

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

**A Plan to Unify Generational Worship Divisions Through the Development and
Implementation of a Biblical Philosophy of Generational Worship**

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the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
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Doctor of Ministry

by

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ABSTRACT

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Westside Baptist Church is a multigenerational Southern Baptist Church with an established culture of dynamic musical worship. Throughout the last four decades, this congregation has flourished in its weekly engagement of musical worship. Westside's musical worship styles are generally comprised of traditional hymns, southern gospel, and praise and worship music. While the church has maintained a reputation of first-rate worship music, the last decade has revealed a growing division among the congregation's generational worship style preferences. One generation of the church longs to worship with the songs that they grew up with, while another generation prefers to grow up with a worship style of their own.

The purpose of this thesis project is to recognize how generational worship style divisions are created and then to resolve the church's generational worship divide by persuading every generation of the value and necessity of both older and newer worship styles. This purpose will be accomplished by evaluating Westside Baptist Church's ministry context, developing a biblical and generational philosophy of worship, observing historical lessons from the worship divisions throughout church history, and researching modern texts about the current worship war. Finally, this thesis project will develop a discipleship strategy for biblical worship that will produce generational unity among Westside Baptist Church worshipers.

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Abbreviations

DMIN *Doctor of Ministry*

LUSOD *Liberty University School of Divinity*

ESV *English Standard Version*

KJV *King James Version*

NIV *New International Version*

Chapter 1

Introduction

There is a rumor that the worship wars have ended in the American church. The speculation is that traditional worship styles from the past have been defeated, and new worship styles have taken their place. However, the conflict over worship styles did not begin in the 20th century, and in a general context, it may not end anytime soon. The ideal method of worship has been a divisive matter for thousands of years. From the beginning of any historical record of worship, there have been struggles over what worship methods are the most appropriate and authentic. The earliest forms of church history expose multiple opinions, perspectives, and divisions concerning a proper method for worship. Throughout the following centuries, the worship debates included a vast array of preferences and traditions. From one century to the next, the church has consistently argued about music. These arguments were over whether or not instruments should be allowed in worship, then the debate evolved to a conflict over which instruments would be most suitable for worship¹. Other divisions included whether Christians should be allowed to sing in church or if there should even be musical worship at all.² Throughout the centuries, divisions continued to progress into conflicts over whether Christians should sing melody alone or be allowed to engage harmony or polyphony elements in worship.³ During the first millennia of the church, the worship style wars were as constant and divisive as they are in the church today.

¹ Andrew Wilson-Dickson, *Story of Christian Music* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 28.

² Wilson-Dickson, *Story of Christian Music*, 56.

³ Wilson-Dickson, *Story of Christian Music*, 52.

Similar to the past, worship style disputes have carried on from one generation to the next up to the present-day. In recent decades, the progression of worship style divisions has become especially obvious among the different generations of worshippers. This generational division of worship has become especially obvious throughout the ministry of Westside Baptist Church.

Westside Baptist Church is a multigenerational Southern Baptist Church with an established culture of dynamic musical worship. During the last four decades, the congregation has flourished in its weekly engagement of musical worship. Westside's musical worship styles have generally been comprised of traditional hymns, southern gospel, praise and worship, and modern worship music. While the church has maintained a reputation of first-rate worship music, the last two decades have revealed a growing division among the congregation's generational worship style preferences. One generation of the church longs to worship with the songs that they grew up with, while another generation prefers to grow up with a worship style of their own.

The purpose of this thesis project is to recognize how this generational worship style division was created and then to resolve the generational conflict by persuading every person of the value and necessity for both older and newer worship styles. This purpose will be accomplished by evaluating the ministry context of Westside Baptist Church, developing a biblical and generational philosophy of worship, observing historical lessons from the worship divisions throughout church history, and researching modern texts about the current worship conflict. Finally, this thesis project will develop an intergenerational discipleship strategy for worship, which will help produce generational unity among the worshippers of Westside Baptist Church.

Ministry Context

Westside Baptist Church is a multigenerational Southern Baptist Church located in Northeast Florida with 1,200 weekly attendees pre-COVID pandemic. Westside is passionate about evangelism, discipleship, expositional preaching, and weekly dynamic worship services. Its mission is to connect all generations to Jesus Christ, one person at a time, for the purpose of worship, community, and service.⁴ Westside has been focused on this mission for more than 50 years.

Westside Baptist Church was founded in the spring of 1958. Over the next fifteen years, the church experienced a fair amount of growth. In August of 1973, the church called Reverend Harold G. Hudson to be its senior pastor. Under the leadership of Dr. Hudson and his music ministers, pastors Jim Law and Scott White, the church built a reputable music ministry with a vibrant choir and orchestra. It was during this season of ministry that the church experienced explosive growth. Fifteen years later, in 1989, the church moved into a 2,600-seat worship center. Dr. Hudson resigned as the senior pastor in 1996, and he was replaced by the church's current Senior Pastor, Keith Russell.⁵

Throughout its history, Westside Baptist Church has maintained a reputation of preaching and worship, which continues in the church today. While other churches have witnessed choir and orchestra ministries' departure and replaced traditional elements with a band and praise team, Westside has been on the front lines of maintaining a worship style with integrated choral, orchestral, and praise band elements into one blended worship service. Westside has developed a robust and flexible choir and orchestra ministry, which blends with modern rhythm band and

⁴ "Westside Baptist Church / About Us." n.d. Wbcjax.Com. Accessed June 21, 2020. <https://wbcjax.com/about-us/>.

⁵ Ibid.

praise teams. This unique blend of modern and traditional instrumentation and vocalists allows the church to facilitate weekly worship services with both modern and traditional values.

The weekly worship services at Westside Baptist Church frequently include a blend of new and old hymns and praise and worship music, along with other various modern worship styles. In addition to each of these congregational worship elements, most services at Westside also include the addition of a special music element featuring instrumentals, solos, vocal ensemble groups, and an exciting choir and orchestra.

However, regardless of the careful effort made to unify generational worship style preferences at Westside, there is still a consistent breakdown in maintaining church unity based upon different generational worship style preferences. Each generation of worshippers values their own style of worship and often fails to recognize the value of other worship styles. This is an ongoing struggle for Westside Baptist Church, and without a clear plan to disciple the church through a biblical and generational philosophy of worship, the generational divisions will continue.

Problem Presented

The problem this project will address is the division at Westside Baptist Church over generational worship style preferences. One generation of believers long to worship with the songs they grew up with, while another generation wishes to create a worship style of their own. As a result, each group often contends that their own preferred style of worship is more valuable, more authentic, and simply more pleasing than the other styles of worship.

To present this problem systematically, one must seek to determine its cause. The following section will show the reasons for the generational disunity of worship at Westside

Baptist Church, which include both external and internal cultural influences, generational segregation across the campus, a lack of worship discipleship at every age level, and a self-serving culture about how worship should be practiced.

The problem of generational disunity within the church has been influenced and increased by external and internal cultural influences. Culture will be defined later in this project. Cultural influence itself is not the enemy of church unity. In fact, cultural influence on the church is not a new trend. Throughout church history, from the Roman Empire to the Reformation and beyond, the church has always been influenced by culture. Dan Kimble explains, “as we read the grand story of the Bible, we see that culture and time have changed worship throughout history.”⁶ The problem is not cultural influence alone, but our propensity resist change in favor of comfort. As things change, one generation commonly becomes skeptical while the next generation successively embraces change. The external cultural influences on the church are abundant, ranging from secular music trends, media saturation among younger generations, the “worship culture” movement, and widespread mega-church influencers across social media platforms.

In addition to external cultural influences, every church experiences internal cultural influences. The internal cultural influences at Westside include the guidance of the music ministry, along with the staff, servant-leaders, peer to peer influence, and most of all, the preaching and teaching from the Senior Pastor. As Dan Kimble argues, “until Jesus returns, we will see many new expressions and forms of worship change in churches within various cultures.”⁷ With both internal and external cultural developments, change is inevitable.

⁶ Dan Kimble, *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2004), 6.

⁷ Kimble, *Emerging Worship*, 9.

The second significant factor related to worship division at Westside is the generational segregation across the campus. In the name of ministering to every generation at their own age-appropriate level, the church has created a setting where younger generations rarely interact with the older generations of the church. This is the case both in the schedule of services and in campus location. In some cases, the children and senior adults at Westside are never in the same building together. These reasons, along with some other ministry-wide practices maintain generational segregation at Westside Baptist Church.

Church members and staff members have indicated that some aspects of generational worship divisions were intensified by a leadership decision made several years ago, which allowed segregation of worship styles according to worship style preferences. In 2013, Westside created a contemporary service in addition to its more traditional service. This became a service which the younger families at Westside attended. After a year, this service was abruptly canceled, and some families were disappointed that the worship service which was created for their preferred worship style had been suddenly abandoned. In more recent days, Westside has experienced further generational segregation among its age-divided ministries. The children's ministry and youth ministry have grown accustomed to having their own worship services along with their own unique styles of worship. There have been numerous occasions where the music selected within these ministries is music that would be unacceptable in the main worship service due to extreme styles and preferences. Age-divided worship styles have also been practiced among the senior adult ministries.

Westside has had a Wednesday night bible study, which is a public service for adults of all ages. However, a decision by the leadership to only include traditional worship styles for this event resulted in a dominant senior adult attendance. In both examples, the worship services

were designed to pander to stylistic preferences of one specific generation. Worship leader Mike Harland discusses implications for segregation strategies: “Churches that create a generationally segregated congregation through music preferences are only delaying the inevitable disruption in the body’s future, and they are doing so in the name of eliminating disruption in the present. Over time, the church grows further and further apart and consequently becomes an easy target for conflict.”⁸ Failure to design worship strategies beyond music preferences endangers worship attendance and ultimately church growth. Kimble explains that because age segregation has become so common within the church, Sunday mornings may be the most radically age-segregated hour of the week.⁹ He asks the question: “How did we come up with so many age-dividers in our churches? Isn’t the church supposed to be a body? Then why do we often dissect the church into little parts rather than seeing it function holistically together?”¹⁰ Age divided ministry fails to mirror the biblical paradigms of intergenerational worship.

Segregated worship services provide instant gratification toward group preferences, but ultimately, produce division that hinders collective worship. Consequently, church-wide worship services on Sunday mornings gather many into one place where worshippers are consistently disappointed with selected styles of worship that differ from individual preference.

A lack of any organized biblical discipleship models regarding worship also embolden generational divisions. While much of the responsibility of these divisions are driven by individual preferences, a large part of this problem has resulted from the leaderships failure to guide the church in a biblical philosophy of generational worship. Both older and younger

⁸ Mike Harland, *Worship Essentials: Growing a Healthy Worship Ministry Without Starting a War* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), Kindle, loc.1127.

⁹ Kimble, *Emerging Worship*, 170.

¹⁰ Kimble, *Emerging Worship*.

generations fail to esteem others better than themselves in worship. Leadership does not teach appreciation and community over individual preferences. In most cases, the musical worship at Westside has been led by individual ministry leaders with no institutional standard or consistent philosophy of worship. This lack of an organized worship strategy has allowed irregularities in the practice of worship which resulted in variance depending on each ministry leader. In other words, because there is no unified music ministry strategy at Westside, there is no unity of musical worship. It is the responsibility of the leadership of the church to determine an institutional philosophy of worship that will be consistently implemented for every age group within the church. Once developed and implemented, worship leaders and worshippers should be instructed in alignment with the institutional philosophy of worship.

Finally, the most unfavorable consequence of generational divisions is the self-serving attitude of worshippers who believe their own personal preference is the only way to worship. Bryan Chappell explains, “only the most arrogant congregation would say that God has taught nothing to its forefathers from which it can learn. And only the most self-absorbed congregation would say that it does not need to be concerned about making its worship relevant to the present generation.”¹¹ The church has a responsibility to make worship relevant, or appropriate to the current body. The musical element of worship should be applicable to every generation of the church. One cannot claim that their preferred worship style is the only acceptable biblical style of worship. As Paul Basden instructs, “for those who wave their Bibles and claim that Holy Scripture gives us a blueprint for worship, I have a sobering piece of news: the New Testament

¹¹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape our Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), Kindle, loc.2319.

nowhere endorses one specific style of worship for all believers.”¹² There is no New Testament prescription for worship style. Basden continues, “a careful study of the New Testament reveals that one searches in vain for a divinely sanctioned style of order of worship that all churches must follow if they are to be true churches. Rather, variety in worship styles emerged during the apostolic era and has been with us ever since.”¹³ Because the Word of God has not sanctioned a specific style of worship, the church has no right to create those sanctions upon one another.

The senior adults at Westside Baptist Church have made statements such as: “The hymns were inspired by God and should never be changed or forgotten.” “The old people pay the bills around here, and so we should have the kind of music that we want.” “They do not make music like they used to; there is nothing like those old hymns.” These statements are very candid opinions about their personal stylistic preference of old hymns over modern worship music. While this is not the opinion of every senior adult at Westside, there are many senior adults who are outspoken about these opinions.

One example of this self-serving mindset becomes evident when one considers that the senior adult generation at Westside generally includes gospel songs written by Bill Gaither from the 1960s and 1970s within their genre label of hymns. For most, this broad classification of hymns would include songs like "Because He Lives," "There's Something About That Name," "The King is Coming," and "The Family of God."¹⁴ As a result of this classification of hymns, many senior citizens consider songs written throughout the 1970s to be among their favorite hymns. Many seniors attribute the same level of value and spiritual depth to the Gaither hymns

¹² Paul Basden, *The Worship Maze: Finding a Style to Fit Your Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 34.

¹³ Basden, *The Worship Maze*.

¹⁴ Vernon M. Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), Kindle, loc. 5409.

as they would to a hymn such as Amazing Grace, which was written in 1779. This reveals an inconsistency of worship style preference, in that many seniors ascribe great value to the songs written and made famous while they were in their 20's, but they fail to extend the same measure of value to the songs written today for the worship of younger believers. Simply put, the seniors generally connect on a very deep level with newer songs written when they were younger, but they are not willing to extend the same choice to the younger generations. However, the seniors at Westside Baptist Church are only partly responsible for the generational rifts.

The younger generation at Westside Baptist Church tends to be self-serving in their approach to worship, and as a result, they also bear some of the responsibility. In some cases, the younger generation at Westside Baptist Church does not try to appreciate the value of older worship songs by mocking certain older music styles during the corporate worship services. A few decided they will not engage in worship during these parts of service. One youth worship leader stated that as soon as he turns eighteen, he will leave Westside and go to a church that performs his favorite worship music. Some of the youth at Westside complain that the older songs sound outdated, silly, and unpleasant. They also claim that the words are irrelevant and difficult to understand.

The youth worship leaders generally choose to lead only newer songs in their worship services. This practice has become so frequent that the youth band often introduces multiple new songs each week. The high turnover rate of worship songs is evidenced by students referring to an old song as one less than a year old. Songs are valued not for their message or philosophical purpose but rather for their age.

The youth at Westside claim that they do not appreciate older music styles or methods. Students have often complained that the older worship songs do not *feel* like worship. This

generation of worshipers assumes that if the music is not played or sung according to their own preferred style of worship, it lacks value or authenticity. Once again, this is a self-serving attitude of worship.

As a result of external and internal cultural influences, generational segregation across the church campus, lack of worship discipleship, and self-serving ideas about worship practices, have furthered division that leaving large portions of the congregation unsatisfied on a weekly basis. Complaints are frequent from both elderly and younger members. The primary issue surrounds the church's focus on appeasing worship preferences instead of a biblical understanding of worship. There is inter-generational fighting instead of unity in worship toward a common goal.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to resolve the generational division of worship by creating a worship discipleship strategy for Westside Baptist Church. This worship discipleship strategy will guide every generation of Westside Baptist Church to worship in one accord regardless of generational worship style preferences. This unified methodology of worship will be evident when each generation approaches worship with humility, willing to recognize and appreciate the value and appropriateness of every generational style of worship. This purpose will be accomplished by evaluating the ministry context of Westside Baptist Church, developing a biblical and generational philosophy of worship, observing historical lessons from worship divisions throughout church history, and researching modern texts about current worship trends. Finally, this thesis project will develop a method of intergenerational

discipleship that will produce generational unity among the worshipers at Westside Baptist Church.

Basic Assumptions

This project holds the basic assumption that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that its words and principles are true. This project also assumes that man's chief purpose is to glorify God and worship Him for all eternity. Therefore, the subject of worship is one of the most essential matters that a Christian should seek to understand and personally develop. It is also the responsibility of every believer to engage in corporate worship. Furthermore, there is an assumption by this researcher that God's Word does not condone only one style of musical worship for the children of God. It is assumed that the most important guideline for worship is found in John 4:24. "They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This type of worship purpose supersedes personal preference.

Another basic assumption throughout this project is the negative impact that age segregated worship and a general lack of worship discipleship at every age level has caused throughout the church. It is believed that age segregation is appropriate for some programs and ministries of the church. However, in general, all generations are better off when they practice the discipline of worshipping together.

Definitions

Before one can begin to understand the divisions of worship, one should first understand what worship is. Kimble defines worship as "the act of adoring and praising God, that is,

ascribing worth to God as the one who deserves homage and service.”¹⁵ This definition is an all-encompassing definition that includes every thought, word, or action that man uses in his response to God. This researcher subscribes to this broad definition of worship; however, for the purpose of this project, unless otherwise noted, the word worship will be used in specific reference to the idea and practice of musical worship within the church.

The researcher hesitates to use the word worship to imply solely musical worship because of the tendency of the church to emphasize musical worship over other practices of worship. This misunderstanding has led many people to assume that when the word worship is used, it only refers to music. Steven Brooks surmises, “in many churches today, worship has become synonymous with music.”¹⁶ Worship in this way simply means the style of music. Brooks adds, “the secular world has even encouraged this misconception by identifying worship as a genre of music.”¹⁷ Church members commonly refer to worship as being “good” or “bad” referencing their approval for the musical portion of the worship service. However, as will later be discussed in this project, worship can be accomplished without any practice of music. Worship should not necessarily be defined as the music one sings or plays for God or the lyrics sung; neither should it refer only to the musical portion of a church service. Congregational singing is only one aspect of corporate worship. For the purpose of this paper, it should be understood that the word worship will refer to the practice of musical worship unless otherwise noted by the term general worship.

¹⁵ Kimble, *Emerging Worship*, 4.

¹⁶ Steven Brooks, *Worship Formation: A Call to Embrace Christian Growth in Each Element of the Worship Service* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2020), 11.

¹⁷ Brooks, *Worship Formation*, 11.

Segregated worship will refer to the separation of worshippers within a church body based upon their common age stylistic preferences. This practice is most commonly found in churches with multiple worship services using different styles of worship in each service. It is also common to see segregated worship styles among children's ministries and youth ministries when they are allowed to select their own preferred worship music without any guidance towards a unified institutional standard of biblical worship.

Finally, throughout this project, Westside will commonly be used as the shortened name for Westside Baptist Church.

Limitations

The scope of this project was explicitly designed to study and serve the ministry of Westside Baptist Church. This study does not assume that every multigenerational church has the same struggle. However, the principles shared will likely have consistent themes and patterns that can be applied to other churches that experience intergenerational worship struggles. The limitations listed below are potential weaknesses within the scope of this project that cannot be controlled.

This project will not attempt to address modern radio's cultural influence and the overall worship music industry. This project will not address the significant influence on worship music that worship publishing companies have over the worship music culture. Furthermore, this project will not include a comprehensive look at all modern worship styles of music. Instead, it will examine a few leading genres while attaching them to the generation that most frequently prefers that worship style. Finally, this project will not engage in the debate on the morality of

instrumental music. This project assumes that instrumental music and rhythms without words are amoral, and it is the words that make the message of a song moral or immoral.

This project will not address the issues of age segregated programs and ministries in a general sense. There is no contradiction when the project explains that a worship philosophy should not be segregated by age, while other programs are segregated by age. Westside Baptist Church is a ministry with many different aspects of age segregation. However, the biblical philosophy of worship will not be segregated by age. The function and purpose of worship is the same for every generation.

Delimitations

Delimitations are purposeful decisions the researcher makes to limit or define the boundaries of the study. This project will not address the theological debates about specific popular worship teams being heretical. Neither will it address whether a church should use music from another ministry whose doctrines do not align. This project assumes that all music styles selected by a worship leader will be individually evaluated and selected based upon their theological accuracy and appropriate usage among their church. The reason for this decision is to avoid the distraction that this kind of discussion would cause from the original subject matter. This project will not address the issues surrounding the frequency and turnover of new worship songs. It is important to understand how songs are being released differently now than in previous decades, but this project will spend minimal time on the issue. Neither will this project address the speed at which songs used to be written and produced versus how they are released and quickly become irrelevant. This will be addressed very briefly, but there is not enough useful data to conclusively speak to this element.

Thesis Statement

It is the contention of this writer that a biblical philosophy of worship should be defined in a multi-generational context that enables leadership to implement a strategy that will teach the church to worship and glorify God – in a spirit of unity – with various music styles that represent every generation of the church. This thesis will be accomplished by surveying historical church divisions over worship practices, current literature of worship practices as well as prominent generational divisions among the worshippers of Westside Baptist Church. The goal will be to construct a philosophy of worship that will be useful at Westside as well as transferable to other, like-minded multi-generational churches.

Chapter Two

Conceptual Framework

The research for this project began in the first quarter of 2020 and lasted through the first quarter of 2021. This time frame was selected due to the schedule of degree completion for the researcher. In preparation for this thesis project, more than twenty different literature sources have been studied and noted. This study will analyze a variety of literature sources that have been published regarding this subject matter. Each academic book or journal shares a different perspective in dealing with the subject of musical worship styles within the church. While only a few of these books provide any cohesive solution to the generational worship problem or even an agreed understanding of the cause of the problem, several consistent themes will be focused on in the following review. Each source of literature provides a definition of worship. Other prevalent themes that are consistent within these books include biblical worship, generational worship, unity in worship, worship preferences, worship culture, worship traditions, youth worship, emerging worship, liturgy, congregational singing, and future worship. The following review will share a comprehensive assessment of the literature in outline form to display how the information from each literary source can cohesively work together to reveal a clear plan for Westside Baptist Church as they seek to disciple all generations of the congregation to understand and adhere to a biblical philosophy of worship.

Literature Review

The following section of this project will provide a review of the existing knowledge regarding the proposed study. In addition, this section examines current literature related to project design and will curate the information from a variety of precedential literary sources

regarding generational and biblical worship matters. The literature review will lay a foundation for the designing a discipleship plan based upon a generational and biblical philosophy of worship.

Worship

Many authors who address the subject of worship seem hesitant to propose a definition of worship likely in response to a lack of biblical prescription. However, Vernon Whaley is an exception to this observation. Whaley explains that worship should not be defined as a song, a music style, an atmosphere, or a feeling. Worship is not measured by one's preference for a band or an orchestra, a praise team, or a choir.¹⁸ Whaley continues by affirming that musical expressions may not even be necessary for biblical worship at all.¹⁹ Worship is far more than music. According to a general classification of worship, both Whaley and Bob Kauflin agree that in its simplest form, worship is love and devotion to God.^{20 21} Kimble's view of worship corresponds with these. Kimble expounds that worship is the act of adoring and praising God.²² It is evident by each of these definitions that worship should be focused on one's love and adoration for God. However, William Dyrness understands worship from the basis of why one should worship. Dyrness addresses why man is created to worship from a biblical historical perspective. He states that worship is not man's creation or need but God's invitation for humanity to be restored and healed back to God. Dyrness goes on to explain that this invitation

¹⁸ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 164.

¹⁹ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 164.

²⁰ Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 26.

²¹ Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 26.

²² Kimble, *Emerging Worship*, 4.

for restoration goes back to Israel's children, and God continues to offer that restoration today.²³ It should be noted, that his definition is not complete. Worship existed before the fall, and before any restoration was needed. Adam and Eve worshipped before sin ever came into the picture. In addition, the angels worship God with no need for restoration. Tozer may have described the purpose of worship best as: “God made us to worship. That is why we were created. Everything has its reason for being here. We have this reason: that we might worship the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”²⁴ In his book, *The Purpose of Worship*, Tozer explains that “Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that majesty which philosophers call the First Cause but which we call Our Father Which Art in Heaven.”²⁵ Tozer explains that worship is the reason why God created man. There is no greater purpose, and there is nothing more fulfilling for a human being. Like man’s chief end, Tozer writes that the creature was created to worship the Lord God and enjoy Him forever.²⁶ With these definitions in context this study defines worship as man’s response to the invitation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is man’s loving response to what God has done through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As one begins to recognize that worship is not simply songs to be sung, one should naturally aim to learn the most appropriate ways to respond to God with the love, devotion, and

²³ William Dyrness, *A Primer on Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), Kindle, loc. 73.

²⁴ A.W. Tozer, *Worship: The Reason We Were Created – Collected Insights from A.W. Tozer* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2017), 33.

²⁵ . W. Tozer, *The Purpose of Man: Designed to Worship* (Ventura, CA: Regal Publishing Company, 2010), Kindle, 8.

²⁶ Tozer, *The Purpose of Man*, 95.

adoration that He intended. A reasonable primer to properly understand worship would be to study how men and women have worshiped God since the beginning of creation. The next portion will consider the common themes and values of worship traditions throughout church history.

Worship Traditions

Whaley argues, “Christian worship is deeply rooted in the past. Much of what we believe today about worship and many of the practices we employ in our worship traditions were derived and shaped by the events, leaders, teachings, theology and even worship traditions of the Old Testament.”²⁷ It is essential to understand the biblical instructions and description of worship and how it has been executed and altered over the last several millennia. The Old Testament example of worship should be the starting point for any proper research with its historical precedents originating in ancient Israel. Therefore, any well-intended study of worship must review and understand the traditional teachings and worship practices.

Traditional worship traditions are examined from their biblical and theological foundations found in Scripture. There is a differentiation between biblical instructions of worship from historical traditions of worship. Both are important, but the instruction of worship is primary, while historical worship traditions are secondary. Bryan Chapell explains that while historical church traditions should not rule one’s worship style, they certainly should inform one’s worship style and enable consistent practices of worship throughout history.²⁸ Matthew Pinson agrees that one should not be controlled by worship traditions, but one should be aware of

²⁷ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 169.

²⁸ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 97.

those traditions.²⁹ A study of worship that ignores historical traditions would be incomplete and inaccurate. The traditions of worship provide a clear understanding of the interpretations of Scripture throughout the ages. James White artistically makes the case by stating that one must know the traditions of others if they seek to know themselves better.³⁰ Biblical worship traditions are analyzed first and then continue through church history. The church has much to learn from the worship traditions of the past. Those traditions were passed down from generation to generation and have had a direct impact on the worship culture of the church today.

Worship Culture

The popularity of the word culture has dramatically increased over the last 50 years. The term has become a universal expression used to mean many different things in many different contexts. It is commonly used among both religious and secular people groups. Culture is used within the context of the arts, social trends, relational environment, business management styles, and more. Culture has also been associated with organizational atmospheres and has become a common word used within the church. Countless Christian leaders speak at national conferences about developing the culture of one's church, staff culture, and worship culture. When culture is discussed throughout this project, it is understood as the aspect of culture that encapsulates the trends, fads, and fashions of the church movement at large, or the preferences of worship within the specific ministry context at Westside. It is understood that culture can refer to much more, even within the context of music styles and worship. However, this project will use culture in

²⁹ Matthew J. Pinson, *Perspectives on Christian Worship: Five Views* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009). 300.

³⁰ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993). 40.

reference to the current movement of preferred worship styles. The adjustment and development of a church's worship culture is a prominent theme throughout the literature review.

When studying worship culture, there are two main aspects to consider. First, the national culture in which individual's worship is derived from geographical and native context. Contextual variations in worship methods differ from the jungles in Africa to the Cathedrals in Europe, from the underground churches throughout the Middle East and Asia to the western churches in America. Each worship setting has its own culture based upon the people, their history, and their evolution of culture. Second, the term worship culture is often used to define Western trends of modern worship as one of the most popular subcultures in Christianity over the last decade. These trends unify many Christians from around the world together in one style of worship music. Tom Wagner explains, "[worship music] is not restricted to North America. Starting in the UK, it spread across Europe and eventually made its way to Australia. The continent is home to the globally popular worship band 'Hillsong UNITED' which currently influences what songs are being sung by congregations worldwide."³¹ Both understandings of worship culture should be recognized and understood when considering the cultural influences within the church today.

Vernon Whaley speaks to the first aspect of worship culture as he discusses a more geographical or national worship style. He writes: "God always gives his people the opportunity to understand and communicate worship in their own language and culture."³² It is common for each culture to believe that their traditions and cultural practices are a paragon, and all other traditions and beliefs are less preferable. This seems especially true in the context of worship.

³¹ Tom Wagner, *Christian Congregational Music: Performance, Identity and Experience* (Oxfordshire, UK: Taylor & Francis Publishing Company, 2016), 138.

³² Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 83.

People from all over the world and even from different generations have become comfortable with and even biased towards their local customs of worship practices. As a result, they often assume that their worship style is the most appropriate worship method for everyone.

Many of the literary sources cited throughout this section address the very important question that every worshipper must also consider on whether God prefers one musical style of worship over another. The reality is that Scripture is not as specific as one may hope in defining a specific style and practice of worship throughout the ages.³³ Neither the Old nor New Testament endorse one specific style of worship for all believers. Basden contends, “a careful study of the New Testament reveals that one searches in vain for a divinely sanctioned style or order of worship that all churches must follow if they are to be true churches. Rather, variety in worship styles emerged during the apostolic era and has been with us ever since.”³⁴ At the very least, scriptures such as Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 support the idea that God is satisfied with variety in our musical worship style. Both verses present an example for worship music styles that include Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Bryan Chapell addresses the matter of worship culture well, explaining that Biblical worship is all about the gospel, and the gospel both transcends cultural trends and generational preferences.³⁵ The church must understand that their personal preferences are only temporary trends that will come and go, and those trends should never become a hindrance to the message of the gospel. A culture of worship should be based upon the biblical instruction in John 4:24, “those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”³⁶ A worship culture should be

³³ Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, loc. 2567.

³⁴ Basden, *The Worship Maze*, 35.

³⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 150.

³⁶ John 4:24, KJV.

formed by a biblical philosophy of worship and not a feeling or an atmosphere within a church. This thesis project will develop and employ a plan for a generational and biblical philosophy of worship that pleases the Lord at Westside Baptist Church.

Biblical Worship

According to the literary sources, biblical worship encompasses our heart's desire, our love for God, and our commitment to worship in spirit (our emotions) and truth (our intellect).³⁷ Biblical worship requires a proper mixture of heartfelt emotions founded on the truths of God's word. Pinson writes: "Biblical worship is ordered by God's word. One of the distinctives of traditional evangelical worship is that it aims to be completely guided by Scripture."³⁸ Worship begins in Scripture and is applied to the whole being of the worshipper. Vernon Whaley supports, "Biblical worship isn't a one-dimensional activity. It involves a combination of reason, spiritual intuition, and emotion . . . Worship is neither an exercise of barren intellectualism or thoughtless emotion. Worship involves the total human being: spirit, mind, emotions, body."³⁹ It is the responsibility of every believer to make sure that he worships in both spirit and truth. This means that biblical worship is balanced between the head and the heart, an intellectual and emotional response to God.⁴⁰

Scripture commands that worship must be done in spirit and in truth. Truth focuses on fidelity to the doctrine and theology of the Word of God.⁴¹ Bob Kauflin connects this to worship

³⁷ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 183.

³⁸ Pinson, *Perspectives on Worship*, 114.

³⁹ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 54.

⁴⁰ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 5167.

⁴¹ Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 414.

by explaining: “Biblical worship is impossible without doctrine and theology.”⁴² It is every individual's role to understand the words they sing and verify that those truths are in alignment with God's truth. Kimble writes that if someone only focuses on truth without emotion, they will produce dead religion, but on the other hand, emotion without truth will create shallow, undisciplined Christians.⁴³ God created the mind and the heart, and He expects worshipers to engage both while responding to Him in worship.

Spirit emphasizes the application of truth within the heart of man. Thus, worshiping in spirit refers to the emotional response to God's character and redemptive work. Biblical worship is not an either/or matter regarding emotions and truth; instead, it is a both/and matter. Proper worship requires discipline and intentional effort to think about God and respond to Him. Kauflin instructs worship leaders to, “regularly teach the church what true biblical worship is. Your church will be more receptive to change when they understand what true worship is. But it doesn't matter how mature a church is; they'll need to be reminded how to worship biblically.”⁴⁴ Even mature believers struggle to remember that authentic worship is not based upon their individual style preferences, but it is based upon spirits' response to God's word. Chappell expounds, “Biblical worship has a consistent gospel pattern through the ages because it is the truth of the gospel which transcends cultural trends and generational preferences. Removing the gospel pattern of our worship is as destructive to the church's ministry as imposing personal style preferences on worship.”⁴⁵ Without care towards worship purposes, personal styles overtake even the most vibrant worship.

⁴² Kauflin, *Worship Matters*.

⁴³ Kimble, *Emerging Worship*, 52.

⁴⁴ Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 3751.

⁴⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 1989.

It is essential to understand worship in the context of all Scripture. Pinson's summary captures the essence of biblical worship when examining the purposes behind why one worships, "if anyone has any other goal in gathered worship than engaging with God, coming into the presence of God to glorify and enjoy him – any other aim than to ascribe his worth, commune with Him, and receive His favor – then one has yet to understand worship. For in biblical worship, we focus on God himself and acknowledge his inherent and unique worthiness."⁴⁶

Worship Struggles

Another common theme among the literary sources is the classification of common struggles in worship. The following section will address some of the common problems that each source of the literature reveals about what occurs when congregations become generationally biased in their practice of worship. Mike Harland speaks to this matter of worship style preferences by explaining that the church often tries to put Jesus in a box to fit their personal preferences and lifestyle.⁴⁷ He explains that the church has the whole element of worship preference upside down. Instead of the church changing Jesus to match their preferences, they are supposed to change themselves to match His preference.⁴⁸ This point seems somewhat exaggerated about the nature of worship preferences from generation to generation. However, it is true that when the church is willing to be divisive about the style of worship music, they are placing their preferences above the mission of Jesus.

⁴⁶ Pinson, *Perspectives on Worship*, 103.

⁴⁷ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 333.

⁴⁸ Harland, *Worship Essentials*.

This introduces the concept of generational segregation within the church. This occurs when a church creates services specifically geared toward reaching certain age groups and naturally excluding other age groups. Bryan Chappell explains that one strategy for easing tension among the generations is to create multiple services for each style of worship; however, he states that this is only a stopgap, and ultimately it will create separate worship communities within the church instead of a unified body of believers.⁴⁹ In his book, *Unfashionable*, Tchividjian explains:

Most churches would agree that racial or economic segregation runs contrary to the very nature of the Gospel. Most would also acknowledge that any sort of class bigotry is antithetical to the Gospel and should therefore not be tolerated. But there's another, perhaps more subtle, type of segregation that many churches today have actually adopted and embraced. Following the lead of the advertising world, many churches today (and more specifically worship services) are targeting specific age groups to the exclusion of others. For years now, churches have been organizing themselves around generational distinctives: busters, boomers, Generations X, Y, and Z. Many churches offer a "traditional service" for the tribe who prefers old music and a "contemporary service" for the tribe who prefers new music. I understand the good intentions behind some of these efforts, but something as seemingly harmless as this evidences a fundamental failure to comprehend the heart of the Gospel. When we offer, for instance, a contemporary worship service for the younger people and a traditional worship service for the older people, we are not only feeding tribalism, but we are saying that the Gospel can't successfully bring these two different groups together. It is a declaration of doubt in the reconciling power of God's Gospel. Generational appeal in worship is an unintentional admission that the Gospel is powerless to "join together" what man has separated. Plainly stated, building the church on age appeal (whether old or young) or stylistic preferences is as contrary to the reconciling effect of the Gospel as building it on class, race, or gender distinctions. Negatively, when the church segregates people according to generation, race, style, or socio-economic status, we exhibit our disbelief in the reconciling power of the Gospel. Positively, one of the prime evidences of God's power to our segregated world is a congregation which transcends cultural barriers, including age.⁵⁰

This stopgap became one of the main struggles that Westside Baptist Church has dealt with concerning worship preferences. The implementation of separate worship communities has

⁴⁹ Chappell, *Christ Centered Worship*, 5216.

⁵⁰ Tullian Tchividjian, *Unfashionable: Making a Difference in the World by Being Different* (Colorado Springs, CO: Doubleday Religious Publishing Group, 2012), 99.

been practiced at Westside Baptist Church and in some ways is still being practiced within the senior, children's, and youth ministries. Westside has at least three different subcultures of worshipers who prefer worship preferences unique to their age demographic, and yet many of them struggle to respect the corporate worship practices of the whole church. Neese also addresses the problem with making worship styles based upon one's personal preferences, stating that the church has marketed something to the congregation that was meant to minister to Jesus. He explains, "we have made worship about us, our preferences, our tastes, our comforts, our opinions. We have made it about ministering to our needs and coddling our self-centered nature . . . When we make worship about us, we become idolaters."⁵¹ This is the matter at the heart of the struggle that Westside has developed concerning worship. The church has grown accustomed to the idea that worship music should satisfy the congregation. As a result, there is tension in how a successful worship service is evaluated. The congregation will often communicate feedback about the worship service. If the style of worship that was chosen for that day aligned with their individual worship preference, they experience more pleasure than with other worship styles. However, if the style of worship that day does not align with their preferences, they complain about the worship experience.

The two most consistent struggles mentioned concern the development of worship based upon the preference of the people and the segregation of worshipers based upon their stylistic preferences. Both issues have played into the problem facing Westside Baptist church.

⁵¹ Zack Neese, *How to Worship a King: Prepare Your Heart, Prepare Your World, Prepare the Way* (Southlake, TX: Gateway Create Publishing, 2015), 13.

Generational Issues

Every generation is created and called to worship.⁵² When one generation responds negatively towards another generation, it creates a division amongst both age groups. This is especially obvious concerning tastes, styles, and preferences. One generation usually prefers to use mobile Bible app software and take notes on their phone, while another generation may prefer a physical Bible and use pen and paper to take notes. One generation may prefer wearing formal attire for worship while another generation prefers more relaxed clothing. The fact is that different life experiences will result in different preferences, but those differences should not cause divisions within the church.

The generational divide among the church family is oftentimes most obvious when considering one's worship ministry. Each generation tends to respond to the other with frustration and sometimes arrogance. Both sides believe that they are practicing true worship and God is not as pleased with the worship of others like he is pleased with their own worship. It is even worse when the argument becomes one of a spiritual nature. For example, some claim that those who worship with their style of music are closer to God than those who worship with other music styles. Each generation must understand that God was pleased with man's worship far before their preferred style of worship came into existence, and God will continue to be pleased with worship when their style no longer exists. Bob Kauflin explains that this is the reason why he leaves old hymn books on his desk, is to remind himself of those worshipers who have gone before him.⁵³ Kauflin admits that he was not the one man to discover the proper mode of worship

⁵² Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 5208.

⁵³ Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 4223.

finally, but he has joined the story adding his own fingerprint for this season. Oh, that every worshipper would discuss this subject with such reason, grace, and humility.

Mike Harland writes about the struggles that have been created within our churches by segregating our worship services according to generations. He explains, “is it any wonder they have difficulty transitioning if they’ve always been in age-segregated gatherings with songs, stories, and videos cultivated for their unique preferences?” He takes it a step further, writing: “When we only have age-segregated gatherings, are we pandering to preferences, to drive our numbers in the present, or are we thinking long-term about how we make lifelong disciples of Jesus.”⁵⁴ This should be especially challenging for churches who are spending more time debating worship styles and less time discipling and recruiting new believers.

One obvious problem with generational segregation in worship is that older generations do not simply outgrow their own stylistic preferences when they turn a certain age. Neither do younger generations suddenly mature their stylistic preferences and enjoy gospel music from fifty years or a hundred years before their time. Therefore, churches cannot determine their worship styles based upon the preferences of the congregation. Instead, they must find ways to balance the generational styles in a way that teaches every generation to respect and appreciate the heart of worship even when they do not prefer the style of worship. There are strong emotional ties to one's preferred style of worship. However, when it is accomplished, it will look like true generational worship, which Ron Man describes as “the mixing of historic, traditional, contemporary and global expressions of worship into a diverse mosaic of praise to glorify God

⁵⁴ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 1173.

by encouraging the united participation of believers across demographic and generational lines.”⁵⁵ Unity is built when believers come across generational lines to worship together.

Results of Biblical Worship

Congregational Singing

Singing in the church has been such a divisive and controversial subject matter that many wonder if this practice should continue. Tradition states that congregational singing was rather uncommon in the church up until the 16th century. David Neu gives some background, “as a rule, the Roman mass of the Middle Ages did not include congregational singing beyond a very brief response. The Gregorian chants were sung by the choir, in unison.”⁵⁶ But even then, church divisions over musical worship styles remained.

Beginning around the time of the Reformation, congregational singing was reinstated for the benefit of theology, worship, and unity among the congregation. Singing in scripture is one of the most descriptive features and commands for worship. When generations humble themselves and sing together, they encounter a powerful spirit of unity. Sarah van der Walt explains, “Luther played an important role in introducing congregational singing into the churches of the Reformation. To him, it was an indispensable part of the liturgy.”⁵⁷ She goes on that, “Calvin has a lasting influence on the development of church music and congregational singing in the Reformed tradition . . . Like Luther, Calvin also gave congregational singing a

⁵⁵ Sandra Maria Van Opstal, *The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016), 16.

⁵⁶ David Neu, *Worship and Congregational Singing* (Westminster, CO: NeuSong, LLC, 2016), 482.

⁵⁷ Sarel P. Van Der Walt, *Reformed Theology Today: Practical-Theological, Missiological and Ethical Perspectives* (Cape Town, South Africa: AOSIS, 2017), 162.

special place in the liturgy.”⁵⁸ She contends “Luther regarded the ‘language’ of music to be important in the church, and he wanted all the arts, including music, to be in service of the one who created and gave it.”⁵⁹ It was the influence of these two men who impacted much of the practice of congregational worship in the church. “John Calvin encouraged singing because singing required active engagement by the worshiper.”⁶⁰ Men like Luther and Calvin understood the importance of congregational singing and made it an important part of the church liturgy to sing together and worship with gusto.⁶¹ The answer to the struggles in worship must not be the elimination of singing.

Unity in Worship

One of the greatest benefits of multigenerational corporate worship is the spirit of unity that encompasses the whole congregation. Mike Harland says that a church's identity is found in its worship gathering.⁶² This is especially challenging for Westside, as they have developed a gathering of people who struggle to connect with each other around a consistent style of musical preferences. Harland goes on to explain that worship is one of the most important ways that a church can be unified.⁶³ Is it any wonder that the enemy has spent the last two millennia dividing the church over the very thing that is supposed to unite her. One of the early church practices

⁵⁸ Van Der Walt, *Reformed Theology Today*.

⁵⁹ Van Der Walt, *Reformed Theology Today*, 165.

⁶⁰ Stanley M. Burgess, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 742.

⁶¹ Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 1748.

⁶² Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 1167.

⁶³ Harland, *Worship Essentials*.

was to sing in unity to sound like one voice.⁶⁴ Ironically, one of the earliest musical worship debates within the church was over whether harmonies in the liturgy may cause distraction from worship. Even within the first few hundred years of the church, they were divided over whether harmony could be sung in the church.⁶⁵ The church must not allow something created to display unity to be a source of division.

Literature Summary

This summary revealed several common themes regarding worship practices and generational divisions. To appease the stylistic preferences of the congregation, Westside created several different service types to satisfy the different generational worship preferences within the church. As a result, these actions produced unhealthy age segregation among the congregation of the church. The expectation has been that at a certain age, children and youth would automatically adjust their worship style preferences and learn to appreciate styles of worship appreciated by older generations. Instead, young believers promote up through age-segregated ministries until they are forced to merge into a worship service with the adults, which looks and sounds nothing like their previous experiences. As a result, most of those younger worshippers made the decision to leave Westside to go to other churches that will align with the preferred worship style.

According to several of the authors mentioned above, it appears to be unwise to segregate the congregation based upon worship style preferences. There are few exceptions where authors suggest that age-segregation is an appropriate method for fostering worship. Regardless of which

⁶⁴ White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship*, 70.

⁶⁵ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 5322.

position, all agree that there must be a single place in every church where many generations and other cultural demographics can come together to be united in worship. This will be accomplished when the church truly understands the purpose and the function of worship. When this is accomplished, it will bring unity to the body of Christ and great glory to the Father.

Theological Foundations

In establishing a robust biblical precedence for this problem, the theological foundations for a biblical philosophy of worship rely on the generational inferences from Deuteronomy 6. These foundations concentrate on two main components, the scriptural foundation of the purpose and pattern for worship and generational examples of corporate worship located throughout Scripture. Biblical worship must be understood and practiced among every generation. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to provide a biblical foundation of worship while offering some biblical models of generational worship.

The Biblical Purpose of Worship

The purpose of worship cannot be understood without first comprehending the purpose of man. A.W. Tozer eloquently describes God's purpose for creating man:

Throughout the Bible, the prophets and apostles all testify that God made us for a purpose and, according to them, that purpose is to sing His praises before the hushed audience of all creation. God created the silkworm to make silk; the bird was created to sing; the sheep for their wool. Everything in God's creation has its purpose... Ultimately, this man is [created] to enter God's presence and unashamedly worship God... That is why man was created; that is man's chief end.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Tozer, *The Purpose of Man*, 16.

Revelation 4:11 explains that humankind was created for the pleasure of God stating, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure, they are and were created.” It is evident from the Garden of Eden to the final Revelation that man was created to worship God. The biblical purpose of worship is to glorify God. Romans 12:1 explains that a reasonable act of worship is to present oneself as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.

A biblical example of this kind of worship can be found in Psalm 100. This Psalm reveals at least five elements of worship, including service, adoration, fellowship, thanksgiving, and satisfaction. Psalm 100:2 states: “Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!” (KJV). Man is created to worship God through service. If someone says they cannot worship during a service because they are playing an instrument or running a camera, they do not understand worship. Worship is an act of service, and as a child of God serves the Lord with a pure heart, they are engaging in worship. Second, verse three says: “Know that the Lord, He is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” This reminds believers that the purpose of worship is adoration and fellowship. As a believer acknowledges the Lord in his life and recognizes that the Lord is his shepherd, he understands that he is created to adore and fellowship with his master. Fellowship is also highlighted in verse two, where one reads: “Come into his presence with thanksgiving.” The child of God is created to come into the presence of the Lord and live in fellowship with Him. Verse four reminds the believer that worship involves a thankful heart. “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise!” Finally, verse five says that “the LORD is good, his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.” This reminds all believers of the hope that comes from remembering the goodness of the Lord. The worship of the believer should bring great

satisfaction to their heart. This joy and satisfaction do not come because of a preferred style of music but because of the comfort that comes from doing what one was created to do. When man engages in worship, he is fulfilling his greatest purpose. If the believer's joy in worship comes from a style of music, they are missing the biblical purpose of worship.

The Biblical Pattern of Worship

The purpose of worship should lead every person to consider the proper practice and pattern for worship. According to God's Word, God created man and woman, placed them in the Garden of Eden, and initiated an intimate relationship with them. Scripture explains that Adam and Eve heard the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. While there is no clear explanation that this was a common practice, it seems natural to believe that it would have been a regular occurrence. Randy Alcorn explains, "it would be odd for God to first come walking in the garden with Adam and Eve only *after* they had sinned. God walking with people normally suggests closeness and intimacy, and fellowship. To me, the natural connotation is that God often did this, perhaps daily "in the cool of the day"⁶⁷ However, on this day, the Lord's walking and talking with man would change forever. God addressed the serpent and ordered the consequence for his temptation. Then God addressed the woman and the man, explaining the effects of their sin. It is here one can observe the first sacrifice made for sin. Genesis 3:21 explains: "the Lord God made coats of skins and clothed them." Adam and Eve were naked and ashamed because of their sin. They needed a covering that would cost the life of an animal. This action would also provide a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, who would be sacrificed to cover man's sin. Genesis 4 continues to reveal more details about how man is supposed to make an

⁶⁷ Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 57.

offering to God. While the specific details of sacrificial offerings are not listed at this point in Scripture, it is evident that those details were given to Cain and Abel. Genesis 4:3-7 explains that Cain brought the Lord an offering of fruit while Abel brought the Lord the firstling of his flock, and the Lord respected Abel's offering but would not respect Cain's offering. The Lord says in verse 7: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" This passage demonstrates that God has provided clear direction for the process of proper sacrifice and offerings made unto the Lord. This tradition of sacrificial offerings made unto the Lord continues throughout the Old Testament. As one resumes their study of worship in the book of Genesis, they will find consistent patterns that reveal evidence that God had defined precise details regarding the practice of worship for every generation from Adam and Eve to Noah and Abraham and beyond. The first mention of the word worship is found in Genesis 22:5 when Abraham says to his young men: "Abide ye here with the ass; and the lad and I will go yonder and worship and come again to you." The Hebrew word for worship in the passage is *shachah*, meaning to bow down and prostrate oneself before a superior. This word is used twice before in the context of respect before a master (Genesis 18:2; 19:1), but the first time we see the word translated as worship is here in Genesis 22:5. *Shachah* is translated several different ways to mean bow, bow down, reverence, obeisance, and fall, but it is most commonly translated as the word worship. This word is translated to mean worship ninety-nine times in ninety-eight different verses through the Old Testament. "The Old Testament idea [of worship] is, therefore, the reverential attitude of mind or body or both, combined with the more generic notions of religious adoration obedience and service."⁶⁸ Abraham worshiped in Genesis. The Children of Israel worshipped throughout

⁶⁸ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 1118.

the book of Exodus. There are many examples of worshipers continuing throughout the Old Testament. Men like Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and David were all worshippers who led and instructed the coming generations to worship God by their own faithful example. The Old Testament instruction of worship directs God's children to worship him privately and publicly through temple services, including sacrificial acts, ceremonial acts, acts of praise, prayer, and annual feasts of worship.⁶⁹

The New Testament word most commonly translated for worship is *proskyneō*; this word refers to two separate parts of the word meaning to kiss towards. This word is further defined as “to make obeisance or do reverence to, an act of homage.”⁷⁰ The first time we see this word used in the New Testament is regarding the wise men from the east saying: “where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.” A few verses later, their worship is visible in action as they fell down before Jesus, worshipped Him, and presented him their treasures. Worship is mentioned again during the temptation of Christ. In Matthew 4:9, Satan tells Jesus that he will give Him “all these things... if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” Jesus responds with: “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” In each of these references, it is important to visualize a bowing down and paying homage to the one being worshipped. Among the other gospels, Mark and Luke only mention worship a few times, but John recorded one of the most profound passages on worship. Jesus had an encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4, and their conversation leads to one concerning worship. The Samaritan woman seeks to display her

⁶⁹ Bromiley, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

⁷⁰ Vine, W. E., Merrill F. Unger, William White, and W. E. Vine. *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. (Nashville, TN: Nelson Publishing, 1985) 473.

knowledge of the proper place for worship, and Jesus explains that worship is not based upon a location but upon a state of mind. Matthew Henry contends, “John describes the evangelical worship which alone God would accept and be well pleased with. Having shown that the place is indifferent, he comes to show what is necessary and essential—that we worship God in spirit and in truth v.23, 24.”⁷¹ Up to this point, the act of worship has appeared to be based upon actions and locations. One must go on the mountain or to the temple; they must engage in ceremony and feasts. Jesus explains that true worship is not based upon one's action, but it is based upon the heart. Henry argues, “The stress is not to be laid upon the place where we worship God, but upon the state of mind in which we worship him.”⁷² In the same way that the Samaritan woman believed that the focus of worship concerned a specific place, Christians today often mistake the main focus of worship as a specific song or style of music. Vernon Whaley speaks to the heart of what true worship is and is not in his book *Worship Through the Ages*.

True worship is not measured by the songs we sing; by the atmosphere, space, or environment we create in which to worship; by the number of Scriptures we read, or by the technology we deem important for facilitating worship. Worship is not determined by our preference for praise band, pipe organ, orchestra, or acoustic instruments. It is not defined by vocal selections (a cappella or with accompaniment) or by a musician's instrumental skill. In fact, musical expressions may not be essential for biblical worship at all.

If the “what” of worship is the love of and devotion to God, what is the “how” of worship? Jesus gives us one answer in John 4 when he says we worship the Father “in spirit,” referring to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.⁷³

⁷¹ Matthew Henry and David Winter. *Matthew Henry's New Testament Commentary* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), John 4.

⁷² Henry and Winter, *New Testament Commentary*.

⁷³ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 4.

Christ's explanation of worship to the Samaritan woman reveals that worship is a matter of the heart. While many of the definitions of worship from both the Old and New Testament are focused on outward motions and physical positions, the true idea comes from a matter of the heart. The outward signs are evidence of the internal state of the heart. This remains the current concern with Westside's practices of worship. Worshippers learned how to pay homage and bow down in a public sense while internally dishonoring the one they appear to worship. John reminds that God is spirit, and he must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

The pattern of biblical worship has been outlined according to Old and New Testament teachings. Those patterns must also be applied to a context that is applicable to the church today. In most churches, there is an intentional emphasis on the practice of weekly corporate worship, yet rarely does one see the modern church bow or fall down prostrate, paying homage to a superior authority. It is necessary to recognize the pattern of worship within the context of worship today.

Worship has been commonly characterized in three different ways. First, worship is sometimes used in reference to the trajectory of one's Christian lifestyle. I Corinthians 10:31 reminds believers that God should be glorified in every area of one's life. This idea is a lifestyle of worship. Second, worship is often used in reference to a service type such as a corporate worship service to equip and edify the saints. Finally, as a verb, worship refers to specific acts of worship. This worship application includes singing, praying, dancing, raising hands, bowing down, and more. Each of these physical acts of worship operates as an overflow from a heart of worship. The theological foundations that this project will address predominantly speak to the second and third characterization of worship.

The Word of God teaches and provides insights about worship, both in the context of the acts of worship and the worship service within the church. Worship is both a personal and corporate experience. It is critical to understand what the Bible teaches about these two aspects of biblical worship in a modern application for the church today.

Scripture shows other theological elements of generational worship. Starting from the very beginning, God created Adam and Eve, and the story of Scripture navigates from one generation to the next. The scriptures clearly record generation after generation and God's faithfulness to each generation at a different time and in a different way. One can follow God's faithfulness from Methuselah to Lamech to Noah and his sons. One can see how the covenant to Abraham was passed down from generation to generation through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. God describes himself to Moses in Exodus 3 as the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and Jacob's God. A few verses later, God once again speaks to his care for every generation, even giving a memorial to all generations through Moses. In Exodus 12, the Lord requires a memorial day feast, which should be passed down "throughout your generations." The Lord required that testimonies and laws be passed down from generation to generation so that every generation will know that He is the Lord God. In Deuteronomy, God commands his children to Love Him with all their hearts and to repeat those words to their children. God encourages parents to talk about his words, repeat his words, write them down, and post them up on the doorframes and gates. All these instructions are to make sure that God's truth is passed down from one generation to the next.

As one continues to study through the Old Testament, they discover that the Psalms continue the generational theme and direct it towards worshipping together. Psalm 45:17 says: "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: Therefore, shall the people praise thee

forever and ever.” Worship was made in a generational context before it was ordered in the Psalms. Consider moments of generational worship with Abraham and Isaac or Noah and his sons worshipping together. However, the Psalms provide a charge for the practice of generational worship. The psalmist writes: “we will show forth thy praise to all generations.” Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite writes: “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.” Time and time again, one can read of the significance of teaching the next generation to praise the Lord for his works. Psalm 145 says that one generation will proclaim thy works to the next generation. Psalm 146 proclaims that the Lord shall reign forever unto all generations. Psalm 102:18 states it clearly, “This shall be written for the generations to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.” Many of the Psalms give testimony to the fact that God has created a plan and inspired the instruction in His word that every generation is created to worship and that the generations are intended to worship together. Throughout the Old Testament, these passages provide strong evidence that God intends for worship to be an intergenerational practice. The New Testament continues this scene of generational worship. Ephesians 4 teaches the importance of unity within the body of Christ. That unity is displayed in worship as one reads to Ephesians 5.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and
making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto
God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves
one to another in the fear of God.

The church has been instructed throughout the New Testament to use worship to instruct one another how to submit to the Lord. Colossians 3:16 presents the same message about teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual

songs. Each of these passages reveals the truth that the church is instructed to minister to one another through songs. This includes every generation.

There are other examples of generational worship throughout the New Testament, including the Philippian jailer. This man and his house were rejoicing in the Lord together after his decision to trust Christ. The verse says: “believing in God with all his house. It was natural for the Philippian jailer to share his faith with everyone in his home immediately. There is an instruction in Ephesians 6:4 for fathers to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This example is also found in 2 Timothy 1:5, where one can see three generations of unfeigned faith, first found in Lois, then in her daughter Eunice, and then in her son Timothy. This passage displays what generational worship can produce at its best. 2 Timothy 2:2 explains this best; the process of discipleship is for one faithful man to teach another faithful man so that God's truth can be passed down and taught from generation to generation.

Theoretical Foundations

Worship is man's response to the redemptive work of God. This response is only afforded to fallen man because of the atonement for sin that Jesus Christ made available through his death on the cross and His resurrection. From the beginning of creation, humankind was created for the purpose of worshipping God. When sin entered the picture, sin prohibited man's ability to worship God properly. The theoretical foundation portion of this project will provide a brief history of worship from the early church through to the present-day church and also show examples of churches that have experienced division because of age segregation in worship,

along with examples of ministries that experienced success with a cross-generational discipleship plan for biblical worship.

God has provided some regulations and principles on how humankind should worship. These instructions must be interpreted by forming one of two opinions. The regulative principle suggests that the only permissible elements of worship are those which have been given explicit permission from the word of God.⁷⁴ In other words, one can only worship according to the instruction from the Word of God. Second, the normative principle suggests that all methods of worship are acceptable unless it is explicitly forbidden in Scripture.⁷⁵ One must determine where their commitment regarding worship will lie. The worship leader should seek to understand how cultural influences will be allowed to influence the worship ministry in one's church.

Culture, context, and the Bible will all have a role in shaping the forms and circumstances of our public gatherings. That will mean public worship in a Chicago suburb will probably feel and look somewhat different from public worship in rural east Texas and feel and look quite a bit different from public worship on the plains of East Africa or the Andean plateau in South America. But there is no reason it should be different.⁷⁶

In considering how these elements of generational worship should be cohesive within the church, one must evaluate the historical tradition from the early church through to the church of today.

One cannot be sure of the details of musical worship during the time of the early church. There are few passages that address the subject, but the few that do are worth mentioning. First, Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 both give instruction to practice three forms of music in

⁷⁴ Pinson, *Perspectives on Worship*, 114.

⁷⁵ Pinson, *Perspectives on Worship*, 114.

⁷⁶ Pinson, *Perspectives on Worship*, 221.

worship. Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs. While the debate goes on likely all the way back to the early church about the difference between these three types of song, the obvious factor is that Paul gives clear evidence that various types of music are allowed and even favored in worship. Each song and style would minister in its own way. In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas were singing praises while chained up in prison. The songs throughout the New Testament continue through the book of Revelation as it mentions various songs and instruments used in worship.

The Early Christian Centuries

The early Christian centuries brought about the first significant evidence of stylistic divisions of worship music styles. From AD 200-300, most instruments were not allowed in worship.⁷⁷ Even the guitar was banned from being played in churches because of its association with prostitution.⁷⁸ Regardless, singing had become a highly organized part of worship by this point.⁷⁹ However, singing could only be done in unison because of the association with the passages in Scripture that referred to the church having one voice.⁸⁰ The debates most related to negative associations with paganism. Therefore, any element of worship that could be associated with pagan music was banned.⁸¹ This extended to all women choirs which were not permitted because of the association of women singers at pagan feasts.⁸² Singing was a very important part

⁷⁷ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 367.

⁷⁸ Wilson-Dickson, *Story of Christian Music*, 28.

⁷⁹ White, *Brief History of Worship*, 71.

⁸⁰ White, *Brief History of Worship*. 71.

⁸¹ White, *Brief History of Worship*. 71.

⁸² White, *Brief History of Worship*. 72.

of worship in this period, but it also introduced debates and divisions that would surround worship music for centuries to come.

The Middle Ages

It was during this time that almost all singing was done through chant.⁸³ Near the end of the middle ages, polyphonic singing became available.⁸⁴ Between AD 900-1100, music notation became more popular and widely used.⁸⁵ This allows the first record of notation and melody in addition to the lyrics from church worship music. It was during the latter part of the Middle Ages that the church began to permit choirs within worship. These choirs could sing two, three, or even sometimes four-part harmonies during worship. However, even this practice was not accepted by all. Some critics complained that harmony brought lewdness into the church.⁸⁶ During the end of this period, there was a general practice that only choirs could sing in a worship service. The Reformation would soon change that practice.

The Reformation

The Reformation was a period where the church experienced an explosion of preaching and sacred music, particularly regarding congregational singing.⁸⁷ It was also during this time the pipe organ was created and introduced to the church “to accompany singing and play

⁸³ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 5316.

⁸⁴ White, *Brief History of Worship*, 101.

⁸⁵ Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 368.

⁸⁶ Wilson-Dickson, *Story of Christian Music*, 52.

⁸⁷ White, *Brief History of Worship*, 136.

instrumental music.”⁸⁸ Luther was a theologian, a preacher, and a musician, and in fact, he wrote many hymns during this period. It was in his services that the congregation “participated fully and vigorously in the singing of hymns as well as the rest of the liturgy.”⁸⁹ Zwingli, on the other hand, forbade any singing in the church, and he destroyed the pipe organs in the church.⁹⁰ Zwingli’s reasoning for such a strong stance against music was his interpretation of Scripture. During this period of the Reformation, Calvin supported congregational singing but preferred a more reserved worship style.

The Modern Church

White describes, “The nineteenth-century brought major changes in all types of church music. Hymnody turned more and more to the subjective. Much of the music of the frontier focused on how one felt about God, not on what God has done for us.”⁹¹ AD 1850 – 1900, Churches began to adopt a new genre of music with verses and choruses called “gospel hymns.” These became the standard style of worship for evangelicals. Even up to this point, there was much debate about which music styles were appropriate. This season was also the foundation of the hymn style of worship that has carried through to the great debates that exist within the church today. One of the great struggles during that time was the motivation for how church music was used. White argues, “music was often used in frankly, a manipulative way in

⁸⁸ White, *Brief History of Worship*, 136.

⁸⁹ White, *Brief History of Worship*, 134.

⁹⁰ White, *Brief History of Worship*, 137.

⁹¹ White, *Brief History of Worship*, 172.

preparing people to be receptive to gospel preaching.”⁹² Some of these same elements of worship music exist today.

The Researchers Context

This researcher has served on full-time staff in church ministry since 2005. During that time, this researcher has been on staff at three different churches. Two of the three churches were heavily influenced by age-segregated worship, while one was more generationally unified. Before going on staff, this researcher was also a member of another church that had gone through a massive culture shift of age-segregated worship and has experienced devastating results over the last decade because of these decisions to isolate each generation based upon preferences. This portion of the theoretical foundation will also address some mainstream churches and the decisions and results of generation worship practices.

Theological Implications and Applications

A common lesson throughout the study of the history of the church is that musical worship has always been practiced within the worship of the church. The second implication is that as common as musical methods of worship have been in the church, so also are the divisions of worship in the church. Church history records many struggles and conflicts surrounding the methods of musical worship within the church, and many of those divisions still exist in the church today. Christians may assume that the church has always agreed about the most appropriate worship style up until the last generation or two, but the fact is that the church has always been divided over what elements of musical worship will or will not be permitted.

⁹² White, *Brief History of Worship*, 173.

It is time for the church to rise above its self-serving preferences regarding the styles of music within a service. The church family must understand the divisive nature of Satan and recognize that he has allowed the very practice of worship to be an instrument of conflict within the body of Christ. The church must learn to esteem other generations better than themselves. As each generation seeks to serve the other, these flawed foundations can be reestablished, and the church can be unified in worship.

The church will gain this understanding of a generational and biblical philosophy of worship when the leadership becomes intentional about creating and implementing an intergenerational strategy of worship discipleship which will influence all generations at Westside Baptist Church to come together in unified worship.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The methodology portion of this research project addresses the problem specifically. The traditional methodological approach requires that a student reflect and expand upon the research methods described in the prospectus and approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board. However, due to significant course requirement modifications, the researcher was not offered the necessary courses for traditional research methods. Additionally, due to the tremendous impact of COVID-19 on both the researcher and the focus group, Westside Baptist Church, there were several setbacks regarding any traditional research practice. Both issues influenced the development of research. As a result, the mentor and advisors of this researcher have authorized non-traditional methods of academic research.

The degree completion plan required by the Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity was altered after degree plan creations and before the degree plan was finished. The research course was altered during the process which affected the researcher's ability to formalize the research process after completing an official statistics course. Due to course requirements, the traditional course "Research and Writing Portions of the Thesis Project" was substituted by the "Research and Thesis Development" course. The exception was approved by Elise Nicole Glenn on December 13, 2019 with the approval of Dr. McClendon and the researcher completed the research project using a non-traditional methodology.

Without an official statistics course, the researcher lacked necessary skill for data collection and methodologies. The researcher maintained a standard of academic excellence throughout the progress of his degree, maintaining a 4.0 GPA in every course. With the course changes, lack of research training, and no Institutional Review Board approval, no data could be

collected or used for the project through surveys or interviews. Due to these limitations, research is limited to a content analysis along with the researcher's personal engagement as a ministry leader at Westside Baptist.

In addition to these limitations in methodology, the research and writing portion of this project occurred during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic sent much of the world into an unprecedented season of distress, beginning in March. Most of the world was at a standstill for at least six months. Westside Baptist Church, along with many churches, transitioned to online services, and effectively canceled all in-person services for months. From June through October 2020, Westside reinstated an extremely limited schedule of services. The church did not resume any regular services for nearly seven months. During this season, there were limited services, controlled attendance, and reduced time within services, which led to restricted music opportunities. Due to the Center for Disease Control recommended guidelines surrounding the pandemic, choral elements of worship services were highly restricted⁹³. As a result, the amount of data that could be collected would have been very limited.

The limitations of a regular service configuration created many restraints and few opportunities to establish and promote a biblical philosophy of worship at Westside. The most significant limitations were due to the limited capacity for effectively communicating a philosophy of worship during the pandemic. As a result of the online services, there were significantly fewer opportunities to speak to and instruct the online congregation about developing a biblical philosophy of worship. This was a result of the limited-service schedules and the distraction that COVID became in general. Westside transitioned entirely to online

⁹³ CDC. 2021. "Considerations for Communities of Faith." Cdc.Gov. October 13, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>.

services during this season and soon learned that church services would look very different for the foreseeable future.

Another restraint to the project was the natural distractions related to the global pandemic. Worry over the pandemic and God's sovereignty greatly affected congregants' worship participation as well. The worship was restrained because of limited time music opportunities and conversations about worship. Due to the nature of creating multiple services for people to watch online or attend in person, services were consolidated to 60-minute worship services. This scheduling led to fewer opportunities for congregational worship, special music features, and no opportunities for in-person choral worship. There were creative elements of virtual zoom choirs, but even those opportunities were sparse.

While research was restrained due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have also been various opportunities not normally existent. For example, an expectation of change was created among worshippers. In general, people began to make changes that they would have otherwise not changed. Clearing demanding schedules and renewed focus on other priorities affected congregants as well. For example, the researcher found many new opportunities to invest in personal conversations regarding a discipleship of worship philosophy. The opportunity to invest in multiple generations on a personal level has had a direct influence on the overall philosophy of worship at Westside. In addition, the pandemic created needed worship leader adjustments, which allowed a new opportunity of worship mentorship and discipleship between this researcher and the youth band of Westside Baptist Church. The pandemic allowed for fruitful worship discipleship and influence among generational divides.

While recognizing some benefits from this difficult season, the reality is that the practice of any traditional research methods was significantly limited due to factors of quarantine,

institutional closures, and the extensive limitation of accessibility for any qualified individuals regarding this subject matter. Therefore, research methodology relies primarily on content analysis toward the influence of research in the field.

Intervention Design

The traditional methodology of intervention design summarizes the ministry problem and the research question posed in chapter one. Its function is to lay a foundation for a detailed process of survey, questionnaire, and research. Due to project research modifications, intervention design will replace the traditional method with the strategy of worship discipleship which will be implemented at Westside Baptist Church. With this adjustment, the purpose of the methodology portion of this project remains consistent with its original purpose, to answer how this problem will be addressed. The proposed method for addressing the problem at Westside Baptist Church will be a strategy of discipleship focused on biblical worship developed from a biblical foundation of discipleship and specific strategy plan of worship discipleship for Westside Baptist Church.

Ray Jones is one of the leading minds and communicators on the importance of multigenerational worship. Jones was the worship leader at Community Bible Church in San Antonio, TX, where he led a ministry that focused on intergenerational worship discipleship. Ray does not see his leadership platform as one that existed to train performers or musicians but as one to train disciples. He explains, “multigenerational or intergenerational worship has a new name. It is now called discipleship. The scripture is very direct about this concept and even tells us that the older should train up the younger. Multigenerational worship paints an accurate

picture of all generations gathering under the banner of worship in unified purpose.”⁹⁴ According to Jones generational worship is discipleship and when the church segregates worship according to age, it limits its opportunity to engage in biblical discipleship.

King David from scripture was one of the first champions of worship discipleship. He prayed these words in the Psalms. “So even to the old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come . . . One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts.” It is worth noting that David, who was obviously a passionate worship leader, was very intentional about discipling the next generation.

The church has missed this important element of worship discipleship for the last several decades. As a result, she continued down paths where many believed that an ideal worship environment was to give every age group their own space and style to worship on their own. The church can no longer neglect its responsibility to disciple the generations in worship. Mike Harland contends, “healthy worship cultures understand the role music has in discipleship and orchestrate their ministry to fulfill that mission.”⁹⁵ Harland goes on to explain four simple perspectives, or circles, of discipleship within the worship ministry. He clarifies that to achieve unity, one must disciple these four circles in their worship ministry. “The first and smallest circle for worship leaders represents self and those closest to us . . . The second and somewhat bigger circle represents the people we serve within worship ministry . . . The third circle represents the entire congregation. . . the fourth and largest circle is outside the walls.”⁹⁶ Any worship ministry

⁹⁴ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, loc. 1188.

⁹⁵ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 702.

⁹⁶ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 729.

that values biblical discipleship must focus on each of these four people groups. Harland expands, “all four circles are essential to a vibrant worship ministry that makes disciples.”⁹⁷

Cliff Duren is another worship pastor in Spring Hill, TN, at The Church at Station Hill. This church has made generational discipleship a part of its DNA from the very beginning of its revitalization. Harland describes The Church at Station Hill, “everywhere you look as this church worships, you see families. Even in the choir loft, or praise team, band, and technical staff, you see mothers and daughters, fathers and sons.”⁹⁸ The senior pastor at the Church at Station Hill explains his effort towards generational worship, “Ephesians 4:3 instructs us that the Spirit creates unity, but that we have to ‘contend’ or ‘make every effort to keep’ unity in our churches, and that call extends to the unity of all generations declaring together the greatness of our God.”⁹⁹ Unity is the cornerstone of multigenerational worship. He continues, “when we lead the flock in worship, we are equipping them as disciples by helping them realign their love toward God.”¹⁰⁰ There may be a problem in how churches divide their mission statement into common themes like worship, evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship. In a way, it implies that each of these aspects of the church are compartmentalized from the others. Yet, in our churches, these priorities are often intertwined with one another. Worship is discipleship.

⁹⁷ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 729.

⁹⁸ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 1154.

⁹⁹ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 1163.

¹⁰⁰ Matt Papa, *Look and Live: Behold the Soul-Thrilling, Sin-Destroying, Glory of Christ* (Bloomington, Minn.: Bethany House, 2014), 63–80.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

As noted, due to project limitations intervention design will focus on strategy development for worship discipleship at Westside Baptist Church. Since worship is a part of discipleship, as previously established, then it is important for a worship ministry to recognize its responsibility to establish a successful plan to disciple the church in its practice of worship. The implementation of this strategy of worship discipleship will take place in three different ways. First, there will be a general strategy of worship discipleship. This will be taught and applied to every part of the ministry of Westside. Next, there will be a continuation of that discipleship which will be instructed and implemented through weekly corporate worship services. Finally, worship discipleship will accomplish its greatest influence at an individual level of one-on-one discipleship through the worship culture at Westside Baptist Church.

The general strategy relies on the cooperation of the Minister of Music and the Senior Pastor of the church. Harland reminds, “the pastor and the singer are two leaders doing one thing – leading worship – and both are involved in revelation and response. Worship leadership is a shared ministry.”¹⁰¹ At Westside, there is no formal worship pastor as all ministers share responsibilities equally. The senior pastor takes the lead as senior worship leader at Westside Baptist Church which requires any ministers of music to support this leadership structure. The best practice for communicating a unified vision of worship to the congregation of the church should naturally come from the senior pastor. It is critical that the senior pastor understands the problem of generational worship segregation and is willing to work with the ministers of music to create and promote a strategy of worship discipleship for the entire church. The ministers of music should never undertake such a task without the approval and clear communication of the

¹⁰¹ Harland, *Worship Essentials*, 760.

senior pastor. When the senior pastor supports the vision of generational worship discipleship, there will be a common passion and synergy working towards the end goal of unified worship. When the senior pastor and minister of music agree regarding the direction of worship for the church, they should work together with the rest of the staff to make sure there is unity and support for an overall strategy of worship discipleship.

This process of communicating the strategy of worship discipleship to the pastoral leadership of the church should be carefully planned. The Senior Pastor and ministers of music should communicate this vision with optimism and a clear application of the principles in the Word of God. Before implementation, they should work together to decide how this new emphasis on a biblical worship philosophy may impact each ministry represented in the church. Care should also be taken to ensure other pastoral staff identify with the struggles leading to the age segregation in worship, gain input, consider questions, concerns and provide thoughtful feedback. Finally, unity among all pastoral staff toward the vision will promote a cohesive philosophy of worship for the entire church.

This system is being applied at Westside Baptist Church. The senior pastor and the ministers of music agree about the primary issues related to age-segregated worship and support a unified biblical philosophy of worship. The senior pastor and the ministers of music will work together to share the vision of a strategy of worship discipleship in a way that every pastor at Westside can understand, agree with, and champion within their own areas of leadership.

The approved strategy of worship discipleship will be taught and implemented within the weekly corporate worship services. This means that Westside will aim to consistently communicate its philosophy of worship during appropriate moments within worship services. This will be accomplished across all platforms from the song selection to the stage design. The

Senior Pastor and Minister of Music will work together to provide weekly worship services that are carefully crafted to align with the church's biblical philosophy of worship. The Minister of Music will also consistently feature the specific themes and values of biblical worship. Each will be shared and supported by scripture, illustrations, and other teaching methods. The following worship themes will be shared in rotation during weekly worship services.

Themes of Worship

Biblical Worship – An Obedient Heart

Biblical worship is based upon the Word of God. A true worshipper must recognize and submit to the authority of scripture. Worship begins with the Word of God, and if the church claims to worship, they must be devoted to individually reading, applying, and obeying God's Word. If worship is all about a response to the revelation of God, then one cannot respond properly without giving heed to the revelation (II Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 3:16; James 1:22).

Authentic Worship – A Surrendered Heart

One cannot worship God without first placing their faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation provides the foundation for authentic worship. All worshippers at Westside Baptist Church must believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and must seek a genuine relationship with Him. They should also be devoted to a walk of spiritual growth and a surrendered heart (Romans 12:1; John 4:24).

Christ Focused Worship – A Christ-Centered Heart

Biblical worship is focused on Christ alone. Westside will make its worship about Jesus. From the song selection to the verses, the screens to the stage, it will all lead the hearts and minds of the congregation to Jesus. Like John the Baptist, the mission of worship leaders at Westside will be to make much of Jesus and less of ourselves (John 3:30; Matthew 4:10).

Generational Worship – A Unified Heart

Biblical worship recognizes that the Body of Christ is supposed to be unified. Every nation, tongue, tribe, and generation is created to worship God with a spirit of unity. This will be made evident at Westside by generational worship. Westside will promote the energy and excitement of the younger generation and their new worship while also recognizing the value of older worship songs and the memories of God's faithfulness associated with them. The church will be unified, esteeming others better than themselves, even in worship style for the sake of all generations (Deuteronomy 6; Psalm 71:17-18).

Humble Worship – A Servant's Heart

Biblical worship requires that believers think and act like Jesus. Jesus came to earth, made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant. He humbled himself and became obedient to death. God made it clear both in scripture and through the example of Jesus Christ that humility is required for an acceptable sacrifice. Thus, humility is required for biblical worship. Often times in worship settings, pride becomes a tool used to change our focus of worship. Pride takes our eyes off Jesus and places them on ourselves. One must remember that Lucifer was guilty of allowing pride into his ministry of worship. Pride will be the seed of

conflict and contention within a worship ministry. From the perspective of the worship leader, he must remember that a worship leader is called to servanthood, not stardom (II Chronicles 7:14; Philippians 2:5-8; Psalm 51:17).

Holy Worship – A Pure Heart

Biblical worship must come from a pure heart. Character is more important than competency in worship. The Psalmist makes it clear that for one to gain access to the holy hill, they must have clean hands and a pure heart. In fact, the scripture explains that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination. God takes serious offense with someone bringing him an offering with a heart full of sin. Christians are to confess and forsake their sin and seek to worship him with an upright heart (Psalm 24:3-4; Proverbs 15:8; Matthew 5:8, II Timothy 2:22).

Excellent Worship – A Disciplined Heart

Biblical worship should aim for excellence. As stewards of the gifts that God has given, Christians should live with discipline and a standard of excellence. Worshipers are instructed to play skillfully in the psalms, and in the New Testament, worshipers are reminded that everything they do should be for the Glory of God. From scripture, it appears obvious that excellence should be the goal of any worshipper. However, excellence is always secondary to matters of the heart. God is far more concerned with what is inside than how well we disguise it with our skill (Psalm 33:3; I Corinthians 10:31).

Values of Worship

The values of worship are basic beliefs which guide ones practice of worship. Here are some examples of the values of worship for Westside Baptist Church.

- Man is created to worship.
- Worship is a lifestyle, not a music style.
- The church must understand the life and energy that new music brings to the church while remembering the memories of God's faithfulness associated with the old songs.
- Those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth.
- God deserves whole-hearted, passionate worship.
- Worship is a mindful response to the work of God in one's life.
- Worship cannot exist with a spirit of pride.
- Worship always brings the family together.

Each theme and value statement will be communicated at Westside on a regular basis. They will be imparted from the platform and in small groups and shared among the choirs and in Sunday school classes. The values of worship will also be promoted through signage and on social media. The church will grow accustomed to seeing and hearing these values regularly, and as a result, they will become well known to the entire church. In other words, when the church is constantly reminded of their responsibility to be humble and unified in their practice of worship, they are less likely to argue about their music style preferences. It is believed that these biblically based core values of worship will transform the hearts and minds of each generation at Westside.

In addition to the general strategy of worship discipleship, specific worship strategies will be employed. Worship discipleship at Westside will accomplish its greatest influence at an

individual level through one-on-one discipleship which is a critical way for distributing and implementing a biblical philosophy of worship. This plan starts with the leadership and is passed on to the support staff. The support staff must buy into the vision of a unified philosophy of worship, and it must be impressed upon the hearts of the ministry leaders and directors. In turn, this should be passed down to the ministry assistant leaders and the youth worship leaders. It is believed that just as any mentor/coaching relationship works, the relational influence from leaders will pass down the philosophy of worship throughout the entire church.

One significant burden that Westside has encountered over the last decade is the high number of gifted student worship leaders who have left the church to worship elsewhere. Dozens of students left Westside because of their dissatisfaction with the style of worship. In each of these instances, student worship leaders were influenced by a former staff member who also struggled with the worship style. Over the years, the students would come up through his ministry, and upon graduation, they would leave Westside and move on to a new church. A few years ago, this staff member accepted a new position of leadership at a different church and many of those students followed him there. This was a natural consequence of one-on-one influence which brought division among the church. As one learns from the struggles of the past, it is important to recognize the opportunities for the future. Instead of grieving over the gifted student worship leaders who left Westside, the leadership must consider their approach to one-on-one discipleship toward positive means. Leaders should focus every conversation, rehearsal, and worship service toward discipling these gifted students about the biblical responsibility of unified worship.

The Minister of Music has previously been limited in his opportunity to influence the student ministry worship band. However, two years ago the Minister of Music met with the new

youth pastor and explained the need for unity in worship between the youth and the adults at Westside. The youth pastor and minister of music were able to unify around the specific worship strategy for Westside Baptist Church. They made decisions about how to create a spirit of unity, and an opportunity for discipleship, among the youth worship leaders at Westside. Those decisions have created multiple opportunities for one-on-one discipleship with the youth at Westside. These opportunities laid the foundation of the purpose of this thesis project. The opportunity for intentional worship discipleship among the youth at Westside can provide an example for the entire church to be unified in worship. One-on-one worship discipleship may be the most important element in creating a unified spirit of worship at Westside. If one can unify the leaders of each generation and bring them together to worship, then the rest of their generations will also come together in worship.

This implementation of the intervention design will be employed throughout every part of the music ministry of Westside Baptist Church. As a result, there will be a new spirit of unity from the earliest preschool choirs through the children's ministry, the youth ministry, the college ministry all the way up through the senior adult ministries. Generational unity in worship will be achieved when every part of the ministry understands and adheres to the standards and expectations of how music is selected, approved, and respected within each ministry context.

The Methodology Applied to Each Generation at Westside

The previous portion of this section on methodology offered a substitution for a traditional intervention design. The focus provided clarification for the adjustments to the thesis project, along with a summary of the strategic implementation of a biblical philosophy of

worship. For the second portion of this chapter, the focus will shift towards a specific application of worship in each ministry context at Westside Baptist Church.

An Overview of the Worship at Westside

In summary, Westside Baptist Church is a ministry that seeks to reach lost people with the gospel of Christ and to help them grow in their faith through discipleship, worship, and evangelism. The church has maintained a pattern of fruit in each of these areas. However, an obvious struggle has been a division over worship styles across the campus. This division fostered by a lack of worship discipleship at every age level within the church. Any system of worship discipleship at Westside has been non-existent.

Newborn Ministry Worship Strategy

If Westside is going to communicate that it is serious about generational worship at every age, then they must develop a strategy from the youngest to the oldest. As Westside aims to help new parents understand the utmost importance of worship in their child's life, the church must recognize their responsibility to help even newborns in their formation of generational worship. For some, this may seem unnecessary and even extreme; however, this strategy of generational worship will not neglect any age group. There are two effective benefits for bringing up the conversation of biblical worship to a home with a newborn.

First, the ministry effort for newborns provides a significant opportunity to teach parents about their personal responsibility to lead their home in worship. Westside will use this special occasion in the life of a young family to make sure that they understand God's expectation of worship. They will teach these young parents that worship does not only take place on Sundays,

but it should take place every day in their home. These young families should engage in family worship within their home by singing and praying together. They should read and recite scripture together. Every young parent will receive a document teaching them the importance of family worship. They will be reminded that they have a responsibility to raise this little one up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They will be encouraged to read scripture, sing praises, and pray blessings over their little child, all as an act of family worship. The parents of this newborn will be taught that they are the primary worship leaders for their children, and they must lead their children to worship by their own example. These parents will learn that in doing these things, they will create a foundation of biblical worship in the lives of their children. This will allow their children to begin fulfilling the purpose for which they were created.

Second, this ministry effort provides a special blessing for each newborn. Science has discovered that there are many benefits for children who listen to music. Those benefits include brain development and language development, along with many other theories. It is even estimated that a mother who sings to her baby develops a stronger maternal bond than those mothers who do not.¹⁰² It is good for a baby to grow up hearing the songs of the faith. Westside will give each family with a newborn an intentional worship album with baby worship lullabies in their home. With this specific implementation of children's worship music in the home it is hoped to establish deep roots in the hearts of each child and their parents.

The final benefit is to the church. Each time the church has a baby dedication, they will be reminded of the importance of family worship and of their responsibility to raise their little

¹⁰² Fancourt D & Perkins R, "Associations between singing to babies and symptoms of postnatal depression, wellbeing, self-esteem and mother-infant bond", December, 2015, 3, [https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1571561/1/Fancourt_Singing %20and%20PND%20FINAL%20FOR%20REPOSITORY.pdf](https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1571561/1/Fancourt_Singing%20and%20PND%20FINAL%20FOR%20REPOSITORY.pdf) (Accessed on 12/13/2021).

worshipper. This ministry effort will communicate consistently that Westside is passionate about worship from the womb to the tomb.

Nursery Ministry Worship Strategy

The nursery at Westside will understand that they are instrumental in the worship development of every baby that comes into their care. When someone signs up to serve in the nursery at Westside, they are not merely babysitting; they are leading worship. Every nursery worker will recognize that the babies and toddlers in their care may rarely experience the love of Jesus. These servants will understand that for the brief time that they get to care for these babies, they can worship the Lord by loving these children as Jesus would.

In a very practical sense, the environment of the nursery will communicate that this is a place for worship. The environment will be clean and impressive. The same album that is given to each family upon their child's dedication will be playing in the nursery area to create a comforting continuity for both the babies and the parents. Every servant, from the administrators to security, and classroom teachers, will consider themselves a worship leader. They will speak about their time together within the context of worship. When parents pick up their children, the leaders will say, we had such a great day worshiping with your little one today. This will remind the teachers and the parents that this ministry is one of worship and nothing less. The nursery worship leaders will care for these children with love and attention. Throughout their time together, they will pray with the children, sing to the children, and tell each child about how much Jesus loves them.

Children's Ministry Worship Strategy

The children's ministry at Westside Baptist Church is vibrant and exciting. Each week the children go to their connection groups, and then they transition into their own children's worship service. At this level, it is natural for the ministry to take care of their own details regarding worship; however, with this method, there is a tendency and unintentional separation from the institutional philosophy of worship. Therefore, it is at this age group that even more effort is required to keep unity and continuity of worship.

The children's ministry will follow the pattern of the younger age groups by using the term worship, understanding, and communicating that worship is what we are created to do. Worship is not just the music that will be sung or even the lesson that will be taught, but it is the attitude that the children have during the service. The children's ministry will recognize that everything that takes place during a Sunday, from guests' registration to bathroom breaks, to silly games, everything is an act of worship.

The leaders in the children's ministry will learn to recognize that they are worship leaders. Every word that they say to parents and children, every compliment or complaint, every encouraging smile or discouraging remark will enhance or hinder worship that day. There are many facets of a children's worship service that can hinder or enhance worship. For example, if the leaders are not prepared, then they are not leading worship well. If the technology is not managed well, it can create a distraction that will hinder a focus on worship. The Children's Director and all the children's worship leaders must remember that they have an important role in the lives of these kids. They are teaching these kids to worship, not only on Sundays but all throughout the week.

Another important facet of children's worship will be in the songs that are sung and the lessons that are taught. Children have a different level of understanding and development as concrete thinkers. Sometimes, the adult worship songs that are selected are so figurative or theological that children cannot understand what they are singing. Sometimes the best songs for children's worship are songs that teach and repeat simple truths about God. Other great themes are children's songs that teach bible stories. Veggie Tales and Patch the Pirate were very good at writing simple songs that teach an entire bible story with a fun and memorable tune. Often children can learn an entire story from the Bible by learning a worship song.

Westside will also encourage a balanced philosophy of worship among the children's ministries. This means that they will begin doing some new and old worship within the children's ministry. It is healthy and important for the children at Westside to learn some of the most common hymns of the faith while also singing silly songs with Larry.

Middle School Ministry Worship Strategy

Middle School is a fundamental season of transition in the life of any student. This is a season where a young person is learning to worship like an adult. Middle schoolers generally are classified negatively however, they should also be encouraged in their ability to worship. Middle schoolers are created to worship as with other generations. They are often the most easily influenced age group in the church, and so these young people have the greatest potential to be influenced regarding worship. Because they learn most by following the example of the leaders, Westside will be very intentional about placing excellent high school worship leaders on the stage before them. These student leaders will not be excellent because of their musical ability or their level of popularity. The excellence of these young worship leaders will be determined by

their character. The high school worship leaders will be the kind of students that the church hopes to replicate in the middle school ministry. Middle school is also a critical time to encourage and support a daily quiet time for every young person. This should be taught as their daily worship.

Middle school will be a training ground for worship leader development. The ministry will focus on developing select students who are serious about worship by placing those students in areas of leadership. Middle schoolers need time with real worshipers, so this will be much of the focus of the middle school ministry. Westside Youth Ministry will leverage this season where students are more influenced than at any point in their life.

It is during this season that these students will be made aware of the opportunities for worship outside of the traditional ways they have learned. They will discover opportunities to worship around the world through missions, evangelism, full-time service, and other areas of worship. They will learn that worship takes place in public and in private, at school and at home. The goal is that the middle schoolers at Westside learn and believe that worship is a lifestyle and not a music style. It is during this transitional age group that the leadership at Westside will work hard to teach the students that worship has nothing to do with fog and lighting effects. There is nothing wrong with these elements unless they become the identifier of worship.

The middle schoolers will have the first opportunity to engage in consistent service in Sunday morning worship by joining the generational worship choir, orchestra, and praise team. These are areas of the ministry that are highly encouraged for these young people to get involved. Middle school worship is a training ground for the High School Worshipers at Westside Baptist Church.

High School Ministry Worship Strategy

At Westside, it has become clear that training and discipling the high school students. Is vital to providing opportunities to lead. For the students who have displayed a growing walk with the Lord, and a reputation of faithfulness, they are provided with opportunities of leadership both among the youth and among the adults. The aim of generational worship services at Westside is the opportunity to see qualified worship leaders standing together, leading the church in worship from every generation. The goal of corporate worship at Westside provides high school students occasion to lead the church in worship on a weekly basis in some form.

In addition to the cooperate worship setting, there will be very methodical worship discipleship taking place each week in the form of band practice. The Minister of music and the youth pastor will prioritize weekly discipleship among the youth band each week to discuss the struggles and joys of worship. This time of discipleship will develop a relationship between the minister of music and the student worship leaders. As that relationship is developed and the mentoring and coaching progresses, it is likely that those students will not leave the church when they can use their gifts to lead at Westside. That weekly worship discipleship rehearsal will be an open rehearsal where any students from middle school and High school are welcome to attend and participate in the conversation and practice of worship. This will also provide a system of partnering the youth and music ministry together for future development and discipleship.

The high school ministry will participate in a youth worship retreat each year that emphasis a systematic overview of the themes and values of worship listed earlier in this chapter. This retreat will take place around six months after summer camp, half-way through the school year, to encourage the students to remain faithful in their efforts to worship God in their daily lifestyle.

Young Adult Ministry Worship Strategy

The young adult ministry at Westside has been one of the most transient ministries in the church. This worship strategy will endeavor to create a strategy of worship that encourages a long-term commitment to stay at Westside and use their gifts and service within the ministry they group up. The leadership understands that there are several different factors that influence a young adult in the decision to leave and go to a new church, but they want to take the element of worship out of that conversation. Westside will endeavor to raise young adults who have a biblical understanding of worship and will not leave the ministry over a particular worship style.

The fact is that the young adults are seeking to find their place as an adult. They are eager to be considered as adults and not as youth anymore. They have jobs, responsibilities, social demands, and the heavy burden of preparing for the future. The search for a new church is an unnecessary burden during such a transitional season. This season is one of significant transition, and so the worship ministry aims to be very sensitive to a group of young adults that often feel displaced when transitioning out of the youth ministry.

The goal to leverage high school development will provide a comfortable place for young adults to get involved in the adult worship service. If young adults do not feel comfortable anywhere else in the church, there is confidence that they can feel comfortable with the community of leaders and servants in the worship ministry. The most important element of this goal is to remember that this level of transition cannot be considered a blanket transition for all young adults, but every young adult should be considered, invited, and welcomed individually.

The minister of music at Westside plans to serve along-side the young adult ministry and assist in this difficult season of transition. One of the ways that these relationships will be established and increased will be through young adult fellowships in the home of leaders in the

music ministry. This will begin with each young adult receiving an invitation to the music ministers' house during the summer after graduation from high school. This will provide simple transition toward worshipping as an adult who makes decisions for themselves about church attendance and membership. Encouragement and service will be the focus of these transition events.

Median Adult Ministry Worship Strategy

The median adults at Westside are generally the most relaxed age group regarding music worship styles. They tend to not make complaints about specific music styles. However, they do tend to be leaving the church on a regular basis. The apparent reason for this departure is that when their children grow up and create their own families, they follow their children to new churches. At Westside, it appears that when a young family goes to worship somewhere else, the grandparents are generally not far behind them. This is reflected in current cultural trends.

The greatest way Westside can serve median adults is through successful generational worship. Several median adult couples at Westside have had to make the difficult decision of whether they would choose to stay at Westside and attend church with their parents or whether they would leave Westside to attend church with their children. If Westside can develop a healthy understanding of a biblical philosophy of worship, and if they are able to keep young adults and young families, then they will bless the median adults who are torn in two different directions.

Finally, median adults should be the greatest group of servants, leaders, and mentors within the church. This is the age group that has enough energy and enough wisdom to make a

huge impact in the direction of the church's future. They must be reminded of the opportunity they have to influence the younger generations in a lifestyle of worship.

Senior Adult Ministry Worship Strategy

Finally, the senior adult ministry is critical to a healthy balance of worship. The senior adults at Westside will be remembered and respected. Two of the most common issues in dealing with senior adults is that they often feel forgotten about or dishonored in the way that the church aims to keep up with the times. This is a mistake in leadership. It should be clear, many of the seniors should naturally be the most spiritually mature after sitting and serving in the church for so many decades. This assumption is not followed with accurate research. Some of the seniors respond with carnal perspectives concerning worship, just like some of the younger generations. Senior adults should never argue that their faithfulness toward giving is the primary reason they influence song choice in worship. Their opinions and preferences should also not be ignored. There is great value in the experience and wisdom the senior adults and should be shared with younger generations.

In the experience of this researcher, when senior adults are loved, respected, and listened to, they become more flexible. For years it seemed safer to avoid certain senior adults to avoid confrontation however, this practice did not produce adequate results and intergenerational cooperation. Many senior adults have gained a reputation for being difficult, unpleasable, and negative. However, the researcher perceives that relationships are not built positively when senior adults are ignored. When a worship leader builds relational equity among senior adults, responses are more gracious. The worship leader can serve them by choosing songs occasionally that speak to this demographic. This effort can change the worship leader's perspective of the

senior adults, and it can influence the spirit of the church. Every generation at Westside is valuable, and its strategy of biblical worship must recognize that value.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this section on methodology has revealed a plan of intervention, the implementation of intervention which revealed the themes and values of worship at Westside Baptist Church, and finally, the ministry overview of how the worship ministry should operate for every generation.

Chapter 4

The traditional format of a thesis project requires that this chapter focus on the analysis of the results which were tied to the research developed in chapter three. As a result of the course modifications explained in chapter three, the project produced no measurable results. This chapter will focus on possible results of Westside's implementation of a new worship strategy over the last year, along with other ministry examples that support the modifications presented regarding generational worship strategies. This chapter will answer questions concerning anticipated results. Specifically, this chapter will demonstrate the expectations of change upon the implementation of this new generational worship strategy.

The Common Struggle

The research leading up to this project revealed many noteworthy insights about worship within the church. One of the most striking discoveries regarding worship is the lack of knowledge that many congregations have concerning true biblical worship. It has become increasingly evident that this is a problem at Westside, but the problem is also evident in many churches. In his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren addresses several different kinds of churches, which are based upon the pastor's primary focus. If a pastor's passion is worship, "he will instinctively lead the church to become an "experiencing God" church. The focus of this church is on experiencing the presence and power of God in worship. Key terms for this church are praise, prayer, worship, music, spiritual gifts, spirit, power, and revival."¹⁰³ Of the five classifications of churches, this is the only church-type that even mentions the term worship. The other common church classifications include the soul-winning church, the family reunion

¹⁰³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), Kindle, loc. 3578.

church, the classroom church, and the social conscience church.¹⁰⁴ It is obvious that Westside would be classified as a soul-winning church. Warren contents, “if a pastor sees his primary role as an evangelist, then the church becomes a “soul-winning” church . . . [and] in the soul-winning church, anything other than evangelism is relegated to a secondary role.”¹⁰⁵ This describes Westside Baptist Church, and as a result, provides a case for why neither worship nor discipleship, and especially worship discipleship has had minimal emphasis in the past. Most of the members at Westside Baptist Church have not been counseled through a biblical understanding of worship. As a result, there have been many misguided and inaccurate comments about worship made by mature believers within the church. One adult worship leader who serves both in the main worship services and as a youth band mentor made suggestions about techtronics into the main worship service to provide a more worshipful “feeling.” There have been comments from senior saints about the divine inspiration and authority of hymns. Both statements are on opposite ends of the stylistic spectrum, and they are both false. These are two representations of many church members who are unaware of what true biblical worship is. As it is common in many churches across the country, it is also common for members of Westside to define worship as the music portion of the service. Often church members are tempted to evaluate the quality of Sunday’s worship based upon whether their preferred style of music was selected for that Sunday. This is especially true when many of the terms used, the service structure, programming, age-segregation, and popular worship culture, have been teaching the congregation to believe some of those errors about worship.

¹⁰⁴ Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*.

¹⁰⁵ Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*.

As previously suggested, it is the responsibility of the senior pastor and the minister of music, in collaboration with the rest of the pastoral staff, to serve alongside one another to lead the entire church into a unified biblical understanding of worship. The researcher has collaborated with the senior leadership of Westside Baptist Church to create a strategy for worship discipleship. This plan consists of specific instruction in worship for every generation. There is a common struggle among many churches which fail to teach the church about true worship. The researcher believes that a church should not be locked into a classification of worship, or soul-winning, or family. Instead, every church has a biblical charge to equip the believer to participate in each of the spiritual disciplines. A church should focus on evangelism, and worship, discipleship, and community. The church cannot allow its main passion to foster weakness in other critical areas of ministry. This is a common struggle among many churches. If Westside implements this new strategy of worship discipleship, then it can experience incredible results in the future.

An Evaluation of Multigenerational Worship Ministries

First and foremost, Westside must understand a clear definition of worship. This definition will be consistently used in every ministry at Westside. It should be simple to understand and yet broad enough to make the point clear that worship is more than music. In determining the institutional definition of worship for Westside, the researcher will consider the definitions from a few other ministries and individuals. Vernon Whaley defines worship as, “Every time that God reveals Himself to man, an expression of worship follows. Worship is the

normal and natural response to God's presence."¹⁰⁶ It is uncommon for most churches to publish their definition of worship on a website, but some examples include Saddleback Church who defines worship as, "Worship is expressing our love to God for who he is, what he's said, and what he's doing."¹⁰⁷ Another example from Shepherds Community Church defines worship as, "There is no clear definition of worship in all of Scripture, but Scripture as a whole does give us a full picture of what the worship of God involves. In general, worship could be defined as the expression of glad, humble and wholehearted submission to God, in response to His greatness, His salvation, and His promises."¹⁰⁸ Both definitions of worship communicated publicly for their church to see clearly and understand fully. However, some churches never define worship for their congregation. These churches base their definition of worship simply on the chosen musicality. Worship is significant enough that the church should define worship for its people. The church should help the congregation understand that the servants in the sound booth and in the nursery are all engaged in worship. The instrumentalist should understand that while they are playing an instrument and often too focused on the sheet music to get the warm fuzzies, they are still fully engaged in worship. The church leadership must define worship carefully so that the congregation does not define it based upon experience.

One worship leader who has spent the last forty years teaching about biblical generational worship is Ray Jones. Jones established Radiance Ministries in 1981, a ministry designed to "help the church get outside the walls of its buildings sharing Christ and helping people

¹⁰⁶ Vernon Whaley, *Called to Worship: The Biblical Foundations of Our Response to God's Call* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 49.

¹⁰⁷ Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* 239.

¹⁰⁸ Shepherd's Community Church." n.d. Shepherds-Church.Org. Accessed November 11, 2020. <https://www.shepherds-church.org/worship>.

understand the true worship of Christ.”¹⁰⁹ In 1992, Jones was invited to join the staff of Community Bible Church in San Antonio, TX as their Worship Pastor. During his season of ministry at CBC, Jones was able to lead a ministry that became an example for all other churches interested in leading a long-term program of multi-generational worship. Near the end of his ministry at CBC, Jones had more than 1,200 people involved in leading worship or training the next generation of worshipers. His mission to engage the church in multi-generational worship was abundantly successful. Jones became a regular speaker at worship conferences all over the nation, speaking to worship leaders about choirs, multi-generational worship, and congregational engagement.”¹¹⁰ As a result of Jones’ passion for generational worship, he has partnered with many other churches to assist them in the development of their multi-generational worship strategy. As a result of this study, Westside will be reaching out to Ray Jones for a worship consultation and, most likely, a generational worship retreat for the worship ministry at Westside Baptist Church.

The results of this thesis project reveal a need for clear communication from a church about worship. It is estimated that the best way to build momentum into this transition will be to host a worship event at Westside where the whole church will have the opportunity to learn about biblical worship together. This retreat would offer an opportunity to unveil a new worship strategy for the church, along with a plan to develop worship leaders at Westside. This is something that Jones has done for years, and he would be a great partner for the kickoff of this mission.

¹⁰⁹ “Who We Are — Radiance Ministries.” n.d. Radianceworship.Org. Accessed March 12, 2021. <https://www.radianceworship.org/who-we-are>.

¹¹⁰ “Who We Are.”

Another church that has done a great job in making multi-generational worship a part of its identity is Westbury Baptist Church in Houston, TX. Upon visiting the church's website, one can immediately see their passion for multigenerational worship. The church leadership decided to make multi-generational worship a part of their core values. The mission statement of the church is: "Westbury Baptist Church is a multigenerational, multiethnic community of believers who seek to engage, equip, and empower any person who desires to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ."¹¹¹ The worship pastor of Westbury Baptist Church, Dylan Reese, explains that while they are not a perfect church, they are passionate about multigenerational worship and it is a part of their weekly identity in worship. One does not have to look far to see many examples of their practice of generational worship on their website and in their online services.

Other churches that have displayed a focus on generational worship include First Baptist Church of Collierville. The worship pastor, Joshua McClain, is working with his worship team to continue a legacy of multigenerational worship. Their worship vision is: We believe in celebrating the good things the Lord has done and in Christ-centered worship. Worship is a lifestyle, and Sunday mornings reflect our love for Jesus all throughout the week."¹¹² One of the core values of the church is authentic worship which is explained as, "Worship is God-centered and focuses on substance rather than style."¹¹³ Each of these ministries is very clear about its emphasis on worship. This is the anticipated result of what will take place at Westside as the church is introduced to a strategy of worship discipleship.

¹¹¹ "Westbury Baptist Church." n.d. Wbchouston.Org. Accessed March 12, 2021. <http://www.Wbchouston.org>.

¹¹² "I'm New." n.d. Cfbcfamily.Org. Accessed March 12, 2021. <https://cfbcfamily.org/im-new>.

¹¹³ "I'm New."

Every Person was Created to Worship

There are core values that must be defined so that Westside's strategy of worship discipleship will be anchored in truth. Scripture teaches that every person was designed for worship. In a church that understands that every person is created for worship, there will be opportunities for every person to engage in corporate worship. This means that at Westside, the music ministry will not be characterized by one age demographic or by one ethnicity. This will be a ministry where young and old will be able to engage in worship together. Every nation and every tongue will recognize its role in corporate worship.

Ray Jones is passionate about the fact that every person is created for worship, and as a result, he made that value one of the core values of his worship ministry. Around 1996, Jones and his worship team made the decision to give special emphasis to the training of young worship leaders. From that day on, Jones says that his life was changed. They began to focus on the children's choirs of the church. Jones describes, "we changed their thought process from training performers to sing to training children to worship."¹¹⁴ Jones explains that the fruit of this decision was not simple. However, the results of this intentional effort of training worship leaders were undeniable. When one seeks to make a generational impact, they must remember the law of the harvest. One will always reap what one sows, later than sown, and more than expected. When investing in the next generation of worshippers, the church must recognize the long-term investment and anticipate the exponential return. It is worth noting for Westside that this emphasis will not only be on training young worship leaders, but it will also be to recognize

¹¹⁴ Jones, Ray. n.d. "Raising up the next Generation of Worship Leaders." Ministrytodaymag.Com. Accessed March 12, 2021. <https://ministrytodaymag.com/leadership/worship/20706-raising-up-the-next-generation-of-worship-leaders>.

the senior adults who have not been disciplined appropriately in worship and offering them opportunities in worship leadership as well. The most exciting Sundays at Westside will display worshippers from every generation, children, and youth leading worship alongside parents and grandparents. Westside must remain focused on the mission that every person is created to worship, and therefore they are worth the long-term investment.

The church must remember that worship is not only for musicians or full-time ministers, but worship is for each and every human that has ever lived. Man is created to respond to God and should respond to Him in every part of his life. Man's worship should be practiced in private and public, at home and in the office, in the sanctuary, and out of the sanctuary; man must aim to worship God in all that he does.

God Created People Differently and Values Different Styles of Worship

During a mission trip in Togo, West Africa, the researcher participated in the most unique worship service he could have imagined. A village of Christian Togolese had gathered for worship. They created a giant fire and danced around the fire while singing songs of praise to God. It was an experience of worship like nothing he had ever seen. It was a very clear reminder that God loves variety in worship. God created different people, with different cultures, to worship him in different ways. Block argues, "truly worshipful music is rich in variety and comprehensive in scope."¹¹⁵ Paul uses three different words to describe a context for musical variety in worship. In both Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19, Paul makes it clear that variety in music is completely suitable for worship. The three varieties listed are psalms, hymns, and

¹¹⁵ Daniel Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), Kindle. Loc. 4512.

spiritual songs. There is a history of debate over what these three classifications mean. The reference to the psalms seems reasonably obvious. However, there are many different opinions regarding hymns and spiritual songs. Regardless of the conclusions made, one cannot deny that three different classifications are listed, which provides evidence that God has inspired the use of these different types of music. Zac Hicks writes in his book to worship leaders: “I have found that exposing a congregation to a wider variety of musical styles beyond their favorite genres has the added benefit of creating a more flexible and generous worship culture, warding off idolatries associated with consumerism and selfishness that so often plague a church’s musical appetites.”¹¹⁶ The worship leadership of the church must seek to help the congregation expand their comfort zone. The best way to expand one's comfort zone is to get out of it. Therefore, a worship leader will be wise to plan a variety of worship songs and styles, which will guide the congregation towards having a broader appreciation for many styles of worship music. Westside will implement this among its strategy of worship. The anticipated results of this strategy will be an increased appreciation and open mind towards new and different music styles.

This strategy also provides an opportunity for the church to reach different ethnic groups. Over the last year, Westside has increased its efforts to connect with the neighboring Latino culture. This effort has included outreach media translated and printed in Spanish. In addition, Westside has tried to include the Spanish ministry in the general worship service. This included inviting the congregation of the church to sing a song in both English and Spanish while also inviting some of the praise team from our Spanish church to lead worship in our main worship service. This is another way that Westside is seeking to expand the comfort of the congregation

¹¹⁶ Zac M. Hicks, *The Worship Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 176.

and teach them to think outside of the areas they have grown most comfortable. It is believed that this core value of worship will encourage a spirit where the church learns to esteem other people, other ages, and other ethnicities better than themselves.

Worship is a Matter of the Heart

Westside's strategy of worship will consistently remind the church that worship is a matter of the heart. Jesus gave instruction to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This passage instructs believers to respond to God with love with their entire being. God's children are not to worship him with a mind focused on truth with no emotions. God wants his children to worship him in spirit and in truth, with mind and heart. Gods' children are commanded to come to Him with a pure heart. Westside should anticipate two benefits from learning that worship is a matter of the heart. First, the church will associate worship with the daily events of their life, and not only the events that take place in the worship center. Thus, the church will begin to live out daily worship with a surrendered heart to the Lord. They will live a lifestyle of worship the way they were created. Second, when the church grows in their understanding that worship is about the response of the heart, they will engage in more authentic and passionate worship. The heart is the seat of emotions, and therefore when someone responds to God's word with their whole heart, they accomplish this balance of spirit and truth. These results will provide a strong sense of new life and energy to the spirit of worship within the church.

Worship is a Discipline

Worship has been referred to as the "worth-ship" of God. This idea indicates that Christians often respond to God based upon what He is worth to them. It could also be said that a Christian response reveals their opinion of God's worth. If God is worth someone's time, then they will spend time in His Word. If talking to God is worth it, then Christians will be inclined to spend time in prayer. Theodore Roosevelt is known for saying this about work and discipline: "Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty . . . I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well."¹¹⁷ Worship requires the development of discipline. It takes discipline to spend time responding to God's word each day. It also requires discipline to engage in a consistent practice of prayer. It even requires discipline to sing in a weekly worship service in a way that engages a thoughtful engagement and heartfelt response to the truth that one is singing.

The anticipation is that as a church encourages the development of a discipline of worship, the results will be evident by Christians who are consistently growing in their faith. As the children's worship song says: Read your Bible, pray every day and you'll grow, grow, grow." The goal of the discipline of worship is to glorify God and to grow one's faith. A consistent time in prayer, in the Word, serving and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ all require significant effort and the practice of spiritual discipline. Each of these is an example of worship to God, which requires a great deal of effort.

¹¹⁷ Donald Davidson, *The Wisdom of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, NY: Citadel Press, 2018), 47.

The church is a wonderful place to teach people how to master their spiritual disciplines. Westside must remind the church that these spiritual disciplines are the actions of worship. If one trains the church to engage in the spiritual disciplines, the results will be a church that is trained to worship.

Paul says that the spiritual journey for every believer is like a race. Running a race requires time, effort, and dedication. Preparing for a race requires discipline and daily training. Discipline means that the runner says yes when everything within him wants to say no, and vice versa. The same is true for a spiritually disciplined worshiper. The church must help each member understand that their corporate worship on Sundays will be so much richer when they have done the spiritual training of reading the word, praying, and sharing their faith with others throughout the week. The practice of worship must be understood as a spiritual discipline that takes time and effort. The more disciplined the worshiper, the more comfortable he will see every part of his daily life as an opportunity for worship.

The Whole Church Must Worship Together

The heartbeat of multigenerational worship is the realization of all generations coming back together for unified worship. Westside believes that something has been lost because of the church's age segregation in worship. Worship segregation has forced Christians to take sides against each other and form needless divisions within the body of Christ. Westside anticipates incredible unity in the church when it learns to worship together again.

Josh Davis writes about the unity of the worshipping church: "It is our belief that in order to reflect God's glory more fully, we (the church) must be what, in Christ, we already are, that is,

diverse and unified.”¹¹⁸ God’s plan for unity and diversity is most evident in I Corinthians 12. Verse four states: “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” This displays unity and diversity.” The passage goes on to explain in verses twelve and following that the body of Christ must be unified, but there are many diverse parts of the body. This passage of scripture speaks to the diversity of the church body coming together for the work of the gospel. The same principle is true in worship.

Every church must recognize that while there are many different people, different cultures, different opinions, different responsibilities, and preferences, the purpose of worship is singular. The practice of worship may be varied, but the spirit of worship must be unified. The church must come together in worship. Westside will accomplish this by teaching every generation to value and appreciate the generations before and behind them. Westside will encourage all generations to enter a humble and gracious conversation about worship, song selection, the balance of styles, and worship leading opportunities.

A Worship Leadership Strategy

The worship discipleship strategy at Westside will be intentional about the standards set for worship leaders placed in authority over their respective areas of ministry. One of the most obvious reasons for the division of worship at westside is the fact that there has been no single vision of worship. Instead, there was an unspoken goal that every part of the ministry would provide their own worship according to their own liking. This lack of intentionality caused a situation where worship leaders across the campus were doing whatever they wanted to do

¹¹⁸ Nikki Lerner, *Worship Together in Your Church as in Heaven* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 21.

without any guidance or accountability. One obvious example was regarding the youth ministry who had a very talented worship leader on the platform each week who was publicly known for substance abuse issues and partying on the weekend. Because this student was able to produce quality music each week, the youth leadership allowed him to continue leading in this position with minimal guidance and accountability. When the researcher pursued a gracious conversation about worship leading at Westside, this individual explained that they were only going to attend Westside until they turned 18. They went on to explain that at that point, they would be going to a larger church across town to get involved in the worship ministry there. This is exactly what happened within the following year.

There are several passages in scripture that provide a biblical standard of leadership, both according to ministry leadership in the New Testament and even considering the role of the Levite worship leaders throughout the Old Testament. There are examples of leaders in the scripture that demand a level of holiness, blamelessness, and servanthood. Bob Kauflin proposes a list of qualifications for any worship leader, which includes humility, godly character, a love for good theology, leadership gifting, and musical skill.¹¹⁹ It should be added to this list that a worship leader would be a servant who is willing to submit to the authority of the local church, willing to serve the mission of that church, and willing to adhere to the biblical philosophy of worship that their church leadership has instituted.

In addition, a worship leader at Westside must understand and be able to teach others about why worship looks the way that it does at Westside. A worship leader should understand and support the foundation of why particular songs are selected for worship and why other songs

¹¹⁹ Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 254.

are avoided. Finally, and most importantly, a worship leader must be a believer in Jesus Christ and someone who displays the desire to lead the attention of the congregation to Jesus alone and not to their own self. It is believed that if these standards are communicated and expected throughout the discipleship process of every worship leader, then the worship leaders that are developed through the ministry of Westside will agree with the worship vision for the church.

A Worship Strategy Schedule

Westside worship discipleship will require a consistent schedule of dialogue and instruction about worship. As stated earlier in this project, the church must be reminded how to worship. Reminders exist so that when something is forgotten, it can be brought to the forefront again. This is the reason why a worship strategy schedule is critical to long-term success. A worship leader cannot be discouraged when the church forgets important details about worship; they should anticipate that these details will be forgotten, and they should repeatedly communicate each principle of worship. For example, the six major principles of worship for Westside should each be addressed and explained for two months out of the year. The Westside worship discipleship strategy will re-communicate one principle of worship per month, two times each year.

In a general month, on the first Sunday, the pastor or minister of music would share the definition of the selected principle. On the second Sunday, they would recite a phrase about this principle of worship and give an application. On the third Sunday, the church can read the phrase on worship instruction together. Finally, on the last Sunday, the church can put creatively share an application to assist the church in remembering the worship principle for that month.

The results of this practice will assure that there is a system in place to consistently communicate the core principles of worship at Westside. A weekly schedule may not be necessary for the future. However, as the church develops and communicates this philosophy of worship, it should be more intentional in following the schedule early on since most of the church will not recognize these principles of worship.

A Culture of Servant Worshippers

Finally, the Westside worship discipleship strategy will teach every generation to value the worship preferences of other generations and ultimately to esteem the preferences of other generations over their own preferences. This spirit of humility will create a culture of servant worshippers, where the church can realize that worship should not be enjoyed because of the sound of their favorite song but instead because of the beauty of all generations worshipping together as servant worship leader will be eager to lead in a way that will exalt Christ and ultimately exhort the entire church. If every worship leader at Westside Baptist Church supports the biblical philosophy of worship, then this understanding will, in turn, flow down through the congregation. If a worship leader is willing to expand their comfort zone and learn to appreciate different styles of worship that are not idyllic, then this humble spirit will influence the church, which will create a unique blend of diversity and unity in worship.

In 2020, Ravi Zacharias was recorded at a conference answering a question about worship styles within the church.¹²⁰ He ended his response to the question by making a statement that is exactly what Westside Baptist Church needs to understand and remember. He stated that

¹²⁰ “Ravi Zacharias on Worship Styles.” 2018. Youtube. November 1, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLF7N6xsf-8>.

the older generations of the church must understand the life and energy that new songs bring into the church. He went on to discuss the importance of the theme of singing a new song throughout the psalms. Then Zacharias contrasted that point by explaining that the younger generations must be taught the value of the older songs because of the memories that have been associated with those songs. He goes on to explain that younger generations must remember that God has moved in the lives of the older generation, and He reminds them of those special moments through those songs. Simply put, the older generation must learn to value and appreciate the new songs of the church, and the younger generation must learn to value and appreciate the older songs of the church. This is the epitome of a church with many generations seeking to serve and esteem other generations better than themselves. This is the vision of what can be accomplished through the Westside Worship Discipleship Strategy.

A Culture of Production

One of the results anticipated from this strategy of worship is the expectation that good worship will not be defined by the quality of production. Sometimes the nature of production in the context of modern worship can create a false idea that the best worship is gauged by the usage of the latest technology, lighting, and special effects. These enhancements to worship are not necessarily wrong, but when authentic worship starts to be defined by these things, and worship feels insincere without the special effects, something is wrong with the understanding of worship. In this situation, the technology has likely and unintentionally become a source of false teaching. Westside plans to develop a standard for the use of production elements so that the technological elements do not become the very thing being worshipped. Production is healthy as

long as space is left for the Holy Spirit. However, when the production becomes the main focus, then a biblical philosophy of worship has been abandoned.

Additional Themes for a Biblical Worship Strategy

In addition to the themes and values mentioned in chapter three, there are many other facets of biblical worship that must be developed and taught to the church. As the church continues to teach these themes, the congregation will grow in its understanding of a biblical philosophy of worship. First, worship should be defined to the church on a consistent basis. The senior pastor and minister of music can define it according to the following statements: worship is man's response to God's redemptive work, or for a more detailed understanding, "Worship is everything that we do in response to God's glorious work in our lives."

First, one must understand what worship is and then they will wonder what their role is for worship. The role of each person is the same; every person is created to worship. The church could reinforce this on a Sunday by asking the congregation to proclaim: "We are created to worship God, and nothing less." The fact of the matter is that so many things are begging for the attention of believers, but to worship anything other than God is to miss the purpose for man's existence.

Next, every believer must recognize that God created people differently, and He values different styles of worship. The result of a church that understands this is a church that will be more open-minded and gracious towards styles that are not their own. The church must remember that God created the whole world, and He sent His son to die to pay for the sins of every man. God created man and put incredible variety within every people group. The worship leader may remind the church of that song they sang as a child: Jesus loves the little children, all

the children of the world. Jesus created and loves every person, from every nation, every tongue, and tribe. Jesus loves variety, and He expects his creation to appreciate variety as well. The worship leader should teach the church to worship with a perspective that acknowledges: “God created a variety of people for variety in worship.”

The worship leader and the pastor must help the congregation realize that regardless of the temptation to make worship about external factors, worship is a matter of the heart. Just as the old hymn writer wrote, the church must be taught to tune their heart to sing God's praise. The results of a church that prepares its heart for worship will be people who are filled with anticipation each week, a people who are eager to come together with their brothers and sisters and worship the Lord, a people who have taken care of business with God before they even come to church because they desire to waste no time engaging in worship. The congregation of the church must be taught to prepare their heart and mind to respond to God in accordance with his plan for worship.

In conclusion, this chapter focuses on the results that will be developed in a church that applies a biblical strategy of worship. This chapter shares several elements in worship that must be considered and ultimately the result of what can be expected at Westside Baptist Church if these themes and values are taught and practiced in every area of ministry. The results of these elements of biblical worship will assist the leadership of the church in accomplishing the mission of developing and implementing strategic discipleship of biblical and generational worship.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The conclusion of this project will provide an effective summary of the problems treated within the project, a detailed rundown concerning the future of this ministry problem, and some extensive suggestions for further study related to this problem and project. Finally, the last portion of this chapter will answer the question of what needs to be done now that the problem has been addressed.

A Summary of the Problem

Westside Baptist Church has experienced seasons of decline and tension throughout the last decade regarding its generational unity. Both younger generations and older generations have expressed their opinions regarding the direction of the church. Each generation communicates that the church is not moving in the right direction. They affirm how it would recover if the leadership would make decisions to bring the church closer to their own generation's preferred style of ministry. These problems have become most evident by the departure of young adults, the frustration of senior adults, and the discouragement of the staff seeking to bring both sides together. The music ministry of Westside Baptist Church has become one of the main arenas where these generational tensions have come to the surface.

The worship ministry at Westside has been known for its dynamic history of musical worship. For decades, Westside has been among some of the most notable in its region for having a large and talented choir and orchestra. Throughout the decades and up to this point, the church has employed a blend of exciting hymns and choruses, praise songs, and contemporary music in its worship services. Especially over the last decade, the church has strived to maintain

a standard of blended worship to appease the style preferences of many. However, while this effort was being made, there were other systems and practices in place that worked against the spirit of unity.

One of the most obvious problems that this project addressed was the lack of intentional and consistent worship discipleship at Westside Baptist Church. The church has not been consistently taught about how to understand and engage in biblical worship. In fact, the term worship has been more commonly defined as the music portion of the service than by any biblical standard. Furthermore, the church has often used improper terminology or unclear language, which in some cases has communicated the opposite of what the church believes about worship. The leadership, the congregation, and the campus signage refer to the room that the church gathers in as the worship center. This label creates an unspoken assumption that one must go to this place for worship. The church has often communicated about the music portion of the service as worship, implying that worship mainly takes place through singing songs. These labels have assisted some church members in their false understandings of biblical worship, but the more significant issue here is the lack of any church-wide worship discipleship strategy.

Without a clear worship discipleship strategy, the church leaders have been forced to determine their own methods of worship. Each individual ministry leader makes their own decisions about how they will proceed in defining and practicing worship. This freedom has allowed each generation to create a setting where they have only engaged in the style of worship music that their generation prefers. The children's ministry engages in their own songs for worship, while the youth ministry engages in their own style of worship. Even the senior adults have created ministry opportunities to meet and practice their own preferred style of worship. In each of these settings, not only has the generational leadership chosen their preferred style of

musical worship but most commonly, they have taken that style to the extreme. For example, both the youth ministry and the senior adult ministry have used their complete freedom of worship to engage in a style that would almost never be used in the main worship service. In a congregational setting, the seniors would have been extremely unhappy with the style of worship that the youth preferred, while the youth would have been equally unsatisfied with the style of music that the seniors chose. This practice of age-segregated worship created groups of both younger and older worshipers who claim that they can worship better the musical style aligns with their preferences. Some have been so bold as to complain that they cannot worship with the style of music the other prefers. As a result, the blended corporate worship service became one of the least valued worship styles on campus. The senior adults did not appreciate the new worship music that the church was learning, and the youth did not appreciate the older-style songs that the church would sing together. The age-segregated worship developed an appetite for a musical style of worship that could only be fed by continued segregation of the church. As a result, this freedom of age-segregated worship created a widespread spirit of disunity within the church.

This division became most evident through a cycle of departure among the young adult ministries. Westside has invested in young people who have come through the children's ministry and then through the youth ministry to be thrown into a context of worship that is completely unfamiliar and unappreciated. These students are no longer fed the stylistic appetite that they have developed while growing up at Westside. As a result, they decide to leave and go to another church that has main services that look and sound far more like the youth ministry did. For the last ten years, almost every worship leading young adult that has grown up at Westside has left the church to attend and serve at another ministry in the area. This is the result of an age-segregated ministry and an age-segregated worship strategy.

The Future of This Ministry Problem

This thesis project has revealed that the source of the worship problem at Westside is the absence of a strategy of discipleship for biblical generational worship. This project has developed a solution to the problem by establishing a strategy for worship discipleship at Westside Baptist Church. This strategy includes a comprehensive evaluation of musical worship for every part of the ministry at Westside. The system of discipleship recognizes that worship must be taught and encouraged from the womb to the tomb. If worship is supposed to be a lifestyle, then the church must learn to communicate that message clearly and consistently. The strategy of discipleship for biblical generational worship will be developed and promoted by the senior pastor with the assistance of the minister of music. The senior pastor will teach this system of discipleship to the pastoral staff and invite them to fully embrace and champion this intentional plan for teaching the church about biblical worship. Each ministry will submit to a set of organizational boundaries regarding the practice of musical worship. The introduction of new songs must go through a process of approval through the music ministry to verify that the content is biblically honest and organizationally appropriate. This institutional standard will ensure that one ministry is not moving too far away from a balance in worship styles. This strategy will encourage generations to practice worship styles that are outside of their comfort zone. The senior adult ministry will be encouraged to worship some newer songs, while the younger generation will be encouraged to incorporate some older songs in worship. This will create a setting where neither the seniors nor youth are completely unengaged with the worship of the other. As a result, a new spirit of unity will be established among the generations. The church will learn what Scripture teaches about generational worship, and they will recognize the glory that God receives when children, parents, and grandparents worship side by side with a spirit of

unity. One may remember the unity of sound and spirit that occurs when the church comes together to sing a familiar hymn with no instruments. There is incredible beauty when a congregation passionately sings a song in unison, sounding like one voice. How much more powerful it is for one to see multiple generations worship together.

This strategy of worship will emphasize a spirit of humility in worship. The worshipers of the church should have a heart that desires to esteem others better than themselves, even when it comes to their worship preferences. The older generation must learn to value and appreciate the life and energy that the newer songs provide in worship. They must appreciate the fact that young people want to attend their services, and they should encourage their desire to engage in generational worship. Furthermore, the younger generation must learn to value and appreciate the way that God uses familiar songs from the past to remind His children of His faithfulness today. When a believer hears a song that God has used in their life years earlier, it can take them to a powerful moment of worship, recalling God's faithfulness then and now. The younger generation has a smaller bank of songs that God has used in the past, but they must be taught to acknowledge the significance of songs that God has used to bless his children in the past. In each of these contexts, the children of God must understand that worship requires a spirit of humility towards God and towards others.

In addition to a spirit of unity and a spirit of humility, the church must recognize a biblical example of worship that includes variety. It is the nature of every person to establish a comfort zone and then prefer to stay within that area of contentment. However, scripture teaches that in the musical arena of worship, there should be variety. At every age level, the church must be intentional to learn and develop a variety of musical styles. Even the scriptures give a variety of options. From both the Old and New Testament, there are various kinds of songs. The most

obvious endorsement of variety is the command to sing with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. This principle should be applied within the context of worship at Westside. The church should find a middle ground for balanced worship styles, but the leadership should also remind the church of different contexts of worship. The church should be reminded that God delights in worship from all around the world, and He created a variety of people to engage in a variety of styles in musical worship. It is healthy for the church to be reminded of God's plan of variety.

Finally, the future of this ministry problem will address the standard for how worship leaders are disciplined, developed, and engaged within the worship services at Westside. It will be important for the church to be sure that worship leaders agree and adhere to the institutional standard for generational worship. Someone should not be used in the leadership of youth worship if they would not be suitable to lead worship in the corporate service. There should not be worship leaders in any ministry who work against the overall philosophy of worship discipleship. Westside has experienced the struggles that come with rogue worship leaders who seek to lead according to their own preferences, and this can no longer be a part of the worship ministry at Westside. Young people will be trained and developed to lead with a heart that honors the Lord while also showing respect to every generation within the ministry. It is expected that as the philosophy of worship speaks about the value of the older generations of the church that the senior worshippers will fully support the direction of multigenerational worship.

Suggestions for Further Study

The next portion of this chapter will highlight additional resources for someone who is interested in further research about multigenerational worship. First and foremost, the Word of God must be the foundation for any appropriate biblical philosophy of worship. One does not

have to look far to find countless examples of generational substance within the scriptures. From the book of Genesis, one can read details about the lives of the generations from Adam to Noah, from Abraham to Joseph. One can study these generations and come up with a reasonable conclusion that these generations would worship together. In Genesis 22:5, Abraham explained that he and his son Isaac would go up to Mt. Moriah and worship together. Throughout the Pentateuch, the congregation of generational influence continues. The Old Testament offers entire books which are written from one generation to the next. Into the New Testament, the conversations of generations continue. The early church is instructed to allow the younger generations to serve with and learn from the older generations. Joel 1:3 says. "Tell your children about it, and let your children tell their children, and their children the next generation." The model of generational influence is prevalent throughout scripture, and it is a structure that should be reestablished at Westside Baptist Church.

Other additional sources on this subject can include books, blogs, podcasts, and online groups. There is a growing trend in many churches which have recognized the problems created within their church because of age-segregated worship ministries. The newest resources on worship ministry are championing this practice of inclusive unified worship in the church. The bibliography of this thesis project will provide a comprehensive list of books that address the subject of multi-generational worship. One of the highest recommendations that this project can offer is Mike Harland's book *Worship Essentials: Growing a Healthy Worship Ministry Without Starting a War!* Harland is very straightforward about the struggles that have developed in the church because of multiple isolated worship services based upon worship style preferences.

Another source of further research is the recommendation of conversations with leaders from other churches who are attempting to build and develop their own multi-generational

worship strategy. There are many churches and pastors mentioned in chapter four who are serious about multi-generational worship. These churches are eager to share how God is working in their ministry of worship.

Finally, the researcher recommends reaching out to a worship pastor who was able to develop a successful multi-generational worship ministry decades ago. Through Radiance Ministries, Ray Jones makes himself available to any church that is interested in pursuing a system of multigenerational worship discipleship within their ministry. Ray Jones has become known as a source of knowledge and passion concerning multigenerational worship in the church. He has a desire to use his experience to enhance worship ministries all over the world. Westside is currently beginning the process of scheduling Ray Jones to visit and spend a few days with our music staff, pastoral staff, and the volunteers in our worship ministry for the purpose of direction, encouragement, and inspiration as we pursue a strategy of discipleship for biblical multigenerational worship.

What Needs to Be Done Now?

The upcoming months will reveal the development and implementation of this new worship strategy for Westside. The Westside worship strategy will include a unified language about worship supported by scripture so that every age group is familiar with how Westside teaches its biblical philosophy of worship. This language will include a consistent plan of instruction about worship, which can be understood from the youngest to the oldest worshiper. In addition, there are a few key areas that will need to be developed furthering the application of these strategies. As a result, there is a level of weakness in this project, due to the lack of full application into the ministry. An example of this weakness is found in the details and

organization of the core values and themes listed in chapter three. These core values will be edited and polished upon their application to ministry. Another area of perceived weakness in this project is implementation of any expected timeline. This worship strategy began a year ago, near the beginning of this project, but it is difficult to estimate how long it will take before a successful point of measurement is determined. Another weakness in this project is the difficulty of dividing age segregated worship strategies in a church that is heavily segregated by program. It should be understood that this project is not against all age segregation in ministry. Some programs and methods require age segregation. However, those programs must still be very intentional and unified around the purpose and plan for ministry. The problem arises when age segregated worship is given complete freedom with no unified vision or biblical worship. Finally, an anticipated weakness of this project will be the impending pastoral leadership transition that will take place in the next few years at Westside. It is likely that Westside will have a new pastor in the next five years, and therefore, unless the new senior leader is in full agreement with this generational strategy, some changes may take place in regard to the future of these strategies. This project will be improved over time as clarity is achieved pertaining to the timing of transition both in worship and in church leadership.

Ideally, the senior pastor and the minister of music will work together to establish the values and terminologies of worship. During this phase of collaboration, the two will plan a preaching series on worship that the pastor will take the congregation through to introduce this renewed focus on biblical worship. This biblical worship series will be the opportune time for the pastor to preach on unity in worship, humility in worship, and variety in worship. This teaching series will also be planned with song sets that coincide with the teaching for that week. After the collaboration for the preaching series on biblical worship, the pastor and minister of music will

establish an ideal schedule for communicating these values to the congregation on a regular basis.

The senior pastor and minister of music will work together to determine an institutional standard for healthy boundaries for each ministry at Westside. For example, in the past, the youth ministry has been led by a youth band who effectively lead themselves in every way with no supervision. In the past, these students have created the orders of services, selected which new songs the students will learn, what stage design and lighting they prefer, and they have even selected what outside band will be invited to youth events and summer camp. This was an area where the opportunity for discipleship and mentorship was neglected, and as a result, these students took the lead in developing whatever kind of student worship ministry that they preferred. Boundaries are needed to keep a spirit of unity and balance within any ministry. Those boundaries will be established and discussed with the ministry leaders of each area for conversation and modifications.

Finally, the worship ministry of Westside will review its systems for training and developing worship leaders. The staff will create a method of mentorship that includes goals, expectations, and stages of leadership for worship leaders in training. The worship ministry will provide opportunities for these trainees to lead worship in a corporate setting. As young people are mentored and developed with this new philosophy of biblical worship, it is believed that they will have a new spirit of respect and appreciation for the way that worship is prepared and executed at Westside. The goal of this system of worship leader training is that Westside will develop many quality worship leaders who can both continue to serve in the ministry at Westside and go out and serve in other churches and ministries all around the world.

Finally, an additional goal of this project is the potential for transferability of these strategies within other ministries that are facing the same struggles in worship. The biblical applications of these worship values and strategies should be understood and applied in every ministry. Any church that has a testimony of division among generational worshipers can apply these values to attain a more unified spirit of worship within their church. These truths and practices are relevant in small and large churches. These principles can resolve age segregated worship wars in rural churches or big city churches. Each church must understand and disciple their worshippers to remember that worship is a lifestyle, not a music style. Each church must disciple all ages to understand the value of new and old music, while honoring both young and old believers.

In conclusion, the enemy has used worship to divide the church for far too long. The church must be disciplined through a biblical understanding of God's plan for worship. The future of Westside Baptist Church will consist of a worship discipleship strategy that teaches every generation to value the worship inclinations of other generations and ultimately to esteem other generations better than their own. Westside will have a multigenerational worship strategy that honors every generation simultaneously. This strategy of multigenerational worship will teach the older generations of the church to value the life and energy of new songs while teaching the younger generation to value the memories that are associated with how God has used the older songs in the past. This kind of spirit will nurture a culture of servant worshipers eager to engage in worship that will exalt Christ and unify the church as they engage in authentic biblical worship. It is the burden and passion of this researcher to accomplish this vision of unity in worship for every generation at Westside.

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