very similar to what should happen when people join a particular church and attend membership classes today. A designated leader shares the expectations of the church by discussing the mission and vision of the church. The leader shares the expectations of members with regard to worship services and living a life that is pleasing to God. Usually the person designated to teach the membership classes wants to be sure that new members understand the life of their church and their commitment to following the Word of God. New members receive instructions or guidance about the congregation's belief in God and what that belief looks like in action as a committed assembly of people who fear and worship God.
Worship Instructions Given by Jesus Christ

The teachings by Jesus Christ as related to worship were poignant because He knew that His presence fulfilled the very essence of temple worship. Jesus Christ’s actions were a little different from both God’s and Moses’s approaches with regard to helping people understand God’s expectations for proper worship. Jesus Christ’s approach went beyond the ceremonial worship practices that occurred in temple worship. His approach strongly addressed the heart of a worshiper. By examining Jesus Christ’s instructions about worship a picture begins to form. His words were specific and intentional about guiding and leading a person to adequately and properly respond to God as part of their Christian worship.111

In Matthew chapter 4, Jesus was in Galilee beginning His ministry and chose four disciples: Simon called Peter, Andrew, James the son of Zebedee, and John. Jesus was teaching in synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people. Jesus’ instructions were clear as He traveled in Galilee and told listeners to, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," in Matthew 4:17. His instructions were clear and very similar to God’s spoken requirements to the Israelites when He had delivered them from Egypt. God desired that His people be spiritually clean. Jesus was likewise spreading a message for people to turn away from sin, to obey the will of God, to do good and be godly. He was sharing the principles that God wants worship from repentant hearts and the wishes of God demand their worship of Him.

In Matthew 5:16 while speaking to His disciples who were new in their spiritual walk, Jesus instructed them to, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." His advice to the new disciples was encouragement to be a

model worshiper before people. Their good works would entail acts of worship. Jesus was letting
them know that by modeling a life of integrity they would be a light for people to have a desire
to do the same. The result of their actions would cause people to glorify, or worship God.

Jesus’ instructions to His new believers were strongly focused on the building of their
spiritual character. For example, as an act of worship, He advised the disciples to love their
enemies, bless those who curse them, do good to those who hate them, and pray for those who
spitefully use and persecute them in Matthew 5:44. Jesus Christ’s advice offered a foundation for
the application of Christian worship to life. He was advising them to be godly and model mature
and perfected love.\textsuperscript{112}

Furthermore, Jesus encouraged His new disciples to also do good in a way that pleased
God, especially pertaining to charitable deeds. His instructions in Matthew 6:1-4 taught the
principle that authentic worship includes right actions toward others. Jesus established through
examples the difference between sincere acts of worship with right motives versus insincere acts
of worship with the wrong motives. As an authentic worshiper, praise would come from God and
their deeds as acts of worship would be honorable and acceptable in the sight of God.

Jesus Christ knew that His disciples were new in their relationship with Him and needed
guidance about acts of worship. He provided them with the principle that worship is
transformational, dialogic, and relational. For instance, as an act of worship Jesus provided
instructions that provided a model prayer in Matthew 6:6-14. In Mark 11:25-26, Jesus’
instructions about prayer were further clarified in order to address the principles that worship is
formational and relational both horizontally and vertically. He stressed the importance of one’s
relationship not just with God but also with one another. He advised the disciples by saying,

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 18.
“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” Worship through prayer needed to be pure in heart and mind. One way to ensure this as a part of their worship was to be forgiving of people in their prayer life. Also, the example of a prayer that Jesus Christ gave was "a model of simplicity, but equally...an example of dependence and humility as petitioners...[recognizing] the mysterious role of the holy God in their provision, forgiveness, and protection. God and Jesus are the only ones worthy of a Christian's full honor and reverence.”\(^\text{113}\)

It is important to note that Jesus was concerned about the spiritual walk of His new disciples along with their acts of worship. From Matthew chapter 5 to Matthew chapter 7, He shared through examples the principles that worship is a process that requires growth. Jesus covered several topics that directly related to one’s relationship and daily walk with God. He referenced the synagogue, the behaviors of the Sadducees and Pharisees, and false prophets as examples of what not to do as His disciples and God's chosen people. Clearly, there were behaviors and patterns of thinking that God considered offensive or false worship. Jesus wanted to instill quickly instructions for His disciples early on in His ministry to help them maintain a proper and worshipful relationship with God.

Jesus, when questioned by a lawyer who was a Pharisee, reinforced the greatest commandment that Moses had given the Israelites. The lawyer called Jesus a teacher and asked Him what the greatest commandment was in the law. Jesus responded by saying, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as..."

\(^{113}\) Ibid., 19.
yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets," in Matthew 22:37-40. Jesus reinforced and upheld the words of Moses. He wanted the people to understand that the greatest commandment was also the greatest act of worship.

In John chapter 4, Jesus engaged in a conversation with a Samaritan woman and shared God's expectations about worship. This woman was about to begin a new relationship with Christ. Jesus wanted her to know the principles that authentic worship embraces love for the people of God and that genuine worship transcends time and culture. The account in John 4:19-26 demonstrated how Christ was there to save the Samaritans by their coming into the knowledge of the truth. He was the gift that would enable the Spirit to come into their hearts and lead them toward a path of authentic worship and everlasting life.

Jesus gave a command pertaining to the new covenant in Luke chapter 22. His command pertained to the principle that worship is covenantal. The disciples received instructions regarding the memorial of Jesus' death and the fellowship of believers. While in a furnished upper room in Jerusalem celebrating Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, Luke 22:14, 17-20 records,

When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him...Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me. Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”

Jesus Christ offered a prayer of thanksgiving and demonstrated for His disciples the act of humility as part of one's worship. His instructions to do this in the future as an act of remembrance was the Teacher's way of ensuring that the disciples likewise would be humble servants in worship like Him.
In Matthew chapter 28, Jesus and the disciples were in Galilee on a mountain and Jesus gave them their final set of instructions as worshipers. He shared with them the principles that worship is missional and Trinitarian. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” As part of their commitment, the disciples were to continue the gospel, the message of Jesus Christ. They were to go forth and help other people to share the gospel, be baptized, and teach the Word of the Lord.

In Luke chapter 24:46-50, Jesus appeared to the disciples to not only affirm who He was and His divine purpose, but to give further instructions beyond the Great Commission. He shared with them the principle that the Holy Spirit augments their worship. As worshipers, the disciples needed some reassurance and further equipping to fulfill the Great Commission. Acts 1:4-8 provides more information pertaining to the disciples' final set of instructions from Jesus Christ (see Appendix F). The disciples were heading into new spiritual experiences without Him and Jesus Christ wanted to strengthen them for their next level as worshipers. He gave the disciples instructions in two parts. One part of the instructions was to help them understand that although He was risen, their earthly work would occur without His physical presence. The second part of the instructions was to ensure that the disciples became filled with the Holy Spirit in order to be witnesses and fulfill the Great Commission. Jesus Christ's words further affirmed the principle of how the Holy Spirit augments worship. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they would be able to worship and serve as witnesses. Even though Jesus Christ would not be with them physically, they would have His Spirit.
Application and Implication of Jesus Christ's Instructions

Jesus Christ fulfilled the complete and divine purpose of temple worship. During His time on earth, through His relationship with the new disciples, one reads through the Word the importance of worship as a lifestyle. Everything that Jesus Christ did during His earthly time was a demonstration of how one can live a life that completely honors and reverences God the Father in one’s daily walk. In today's membership classes, this would relate to how members receive instruction about the role of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in their spiritual walk. This also relates to when guidance pertaining to the spiritual disciplines such as prayer, reading God's Word, fasting, and service are covered in these classes.

Jesus Christ's commissioning of the disciples is still applicable today. In new membership classes today this usually falls under the topics of discipleship and evangelism, which are a part of one's worship practices as a believer. Just like the disciples, members are to share the gospel and be witnesses to the world. Jesus Christ demonstrated this and gave instructions that reinforced how "effective worship goes beyond merely sitting on comfortable pews in 'services' at church. [Effective worship] will lead to the empowerment of God for witness and service in life...Jesus, like God, as Savior, modeled for humanity the integrated life of worship and service." 114

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114 Ibid., 42.
Worship Instructions Given by the Apostles

The Apostles made their debut as teachers of worship in the book of Acts when the first church began. "The best New Testament scholars are agreed that the Day of Pentecost which came seven weeks after the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, is the birthday of the Church."115 In the review of Scripture, the Church began on the day when the Holy Spirit empowered one of the disciples named Peter to preach the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a mass of people. Eleven disciples stood with Peter as he spoke to Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. Acts 2:9-11 describes the listeners as follows: "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs." During Peter's message, the listeners were cut to the heart and they inquired as to what they should do in response to Peter's gospel message. When Peter's message concluded, a host of people inquired about being saved. Peter’s response included the principle that God wants worship from repentant hearts. In Acts 2:38 he instructed them by saying, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 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.” By the time the day was done, 3,000 people were baptized as a sign of their faith and commitment to the work and gospel of Jesus Christ.

The first church began with individuals committed to having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Although new as believers, they were engaged in five major principles that worship is formational, transformational, relational, missional, and reproducible. They engaged in acts of

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worship through the Word, fellowship, praying, the sharing of their possessions and goods, temple worship, and praising God. The first church was not founded as an organization, club or fraternal order. The first church was founded by people who engaged in acts of worship in the temple and in their homes.

In Acts chapter 8, a eunuch from Ethiopia went to Jerusalem to worship and was on his way back home. He was sitting in a chariot reading the words of Isaiah, the prophet. Philip, a disciple of Jesus Christ, was led by the Holy Spirit to approach the eunuch in Acts 8:30-38 (see Appendix F). Interestingly enough the purpose of the Ethiopian going to Jerusalem was to experience worship. From this passage, an inference can be drawn that the eunuch's experience of worship in Jerusalem left something to be desired and God knew this. An angel of the Lord had appeared to Philip and gave specific guidance regarding the eunuch. Philip was led by the Holy Spirit to teach the eunuch about the Word he was reading and to teach him the gospel of Jesus Christ. Philip taught the Ethiopian the principles that worship is biblical, involves submission, and transcends time and culture. In response to hearing the truth of God's Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ, the eunuch requested to be baptized. This was an act of submission to hearing the truth and an act of true worship.

In the book of Romans, Paul provided instruction to believers in Rome regarding the truth about God and His strong dislike for unrighteousness in Romans 1:16-21, 24-25 (see Appendix F). Paul wanted the people to know that God reveals himself through one's experience of salvation. This revelation included God's desire for righteousness. However, there would be people who would reject or suppress the truth and exhibit unrighteous behaviors. In Paul's narrative lesson on the principle that authentic worship requires holiness, their suppression of
truth and righteousness had a consequence. Their hearts became darkened by sin and instead of worshiping God they worshiped idols. Paul further shared that such acts were deserving of death.

Ceremonial sacrificial worship was essential in temple worship. However, with the death of Jesus Christ, He became the ultimate sacrifice. Paul taught the people of Rome that they were now the sacrifice as part of their Christian worship. He introduced to the people the principle that worship requires a living sacrifice. In Romans 12:1-2, Paul advised them, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." In this chapter, Paul further shared what worship through living as a sacrifice entailed. They were to use their spiritual gifts as one body and not think highly of themselves. They were to behave like a believer of Jesus Christ by not being hypocrites, but by clinging to what was good, and strongly disliking evil.

Having an understanding of God's law, ordinances and expectations of worship, Paul taught the saints of Ephesus worship principles as well. He shared how they as believers and Jesus Christ related to temple worship and their relationship with God. He shared with them the principles of worship being formational, transformational, relational, and covenantal. Paul in Ephesians 2:11-13 shared that prior to their salvation they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and the covenants of the promises of God that He had made with His chosen people. However, because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ and their faith they were no longer apart but near to God in their relationship with Him. In Ephesians 2:14-22, Paul shared that believers were now the holy temple of the Lord where the Spirit dwelled unlike in the past (see Appendix F). In the past, God's presence dwelled in the Most Holy Place of the temple in Jerusalem where He
could be worshiped. Now as worshipers, they were to reflect a life of worship not just in places where people gathered to worship but in their daily lives. Unlike the consecrated high priests who had access to the presence of God in the Most Holy Place, they had access to the presence of God dwelling on the inside of them because of the salvific work of Jesus Christ.

Paul provided instructions to the saints and faithful brethren of Colosse in the book of Colossians. He shared the principle that worship is expressive and formative. He also demonstrated that worship is generous and an excellent outpouring of oneself before God. Providing them with information about the character of a new man, he told them in Colossians 3:12-17,

*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

As people of God, they were to reflect the character and love of Christ. As worshipers, they were to walk in unity. As new people in Christ, their worship was to include acts of thanksgiving and to use psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to teach and encourage each other to remain true to their spiritual walk. Daily they were to live a life that executed actions done in the name of Jesus Christ filled with a heart of gratitude to God, the Father.

**Application and Implication of the Apostle's Instructions**

The Apostles ensured that new worshipers did not forsake the assembling of brethren, which included the Word of God being read for instruction, prayer, praise, exhortation, blessings,
and open discussions.\textsuperscript{116} Assembling as new brethren was vital because worshipers corporately gave God honor, acknowledged God’s greatness, and offered praise. In today's membership classes, this would be similar to when topics such as Bible study, the format of Sunday worship services, and the gospel are shared with new members.

The Apostles, as disciples, had the best opportunity to walk, talk and dwell in the living presence of the Lord with the living sanctuary, Jesus Christ. What they learned was not forgotten once Christ had fully ascended after promising to send the Holy Spirit. As a public profession of faith and testimony, meaning evidence or witness, the disciples wanted to ensure believers understood the role of Jesus Christ in their lives as worshipers. They traveled and taught Jews and Gentiles about holiness, the will of God, God's provision, forgiveness for themselves, forgiveness of others, and the overall power of God. For new membership classes today this relates to when members are taught the church's mission, vision, methods of discipleship, methods of evangelism, and the Trinity.

In membership classes today, members are exposed to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They are encouraged to grow spiritually as some churches share the importance of becoming mature Christians. New members learn why they too should get involved in the ministries of the church and ultimately become witnesses for the kingdom of God. When this occurs, the class is reflecting some of the biblical examples and actions of what the Apostles did when they taught people about worship. The Apostles discovered firsthand that “preaching about Christ must be at the heart of a Christian theology of worship.”\textsuperscript{117} Their teaching of being a living sacrifice and using one's spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit were all examples of living

a life to glorify God. They taught new and maturing believers the importance of a surrendered heart and daily service as brethren. They taught the importance of expressing gratefulfulness and that worship was a way of life with Jesus Christ as the living example. The Holy Spirit was a guide to help people remember the gospel and remain holy with a mindset to always direct all worship toward the awesome Creator Himself, Yah-weh, their God.

**Reflections on the Biblical Precedence for Teaching Worship**

Biblical worship contained key essential ingredients and principles. Worship is exclusive to Yahweh. One kept the Sabbath holy, which evolved to the Lord's Day on Sunday during the first century. The Lord's Supper and establishing sacred things, people, and space were key as well. Through the Word, a person can discover a sevenfold pattern that provides a visual of biblical liturgy, or worship in action. "From call to praise, from praise to confession, from confession to forgiveness, from forgiveness to the Word, from the Word, to response, from response to benediction, the rhythm of biblical liturgy shapes our faith as the people of God."118 Yet, today, "People do not know why they are here. People have a strange moral and spiritual amnesia and do not know their purpose in life, why they were created or what they are sent to do...Religion only addresses man's external condition, not his internal confusion."119 Reinforcing this statement, the Pew Research Center conducted a study called the 2014 Religious Landscape. As part of the study, adults were surveyed and asked the following questions about God: "Do you believe in God or a universal spirit?" and "How certain are you about this belief? Are you


absolutely certain, fairly certain, not too certain, nor not at all certain?" Among a sample size of 35,071, 63% of the people were absolutely certain and 20% were fairly certain.120 Based on the same study in 2007, the percentage of people who were absolutely certain declined from 71% in 2007 to 63% in 2014. A closer examination of the same questions was further delineated by religious groups which included Evangelical Protestant, Historically Black Protestant, Mainline Protestant and Orthodox Christian. None of the aforementioned represented religious groups were 100% certain about their belief in God.

LifeWay Research conducted a research in 2016 and surveyed 3,000 people. The goal was to measure the theological understanding of Americans today. The survey gathered data on the following belief statement: "Humans exist to bring God glory and to enjoy Him." 58% agreed strongly/somewhat, while 28% disagreed somewhat/strongly, and interestingly enough, 14% of the respondents were unsure.121 The survey also presented the following statement: "God has authority over all people because He created human beings." 65% agreed strongly/somewhat, 24% disagreed somewhat/strongly and 11% were not sure.122

Both studies help support the idea that people need a greater understanding of who God is and His role in the life a believer, especially people new in their faith or new to a worshiping community. The data further helps support the idea that people are not confident about their purpose in relationship to God. They do not completely understand why they were created or for whose purpose. They do not fully understand that at the center of their purpose and relationship to God is worship.


122 Ibid.
However there is significant evidence that God was teaching people who He was as Creator of heaven, earth, and man throughout the Scriptures. Furthermore, God was teaching not only through Himself but through His chosen vessels like Moses, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles, what a life of worship entailed. The Bible clearly establishes precedence, yet, something is still amiss today especially when authors Benke and Benke of *Church Wake-Up Call* cited the research work of George Barna, author of *Generation Next*. Benke and Benke shared how George Barna's polls published in a 1995 book revealed that the needs of newcomers in churches were seeking the following fulfillment: 

- to believe life is meaningful and has a purpose
- to have a sense of community and deeper relationships
- to be appreciated and respected
- to be listened to and heard
- to feel that one is growing in the faith
- to have practical help in developing a mature faith

The Pew Research and LifeWay data reveal that although it is more than 20 years since George Barna's research polls, people are still missing a central understanding for their life and God's purpose for their life as worshipers.

When it comes to the idea of worship, it begins with one having a clear understanding that there is something larger than man, bigger than life itself, shaping, transforming and transcending eternity. Eventually, one comes to realize that above all else in the universe there is God, the Creator. That realization alone elicits actions to give, to relate, to interact, and to understand more of Him. These actions become worship.

A central understanding of worship begins in the Word of God and this needs to be taught, especially to new members. God, Moses, Jesus Christ and the Apostles were diligent about teaching principles of worship to people who were new in their spiritual walk. If more

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123 Benke and Benke, *Church Wake-Up Call*, 44.
individuals were taught the basic, central understanding and principles of worship, more Christians would be 100\% sure of who God is and why they exist to bring God glory. Because people are not 100\% sure, more churches need to strongly consider integrating worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum.
CHAPTER 7: OVERALL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary and conclusion of the overall thesis project. The summary addresses the considerations and thought processes for this thesis project. The chapter concludes with final thoughts pertaining to the importance of integrating worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum.

Summary

This thesis project was designed to explore how local churches are addressing the subject of worship for new church members. This was due to current research revealing that there is a deficit in membership church models pertaining to the introduction and explanation of worship to new members. The researcher found this to be interesting especially when churches in essence want new members to experience being welcomed, received and enfolded as a believer into the body of Christ. One way this experience occurs is through churches offering membership classes. However, a vital content of worship being introduced as a subject in membership classes is missing.

Further research revealed that churches are experiencing challenges with membership. For instance, churches are experiencing challenges with retaining members who experience strong spiritual growth and assimilation. The researcher believes that addressing the challenges with membership begins with ensuring members know their purpose and why God created them. The researcher believes that if people clearly understood that their purpose is to worship God

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that knowledge would have a direct impact on members' efforts to grow spiritually, assimilate, and fulfill the purposes of the local church.

Kevin Miller of Idlewild Baptist Church, shares how mandatory membership classes is most effective for new members. Over the course of four hours, new members are indoctrinated in the church's culture and educated about the mission and vision of the church.\textsuperscript{125} Robert Dillard of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church is quoted as saying a new members class or Inquirers Class is vital for informing potential members of the commitment level required.\textsuperscript{126} Based on the review of several curricula by the researcher, new membership classes are covering essential topics such as mission, vision, church commitment, conversion, salvation, baptism, Communion, the gospel, The Trinity, and spiritual growth. However, there is a loose connection of these topics to the essence of worship and why members should ultimately choose to join a local church. According to Hoge and his colleagues who authored \textit{Vanishing Boundaries} in 1994, "a congregation can grow by providing four commodities: religious education, personal support, sense of community, and inspiration and spiritual guidance."\textsuperscript{127} In order for this to happen, new members need to know explicitly that all of who they are and what they do is ultimately worshiping God. This directly interrelates with their religious education, personal support, sense of community, inspiration, and spiritual guidance.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 39.\\
\textsuperscript{126} Von Kanel, “Assimilation,” 38.\\
\textsuperscript{127} Wulff, “Are Pastors the Cause,” 3.
\end{flushright}
Conclusion

Josh McDowell, author of The Last Christian Generation, wrote,

A ground-breaking study by George Barna divides professed born-again Christians into two categories: Those who believe in Christ, but their lives don't reflect Christlikeness; and those who believe in Christ and live a Christlike life." His research showed that 98% of professed born-again young people do "believe in Christ," but they do not reflect Christlike attitudes or actions. What has happened? Why does the Christianity that so many of our young people, and even adults, are adopting make so little difference in their lives? Is it because they are not attending enough church services and Christian events or that there are not enough seminars and resources available in the form of books, training, or curriculum to teach them the truth about Christianity? Although it may sound harsh, I’m afraid George Barna is right when he says: Nothing is more numbing to the Church than the fact that it is mired in a rut of seemingly unfathomable depths. The various creative approaches attempted over the course of this decade have drawn much attention but produced little, if any, transformational impact...although many people attend a church, few Americans are committed to being the Church.128

If this is in fact true, then our churches have to be willing to try something new. According to Proverbs 18:15 the Living Bible version states, "The intelligent man is always open to new ideas. In fact, he looks for them." The integrating of worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum is a new idea that has the ability to help address new members assimilating into the church body to completely fulfill the purposes of God and benefit the local church. Introducing principles of worship for new members provides a stronger foundation for the development of their relationship with God. This is especially true when a relationship with God means hiding the Word in one’s heart, proclaiming the truth, and rejoicing in God’s statutes. True worshipers also meditate on God’s precepts, consider the ways of God and delight in the Word of God.129 There is evidence of these beliefs in our local church's membership curricula; however, what is missing is making the explicit connection to the role of worship in one's relationship with God. Churches have a desire for members to have a relationship with God that


129 Whaley, Called to Worship, 166.
includes hiding the Word, proclaiming the truth and delighting in God's Word. Yet, how can this be fully achieved when none of these encouraged actions are directly tied to members understanding that all of this exemplifies worship?

McDowell wrote, "We must reclaim and revive in our churches and families this worship of the Lord in reverence for the awesome God that He is. We must reverence Him, honor Him and sacrifice our own way to follow His way...A life of worship to our Creator is about cultivating a longing for God and to please Him."¹³⁰ In order to heed this poignant advice, local churches can begin by taking the first step to integrate worship pedagogy into new membership curriculum. By doing so, local churches will yield more committed members equipped for the purposes of the church, which includes ministry, evangelism, discipleship, and the Great Commission. The local churches will also yield more spiritually well-rounded members dedicated to the vertical dimension of one’s relationship to honor and reverence God as a life-long worshiper.

Bibliography


APPENDIX A: Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool

Integrating Worship into the New Membership Curriculum
Local Church Curriculum Analysis Tool

Instructions: Using the church's new membership curriculum, analyze the Bible, worship, and curriculum content as well as the needs of participants by placing a check mark (√) in the appropriate column to indicate if each criterion is evident, partially evident, or not evident.

### Criteria for Bible Content & Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Bible Content &amp; Usage</th>
<th>Evident (Explicit)</th>
<th>Partially Evident (Implied or Inferred)</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The church’s curriculum teaches that the Bible is the Word of God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The church’s curriculum guides students in their personal faith.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The church’s curriculum encourages Bible study skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The church’s curriculum helps participants comprehend the meaning of a passage being studied.</td>
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<td>The church’s curriculum encourages participants to use the Bible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The church’s curriculum contains the major themes of the Bible such as creation, sin, judgment, redemption, and resurrection.</td>
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### Criteria for Worship Content & Usage

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Worship Content &amp; Usage</th>
<th>Evident (Explicit)</th>
<th>Partially Evident (Implied or Inferred)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The church’s curriculum contains a component for worship.</td>
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<td>The church’s curriculum teaches the belief, “People are created for worship.”</td>
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<td>The church’s curriculum guides presents a clear definition of worship.</td>
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<td>The church’s curriculum includes specific worship principles.</td>
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<td>The church’s curriculum helps participants understand God’s expectations of worship.</td>
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<td>The church’s curriculum contains examples of worship practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The church’s curriculum encourages participants to use the Bible to study and understand what authentic worship is and how that applies to a lifestyle of worship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria Curriculum Content &amp; Participant Needs</td>
<td>Evident (Explicit)</td>
<td>Partially Evident (Implied or Inferred)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The content encourages participants to consider the practical implications of the concepts and to make the connection to their personal lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The content provides opportunities to meet the spiritual needs of the participants.</td>
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<td>The content provides opportunities to meet the fellowship needs of the participants.</td>
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<td>The content provides opportunities to meet the emotional needs of the participants.</td>
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<td>Participants are encouraged to apply the content to the Scriptures along with guidance from the Holy Spirit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants are encouraged to personally respond to the content.</td>
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<td>The content provides spiritual training for the participants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The content in the curriculum relates to the participants' church, community and the world.</td>
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APPENDIX B: Local Church Observation Reflection Tool

Integrating Worship into the New Membership Curriculum
Local Church Observation Reflection Tool

Instructions: After conducting nonparticipant observations of the new membership class, use field notes and reflect to identify the instructional delivery as it relates to the Bible, worship, and curriculum content as well as the needs of participants by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column to indicate if each criteria was evident, partially evident, or not evident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Bible Content &amp; Usage</th>
<th>Evident (Explicit)</th>
<th>Partially Evident (Implied or Inferred)</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the observations, the instruction included teaching the participants that the Bible is the Word of God.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction included guiding participants in their personal faith.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction included helping participants comprehend the meaning of a passage in the Bible.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction included participants using the Bible.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction covered the major themes of the Bible such as creation, sin, judgment, redemption, and resurrection.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction included encouraging participants to practice bible study skills.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Criteria for Worship Content &amp; Usage</th>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction included sharing a specific component for worship to the participants.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction included sharing the belief, “People are created for worship.”</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction included presenting a clear definition of worship to the participants.</td>
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<td>Criteria for Instruction to Meet Participant Needs</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction encouraged participants to consider the practical implications of the concepts and to make the connection to their personal lives.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction encouraged participants to apply the content to the Scriptures along with guidance from the Holy Spirit.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction allowed participants to respond personally to the presented content.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction provided spiritual training for the participants.</td>
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<td>During the observations, the instruction allowed opportunities to share/demonstrate how the content related to the participants' church, community and the world.</td>
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APPENDIX C: Sample Letter & Church Presentation

Sample Letter to Local Churches

January 15, 2018

Dear Reverend ________________,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to participate in experiencing _________ Baptist Church's new membership classes. As shared with you, I am in the process of completing my doctorate in worship studies at Liberty University. As part of the process, students are being asked to complete a thesis project for the academic year.

Taken from Liberty University's Doctor of Worship Studies Thesis Handbook, "The Thesis Project represents the final element of formal training. As such, it should make a significant contribution to the individual student, the existing body of literature, and to the student's personal current or desired field of Christian ministry. The project must lend research support to a practical application of an applied approach by:

- Showing that the Thesis Project is supported by an appropriate theoretical basis (biblical, ethical, philosophical, psychological, educational, sociological, or theological).
- Describing and defending the project's design and practical implementation.
- Evaluating the significance of the project for worship ministry.
- Communicating fresh and original understandings of worship ministry to peers."

I am looking forward to being a part of your church's new membership class experiences over the next few weeks. To help provide a scope of what my thesis project entails, I have enclosed an overview of the project.

Thank you again for being one of the local churches to support this innovative project.

Sincerely,

Janicka Newbill
Church Presentation - Thesis Project Overview

Name: Janicka Newbill   Degree Program: Liberty University, Doctor of Worship Studies (D.W.S.)

Thesis Project Title
Integrating Worship Pedagogy into New Membership Curriculum for the Local Church

Significance of the Thesis Project

- This thesis is significant because “education is a vital ingredient to an effective church program.”

- Introducing the content of personal and corporate worship practices as part of the new member’s experience will add to the idea of education, relationship and needs being addressed.

- “We need to reach out and teach” with a “reach out and touch” attitude. Relationships do not develop only through education and knowledge. They develop as the churches identify with the needs of people.”

  - The review of literature reveals how one of the important needs of new church members is to develop a worship lifestyle. This worship education will have long-lasting implications on their personal and church lives.

- Encouraging people to embrace personal and corporate worship through the membership classes will help address the issue of retention or the "back door" phenomenon of church members.

- By introducing worship early to new members, they will begin a path that will enable them to identify how worship encompasses all of life both within and outside of the church. The urge to want to gather corporately for worship will also be reinforced.

- The outcome to this idea is new members will eventually be disciples who have been spiritually transformed by worship.

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2 Ibid.
Three Research Questions
The following three questions will be addressed by this project relating to new membership classes with regard to worship:

1. What is the current content used in orientation class for new members?
2. Is the subject of worship addressed initially for new members?
3. How does the inclusion of a worship component augment the assimilation of new members into the worshiping community?

Worship Defined
- The biblical definition of worship means Shâchâh (shaw-khaw) in Hebrew (Old Testament). The definition means to be prostrate in homage to royalty or God, to bow down, fall down, do reverence, or make to stoop. The biblical definition of worship in Greek (New Testament) means Prŏskunēō (pros-koo-neh-o). This is defined as to kiss, to fawn, crouch, to prostrate oneself in homage, do reverence to, or adore.
- With regard to application, "Worship involves all that is inside a person, all that is outside a person, and all that takes place within the corporate assembly of God's people."³

Corporate Worship Defined
- "Worship refers to of a particular church community in a public celebration of its faith. It has both vertical and horizontal dimensions: one's relation to God and one's relationship with fellow worshipers. It is an expression of adoration and praise to God in community."⁴
- Another definition about worship as it relates to corporate worship is described as, "To worship is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community. It is breaking into the Shekinah (glory) of God, or better yet, being invaded by the Shekinah (glory) of God."⁵

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Background of the Problem
- Many churchgoers are not aware of the definition of worship or even their role in the worship experience during their weekly services. Their understanding of worship tends to occur through bits of information expressed by worship leaders leading weekly services or through pastoral sermons of worship.
- Many churchgoers are in need of a deeper understanding of what worship is and how it shapes their life as members of the church.
- Churchgoers are in need of understanding how their personal worship has a bearing on experiencing true and authentic worship during their weekly services.

Statement of the Problem
- Church members need education about the importance of authentic worship, both personal and corporate. If church members lack education on the importance of authentic worship, then their church assimilation, participation and growth in the local church body may be hampered.
- This problem could be addressed via a worship component in a new membership curriculum.
- Beginning with the new members' classes would be a start because in a survey conducted by LifeWay Research, two thirds of the 5,000 individuals surveyed do not attend regular classes for adults like Sunday school, Bible studies or other small group activities.\(^6\)

Working Hypothesis
- There is an interdependent relationship between understanding what worship is and the participation of church members in the life and work of their local church body. This interdependent relationship directly impacts the assimilation of church members.
- To help address this interdependent relationship, the local church can begin with their new church members who tend to experience new membership classes.

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Purpose of the Thesis Project

- The purpose of this thesis project is to encourage churches to embed a worship curriculum in the new member orientation curriculum. The introduction of a worship curriculum would further help new members orient into the worship life of their church.
- The introduction of a worship curriculum as part of the new members’ orientation class can help address some common issues that arise with corporate worship.
  - “Most if not all of the people attending worship at [our] church have learned whatever they know about worship by observation alone.”
  - Another issue is that often church members will engage in corporate worship by being observant or as attendees who have been invited to listen and at times sing along when asked by worship teams.
  - Also, churchgoers sometimes confuse an emotional response to music with experiencing the true presence of God.

Research Method and Plan
Discipleship Teachers & New Members

- Working with the local church’s lead designee, a discipleship teacher(s) will be identified for the purpose of gaining an understanding of how worship principles are embedded into the church’s new membership curriculum.
- The discipleship teachers will be shadowed in order to observe the teachers during actual classroom presentations for new members.
  - This will enable the opportunity to experience the current new membership curriculum.
  - At the completion of shadowing the discipleship teacher(s), collaboration meetings will occur with the church’s lead designee and/or discipleship teacher(s) to present an introductory worship curriculum that can be embedded into the new membership curriculum.

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7 Gilbert, “A Key Shaping, 10.
8 Ibid.
Church Presentation - Thesis Project Overview

Name: Janicka Newbill  Degree Program: Liberty University, Doctor of Worship Studies (D.W.S.)

Thesis Project Title
Integrating Worship Pedagogy into New Membership Curriculum for the Local Church

Some Scriptures for Foundation
John 4:21-24 (NKJV)
Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Joshua 24:14-15, 24 (NKJV)
“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”... And the people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!”

Psalm 95:6-7 (NKJV)
Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.

Psalm 111:1, 10 (NKJV)
Praise the LORD! I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation... The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

Revelation 5:11-13 (NKJV)
Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!” And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”
Church Presentation - Thesis Project Overview

Name: Janicka Newbill  Degree Program: Liberty University, Doctor of Worship Studies

Thesis Project Title
Integrating Worship Pedagogy into New Membership Curriculum for the Local Church

Statistics to Consider
In a survey with 3,000 respondents, 58% agreed strongly/somewhat while 28% disagreed somewhat/strongly that, "Humans exist to bring God glory and to enjoy Him." Interestingly enough, 14% of the respondents were unsure. ("The State of American Theology Study 2016," LifeWay Research, 2016)

Reflection Response: Simply put, we were created for worship, yet people are not 100% convinced of this fact.

Among churches in America, the average retention rate is 35%. If a new member class is offered, it goes to 72%. When the class is required...the retention rate rises to 80-85%. ("MOVE: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth," Greg L. Hawkins & Cally Parkinson, 2011)

Reflection Response: New member classes have a significant role in the church body.

Since 2010 the erosion of spiritual vitality is much less steep than the decline in congregational growth and it is considerably less severe than it was between 2005 and 2010. ("American Congregations 2015: Thriving and Surviving," Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2015)

Reflective Response: The fact remains, spiritual vitality is declining.

More than four-in-ten religiously affiliated adults (43%) now say they read scripture outside of religious services at least once a week, up 3 percentage points since 2007. And fully three-in-ten religiously affiliated adults now say they participate in prayer groups or scripture study groups on a weekly basis, also up 3 points since 2007. ("U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious," Pew Research Center, 2015)

Reflective Response: Overall, less than 50% of religiously affiliated adults are engaging consistently with worship practices.

Among Christians, believing in God tops the list, with fully 86% saying belief in God is “essential” to their Christian identity. In addition, roughly seven-in-ten Christians say being grateful for what they have (71%), forgiving those who have wronged them (69%) and always being honest (67%) are essential to being Christian. Far fewer say that attending religious services (35%), dressing modestly (26%), working to protect the environment (22%) or resting on the Sabbath (18%) are essential to what being Christian means to them, personally. ("Religion in Everyday Life," Pew Research Center, 2016)

Reflective Response: The percentages are concerning, if being a follower of Jesus Christ and worship is all-encompassing lifestyle.
Three-quarters of adults – including 96% of members of historically black Protestant churches and 93% of evangelical Protestants – say they thanked God for something in the past week. And two-thirds, including 91% of those in the historically black Protestant tradition and 87% of evangelicals, say they asked God for help during the past week. ("Religion in Everyday Life," Pew Research Center, 2016)

Reflective Response: This is good, since thanking God and seeking His help is part of having a worshipful relationship with Him
APPENDIX D: Worship Principles

Worship Principles

Overarching Worship Principles I
- Worship is formational.
- Worship is transformational.
- Worship is relational.
- Worship is missional.
- Worship is reproducible.

Overarching Worship Principles II
- Christian worship is biblical.
- Christian worship is dialogic and relational.
- Christian worship is covenantal.
- Christian worship is Trinitarian.
- Christian worship is communal.
- Christian worship is hospitable, caring, and welcoming.
- Christian worship is in but not of the world.
- Christian worship is expressive and formative.
- Christian worship is generous and an excellent outpouring of ourselves before God.

Worship Principles & Its Demands
- The wonder of God demands our worship of Him.
- The work of God demands our worship of Him.
- The wisdom of God demands our worship of Him.
- The wishes of God demand our worship of Him.

Worship Principles for Spiritual Formation
- Worship is a lifestyle.
- God is all about a worshipful relationship.
- Worship is a part of God’s cycle of life.
- Worship brings God’s revelation of His presence.
- Jesus is our eternal object of worship.
- The Holy Spirit augments our worship.
- Worship begins with obedience.
  - Obedience is central to worship.
  - Worship involves and equals submission.
- God wants worship from repentant hearts.
  - Brokenness is a prerequisite for genuine worship.
  - Worship requires a living sacrifice.
Authentic worship requires Holiness.
True worshipers demonstrate personal integrity.

- Authentic worship requires a sacred space.
- Worship is a process.
  - Worship as a practice takes time.
  - Worship requires order.
  - Worship requires growth.
  - Worship involves a routine.
- Worship involves service.
  - Authentic worship includes right actions toward others.
  - Authentic worship embraces love for the people of God.
  - Genuine worship transcends time and culture.
- True worshipers keep His Word, seek Him, hide the Word, proclaim His truth, rejoice in His statutes, meditate on His precepts, consider His ways, and delight in His Word.

The denoted worship principles reflect the following resources:


## Class 1: Vision & Mission of the Church

### Class Content
This class exposes new members to the vision and mission of the universal Christian Church and the local church.

### Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:
- State the basic definition of the universal Christian Church and the local church.
- Describe the overall direction of the universal Christian Church and local church. (vision)
- Describe the overall reason why the universal Christian Church and the local church exist. (mission)
- Identify the similarities and difference between the universal Christian Church and the local church.

### Application of Worship Principle(s)
- Worship is missional.
- Authentic worship requires a sacred space.

### Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:
- Why should I belong to the universal Christian Church?
- Why should I belong to a local church?

### Biblical Scriptures for Application

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians 1:22-23</td>
<td>Ephesians 2:14</td>
<td>Ephesians 4:12</td>
<td>Colossians 1:18</td>
<td>II Timothy 3:16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Essential Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assembly</th>
<th>Believers</th>
<th>Belonging</th>
<th>Biblically-based</th>
<th>Christ-centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>Ekklesia</td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Essential Statements
- The primary purpose is to glorify God, and to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people who are in a state of eternal separation from God.
- The local church’s presence should be ever increasing in the local community to proclaim the truth and be examples of the truth.
- The local church is both a worshiping and teaching institution that equips the body of Christ to do the work of the ministry.
# New Members Unified Curriculum Guide

## Class 2: An Introduction to Christian Worship

### Class Content
This class introduces to new members God’s expectations for personal and corporate worship for Christian believers.

### Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Define what personal and corporate worship are for the life of a believer.
- Describe the benefits of personal and corporate worship.
- Apply the role of personal and corporate worship to the universal Christian Church and the local church.

### Application of Worship Principle(s)

- Christian worship is biblical.
- Worship is transformational.
- Christian worship is formational.
- Worship is relational.

### Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:

- What is the definition of worship?
- What is the difference between personal worship and corporate worship?
- How does belonging to the universal Christian Church and the local church help me as a worshiper?

### Biblical Scriptures for Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 22:5</th>
<th>Deuteronomy 6:4-5</th>
<th>Psalm 29:2</th>
<th>Psalm 95:6</th>
<th>Matthew 4:10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Essential Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authentic</th>
<th>Awe</th>
<th>Horizontal</th>
<th>Reverence</th>
<th>Sincere</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>Worshiper</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Essential Statements

- God created man for worship.
- "Worship involves all that is inside a person, all that is outside a person, and all that takes place within the corporate assembly of God's people."\(^1\)
- "Worship refers to self-expression of a particular church community in a public celebration of its faith. It has both vertical and horizontal dimensions: one's relation to God and one's relationship with fellow worshipers. It is an expression of adoration and praise to God in community."\(^2\)

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# Class 3: Repentance & Salvation

## Class Content
This class shares with new members the importance of salvation and its relationship to being an authentic worshipper who is a believer and a member of the universal Christian Church and the local church.

## Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:
- Discuss the meaning of conversion.
- Describe and explain salvation as a process.
- Explain the relationship between repentance and God's desire for worship.

## Application of Worship Principle(s)
- Worship is transformational.
- Worship is a process.

## Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:
- What is the new birth and how does this relate to salvation?
- Why does God desire worship from repentant hearts?

## Biblical Scriptures for Application

| Psalm 51:2-4 | II Samuel 11 to 12 | John 1:2, 12-13 | John 3:16 | Romans 5:6-8 |
| Romans 10:9-17 | II Corinthians 5:17 | I Timothy 2:5-6 | 2 Peter 3:9 | I John 5:11-12 |

## Essential Vocabulary

| Assurance | Conversion | The Cross | Faith | Forgiveness |
| Grace | Saved | Separation | Sin | Works |

## Essential Statements
- Brokenness is a prerequisite for genuine worship.³
- When salvation occurs, God declares a person as righteous in His eyes, free from guilt and the punishment of sin.
- Through worship, people become aware of the presence and immensity of their sin. People get a glimpse of the way God views their sin, causing them to seek repentance.⁴
- Once a person is saved, he or she becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of the God and the universal body of believers called the Church.

---
New Members Unified Curriculum Guide

Class 4: The Gospel

Class Content
This class provides new members with an understanding of the gospel and its implications in the life of a believer.

Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:
- State what is the centrality of the gospel?
- Describe how one is spiritually renewed through the gospel?
- Identify the essential elements of the gospel in the life of the universal Christian Church and one's local church.
- Relate the gospel to the importance of personal worship and corporate worship.

Application of Worship Principle(s)
- Worship is missional.
- Christian worship is communal.
- The wonder of God demands our worship of Him.

Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:
- Why is the gospel important to my life as believer?
- Why is the gospel important to the universal Christian Church and the local church?
- How does believing and sharing the gospel impact my worship?

Biblical Scriptures for Application

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colossians 1:17-18, 28</td>
<td>Hebrews 2:9, 14-17</td>
<td>Hebrews 10:3-5, 10-12</td>
<td>Revelation 1:17, 18</td>
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</table>

Essential Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Disenculturation</th>
<th>Holiness</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mediator</td>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Proclamation</td>
<td>Resurrection</td>
<td>Sanctification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essential Statements

- Jesus came to earth in the flesh to confirm God's promises.
- The gospel sheds light on the seriousness of man's sinful nature and God's redeeming love for the people He cherishes so dearly as the Creator of heaven and earth.
New Members Unified Curriculum Guide

Class 5: Baptism

Class Content
This class introduces new members to one of two rites called baptism, which is an ordinance in the Church body.

Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:
- Describe how repentance and faith relate to one's decision to experience baptism.
- Illustrate how baptism relates to the work of Jesus Christ.

Application of Worship Principle(s)
- Worship is formational.
- Worship involves and equals submission.
- Christian worship is generous and an excellent outpouring of ourselves before God.

Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:
- What is the main purpose of baptism?
- Do I need to be baptized? If so, why?
- How does being baptized relate to my life as a worshiper?

Biblical Scriptures for Application

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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romans 6:3</td>
<td>Galatians 3:26</td>
<td>Colossians 2:12</td>
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Essential Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defilement</th>
<th>Glorify</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Immersion</th>
<th>Lordship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinance</td>
<td>Submission</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Testifies</td>
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</table>

Essential Statements
- Baptism is an act of worship.
- Baptism is an ordinance that sets forth the central truth of the Christian faith.
New Members Unified Curriculum Guide

Class 6: Communion

Class Content
This class introduces new members to the second rite called Communion (The Lord's Supper), which is an ordinance in the Church body.

Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:
- Describe how repentance, faith, and baptism relate to one's decision to partake in Communion.
- Illustrate how Communion relates to the work of Jesus Christ.
- Explain the significance of Communion.

Application of Worship Principle(s)
- Worship is formational.
- Christian worship is covenantal.
- The wishes of God demand our worship of Him.

Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:
- What is the main purpose of Communion?
- Do I need to partake in Communion? If so, why?
- How does the practice of partaking in Communion relate to my life as a worshiper?

Biblical Scriptures for Application

| 1 Corinthians 11:20-25 | 2 Corinthians 17 |

Essential Vocabulary

| Celebration | Instituted | The Lord's Supper | Ordinance | Partake |
| Reflection  | Remembrance | Sacrifice | Symbolic |

Essential Statements

- Communion is an act of worship.
- Communion is an ordinance that sets forth the central truth of the Christian faith.
## New Members Unified Curriculum Guide

### Class 7: Father, Son & Holy Spirit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This class introduces new members to understanding the essence of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as described in the Word of God.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Outcome(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of this class, students will be able to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Explain the character of God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Summarize the roles of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Describe how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit relate to one's personal and corporate worship.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application of Worship Principle(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Worship is transformational.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Christian worship is Trinitarian.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Application</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This class will answer the following questions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why is my relationship with Jesus Christ so important?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• How can The Trinity be explained in a simple way?</td>
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### Biblical Scriptures for Application

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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romans 12:4-5</td>
<td>I Corinthians 2:9-13</td>
<td>Ephesians 1:22-23</td>
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### Essential Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Augments</th>
<th>Comforter</th>
<th>Omnipotent</th>
<th>Omniscient</th>
<th>Righteous</th>
<th>Servant</th>
<th>Suffering</th>
<th>Transcendent</th>
<th>Truth</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Essential Statements

- We are drawn into relationship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- “God, through the Holy Spirit, is in the business of changing people. The power of the Holy Spirit changes broken, sinful people into worshipers of the living God. He transforms lives from hurting and broken to healed and re-created. As He transforms people into the likeness of Jesus, they are equipped to teach, train, encourage, edify and share the gospel with the lost so that they can become Great Commission worshipers of the living God.”

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5 Ibid., 38.
Class 8: Spiritual Disciplines

Class Content
This class exposes new members to the importance of maturing as a believer through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Summarize how spiritual disciplines assist a believer in walking God's way.
- Explain how spiritual disciplines relate to personal and corporate worship.
- Relate the practice of spiritual disciplines with examples of acts of worship.

Application of Worship Principle(s)
- Worship is a lifestyle.
- Worship requires growth.
- Christian worship is expressive and formative.
- Christian worship is generous and an excellent outpouring of ourselves before God.

Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:

- What are specific examples of spiritual disciplines?
- How can the practice of spiritual disciplines help me grow in my spiritual walk?
- Why is the practice of spiritual disciplines acts of worship?

Biblical Scriptures for Application

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colossians 1:3-12</td>
<td>Colossians 3:16</td>
<td>Hebrews 4:12-16</td>
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</table>

Essential Vocabulary

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Deed</th>
<th>Fasting</th>
<th>Intercessory</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Serving</td>
<td>Stewardship</td>
<td>Willing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essential Statements

- True worshipers keep His Word, seek Him, hide the Word, proclaim His truth, rejoice in His statutes, meditate on His precepts, consider His ways, and delight in His Word.⁶
- “God nurtures one's relationship as a person worships Him. He’s vitally interested in seeing a person pursue a closer relationship through daily companionship with Him as the living Lord of the universe and as a person's loving Father. He wants this relationship with Him to be active, vibrant, intimate, and worshipful – a holy friendship.”⁷

---

⁶ Whaley, Called to Worship, 166.

# New Members Unified Curriculum Guide

## Class 9: Spiritual Gifts

### Class Content
This class exposes new members to the significance of spiritual gifts and the impact on maturing as a believer.

### Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:
- Categorize examples of spiritual gifts.
- Demonstrate how spiritual gifts assist a believer in walking God's way.
- Explain how spiritual gifts relate to personal and corporate worship.

### Application of Worship Principle(s)
- Worship involves service.
- Worship requires order.
- Christian worship is dialogic and relational.
- The Holy Spirit augments our worship.

### Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:
- What is the difference between spiritual gifts and the fruit of the spirit?
- How do spiritual gifts advance the kingdom of God?
- What is the relationship between spiritual gifts and worship?

### Biblical Scriptures for Application

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Timothy 4:14</td>
<td>Titus 2:1-8</td>
<td>I Peter 4:10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Essential Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Compassion</th>
<th>Exaltation</th>
<th>Exhortation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manifestation</td>
<td>Ministry</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>Mercy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Essential Statements
- The use of spiritual gifts is acts of worship.
- When a believer allows Christ to function as Lord of their life and the Holy Spirit is free to actively do His work in a believer, life will no longer consist of merely doing good works for God. Instead the Christian believer will experience the exciting adventure of walking in God's very presence utilizing one's spiritual gifts.\(^8\)

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New Members Unified Curriculum Guide

Class 10: Evangelism & Discipleship

Class Content
This class shares with new members the importance of evangelism and discipleship as missional acts being vital to their spiritual walk.

Class Outcome(s)
By the end of this class, students will be able to:
- State the basic definitions of evangelism and discipleship.
- Compare and contrast evangelism and discipleship.
- Explain how evangelism and discipleship are examples of worship.

Application of Worship Principle(s)
- Worship is reproducible.
- Worship is missional.
- Christian worship is hospitable, caring, and welcoming.
- Christian worship is in but not of the world.

Personal Application
This class will answer the following questions:
- What are God’s expectations of me for evangelism and discipleship?
- What is the connection between evangelism, discipleship and worship?
- How does evangelism and discipleship advance the mission of the universal Christian Church and the local church?

Biblical Scriptures for Application


Essential Vocabulary

| Circumspectly | Community | Discipleship | Equipping | Fellowship |
| Interdependent | Kingdom | Transformed | Unbelievers | Zealous |

Essential Statements

- God desires nations to worship Him.
- It is important to grow one’s vertical relationship with God and nurture their horizontal relationships, which can lead to opportunities to share the good news and make disciples.
- “The world can be saved by one thing and that is worship. For to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.”

9 Morgan, Nelson's Complete Book, 808.
APPENDIX F: Scriptures

Scripture Relating to the Teaching of Worship Principles

Worship Instructions Given by God

Exodus 24:3-8
So Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the Lord has said we will do.” And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient.” And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words.”

Worship Principles:
Worship is covenantal, transformational, and requires a living sacrifice.

Worship Instructions Given by Moses

Deuteronomy 4:5-10
Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ “For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, especially concerning the day you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb, when the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’

Deuteronomy 4:15-19, 39-40
Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. And take heed, lest you
lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage... Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

Worship Principles:
Worship requires holiness, and involves and equals submission.

Worship Instructions Given by Jesus Christ

John 4:19-26
The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

Worship Principles:
Authentic worship embraces love for the people of God and genuine worship transcends time and culture.

Acts 1:4-8
And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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.

Worship Principle:
The Holy Spirit augments worship.
Worship Instructions Given by The Apostles

Acts 8:30-38
So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.” So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Worship Principles:
Worship is biblical, involves submission, and transcends time and culture.

Romans 1:16-21, 24-25
For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened...Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Ephesians 2:11-22
Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of
the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Worship Principles:
Worship is formational, transformational, relational, and covenantal.