

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATED CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES FOR  
IMPROVING INTER-GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN INDIAN  
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

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## ABSTRACT

# EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATED CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES FOR IMPROVING INTER-GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

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The Indian churches in the United States consist of mostly two groups of people, namely, those who migrated directly from India known as the first generation, and those who are born and brought up in the United States, otherwise known as the second generation. The first generation keeps many traditions, practices, and ideologies they brought from their country of origin. They assume that these are superior to most of the other cultures, and hence need to be preserved by future generations. The second generation does not think much about the first generation's cultural and ethnic norms and are not willing to give such prominence to their prerogatives. Since they were born into a different cultural scenario and raised in a postmodern society, these traditions and ideologies of their parents' generation do not seem to have contemporary relevance in their day-to-day lives. Therefore, the silent encounters, otherwise called inter-generational conflicts, occurring between these two groups culminate in the exodus of the

younger generation from “their home churches and possibly from the Christian faith”<sup>1</sup> itself.

The thesis examines how participation in integrated Christian activities affects inter-generational relationships in the first and second generation of the Indian Pentecostal Churches. The project also identifies the dynamics of inter-generational relationships in order to build healthy families, because such families will be the basic units for the existence of healthy churches and societies.

In reference to the aforementioned thesis, the project provided an incredible opportunity for both groups to interact together and bring forth better solutions for healthier inter-generational relationships. It is evident that even though all churches are very much concerned about this phenomenon, many have not been able to do much in addressing the problem with plans for corrective actions. Therefore, the evaluation and research opened the way for greater discussion between both generations. Moreover, the researcher is confident that it will positively touch the generations to come.

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<sup>1</sup>Helen Lee, “*Silent Exodus: Can the East Asian church in America reverse the flight of its next generation?*,” Christianity Today, No.9, Vol. 40 (August 1996), 50.

*I dedicate this thesis to the Almighty God and to the Indian Christian Diaspora all over  
the world*

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## INTRODUCTION

“Silent Exodus” is a phrase that makes immigrant churches contemplate an ongoing challenge, which deeply affects their survival and existence. ‘Silent’ and ‘exodus’ are two familiar words which in themselves do not have any negative impact. However, when these two words come together, they make a much stronger wave in the Christian churches especially among the immigrant churches. In general, the word ‘Silent’ gives the connotation of something that is not expressed directly and the word ‘exodus’ poignantly speaks about exit. In a way its outcome deeply affects the leadership as well as community of faith as a whole. Silent exodus of generations from the church or faith itself is one of the major challenges of the age.

For the last twenty five plus years of my life I have been in Christian ministry in different capacities such as pastoring, teaching, preaching, church planting, and leadership training in different parts of India, the Middle East and the United States of America. Of these, the last nine years of my ministry as a senior pastor in North American Indian churches, particularly in Chicago, Dallas and currently in New York, have given me an enormous amount of diagnostic experiences about the felt needs of the first and second generations of Indians living in the United States.

As a pastor who ministers mainly among the Indian community, I have witnessed a myriad of ethnic and cultural challenges among the Indian Pentecostals who live



outside of their native India. Indian people have more than sixty years of history in the United States. The demographics of American Indian churches consist of two groups of people, namely, those who migrated directly from Kerala known as the first generation, and those who are born and brought up in the United States, otherwise known as the second generation. The first generation keeps many traditions, practices, and ideologies they brought from their country of origin. They assume that these are superior to most of the other cultures, and hence need to be preserved by future generations.

The second generation does not think much about the first generation's cultural and ethnic norms and are not willing to give such prominence to their prerogatives. Since they were born into a different cultural scenario and raised in a postmodern society, these traditions and ideologies of their parents' generation do not seem to have contemporary relevance in their day-to-day lives. Therefore, the silent encounters, otherwise called inter-generational conflicts occurring between these two groups culminate in the exodus of the younger generation from their home churches, and possibly from the Christian faith itself. Even though all churches are very much concerned about this phenomenon, many have not been able to do much in addressing the problem with proper plans of corrective actions.

Why is it important to address the issue of inter-generational relationships? Federal census projections report that Asian immigrants are one of the nation's fastest-growing groups. According to the US Census update in April 2010, the total U.S. population was 308.7 million out of which 14.7 million or 4.8% were Asian alone. At present the Indian Pentecostal community has more than 150 local churches across the United States. Among the Indian Pentecostal community, just like all other ethnic groups,

the relationship issues between the first and second generation have led to the “Silent Exodus.”

As an immigrant pastor from India, I have experienced generational challenges existing in this country and know the importance of acquiring knowledge to bridge the gap between two generations, instead of building a church that serves only a particular generation, we must build a “God designed church”<sup>1</sup> for the community that encompasses all generations. The last nine years of ministry experience in this country has enabled me to understand the confusions and chaos existing between the two generations. In my research, I have not come across much study in this field and I am therefore trying to find facts and figures related to the subject matter as part of a relatively pioneering project.

I have examined four ongoing challenges related to marriage, church, parenting and worldview among the first and second-generation members of Indian Pentecostal churches. It is my hypothesis that ‘participation in integrated Christian activities can have a positive impact on inter-generational relationships in the first and second generations of the Indian Pentecostal Churches.’ In my efforts to test my hypothesis, I investigated some of the helpful and non-helpful areas in improving intergenerational relationships and, identified some solutions to bridge the gap between intergenerational relationships within the Indian Pentecostal community.

I do not claim that mine is a complete and comprehensive conclusion about the relevant issue; rather, I believe that mine is a pioneering effort to make a dent in the

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<sup>1</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Changing Church* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 2004), 67.

mounting challenge that the community faces. However, it will shed some light upon the inter-generational issues and which will pave the way for future study in this area.

CHAPTER 1  
INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS  
CHALLENGES

**The India Pentecostal Church of God**

The Indian Pentecostal Church of God, IPC,<sup>1</sup> is the largest indigenous, independent Pentecostal denomination in India. “The Christian movement in India was pioneered by the disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thomas the Apostle, who traveled outside the Roman Empire to preach the Gospel, traveling as far as India.”<sup>2</sup> And it is believed that the Indian Christian churches were started in the first century itself. It is assumed that a few churches were founded by him in the southern part of India, particularly in Kerala. However, the growth of the Christian movement was considerably slow for the next twenty centuries. All through these centuries, missionaries from different parts of the world, particularly from Europe and America, visited India and labored for the propagation of the gospel and furtherance of the kingdom of God in a Hindu-dominated, idol worshipping Indian soil.

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<sup>1</sup> IPC is the abbreviated form of the title “*Indian Pentecostal Church of God.*”

<sup>2</sup> A.E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas; An inquiry with a critical analysis of the Acta Thomae* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press LLC, 1905), 20.

During the first part of the twentieth century a great revival broke out in Central Travancore, Kerala, India, among the traditional Christian churches. As a result of the movement of the Holy Spirit, several congregations and prayer fellowships emerged under various independent leaderships in Kerala. Consequently, the origin of the Indian Pentecostal Church of God was one of the outcomes of this revival that became a pivotal point in the history of the Christian churches in India.

The chief architect of IPC was Pastor K.E. Abraham, a powerful preacher and writer. He received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1923. Along with him, Apostle P. M. Samuel, Pastor K.C. Cherian, Pastor P.T. Chacko, Pastor K.C. Oommen, Pastor P.T. Mathew and many others who were filled with the Holy Spirit also labored with great zeal for the expansion of the kingdom of God. Gradually, these independent leaders formed a fellowship and in 1935 The Indian Pentecostal Church of God was registered as a Religious Society at Eluru, Andhra Pradesh. The First President was Apostle P.M. Samuel with administrative headquarters at Hebron, Kumbanadu, Kerala, India. Thereafter, the IPC made remarkable progress in founding churches and taking the gospel to different parts of Kerala as well as other states of India.

By 1950, IPC became one of the leading Pentecostal denominations in South India. Today, with more than 7000 congregations, IPC has churches in all the major continents of the earth. The vision of the native leaders and their hard work can be primarily attributed to the growth of the IPC. The local churches belonging to this movement span the length and breadth of India as well as countries outside India, especially in North America, the Middle East, Europe and Australia. The local churches

under IPC by origin, administration, and practices are truly indigenous and are led by local ministers and leaders.

### **Indian Pentecostal Community in the United States**

America is a land of immigrants. It consists of different people groups from all over the world. Pew Research studies show that the “Asian American Christians are growing in influence and audience. The estimated number of Asian American Churches in the United States is 7123.”<sup>3</sup> Indian people groups started to migrate to America around 1900 onwards. “Sikhs<sup>4</sup> were one of the first groups of Indians to enter the United States as migrant workers in California in the early 1900s.”<sup>5</sup> South Indian migration, especially those of the Keralites,<sup>6</sup> began around the 1940s. Certainly, the fact that the United States was one of the most developed countries in the world served as a huge attraction for migrants for the fulfillment of their highest dreams and ambitions. However, it is also important to acknowledge the virtues as well as challenges they and their generations face just because of the migration. As Dr. Thomas Kulanjiyil, a professor who works among the Indian Immigrant Population in the United States writes, “Whether it’s a chosen path or a forced decision, immigration to a foreign land can have a profound

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<sup>3</sup> Helen Lee, “*Silent No More*,” *Christianity Today*, October 2014, Vol. 58, No. 8, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Sikhs are the group of people who mainly live in the Indian state of Punjab and they follow the religious rules of Guru Nanak.

<sup>5</sup> Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano, Nydia Garcia-Preto, eds, *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, 3rd eds (New York: The Gilford Press, 2005), 385.

<sup>6</sup> Kerala is one of the southern states of India where people mainly speak Malayalam as their primary language.

effect on individuals and families.”<sup>7</sup> This is true concerning the Indian Pentecostal community. At present, the Indian Pentecostal church has more than 150 local congregations across the United States. Even though the local IPC churches in the United States have their own independent registrations, they teach and follow the articles of faith of IPC general as the doctrinal standard.

### **Inter-Generational Challenges**

The first decade of the twenty-first century has witnessed remarkable changes in human history because of many innovations and progress in technology. Even though the major leaps in these areas are to be perceived in a positive way, they also came with a heavy price tag. Many social norms and cultural paradigms have been turned around to an immeasurable degree, and several have taken a downward trend and ended up in a low level. Churches and Christian communities are struggling to keep their faith with a biblical approach and retain both the young and old generations together with the same level of devotion and loyalty to God. Hence, the early years of the twenty-first century have shown the Indian Christian Community that it is time to wake up... time to wake up and build a generation that stands firm amidst the tidal waves of cultural challenges... time to wake up and act appropriately. The church is fast losing a younger generation to this time of transition who profess and practice the relative morality that has engulfed the North American society. Time to wake up and raise young leaders that will boldly profess their faith, show integrity amidst adversity and stay strong for the Lord even if it is not the popular norm.

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Thomas Kulanjiyil and Dr. T.V. Thomas, eds, *Caring for the Asian Soul* (Bangalore, India: Primalogue Publishing House, 2010), 9.

In the midst of these chaotic times, the Indian Christian communities who are settled in North America have been facing some unprecedented challenges in balancing the contemporary customs and mores of North American culture with the age-old traditions of Indian culture in order to accommodate both the young and old. Frenzy struggling to keep a balance between these two generations, the biblical principles that underlie concepts such as marriage, church, parenting, and Christian worldview have been frequently compromised. In other words, instead of approaching the issues on a biblical platform, subjective compromises have been made by many churches. Many times, even though it has come to the attention of Church leadership that many tensions exist between the younger and the older generations about the biblical basis for preserving the integrity of such fundamental institutions, efforts to address them objectively have not been undertaken in an organized manner.

Thus, an important question is: are ethnic and/or cultural or generational issues relevant in congregational conflict? As a pastor who ministers mainly among the Indian community, the writer has witnessed many ethnic and cultural issues as he has tried to introduce attempts at conflict resolution.

The congregants of the Indian Pentecostal churches who belong to the first generation have been facing a huge dilemma as to whether to integrate into the society into which they migrated or to stay separate. Unquestionably integrating into a new culture would require many sacrifices along the way and perhaps produce strong cultural dislocations, even possibly generating feelings of loneliness or isolation. Monica McGoldrick writes, “India’s long history of survival has been due largely to its people’s



tolerance of diversity and their ability to integrate the best from the host culture.”<sup>8</sup> But it has to be evaluated how much the first generation immigrants in American Indian communities have been able to adapt to the good qualities of the new nation where they live. When we go through the thought provoking ideas of Lynda Spence and Heidi Liss Radunovich, in their article, *Developing Intergenerational Relationships*, these issues become so relevant. They write, “when people are raised in different time periods, their values and perceptions of the world can be quite different, and this can lead to difficulties in understanding one another. Because of this gap in understanding between generations, it’s important to find links between younger and older generations.”<sup>9</sup>

The ethnocentric mindset of the first generation Indians is one of the major causes of disharmony that many families and even the churches face. W. G Sumner defined ethnocentrism as

A technical term for the world view which holds that one group lies at the center of everything, and that all other groups are scaled and rated with reference to one’s own. Therefore, each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders.<sup>10</sup>

Ethnocentrically oriented thinking compels them to keep away from certain relatively adaptable realities.

Perhaps, the cultural realm is a major battlefield. The reasons for the conflicts can be identified in different areas such as the family, dress, hairstyle and food, etc.

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<sup>8</sup> Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano, Nydia Garcia-Preto, eds, *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), 378.

<sup>9</sup> Lynda Spence & Heidi Liss Radunovich. *Developing Intergenerational Relationship*, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy1007> (Accessed on October 7, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> W.B. Sumner, *Folkways* (Lexington, MA: Guinn and Company, 1960), 15.

According to McGoldrick the word for this phenomena is “acculturation,” which is simply a way of saying that when a previous and current cultural clash, we find a way to meet the physical, psychological and attitudinal changes that result.<sup>11</sup> “Acculturation explains the process of cultural and psychological change that results following meeting between cultures.”<sup>12</sup>

Among the Indian community, family setup mainly works based on relationships. Families have an elaborate network of relationships. Having grandparents, parents and children living together in the same house creates remarkable bonds because it almost forces everyone to relate everyone else. These relationships, however, in the context of challenges faced by the immigrant community, sometimes produce negative outcomes. Many times parents are not willing to give independence to their children even though they are old enough to take care their own life and work. Until they reach a level of “status, age, and maturity,” they are not allowed to participate in the decision making process of the house. They are expected to live at house at least until their marriage. Wayne E. Oates points out the danger of such dependency in his book *Behind the Masks*: “Failures of human nature in parenting, teaching, and vocational settings all produce people who, after the age eighteen or twenty, are still as dependent as they were at three, four or five.”<sup>13</sup> Even though dating is a very important part of the American society, the

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<sup>11</sup> Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano, Nydia Garcia-Preto, eds, *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), 385.

<sup>12</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acculturation> (Accessed on October 2, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> Wayne E. Oates, *Behind the Masks* (Louisville, Kentucky: the Westminster Press, 1987), 18.

second generation Indian youth struggle with this issue. Parents may see it as a taboo, while the young person sees it as a part of his /her social life. Moreover, the first generation often believes in the arranged marriage, while the second generation thinks about a partner based on his or her own choice.

All these areas of conflicts tend to develop and foster tensions within Indian immigrant homes, within two-generation families, and within their church. Its waves surround the community as a whole. Dr. Thomas Idiculla writes in his book *Strangers in a Foreign Land* that “Indian (Keralite) Christians come to this country with a rich spiritual heritage. They also come with certain preconceived notions and perceptions. Consequently, they experience significant challenges in the spiritual, social, and cultural milieu of the United States.”<sup>14</sup> Hence, conflict resolution efforts in these areas are somewhat of a hectic and risky job. The “leader” or the “person helping resolve the conflict” will need to satisfy all groups and ages of people without hurting them. Ministering to a people group who carry cultural and ethnic preconceptions needs much grace and care. The plight of the Indian Pentecostal Churches in the United States in relation to intergenerational issues is that. It is similar to a box filled with fragile materials, bearing a label which reads “breakable – handle with care”. In summary, ethnic and cultural issues are hence major factors in generational conflict resolution with Indian families.

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. Thomas Idiculla, *Strangers in a Foreign Land* (Waltham, MA: Agape Partners International, 2012), 25.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PORTRAIT OF THE SUBJECT MATTER

It is the splendor of the Bible that it touches every aspect of human life. The Book of Psalms has many components that bring such aspects to light for the common reader. Psalms 127 and 128<sup>1</sup> give us clear depictions of God’s design of an ideal and successful family and suggest that through such families, a resilient community of faith is established. A beautiful home is built with divine values and it accommodates both generations.

Psalms 127:1 states: “Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” The Psalmist mainly speaks about the “building” as well as “shielding” of a sturdy and God fearing family. Building is a painstaking effort, which needs careful attention and hard work. The Psalmist portrays a God who works and builds and He expects the same from His people. Construction may take much toil but the blessing of God will make it easier to achieve. God has called us to build our lives, our homes, our community and the community of faith. Only if construction and protection go together will proper existence take place.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptural quotations in this chapter are taken from the English Standard Version.

The psalmist depicts the children or the next generation as wealth or treasure. He says that it is a reward for the warrior, who here is the parent, and the reward comes from the Lord. Many times children are seen as liabilities rather than assets. However, the Bible calls children a family's wealth. What we need to do with the children that God has given in the family, or in the family of faith, is to accept them and then invest in them.

“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.”<sup>2</sup>

Generations are the hope and promise of the community. As Warren W. Wiersbe writes in his Bible Exposition Commentary,

It does no good to build and guard our houses and cities if there are no future generations to inherit them and keep the family, city, and nation going...Children are precious-a heritage- and make the home a treasury. But they are also useful-like fruit and arrows- and make the home a garden and an armory. If we do not raise our children to know and love the truth, who will plant the seeds of truth and fight the battles against lies and evil in the years to come?... It is in the family that we preserve the best of the past and invest in the future. Every baby born is God's vote for the future of humankind and our opportunity to help make some new beginnings. ...But all adults can value the children, pray for them, be good example to them, and see that they are protected and cared for and encouraged in their spiritual upbringing.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly the psalmist reminds us that both parents as well children have certain duties and privileges in terms of a healthy home and a dynamic community. “If parents, teachers, and church leaders do not courageously maintain the walls and guard against the

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<sup>2</sup> Psalms 127:3-5.

<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary; Wisdom and Poetry* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Cook Communications Ministries, 2003), 346,347.

enemy, our efforts will be in vain.”<sup>4</sup> Pulpit commentary narrates this portion as, “The teaching is enforced by an example. The prosperity, alike of states and of individuals, depends on nothing so much as on an abundant progeny of children.”<sup>5</sup>

We will spend all our energy and time protecting our material wealth. In the same manner, we need to understand that the same has to be done with the next generation who we consider as wealth or treasure. Not only should we invest our wealth for a better future, but also for keeping the next generation strongly rooted in God’s principles. Such families and churches will enjoy dividends from the investment in the future. Those who view children as a disturbance or nuisance should instead see them as an opportunity to shape the future. Children must never be considered as an inconvenience when God values them so highly.

Matthew Henry’s comments on these verses give a clear picture of a godly family that consists of parents and children and their value as the integral part of a society.

That they are a good gift, and a great support and defense to a family: As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, who knows how to use them for his own safety and advantage, so are children of the youth, that is, children born to their parents when they are young, which are the strongest and most healthful children, and are grown up to serve them by the time they need their service; or, rather, children who are themselves young; they are instruments of much good to their parents and families, which may fortify themselves with them against their enemies. The family that has a large stock of children is like a quiver full of arrows, of different sizes we may suppose, but all of use one time or other; children of different capacities and inclinations may be several ways serviceable to the family.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary; Wisdom and Poetry* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Cook Communications Ministries, 2003), 346.

<sup>5</sup> H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, eds, *Pulpit Commentary*, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/pulpit/pslams/127.htm> (Accessed March 4, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary: Job to Solomon*, Vol.3 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 602.

The Psalmist interprets the second generation as arrows in the hands of the warrior, “ready winged with duty and love to fly to the mark; polished and keen to grace and maintain the cause of their parents, to defend them from hostile invasions, and instantly to repel every assailant.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, they must be sharpened with God’s Word. They must not only be sharpened but they must be pointed to a target which is the ultimate aim of their life. That aim for every Christian home is Jesus. During this process, the bow is stretched. Unless it is stretched, the arrow cannot reach its target through its trajectory. The stretching process involves sacrifice, pain, stress and tension. The combination of the arrow and the bow is a collective work. They compliment each other and ultimately, the arrow is let go of the bow when the time comes. The bow should never be stretched to the point of it breaking or overstretched to the point of the arrow missing its target. The complimenting and supplementing roles that the bow and arrow play in accomplishing the ultimate goal must be blended with finesse and artistry. The Kingdom Target must be the focus as the first and second generation adopts such a position of coexistence.

Again, in Psalm 128:3, we read: “Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.”<sup>8</sup> The Psalmist compares the children to olive plants. “The picture is that of the young olive trees

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<sup>7</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Benson Commentary*, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/benson/pslams/127.htm> (Accessed March 4, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Psalms 128:3.

springing up round the parent stem, fresh and full of promise. The evergreen olive is an emblem of vitality and vigor.”<sup>9</sup> Olive is one of the most common and precious trees in Israel. In almost every olive tree there will be as many as ten or more new tree sprouts growing up out of the root system around the tree. “The comparison of children to the healthy young shoots of a tree is, of course, common to all poetry, being indeed latent in such expressions as “scion of a noble house.”<sup>10</sup>

Leslie Rose writes in her article, *The Life Span of Olive Trees*

Olive trees have been cultivated by humans for thousands of years... Provided with the appropriate growing conditions, this tree can survive in relative neglect for hundreds of years. While olive trees may live to be as old as 1,500 years, the average lifespan is 500 years. Olive trees thrive in well-draining, sandy soil. They need full sun, a long, hot growing season and a winter of at least three months with temperatures ranging from 35 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Grown in these conditions, olive trees will begin producing olives when 5 or 6 years old. Olive production increases with time, and will become most efficient when the tree reaches 40 or 50 years old.<sup>11</sup>

The parent olive tree hovers over the little trees that grow at its root so that the little ones are protected from the sun, rain and other occurrences. After some years, the little olive plants that sprouted up around the parent tree start to produce fruits and grow and start to support the old tree from falling. It is expected that the second generation are supportive and helpful to the first generation in their old age or in their times of need.

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<sup>9</sup> H. C. G. Moule, *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/128-3.htm> (Accessed March 4, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> C. J. Ellicott, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/psalms/128-3.htm> (Accessed March 4, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Leslie Rose, *The Life Span of Olive Trees*, <http://homeguides.sfgate.com/life-span-olive-trees-60048.html> (Accessed March 4, 2015).



Matthew Henry states, “It is pleasant to parents who have a table spread, though but with ordinary fare, to see their children round about it, to have many children, enough to surround it, and those with them, and not scattered, or the parents forced from them.”<sup>12</sup>

The following illustration of William M. Thomson in his book, *The Land and the Book* gives a clear spiritual meaning of olive tree comparison.

To what particular circumstance does David refer in the 128th Psalm, where he says, Thy children shall be like olive plants round about thy table? Follow me into the grove, and I will show you what may have suggested the comparison. Here we have lilt upon a beautiful illustration. This aged and decayed tree is surrounded, as you see, by several young and thrifty shoots, which spring from the root of the venerable parent. They seem to uphold, protect, and embrace it. We may even fancy that they now bear that load of fruit which would otherwise be demanded of the feeble parent. Thus do good and affectionate children gather round the table of the righteous. Each contributes something to the common wealth and welfare of the whole - a beautiful sight, with which may God refresh the eyes of every friend of mine.<sup>13</sup>

The analogy of children being "*like olive plants all around your table*" would assume that they would be abundant, energetic, and dutifully responsive to the parents. The olive plants or the saplings at that age are “bendable”. If one tries to bend them after they become trees, they will break. The analogy is beautifully portrayed complimenting the one about the arrows. The plants are to be nurtured, shaped, and developed at a time when the bending can be done without breaking so that the plants produce olives to produce oil for the future. This profound statement is a comforting and faithful promise

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary, Job to Solomon*, Vol.3 (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 603.

<sup>13</sup> William M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, Vol.1 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858), 76, 77.

from the Lord. Significantly, olive branches are considered worldwide as the symbol of peace as well.

A healthy family would be sacrificial enough to follow the divine elements such as love, service, honesty, integrity, and commitment in all its dealings. These will help to build strong and healthy relationships amongst as well as between the families of the extended church family. The Apostle Paul gives a beautiful portrayal of love in his epistle to the Corinthian church<sup>14</sup> in which he presents fifteen characteristics that are essential for the peaceful coexistence of families and communities. Love and encouragement will generate more positive results than rebuke can ever do.

Out of the fifteen characteristics, the last four are more powerful and relevant to the subject matter. They are

Love bears all things.  
Love believes all things.  
Love hopes all things.  
Love endures all things.<sup>15</sup>

What a fabulous portrayal of a godly family that alienates negativism and endorses positivism in the family. Progressively the family sees its plenteousness in its relationships, and how pragmatically does Paul narrate the character and qualities of the term “love.” Here the element is love, which is always unconditional. The love that Paul has been speaking about does not derive from humanity, but instead from God. No doubt he is drawing a gorgeous picture of a person filled with divine love, the love of Jesus.

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<sup>14</sup> 1Corinthians 13:4-7.

<sup>15</sup> 1Corinthiana 13:7.

Love is the greatest force on the earth for the sustenance of godly families.

Without a strong foundation no structure can exist. In other words, the generations that build on strong divine love would exist even in the midst of the waves and winds of the time. However, love will remain as a simple four-letter word if it does not have practical application. Love becomes meaningful when it takes action. In short, the above-mentioned characteristics are inevitable to maintain a healthy and spiritual relationship between different generations. It clearly helps one to think not of oneself, but of others because love will eliminate pride and selfishness and replenish it with a desire to encourage others. A person who knows the meaning of love will behave in a manner to honor others at all times.

Bear, believe, hope and endure- these are some of the most incredible practical applications of faith one should have in life. Here the word “bear” means share the portion. “Believe” means understand and accommodate. “Hope” speaks about the positive expectation and finally “Endure” supports tolerance even in negative circumstances. William Barclay gives a striking example from the life of the English educator Thomas Arnold<sup>16</sup> about how negative circumstances can be transformed into progressive and effective outcomes. Barclay points out the story based on 1Corinthians 13:7 “Love bears, believes, hopes, endures- all things.”

When Arnold became headmaster of Rugby he instituted a completely new way of doing things. Before him, school had been a terror and a tyranny. Arnold called the boys together and told them that there was going to be much more liberty and much less flogging. "You are free," he said, "but you are responsible--you are

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<sup>16</sup> The English educator Thomas Arnold (1795-1842) was a headmaster of Rugby School, and through his efforts it became the model for other English public schools and for boarding schools throughout the Western world.

gentlemen. I intend to leave you much to yourselves, and put you upon your honour, because I believe that if you are guarded and watched and spied upon, you will grow up knowing only the fruits of servile fear; and when your liberty is finally given you, as it must be some day, you will not know how to use it."

The boys found it difficult to believe. When they were brought before him they continued to make the old excuses and to tell the old lies.

"Boys," he said, "if you say so, it must be true--I believe your word."

The result was that there came a time in Rugby when boys said, "It is a shame to tell Arnold a lie--he always believes you."

He believed in them and he made them what he believed them to be. Love ennobles even the ignoble by believing the best.<sup>17</sup>

All generations have their own strengths and weaknesses as common to the human kind. Considering oneself more righteous than others will pave the way for disrespect and distrust.

"Love bears, i.e. either covers or endures...Love hopes, not with unreasoning optimism, but in expecting ultimate triumph by the grace of God. Love endures, i.e. in an active positive sense."<sup>18</sup>

Love is willing to bear the faults and imperfections of others. The two words "all things," are worth noticeable as love is a no holds barred action. The meaning must be "as far as it can consistently or lawfully be done."<sup>19</sup> If both the first and second generations will apply the true meaning of these four truths in their life, irrespective of

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<sup>17</sup> William Barclay, *The Daily Bible Study: The Letters to the Corinthians* (Bangalore, India: Theological Publications in India, 2001), 123, 124.

<sup>18</sup> D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer, Eds, *New Bible Commentary: third edition* (Secunderabad, India: Operation Mobilisation India, 1993), 1068.

<sup>19</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes Notes on the Old and New Testaments*, [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1 Corinthians/13.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_Corinthians/13.htm) (Accessed March 4, 2015).

their cultural differences, it will make a tremendous impact upon their families and communities as well.

In terms of intergenerational relationships, the aspect of love is a powerful tool to assist both generations even though the relationship between the two generations have had its limitations. Sometimes people would view all of these qualities as weakness to those who practice them. However, according to Paul, these are the signs of strength in healthy families and communities. It facilitates none to be victims but all to be victors.

In a family, both generations are valuable and have something to contribute to each other for their existence and welfare. As Leslie Verghese, LCSW writes in his article published in *Strangers in a Foreign Land*,

God's standards of holiness transcend cultures, traditions, languages, nations, castes and all other barriers that man has created. Years will go by, but God's standards remain the same. We must continue to impart them to our children so that they don't place culture over Christ or Christ over culture, but they will see Christ in culture.<sup>20</sup>

If the older generation could realize the possible damage that could happen in their families and relationships, the remedy would be easier. At the same, the younger generation should realize and accept the older generation's desire to make home blessed and beautiful. The conflicts may or may not be the fault of either generation. However, both groups must realize that this is not the time to find fault with, or accuse each other. Act speedily and carefully. What should our community do to act appropriately in these perilous times? The Book of Esther contains an emphatic phrase "*for such a time as*

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<sup>20</sup> Leslie Verghese, MSW, LCSW, *Strangers In a Foreign Land* (Waltham, MA: Agape Partners International, 2012), 158.

*this.* <sup>21</sup> Mordecai goes to Esther and reminds her that she is strategically placed in a position of authority in the pivotal moment when the future of Israelites was to be decided.

Furthermore, if the first generation develops a clear biblical vision; obey the revealed truth; follow the directions from God's word; are available for the second generation; communicates openly; establishes rules with relationship; teaches, trains, models and impresses; provides unconditional love, support and care; prays with and for them, then the inter-generational relationships will be strengthened in the community. "*A threefold cord is not quickly broken.*"<sup>22</sup> God should be considered as the first cord and both generations the remaining two equally responsible cords where the relationship between generations will be modeled and resilient.

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<sup>21</sup> Esther 4:14.

<sup>22</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:12 (English Standard Version).

CHAPTER 3  
DEFINING INTER-GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE FIRST  
AND SECOND-GENERATION MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN PENTECOSTAL  
CHURCHES

**Challenges in the other Contemporary Asian Communities: An Evaluation of  
the Article “*Silent Exodus*”**

Changes are an inevitable part of life. Changes in place, environment, people, lifestyle, expectations and other factors can naturally have an effect on people’s thoughts and behavior. Issues can arise when we don’t deal with changes in a positive manner. While culture and language are an important part of one’s own heritage, they should not take focus away from what’s important in the big scheme of things—their Christian faith. Helen Lee wrote a beautiful article in “*Christianity Today*,” entitled “*Silent exodus.*”<sup>1</sup> It is one of the most profound articles of its kind, dealing with the inter-generational crisis existing among the Asian community in the United States. Even though it was written close to two decades ago, the clearly narrated scholarly findings are still relevant in the Asian American community. Lee begins her article:

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Lee, “*Silent Exodus: Can the East Asian church in America reverse the flight of its next generation?*,” *Christianity Today*, No.9, Vol. 40 (August 1996), 50-53.

Asian churches in the United States are discovering that despite their spectacular growth they are simultaneously losing their children. At an alarming rate, many young believers who have grown up in these Asian congregations are now choosing to leave not only their home churches, but possibly their Christian faith as well.<sup>2</sup>

She continues:

The surge in Asian immigration led to an explosion of new churches. But the flip side of this success story has been a silent exodus of church-raised young people who find their immigrant churches irrelevant, culturally stiffing, and ill equipped to develop them spiritually for life in the multicultural 1990s. Many in younger generations either immigrated with their parents at a very early age or were born in the United States, placing them in a stressful bicultural context of balancing the oft-conflicting Asian parental and American cultural influences.<sup>3</sup>

According to the article, Allen Thompson<sup>4</sup> indicates that, “The second generation is being lost. They are the mission field we need to focus on.”<sup>5</sup> The important question we need to address is “why have the young people left church altogether?” Have they also left their faith? “As a church, are we working enough to have the younger generation stay in the Christian faith? Who should take on the responsibility of keeping them in their Christian faith?”

In the article, John Lee talks about how, as a young Korean Christian, he felt, “church was more for my parents. There wasn’t a lot for us in terms of learning about the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>4</sup> Allen Thompson, coordinator for multicultural church planting in the Presbyterian Church of America.

<sup>5</sup> Lee, *Silent Exodus*, 50.



Bible and Christianity.”<sup>6</sup> He emphasizes the lack of English sermon or children’s program. This might be a little more common than we would like to accept.

Many immigrant churches, during the last several years, anticipating the language problems of the different generations, have been trying to take on a dual role of serving the first generation Christians, while also attempting to serve the second generation. The question is how successful are they in taking on this dual role? More congregations have sermons in English on a regular basis, which is helpful, because of language issues, but is it enough?

While services conducted in both languages might work for those who are bilingual, I feel this option will not be a true solution for those who are not fully comfortable with both languages. Either group might pay attention only when the program is in a language they understand. They might be fully tuned out during the rest of the service, which can have a negative impact on the spiritual benefits we hope to achieve during a church service. Hence I doubt that this option is truly beneficial, if our ultimate goal is to develop Christians with a strong foundation.

Of the different methods the article mentions, as ways to end the exodus of the second generation from the church, the one thing that might be more effective would be to develop a “church within a church.”<sup>7</sup> This method would definitely provide the desired outcome for both groups. One of the issues our community struggles with, when

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 52.

new churches are formed by non-traditionalists, is our perspective on having multi-ethnic members. Many doubt the impact a mixed group might have on existing members and the effect on their children.

According to Charles Kim, a youth coordinator, “kids don’t own the faith. They come to church because they are forced to.”<sup>8</sup> This may be true to some extent in our community as well. Generally, kids attend church for different reasons as they go through different stages in life. While church might have been a place where they were forced to go, or where they fostered friendships, as friends start to move away, if the young people are not attending church for other spiritual reasons as well, then we haven’t fully developed them spiritually.

By the time children get older and start attending either high school or college, if they haven’t acquired a strong Christian foundation, then we risk having them leave the Christian faith. The responsibility, in my opinion, falls not only to the church, but to the parents as well. Both units should work together. Our society places a lot of emphasis on doing well economically. This is especially true for Indian Americans. We have high expectations for our children—in an academic sense—so they can have a great future. But in doing so, we sometimes fail to take the time in our homes to teach our children the important principles from the Bible. Of course, we all do our best. But is it really enough? We might be losing our focus on what’s truly important.

If our churches and individual families can put our priorities in the right order, we can be more hopeful in ending the exodus and making sure the younger generation stays in the Christian faith. The older generation may be uncomfortable with and might be

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 51.

resistant to some of the ideas, such as having a separate church service to accommodate the younger generation, or having a blended service with more emphasis on the younger generation. However, if we look back at their lives, parents sacrificed their comfort in various ways by leaving their homeland for a better economic future. If they are truly desirous of seeing the younger generation stand in the faith of their forebears, this is another sacrifice they have to make, in order to win and keep generations for Christ.

As Ronald W. Richardson writes, “In humans, the innate biological response to threat is either fight or flight. Our automatic reaction is to react aggressively and attack or to run away in fear,”<sup>9</sup> which can be considered true concerning the second generation’s exodus from the church. They leave silently without any complaints or claims.

**Challenges in the Indian Christian Community: An Evaluation of the book  
“*Strangers in a Foreign Land.*”**

*Strangers in a Foreign Land*,<sup>10</sup> a book edited by Thomas Idiculla and containing essays written by fourteen leaders of the Indian Pentecostal community in the United States, provides ample facts and figures concerning the challenges of different generations in the Indian Christian community in the United States. There are very few studies apart from Dr. Idiculla’s that have been conducted among this community, and his work broadens the scope of methodical research about intergenerational relationships.

Dr. Idiculla explains the very purpose of this book as follows,

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<sup>9</sup> Ronald W. Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 41.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Thomas Idiculla, editor, *Strangers In A Foreign Land* (Waltham, MA: Agape Partners International, 2012).

The ultimate aim or mission of this book is to awaken Indian immigrants to the Biblical truth that we are aliens and strangers in this world (1Peter 2:11) regardless of our geographical location and settlement... America is not our home. Yes, we are pilgrims, wanderers, and strangers in this foreign land.<sup>11</sup>

### **Is it really a Cultural Gap?**

In the book, *Strangers in a Foreign Land*, many of the authors indicate cultural reasons as one of the primary factors that contribute to the struggles we face in this land.

We need to determine what the real reasons are, in order to find a true solution.

Wikipedia indicates,

The culture of Kerala is a synthesis of Aryan and Dravidian cultures, developed and mixed for centuries, under influences from other parts of India and abroad. Kerala showcases a culture unique to itself developed through accommodation, acculturation and assimilation of various faculties of civilized lifestyle.<sup>12</sup>

It's important to note that the origin of Malayalee<sup>13</sup> culture was derived from places other than India and it has transitioned over time. What's also noteworthy is that different cultural programs and artwork all seem to have a Hindu origin.

Dr. C. Thomas Luiskutty writes, "Indian Christians do not promote many expressions of arts, as they are closely identified with pagan religions and styles of worship."<sup>14</sup> Even as children, growing up in India, we were completely discouraged from participating in or being an onlooker of the various forms of arts. The Malayalees, who

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>12</sup> Culture of Kerala, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture\\_of\\_Kerala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Kerala) (Accessed 10/18/2014).

<sup>13</sup> The people of Kerala who speak mainly Malayalam language are known as Malayalees.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Thomas Idiculla, editor, *Strangers In A Foreign Land* (Waltham, MA: Agape Partners International, 2012), 43.

have come to America, love their homeland, without any question. But what is it that truly distinguishes or identifies the first generation, as true Malayalees, in terms of culture, other than the language, food, and maybe the clothing?

Luis Kutty also notes that “one prominent aspect of culture is the strong family unit with respect, care, loyalty and affection.”<sup>15</sup> While it may be true that we generally recognize these practices among Indians, these customs are also practiced by other cultures; it’s not unique just to Malayalees. The majority of our values and traditions, which we might say are culturally based, are also what the Bible advocates. As Christians, what ultimately matters, regardless of how much we cherish our heritage, is how we maintain or cultivate our faith, especially among future generations.

#### **Challenges from the Conflict between the First and Second Generations of Indians in the United States and Possible Solutions**

Different authors write about the conflicts we face as Indian Christians. Conflicts can arise due to cultural reasons or non-cultural reasons. Dr. Samuel Mathai writes, “An adult brought up in the Indian culture is often in conflict with his/her own children born/raised in the American culture.”<sup>16</sup>

Obviously the authors in Idiculla’s book suggest that local churches, partnering with families, can play an important role in bridging the gap between the generations. We must take time and energy to invest in our future, not just focus on the short-term goals.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 26.

However, if we look at the big picture and not get distracted by details, we will be able to have more hope for a bright future.

### **Challenges Related to Marriage**

There are issues and challenges related to marriage among Indian Pentecostal community in the United States. Therefore, it is inevitable that there will be a discussion of the first and second-generations' concepts of marriage.

The concept of the first generation immigrants in the United States mainly follows the traditional Eastern view of marriage such as:

- Arranged marriage as the only method of choosing a partner.
- Dating is a taboo.
- Marriage is an entry into an unbreakable covenant.
- The wedding ceremony is a social event to gather friends, families and extended families.
- The husband is the head of the house and the breadwinner.
- The wife mainly is the homemaker.
- Married couples continue at the bridegroom's parents' house for at least a few years.
- The couple receives instructions and interference from in-laws.
- The following of unwritten laws and norms of the society.
- The priority is God, Church and Family.

The second generation of Indians in the United States tends to see marriage and family in a blended way of both eastern and western views. Such as:

- Marriage as a personal choice.
- Marriage is a contract between two individuals.
- Dating for the purpose of mutual understanding.
- There is equality of spouses.
- There is mutual sharing of responsibilities.
- Both partners are earning members irrespective of gender difference.
- Once married, one enters into a contract that is breakable with mutual consent.
- The Priority is God, Family and Church.

### **Challenges Related to Church**

Everyone in the immigrant churches whisper almost the same question “how do we do church inter-generationally?” The question itself points to the existing challenges related to the church among the immigrant communities. In a sense, church is not the building, the meeting place, an organization, or a denomination, but something above and beyond that.

In his book, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Peter Scazzero writes about the spiritual bond the New Testament believers carry with others believers who live all across the world.

The New Testament describes becoming a Christian as a spiritual rebirth through which we are adopted into a new family—the family of Jesus. Once this occurs, we become brothers and sisters to a worldwide family that crosses racial, cultural, economic, and gender barriers. We are birthed into a new family tree.<sup>17</sup>

The local church is defined as a assembly of believers, irrespective of their age or ethnic background, that meets together physically for worship, fellowship, teaching, prayer and

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003), 97.

encouragement in the faith. The challenge, then, is whether we are able to live in relationship with other believers. In order to show our unity and fellowship, we break bread together, pray for each other, disciple, and strengthen one another. How much does it work towards strengthening the inter-generational challenges? Or how much it is successful in bridging the gap between different generations? These are questions that remain unanswered in our community.

The first Generation's view of the church is that

- It is a place to worship with same ethnic group.
- Worship is preferably held in Malayalam which is their first language.
- Has a lengthy service with different programs such as songs, testimonies, scripture reading, prayer, and sermons etc.

The second Generation's view of the church is one

- That is multi-cultural in nature.
- Where the medium of language- English, their first language.
- Where the service length is limited including a profound Bible message and praise and worship.
- Where the messages mainly focus on doing something for God and for humanity.
- Where worship is done more quietly.
- With a major focus on "kingdom building."

The book, '*Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*, clearly narrates the challenges in the following way

Recent studies that have examined various congregations in the United States point out that each congregation has two forms of theology that guide and shape them. Explicit theology (proclaimed faith) is preached from the pulpit, taught in



Sunday school classes and listed on the churches' website as its statement of faith; it is what the congregation confesses as its belief. Implicit theology (practiced faith), on the other hand, is what the congregational leaders and members do when they gather together; it is a set of values and norms that guide how they make their decisions, relate to one another and allocate their resources. Studies point out that congregations grow most optimally when their explicit and implicit theologies are congruent with one another and thus reinforce one another. These studies indicate, however, most congregations fail to experience such an agreement between their two operating theologies. Furthermore, these studies find that between the two, implicit theology exerts greater influence in shaping the congregation and its members.<sup>18</sup>

When the gap between the two generations widens, it will strongly affect the growth and existence of the church.

### **Challenges Related to Parenting**

The Free dictionary defines 'Parenting as the rearing of a child or children, especially the care, love, and guidance given by parent.'<sup>19</sup> In his article "*What is Effective Parenting?*" Kerby Alvy writes:

Effective parenting refers to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realize his or her full potential as a human being. It is a style of raising children that increases the chances of a child becoming the most capable person and adult he or she can be.<sup>20</sup>

Generally speaking, parents are responsible for providing the basic means that are indispensable, like a home, food and clothing. Their responsibility extends to good

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Cha, Steve Kang and Helen Lee, eds, *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), 13.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/parenting> (Accessed 10/21/14).

<sup>20</sup> Kerby T. Alvy, *What is Effective Parenting, National Effective Parenting Initiative*, [http://www.ciccparenting.org/PDF/What%20Is%20Effective%20Parenting%20Article%20\(073007\).pdf](http://www.ciccparenting.org/PDF/What%20Is%20Effective%20Parenting%20Article%20(073007).pdf) (Accessed 10/21/14).

stewardship of these resources, and making sure that the environment and provisions they provide are safe and clean, and appropriate for their wellbeing. Protecting children from physical or psychological harm is also comes under the parental duties.

Parenting styles are varied in different cultures. In terms of Indian parenting style there is not a unique style of parenting. It differs from region to region or based on educational level. Some families are authoritarian, joint family system and authoritative. In Authoritarian Parenting, the father is the head of the house who decides matters related to the entire family and children in an authoritarian style. Usually the male members have an upper hand in the household affairs while female members of the family take care of all other matters of the house including those related to children.

The joint families system or the extended family circle is another feature of traditional Indian culture. Here parenting is the business of the maternal and paternal aunts, uncles, grandparents, and even distant relatives and not strictly the sphere of the father and the mother.

Finally, in the authoritative family, the highly educated or free Indian parents maintain a different style of parenting. This style of parenting is more self-ruled and open than one where the child has very few rights to demand or defy the parent's order.

### **Challenges Related to the Worldview**

*What is a worldview and what does changing your worldview involve?*

A quite simple but very helpful definition of “the world view” states that:

A worldview is an everyday, ordinary-language description of the world, that shapes and guides our lives, helping us to understand, explain and explore the world around us and everything in it, and how these are all related to each other, by giving us a way in which we can see them. In this sense then, it is "the

comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things and their relationships.<sup>21</sup>

Indian Pentecostal Church members struggle in the field of worldview because both generations hold extremely different worldviews in almost every aspect of day-to-day life. In my understanding, there is some major diversity between both generations about the worldview. Some examples are:

- While the first generation tries to interpret the “calamities” in a theological way, the second generation sees it in a compassionate or humanistic way.
- Even if the first generation sees the “epidemics” as an invisible intervention in human history, the second generation sees it as a change of climate or environment.
- The first generation sees the decline of “morality” as a major menace to the existence of human society but the second generation sees it as only a shift of society.
- The first generation evaluates “poverty” as the result of economic variation but the second generation considers it as the result of one-sided accumulation of wealth.
- While the first generation intends to interpret “global warming” in an eschatological point of view, the second generation explains it as the consequence of the misuse of natural sources.

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<sup>21</sup> Karla Sánchez Ibarra, *What is a worldview and what does changing your worldview involve?*, <http://karlaprepcourse.blogspot.com/2010/01/what-is-worldview-and-what-does.html> (Accessed on 10/22/2014).

Obviously, there are conflicts and tensions existing between the first and second-generation of the Indian Pentecostal community in terms of the four subjects noted above. My conversations with both generations related to the topics provided enormous fabric for the project. I conclude that these are the areas needing to be addressed without any delay to identify effective solutions in support of our families as well as the community.

## CHAPTER 4

### EXPLANATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

As specified in the introduction, my project was concerned about testing the hypothesis that “participation in integrated Christian activities can have a positive impact on inter-generational relationships in the first and second generations of the Indian Pentecostal Churches.” The purpose of the project was to find a practical solution to end the exodus of the second generation of Indian Pentecostal Church members from their churches or from the faith itself. At the same time, a successful outcome should be a helpful tool for other immigrant communities who are struggling with the same problem. In order to test the hypothesis, four integrated Christian activities were conducted based on four different subjects, all of which are very relevant in this community.

I anticipate using the findings to challenge the members and leaders of North American Indian Pentecostal churches to explore the immeasurable opportunities available to engage both the younger generation and the older generation with the purpose of building a “God envisioned church” to serve their own community and humanity as a whole.

The integrated activities were held at the Shalem Pentecostal Tabernacle, Elmont, New York, where I have been serving as the senior pastor.

### **Selection of the Lay Advisory Committee**

In order to ensure the best possible outcomes for the project, I recruited a Local Advisory Committee. The Committee was a selected group of mostly laypersons associated with my ministry context, who were chosen to work with me as a team to design, implement, and assess all aspects of the professional project. The Lay Advisory Committee consisted of a total of eight members. The criteria for the selection of the committee was 1) that all were members of the Indian Pentecostal Community; 2) that the group consist of four first generation adults and four members of the second generation; 3) that each first generation member must be the parent of at least one teenage child; 4) that all must be willing to participate in the project; 5) that they be able to communicate in English; 6) and that no compensation will be paid to any of the participants.

Of the four first generation members, (one of whom functioned as the chairman) there was a Licensed Psychotherapist who has worked extensively with both first and second-generation Indian Christian immigrants, a former university Professor and the son of a first generation immigrant, a Certified Public Accountant and an entrepreneur. Based on availability all were male.

Among the second-generation members was a Medical student who is extensively engaged in global mission work, a young adult with an M.S.W degree who is an active participant in youth activities at the church, a software engineer who is also a praise and worship leader, and a registered nurse who is active in Christian education and youth programs. Two were male and two were female.

### **Selection of the Workshop Participants**

With the assistance of the local advisory committee a total number of sixteen participants were recruited by the candidate based on their willingness to participate in this project. This group consisted of eight first generation adults among whom four were male and four female, and eight second-generation teenagers, four male and four female, selected from the Shalem Pentecostal Assembly in Long Island, New York. All of the participants were able to communicate in English. Each first generation member was the parent of at least one teenage child, while all teen age participants were born and raised in the United States by first- generation Indian immigrant parents. All agreed to attend all workshops and provide feedback at the conclusion of the project. Finally, participants were not compensated.

### **Selection of the Topics**

As a pastor who has ministered mainly within the Indian Pentecostal Church in the United States for the last ten years, I have had to deal with numerous ethnic and cultural challenges. This scenario inspired me to discern the different areas where challenges exist. From among them, I short-listed four, which I considered as the most challenging and needing immediate attention.

There was a pre-testing of participants. All participants were required to answer a series of questions prepared by the candidate and approved by the Local Advisory Committee that focused on these intergenerational challenges. Additionally, I had the opportunity to attend and speak at different Indian Pentecostal church conferences in North America, which gave me an understanding of the dire needs of the community. Further, my experience as an immigrant pastor, has helped me to understand the crisis

between the generations. Hence, working with the Lay Advisory Committee, I chose to focus on the four subjects of marriage, church, parenting, and Christian worldview to form the prime subjects in the testing of my thesis hypothesis.

### **Selection of the Workshop Leaders**

Following the selection of the subjects, with the assistance of the advisory committee I was able to choose four persons from different walks of life to lead the workshops. We also developed certain criteria for the selection of the workshop leaders. We were looking for workshop leaders who were themselves Indian immigrants now settled in the United States, participants in an Indian Pentecostal Church, familiar and comfortable addressing both generations, and able to communicate in English.

Based on these criteria we selected four persons who are active and proficient in church as well as in their secular jobs. They have enormous leadership qualities and demonstrate spiritual maturity. The following paragraphs briefly describe the presenters and their qualifications.

Thomas Idiculla, PhD, is the Director of Mental Health Services Evaluation Department at McLean Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts and also Lectures in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. One of his research interests is immigrants and intergenerational issues. He is a pastor, counselor, researcher, author, and frequent presenter at national conferences, marriage and family conferences, Christian camps and retreats.

Rev. Leslie Verghese is an ordained pastor of the Indian Pentecostal Church, a Licensed Psychotherapist of New York State and NCCA certified licensed pastoral Counselor, who works significantly with the first and second-generation immigrants of



the Indian Christian community. In his secular job, he works as the Senior Vice President of Lifespire Inc., a premier organization in New York serving over 5000 individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness. Rev. Verghese is a resource person for seminars and workshops, which are relevant for parents, couples, and youth.

Finney J Cherian works as the chairman of the board and chief executive of the Millennium India Acquisition Company Inc. He is a Sunday School Teacher and a well-known preacher of the word of God. He has an enormous talent to co-ordinate Youth camps and family retreats.

P.C Jacob was the president of the Pentecostal Youth Fellowship of America (PYFA), a united youth movement of different Pentecostal churches in the Tri-State area as well as serving as the former president of the Indian Pentecostal church youth wing (PYPA). He is a resource person for seminars among the Indian Christian community.

I personally shared the plan and purpose of the project with the workshop leaders and each one had the freedom to present their own thoughts and ideas based on the hypothesis and overall setting of the project. I presented the prospectus in advance so that they were well aware of the time frame and subject matter of their presentations.

### **Workshop Structure and Summary**

The workshops were conducted on four Saturday afternoons with participants from both generations meeting together. Each session was 90 minutes in duration.

### **Session 1- Marriage**

A paper presentation with power point visuals by Leslie Verghese, on “Marriage: God’s Design and Man’s Mandate; Conflicts and Challenges.”

- Presentation – 50 Minutes.
- Discussion – 30 Minutes.
- Recap – 10 Minutes.

### **Session 2- Parenting**

A workshop on “Bridging the Gap and Building the Future - Developing and Maintaining a Healthy Parent Child Relationship” – Moderated by Professor. Finney Jacob Cherian.

- Topic Introduction by Moderator – 25 Minutes.
- Breakout Session – 25 Minutes.
- Reflections by Group Leaders – 20 Minutes.
- Recap by Moderator – 20 Minutes.

### **Session 3- Church**

A seminar by P. C. Jacob on “Building a Healthy and Integrated Church.”

- Seminar Presentation – 60 Minutes.
- Reflections and Discussion – 30 Minutes.

### **Session 4- Worldview**

A discussion on “Viewing Contemporary Issues through a Spiritual/Biblical Perspective” – Dr. Thomas Idiculla.

- Paper Presentation with power point visuals - 40 minutes.
- Breakout session- 30 minutes.

- Recap by Moderator-20 minutes.

Session 5-Post-testing -Administration of the post questionnaire to the participants

Local advisory committee members and participants were present in the workshops and actively engaged in discussions and contributed their viewpoints related to the subjects. It was really a positive experience for all those who attended and it started being reflected in our church services. Giving more youth oriented messages and increasing the active participation of the young people in worship services made them feel more a part of the church. Moreover, everyone felt the need to open a way to discuss such issues in an elaborate way for the benefit of the community as a whole.

### **Workshop # 1- Marriage God's Design and Man's Mandate; Conflicts and Challenges**

The first workshop was held on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014. It was divided into two distinct parts. From 2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m., the chair of the advisory committee provided an interactive orientation to the participants. This session focused on the presentation of the problem, immediate challenges, and possible solutions. Then there was pre-testing of participants, which consisted of answering a questionnaire that focuses on the intergenerational challenges. This orientation was followed from 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. by the first of the four integrated inter-generational activities.

Rev. Leslie Verghese presented a paper with power point visuals related to "Marriage: God's Design and Man's Mandate; Conflicts and Challenges." He conducted the presentation and discussion with scriptural references and examples from present-day society.

Some of the observations during the discussion time were thought provoking and for some participants, it was a new experience to talk so openly about such matters, especially in a setting where two generations were present. One of the parents indicated “kids these days grow up learning about love and the opposite sex much earlier.” In most cases, this is done through interactions with their own peers and television media. There was also an awareness by the younger generation that Christians should “look at the Bible and stop trying to look to others to define marriage” which included parents and peers.

Both groups were encouraged to consider the other generation’s opinion of their future spouse. “Kids should consider if the parents would approve their choice.” The lack of discussion about spouses, marriage and the future is an area that leads to major conflicts between the generations.

The first generation males felt the second generation had a better understanding of marriage, as the “youth grow up in a culture where they would choose their own spouse. Instead of choosing a mate based on cultural expectations, or even worse, forced parental choice, the second generation actually chooses their mates based on their own judgment, considering spiritual, familial and personal merit.”

The second-generation males felt “both groups were flawed in their understanding of marriage and neither has the true biblical design of marriage. The first generation is overly preoccupied with cultural norms, and societal expectations. The second-generation members are rash in their romantic pursuits and are too quick to “fall in love.”

The second generation also conveyed that the “cultural structure of marriage has changed and thus parents need to understand that what we look for in a spouse has changed as well.” However, they are aware that they need to recognize the “necessity of

spiritual coherence in a marital relationship.” The second-generation females, however, believed the first generation “understands marriage better due to having more experience, understanding and wisdom.”

Based on the above responses, maybe the second generation females, as opposed to the males, might be more willing to consult with their parents in choosing their future spouse or talk about marriage in general. The males, however, would be more reluctant in doing so, since they are more skeptical about their parents’ understanding of the issues involved. As a result, if parents tried to intervene or advise the males, they would most likely have more conflict with their kids.

Some first generation members suggested that children could be significantly impacted by the relationship, whether it is positive or negative, between a husband and wife at home. Children learn about marriage and its various aspects at “a very early age” from their respective parents either “consciously or unconsciously.” Therefore, if parents fail to present their marriage positively, it is natural that the children will follow in their footsteps. Members also claim “parents may end up looking like hypocrites,” if they fail to act as they preach.

According to one first generation member “when there are conflicts between a husband and wife, how they resolve their differences can also impact how the children will choose to resolve their own conflicts with their own spouse, or even with their parents, which can lead to inter-generational conflicts.”

**Workshop # 2- Parenting:  
Bridging the Gap and Building the Future –  
Developing and Maintaining Healthy Parent-Child Relationships**

The second workshop was held on Saturday, March 19, 2014 from 4 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. and had “Parenting” as its theme. Professor Finney Jacob Cherian was the moderator; he meaningfully presented the topic for the day. Then 25 minutes were spent for the breakout session and 20 minutes for the reflections by the group leaders based on the discussion. In the last 20 minutes, the moderator offered a recap of the various points that arose during the discussion.

Some of the observations and reflections from the discussions are as follows: First generation adults generally follow the same parenting patterns as their own parents, being strict. They feel they do a good job with parenting when they follow their Indian culture in America. Even a second-generation member indicated, “I would treat my children the same as my parents taught me.”

Parents felt they should not be easy with their children. “They can always do better.” Children seem to have fears of disappointing their parents. This creates added pressure on the children. We need to keep in mind how much this pressure each child can handle. We should also consider them as unique individuals, with unique skills, abilities and interest.

The younger generation generally felt that they are under lot of pressure to do well academically, which seems to be working as far as positive results are concerned. They felt they “have been successful” in meeting the needs and expectations of parents as well as their “personal goals.” It was interesting to note that some participants stated that

they were not very successful when they were younger, but their parents “pushed enough to help them make successful.” The children generally felt parents had an “issue with their friend circles.” This leads to having them “do things behind their parents’ backs.”

Both parents and children expressed the wish for parents to have been more involved in their children’s lives. One of the children indicated, “They didn’t have too much time to work with me.” This is an interesting observation about the Indian parenting scenario as the public perception is that Indian parents are overly involved in the lives of their children. However, the struggles of survival of the first generation may have negatively impacted the time, availability and influence of the parents in the lives of their children. Both groups also would have wanted their children to be more involved with their friends and have time for “extracurricular activities.” As a second-generation member stated, they want to “have some time for fun.” One of the parents also expressed the need for closer relationships with children. “Fathers are no longer involved with the children and they are at least an arm’s length away from them.” Lack of availability due to the existential struggles of the first generation has contributed to this.

The discussion also revealed a noticeable and complete reversal in the order of priorities between children and their parents focused on academics first and then on principles of life; while the younger generation seemed to focus first on principles and then on academics.

Both generations felt that eighteen was the right age to allow their children to take on responsibility, when they go away to college, even though some mothers might have a hard time letting them go. The first generation felt that the physical punishment they receive during their growing up stages was rough but good, in that it created discipline

and helped youth achieve greater success. Parents used punishment as a means to keep them accountable for their actions. They acknowledged that sometimes they also used it on their children without control. “It was good in most cases, but often times the parents got carried away with anger. These days, we keep our children accountable by comparing them to other children in the community.”

The second generation also felt the environment is stricter these days, as compared to their parents, maybe to counteract the freedom the Western style provides. Also, there is a difference in the amount of freedom given to boys, compared to girls. “Girls aren’t allowed to do much socially;” this appeared to be true regardless of the generation, maybe with more freedom being given to girls these days.

One of the children noted that strong bonds are created within Indian churches “within the second-generation vs. first generation.” This probably indicates a lack of inter-generational connections. And it seems that the second-generation members have more unity between them compared to the unity among the first generation members. As one parent indicated, “all parents are doing what they think is the best for the success of the children.”

Both groups generally felt there were issues with communication. “Kids are afraid to tell their parents anything.” “Parents shouldn’t have absolute authority, which cannot be questioned.” They should try to explain and have their kids understand their point of view. Children also seemed to be afraid of letting their parents down, and not meeting their expectations.

There were some strong opinions between the two groups regarding selection of life partners. Some of the first generation members seem to strongly oppose giving their



children the option to select a marriage partner. Other areas that seemed to cause conflicts were differences in values or ideals, such as traditional child-rearing practices, which are labeled authoritative compared to the American standards. Adults generally raise their voice rather than lower their voice when correcting a child. It is not appreciated by the younger generation. Parents are not always concerned about using words of appreciation when their children make some achievements.

Inability to resolve these issues have been resulting in depression and even suicide. Dr. Thomas Kulanjiyil quotes the words of Varma V.K and Chakraborti. J. in his book *Caring for south Asia souls*,

Asian Indian depressives tend to somatize more often than Western ones. The prevalence of guilt feelings has been reported to be less in Asian Indian patients than in their American counterparts. Suicide rates are much less among Asian Indians than the Americans, though suicidal ideation and unsuccessful suicidal attempts are quite common.<sup>1</sup>

Individuals in both generations were aware of the differences between them and expressed a willingness to sacrifice for the benefit of the other.

### **Workshop # 3 Church: Building a Healthy and Integrated Church**

The third workshop was held on Saturday, March 29, 2014 from 3.30 to 5 p.m. P.C. Jacob led this session and the main focus was on “Building a Healthy and Integrated Church.” Mr. Jacob presented the subject matter within 60 minutes and narrated the challenges which immigrant churches face. The last 30 minutes was for reflections and discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas Kulanjiyil and Dr. T.V. Thomas, eds, *Caring for the Asian Soul* (Bangalore, India: Primalogue Publishing House, 2010), 24.

According to the presenter, teaching is a primary characteristic of a church. He reported that studies show the larger, growing churches are the ones that are solidly preaching and teaching the word. Churches do have an important role in teaching the word of God, in a general sense. He added, however, that when it comes to teaching children, home is the main place where the foundation for this should be built. This is especially true as it relates to resolving inter-generational conflicts and improving relationships.

Mr. Jacob went on to say that families have an integral role in our Christian community. The Bible requires parents to teach our children diligently. They are also required to train up their children "...in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."<sup>2</sup> The primary responsibility is given to the parents to ensure the children are taught and trained so they maintain their faith, as they get older. The role a church needs to take on is to partner with parents and provide additional support.

Mr. Jacob spoke approvingly about churches that have tried to be more accommodating to the needs of the younger generation and have been providing services geared mostly for kids. As a second -generation member indicated, "kids have gotten used to the combined worship service." Most of the service in Malayalam ends by 11 at the Shalem Pentecostal Tabernacle from which the participants were selected, after which the service is mostly in English. The objective in having a family integrated church is to have parents and children worship together. As the saying goes, the family that prays together stays together. The older generation also has more opportunities to pass on their valuable knowledge and experiences.

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<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 22:6 (ESV).

While there are different generations who attend the church, the seating is not so inter-generational. Children's church is currently held separately at the same time that the main service is conducted. By age ten or eleven, when the younger children join the rest of the congregation for regular service, they are either unable to sit still or are disinterested. Mr. Jacob encouraged us to allow the children to be part of the regular service from a younger age by making the service more appealing to them, which then makes the church truly intergenerational. The spiritual development of our children is sometimes passed off to Sunday school teachers, a Children's minister or Youth minister. We give the reasonability to answer our children's questions or have them address the children's concerns or issues.

According to the presenter, the different programs that are conducted as "age appropriate," generally provide more segregation by age, rather than building more inter-generational relationships. He said,

We have taken somewhat of a segmented approach with our activities. In many instances, the family only drives to church together, but does not see each other until the end of the service. Even when we go to 'family retreats,' parents don't have chances to interact with their children until they're ready to drive back home. Separate meetings and activities are held for them. They sleep in separate rooms and hang out with their group of friends only. This just fosters more detachment from the parents. This is an area in which we can take additional measures as a church, to encourage better inter-generational relationships.

Moreover, with so many churches in every neighborhood, it makes it easier for "young adults to leave their home church" if their needs are not met. As children become more independent - once they complete high school and/or move on to college - parents can't really compel them to stay in their home churches. The church must be able to offer them what they need for their spiritual growth.

It is interesting to note that there was a real difference in the responses from members within the second generation. While one of the younger members, who hadn't yet completed high school, felt strongly that she "wouldn't want her kids in an American church", another member, who was attending college, felt more strongly in favor of allowing it. As the children get older, we also see a change in their mindsets. They are more assimilated to Western culture and attitudes.

We found differences in opinions within each generation as well. Members from both generations felt this was the area where we have been seeing the most changes. There seems to be more focus on culture, as members from both generations felt we were still too focused on culture and less on doctrines from the Bible. A second-generation member indicated, "Indoctrination is focused on non-doctrinal things, such as Jewelry". A first generation member stated, "We don't preach the word often, we teach culture. It is good to have pride in culture, but God should not be separated out of culture and neither should culture take precedence over scripture."

Mr. Jacob pointed out that sticking to traditional practices, even ones such as cutting hair, are generally not preached from the pulpit these days, as it used to be a couple of decades ago. Even though the message on cultural taboos is not so direct any more, it is instead communicated by disapproving looks, indirect words, and discussions heard through the grapevine, the message to stick to tradition still seems to come through loud and clear, for at least some of the members. This takes our focus away from creating a foundation based on the Bible and instead focusing on the less important cultural practices.

The presenter quoted from Jeremiah 6: 16 (CEV), “At the crossroads, follow the road your ancestors took, and you will find peace.” When we focus on maintaining our ethnic and cultural customs alone, we lose our correct perspective. God requires us to follow the rules and commandments that were given to Moses.”

However, he then added that from a Biblical viewpoint, placing too much importance on customs becomes an idol in itself.

For the customs and ordinances of the peoples are false, empty, and futile; it is but a tree which one cuts out of the forest [to make for himself a god], the work of the hands of the craftsman with the ax or other tool. They deck [the idol] with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers so it will not fall apart or move around.<sup>3</sup>

The presenter stated that modern churches that were recently formed by Millennials or the younger generations seem to have “adjusted their boundaries so much.” They may be more accepting of everyone, regardless of their backgrounds. There may be an issue in regards to where boundaries are drawn – moral values and inherent values that are Bible based, in terms of dating, drinking and other social activities.

According to a first generation participant, “it was surprising to hear that there seems to be no hope. Two separate cultures are incompatible.”

While one of the younger generation members who attended college felt “the evolution was too slow,” another younger generation member who attended high school felt “the church would develop with the growing mindsets of the aging youth.” The responses indicate a disparity even within the second generation, which seems to depend on a person’s level of education and independence.

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<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 10:3 (Amplified Bible).

It was good to hear that a second-generation member felt that “The language barrier is still going to exist, but the church works to help the young people.” Changes have been made to facilitate the language issue, where the majority of the worship service on Sundays is conducted in English. A second generation member also suggested that the younger generation should have an important role in the worship service, perhaps including more time to do praise and worship and opportunity to share the word of God.

According to the presenter, “people will want to come to a church where they feel welcomed and cared for. People will leave a church more often because relationships have not been developed more so than any other reason.” One of the younger generation participants indicated, “Fellowship is very strong among friends and family.” This seems to be an area of concern. While people are comfortable with their own friends and interact mainly with those who are part of their group, others who are not part of the in-crowd may feel left out. A solution suggested by a first generation member was to setup some means “to interact with and address newcomers.”

The presenter indicated, “The worship experience must never be just a performance.” One first generation member commented, “Some of the contemporary worship songs and music may be appealing to a segment of the congregation, but it gives more of a rock-concert feel, rather than being conducive to worshipping with your heart, soul and mind.” Regardless of the age group, the participants felt, “Church should be chasing after unbelievers, even though the IPC churches structure is more focused on Christian families.” A church has different responsibilities, such as evangelism and believer development.

According to a first generation participant, we need to focus on how welcome the visitors would feel (due to our general approach to newcomers) and how longer they would continue to attend our church. Everyone has established their comfort level with regular members, who are all generally believers. One of the solutions that were discussed is to form a welcome committee, who could meet and greet all relatively new members.

#### **Workshop # 4 Worldview Viewing Contemporary Issues through a Spiritual/Biblical Perspective**

The Fourth workshop was held on Saturday, April 19, 2014. It was composed of two sessions, the first session from 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m., focusing on the topic of Worldview, with a discussion on “Viewing Contemporary Issues through a Spiritual/Biblical Perspective.’ Dr. Thomas Idiculla presented a paper with power point visuals for forty minutes; followed by a half-hour breakout session and a twenty-minute recap by the Moderator. A second one-hour session immediately followed, which administered the post-testing questionnaire to both generational groups.

Worldviews can vary depending on a person’s primary identification of himself or herself. According to Dr. Idiculla, a person’s worldview should not be “watered down by the world, and not change course due to other worldviews.” He used the ship as an analogy, which needs a clear direction and a clear vision. One of the adult men noted that worldviews evolve and change over time.

During the discussions, it was established that a Christian worldview is completely different from a secular worldview, both generations seemed to agree with this. As one of the younger women said, there are some issues that are uncompromising

for Christians. One of the key discussion points was to address why young people are not actively involved in the church and leaving the church. They also tried to determine how these problems arise.

The generations agreed that issues seemed to originate primarily from home, where most intergenerational interactions between parents and children take place, beginning in early childhood. Children learn to either like or dislike what they observe at home. Home atmosphere also has an impact on children's worldview, in terms of their learned lifestyles. Both help to form how they ultimately decide to act and behave. If the intergenerational conflicts are not clearly resolved at home, they can carry forward and be reflected in how children feel about serving and worshipping at church.

Having different worldviews can also create intergenerational conflicts. According to Dr. Idiculla, there's a lack of understanding between parents and their children. One of the first generation participants commented: "Marketing a worldview through a message is important. The message itself is great, BUT it must be packaged and sent out in a way in which people will agree and accept the message!" A second-generation participant also added that, "the most powerful marketing is a personal experience and a personal testimony. You need to invite people to experience God."

One of the second-generation participants felt a three-hour church service was too long. But this was also echoed by some of the first generation members. "The constant stream of speakers, testimonies and prayers jammed into a three-hour church session causes a problem with the style and delivery of the message. The delivery, the audience, and the speaker all add to misunderstanding the complete truth of the gospel."



There was a strong difference in opinion about the subject of Christian worldview. The adult men's group indicated that "you should be instilling Christian values and ethics, during the formative years of a child's development." Children should be taught, instead of just imposing the parents' beliefs on them. One person in the young women's group, on the contrary, stated she would "impose all aspects" of her life on her children, to make sure her children are "raised correctly."

### **Workshop Conclusion**

Indian Pentecostal Churches are deeply rooted in the Word of God but the cultural impact of church members' countries of birth is also strong and permeates into almost all of a congregation's activities. In my observation the interactions in the various workshops is that the first generation, sometimes deliberately and often unknowingly, holds on to remnants of religious life from their country of origin, while the second generation is familiar with the transmitted religious culture of the country of their parents' origin and not willing to embrace it completely. It is really a challenging situation for both groups to generate a feeling of equilibrium in their homes as well as in their churches. The first generation is trying to keep one culture in their homes and another one in their workplace or community and, likewise, children are keeping one culture in their homes and another one in their schools. This dichotomy causes conflict and confusion for both generations. However, the integrated activities opened a "bottle of challenges," that probably has been corked up for years in this community and has produced the need to have this kind of meaningful discussion between both groups.

Both groups came to an understanding of the existing challenges and need for transparent and healthy discussions for the well-being of the community. In short, for

every problem there will be a solution. But the awareness of challenges and the revelation of solutions should lead to the proper action to make an end of the crisis.

## CHAPTER 5

### ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

#### **General Impressions from the Project**

Working on this project gave all participants, the researcher and the lay advisory committee a great opportunity to be able to discuss and think critically about several of these issues that impact the daily lives of the Indian Christian community. The participants gained a better understanding of why people behave and act as they do, their unique worldviews, which could be different from another person's, even when it is a Christian worldview. These views can very well be a combination of different factors that influence a person's life. The insights gathered during these group activities are intended to open up doors for addressing some of the key issues that are becoming problematic and of concern in this community.

When we try to deal with different problems, many times people look only at the final outcome or behavior. However, if we need to change that behavior, we need to identify what the root causes are which lead to the end result. Problems don't happen all of a sudden. There is a gradual process through which people's attitudes and behaviors change. Hence, it is important that we evaluate the different influences upon the people impacted, especially from childhood leading into adulthood.

The group discussions with other adults in their groups, as well as with teenagers, enabled both groups to receive valuable insights into the manifested problem, behavior and norms. Group discussions were very productive because a group leader would guide the other members on different topics and ask relevant questions to gather more information specific to the study. Participants understood the general topic of discussion very well and talked about many relevant issues candidly. Some members were more vocal compared to others. Getting each member's point of view provided more information for the study.

The focus of the study was very relevant to the present day Indian Pentecostal community. The topic addressed real issues that many of our families face in their daily lives. We have been seeing and facing an increase in challenges related to inter-generational relationships. Working on this project gave more of an insight into how parenting, marriage, church and worldview are so inter-connected.

As the generation gap widens due to language, style and comfort factors, both generations seem to be moving towards having more separate services and activities. While different age based programs or services are necessary at times, integrated activities are essential to keep the structure and bonding of families together. Picnics and retreats are areas where we can try to include some programs oriented to the family unit as a whole, and involve different generations in integrated activities. Taking time to play and have fun is a time when both groups can let their guards down. It would help each group better understand that no matter what your age is, everyone likes to have fun; this will help break down some barriers.

People from one generation may find one worship style more preferable compared to someone from another generation. Providing a stronger foundation through messages and selection of songs can also have a positive impact on the younger generation's Christian faith.

The exodus of the maturing second generation from the churches formed by the first generation will continue to be a challenge going forward if it is not addressed adequately and if available solutions are not adopted at least at this advanced stage. However, if we learn to live with our children more harmoniously at home, and then at church, we teach the importance and value of having both generations worship together.

#### **Assessment of the project by the Local Advisory Committee**

The project was guided by the Lay Advisory Committee, which included four adults from first generation and four young adults from the second generation who are active in the Indian Pentecostal community of the New York Long Island area. The lay advisory committee was very much helpful in assessing the strengths and needs of the generations and critiquing the progress of the project. Upon completion of the integrated intergenerational activities, a combined meeting of the committee was held to have a full-fledged evaluation of the efficacy of the project.

Some of the questions that the researcher asked to the local advisory committee in order to evaluate the project were as follows:

*1. What steps in the Action Phase of the project have been taken? What is the result?*

The LAC generally felt the methodology used by the candidate was very appropriate. The scope of the project and various steps involved in the project were thoroughly explained. An adult member pointed out that, "a combination of seminars,

group discussion, symposiums and other informal and formal discussions were held throughout the project to help move it in an action-oriented manner.” Another adult member said, “series of seminars and group discussions helped the participants were able to delve deep into various topics such as ministry, marriage, generational and cultural issues etc.” One young adult responded, “The results of this project have been beneficial to all involved. It opened the eyes of many to the plight of the “other side” and was instrumental in beginning to bridge the gap.”

Another young adult reported that, “there were discussion groups and surveys taken to mark progress. There was great dialogue between generations and a challenge of thinking in how we should go forward. Ideas and opinions were shared and discussed.” One of the young adults, appeared pleased to be “having different discussion forums to understand and verbalize current barriers and needs from different viewpoints,” and then added thoughtfully that “Change brought more individuals to step up and be the change.” Moreover, there were “more discussions on the spiritual stand of each other and encouragement for continued change.”

*2. What is your overall evaluation of the project and of the impact it is making on the Candidate, the Committee, and the Congregation?*

The LAC members indicated that due diligence was shown throughout the project. Areas that required help were met with immediately and help was sought.

One adult member noted that,

This project helped the participants engage in deep and meaningful discussion on many issues that currently impact our community. For example, the discussions regarding how differently the first and second-generation views social issues such as marriage was eye opening. As a first generation American, I realized that there are more things that unite the first and second generations than what separates us.

Another member pointed out, “I can see it coming through in his teaching of the word and church administration.” It was the opinion of another adult member, “[the] candidate did not tamper with the objective course of the project at any time and allowed the participants and the LAC to critique the project constructively.”

One young adult observed:

I see that the candidate was able to use this platform to help the church visualize the needs of its challenges bring awareness to the community on the necessity of change and growth. It was inspiring and encouraging setting the course for new interventions and used the ability to deploy more people to be responsible for the change needed.

Another young adult pointed out that, “It opened the eyes of the younger generation to our parent’s hearts behind doing what they do as well as gave our parents insight into where we as the younger generation were coming from. This has definitely made a big step in the right direction for our congregation.”

Again, a second-generation member offered this thought provoking observation:

The project was a long overdue conversation on the generational divide between two conflicting groups in our community...The Congregation received the radiating effects of healthy conversation: personal changes from challenging questions turn into relational changes, and finally systemic changes in our community. The project helped both generations see a fresh perspective in an honest and open way.

### *3. Assess the Candidate’s leadership on the project so far.*

One adult member reported that, “the candidate has been very vocal, confident and willing to lend an ear to all statements. He was able to lead the team towards positive measures.” Another young adult said, “It was very clear that he was passionate about his project and that he spent a significant amount of time in organizing and putting everything together.” One adult member addressed both the strength and weakness of the

candidate; “Strengths: Gave a good vision of the overall project. Organized the meetings into distinct themes. Arranged the discussion groups with a good mix of people.

Weakness: Could have allowed more time for free discussion rather than the seminar speakers.”

One adult member courageously evaluated that, “traditional Indian churches are reluctant to changes.” Another adult observed that, “This was a high-risk change especially due to the fact that the entire congregation was not part of the project. The leadership skills were clearly evident as the candidate was able to achieve almost unilateral consensus in implementing his vision.”

*4. The feedback or comments on the project offered by church members, officials, consultants, or observers who were not members of the Advisory Committee.*

One young adult noted that, “The one comment that I heard from a lot of people was that we need to do more of these discussion boards. A lot of people found it very helpful and progressive.”

One of the adult members wrote, “Many individuals commented that an in-depth study of how integrated activities can benefit both generations was overdue, especially when many churches including our own church are struggling to make the current programs and their format relevant to both groups.”

#### **Assessment of the project by Participants**

After the project was completed, a few questions were sent to the participants to evaluate the project overall. Out of the sixteen participants, a total of sixty percent



responded. While seven out of eight first generation<sup>1</sup> participants responded only three out of eight second-generation<sup>2</sup> participants returned their responses. Largely, the participants felt the project was a success and that the objectives of the project were relevant to the community's needs. The responses received from the participants were hopeful and encouraging. Both groups, the older and younger generation, were appreciative of having had the opportunity to have open discussions. The questions and the summary of its responses are....

*1. What were your apprehensions about being a 'participant' in the project of inter-generational issues before you attended the orientation?*

FGM #1- I felt the same but I learned some new info on inter-generational issues

FGM #2 - In regards to being a participant in this project I had no apprehensions before the orientation.

FGM #3 - My apprehension was the topic must have been studied a long time ago.

FGM #4 - I felt the objective of the study was very relevant and worthwhile. I was concerned about how open minded we could be in addressing real issues and be accepting of each other's point of view. Also, if eventually this could generate a positive outcome.

FGM #5 - I was concerned that if generations will share their true and honest opinions about these issues. Also if they will be able to relate to each other.

FGM #6 - As a participant, I noticed there is a big Generational Gap between the

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<sup>1</sup> FGM is the abbreviation of first generation member.

<sup>2</sup> SGM is the abbreviation of second generation member.

Youth and Aged people. This needs to be addressed in a broad perspective manner to the core to avoid future break out.

FGM #7 - I didn't have any fears before participating in this project.

SGM #1- At first I was nervous because I wasn't very knowledgeable on the topic of inter-generational issues. So, I wasn't really sure what to expect.

SGM #2- Before the project, I wasn't sure what would happen during our discussions. I knew we would be discussing inter-generational issues between the youth and adults. I expected there to be a lot of disagreement.

SGM #3- I had no apprehensions about being a participant in the project beforehand.

2. *Were your apprehensions resolved during the course of or after the completion of the project?*

FGM #1 - Not really.

FGM #2 - During the course of the project any possible apprehensions were further from. Being in my mind.

FGM #3 - I am somewhat satisfied with the project.

FGM #4 - Yes, some of the areas were discussed at a high-level and some on a detailed bit-more detailed level. Everyone seemed to be able to freely express their point of view.

FGM #5 - Yes. Both groups engaged in constructive and open discussions and were able to resolve conflicting opinions.

FGM #6 - Not really, because the discussed points are very relevant and need to implement the same, very systematically.

FGM #7 – Yes.

SGM #1- After taking the course I became way more aware of inter-generational issues.

SGM #2- I was surprised to see how the project turned out. There were many agreements rather than disagreements between the youth and adults. We had very similar thoughts, which I didn't think would occur.

SGM #3 - I had no apprehensions before the project.

3. *Which one of the four topics chosen Marriage, Church, Parenting and Biblical Worldview had a personal impact on you the most and why?*

FGM #1- Parenting I feel that we have communication gap between parents and younger generation.

FGM #2 - Being that I am part of the older generation, “Church” had the biggest impact on me. I feel the older generation and newer generation do not understand each other and because of this there seems to be a communication gap.

FGM #3 - Parenting was the most affected topic in my life.

FGM #4 - Parenting. Realize more how important the parenting role is in relation to all other areas as well. It has a direct impact on our children's worldview and their behavior in the long-run. Home is where different inter-generational conflicts arise mostly. Learning to address & resolve issues at home will be the key to resolving inter-generation issues at church.

FGM #5 - Church. As a participant, I am more open to suggestions and needs of younger generation.

FGM #6 - Biblical Worldview really leads me to a different dimension in my thinking perspective and also in my study.

FGM #7 - Marriage.

SGM #1- I found the topic of church most interesting because it hits closest to home since church is such a huge part of my life.

SGM #2- Marriage aspect was interesting to me the most. This is because topics that aren't really discussed commonly were discussed, and rather than differing opinions, most adults shared the same views as their children.

SGM #3 - The topic of parenting had the most personal impact on me because it was interesting to hear the views on certain points of discussion from both children of various ages as well as parents. Parenting seemed to have the most avid and passionate discussions because the child to parent relationship was clearly looked into by both children and parents.

4. *If given an opportunity to continue further studies or reviews on inter-generational issues in the future, would you be interested and if yes, which area do you think is the most important for today's generation?*

FGM #1- No

FGM #2 - The area I would want to continue further study of would be the "Church". This, in my opinion, is most important.

FGM #3 - Yes, I would be interested in participating in further studies. I think Marriage is the topic we need to focus more because the second-generation is now grown up and need a lot of help with marriage and family life.

FGM #4 - The area that would affect inter-generation issues the most, I believe, is

Parenting. This area has the direct and most significant effect on our inter-generational issues. It's also an area parents can directly have an impact with their children on a regular basis. Start at an early stage.

FGM #5 - Yes. Marriage.

FGM #6 - Yes of course, and the more you get knowledge from the Biblical perspective of all the topics especially Parenting & Worldview.

FGM #7 - Yes, I would like to learn more about marriage. Although most American's religious view of marriage is important, I feel that marriage today is less important than it was to previous generation.

SGM #1- Yes I would study inter-generational issues. I find the topic of marriage and church the most interesting, relatable, and applicable.

SGM #2- I would be interested in further studies. I think out of the 4 topics, the most important would be about the Church. Finding ways to integrate the church between youth and adults would be beneficial in closing the generation gap between the two.

SGM #3 - Yes, I would. I think parenting is the most important for today's generation because a lot of valuable and vital information gets lost in the process of miscommunication in today's generation. By looking into parenting more I think it's possible that a lot of problems concerning this miscommunication could be addressed.

5. *What are the logistical and practical challenges you faced during the project?*

FGM #1- None.

FGM #2 - During this course of this project I did not face any logistical and practical problems.

FGM #3 - Practically, scheduling was the main challenge. From a first generation viewpoint, some issues the second- generation raised are logically incorrect.

FGM #4 - Generally, the time slots selected were very reasonable, especially, since the project focused on a worthwhile objective.

FGM #5 - Understanding and relating to the needs and point of views of both groups.

FGM #6 - The biggest challenge are: even in opinion from Young Adult - To old people is totally in a different view point and the parents and children are living with the same unattended issues.

FGM #7 - None...The goal of this project is to bring hope back in to marriage, and the challenges of life that couples and families face. Younger generation often feel that elders are out of touch. At the same time older Christians often view younger generation as disrespectful, uncommitted to biblical viewpoints.

SGM #1- There were a lot of different opinions on each topic which caused some argument here and there but we all cooperated and listened to one another.

SGM #2- During the project one problem we may have faced was enough time to thoroughly discuss the topics.

SGM #3 - Time was definitely one of the biggest challenges faced during the project.

6. *What are your suggestions for improvement for a future candidate/project?*

FGM #1- This was a good subject by interacting we all learned some new facts

FGM #2 - Improvements that I would offer would be further studies in the area of “Church” and the barrier between the newer and older generations.

FGM #3 - It was a new experience to me. So I am not going to make any suggestions.

FGM #4 - The candidates represented a very good cross-section of both generations. Also include kids in different age groups - high school / college. When using discussion groups, it would be beneficial to have a group leader who has more understanding of the topic and can guide through the discussions. It would be helpful to have someone take good notes during the discussions also, so we have a good record of all the responses.

FGM #5 - Open communication between generations.

FGM #6 - If the point discussed in the project is available for future reference would be great and each topic discussed should be in depth for better understanding and use for their own life.

FGM #7 - Challenges and concerns were faced and some lessons were learned during Implementation of the project: considering marriage (premarital counseling);

When should a Christian couple seek counseling; how do you talk to your kids about premarital sex; how can the church today help younger generation to premarital counseling; how should parents influence marriage.

SGM #1- There should be more discussion time.

SGM #2- Similar to question 5, more time may be more ideal for being able to discuss these issues to come to more conclusions and solutions on these topics.

Also, using more participants to see other points of views could also prove to be helpful in this study.

SGM #3 - More time during the smaller group discussions would be helpful as well as printed talking points or questions to keep the momentum of the discussion on topic.

### **Reflections by the Candidate**

In this project, the structure and process as detailed in the prospectus for timetable, meetings, research, leadership recruitment, and collaborative work was followed consistently and methodically. Immediately after the approval of the prospectus, the process of collecting research materials such as books, articles, videos etc. was started which was succeeded by preliminary project planning, recruitment of lay advisory committee, recruitment of participants, pre and post testing of participants, all of which took place in a timely manner.

Faculty Colloquium Leaders were very helpful in formulating the project topic and prospectus. They helped in focusing on the needs and challenges of the particular subject matter. D. Min. Colloquium was well designed and arranged to help the candidates to progress smoothly in their desired study tracks.

Since the project was based on a highly challenging and un-researched subject, my quest began to determine major causes of conflict and challenges among the first and second generation of the Indian Pentecostal church members in the United States. Part of the initial process of the research was reading books and articles related to the challenges and conducting one on one talks with church leaders etc. During the research study, “church related” proposed changes such as more participation for the young people in



worship services, trying to maintain most of the worship services in English, etc. were integrated in regular church activities and I conducted one seminar for the whole church on the subject of intergenerational relationships, to assess the efficacy of the hypothesis.

It was a novel idea among the Indian Pentecostal community in the United States to bring both generations together to meet and discuss the challenges the families as well as the churches face. In the beginning I was concerned about the selection of participants from both generations because I was not sure how they would respond and what their reaction be.

It was a struggle in my heart whether the project would end up a success or a failure. In the beginning I asked myself, “am I opening a can of worms?” To my surprise, both generations were willing to participate in the project and I noticed that the first generation was more enthusiastic to give their feedback during discussions. Their keen interest in the subject, was noticeable. My own Indian cultural bias played a role in my calculation that the first generation would be reluctant to answer questions related to marriage, parenting etc. But the project sessions changed my view, because the first generation participants were so willing to present their ideas.

The topic that I chose for the project actually derived from my own ministry experience as an immigrant church pastor and parent. I could see the need for inter-generational relationships in the first and second generation of the Indian Pentecostal community. But it was so challenging for me to present the subject matter before the people, and not only that I was really concerned, how it will affect my own existence. It was just a fear in my heart, however; the project went well and its results began to reflect in my own ministry and church as well.

I was literally struggling to answer some of the questions about matters like interracial marriage, authoritative Indian parenting style, etc. To a certain extent, I became empty and feared matters would get out of hand. Sincerely speaking, during this time, I reminded myself that I am a pastor and I need to balance both generations without hurting them or causing anyone any harm.

All four speakers did an incredible job on the subjects assigned to them. One of the speakers could not show up because of some unexpected church related matters. However, two weeks before the scheduled session, I was able to find another suitable candidate to handle the session. All of them were able to relate to both generations. One speaker has second-generation young adult children and the other three speakers have second-generation teen-age children, which enriched their presentations.

It was a great boost in my leadership as a church pastor because the project opened my eyes to both opportunities and means to bridge the gap between the two generations in a more systematic way. As a pastor of multiple-generation Indian immigrant families in the United States, I have become aware of the need to be more careful with my practice of ministry in order not to compromise its scriptural foundation, while still meeting the needs of both generations. This project was unprecedented in this community and it has paved the way for a wide range of changes to be implemented for both the short term and long term.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Soil erosion is one of the main challenges of the agriculture industry. What does soil erosion really mean? The unprotected topsoil is gradually eroded and the earth loses one to two inches of fertile soil every year and that inadvertently affects the productivity. This may be due to severe weather conditions such as washing away of topsoil by heavy rains, or loss of loose soil during the stormy seasons. There are various ways to prevent the earth's precious topsoil from being eroded such as building a retaining wall or fence or creating awareness among people of the need to plant more grass etc.

The exodus of the younger generation from the church is considered somewhat similar to the erosion of fertile soil. When compared to other immigrant churches, the Indian Pentecostal Churches in the United States are also facing deep challenges in keeping different generations under one roof. Even though the church has strong emphasis on teaching the Word of God, the cultural impact of their country of origin continues to strongly influence how they regularly conduct affairs. Working with this highly contemporary subject opened an incredible opportunity to throw light upon the challenges and paved the way to have meaningful discussions between both first and second generations.

After completely embracing the overall purpose of the project and its hypothesis, the researcher's heart and soul was dedicated develop workable solutions. Challenges are

not accidental, especially when they happen in the community of faith. Hence long-term strategies are needed to prevent the complete loss of a church generation.

Salient points emerging from the project, which include ways to improve intergenerational relationships are:

- ❖ The first generation must be willing to sacrifice the irrelevant traditions and customs, which were carried from their country of origin and at the same time second generation must honor the strong family values of the first generation.
- ❖ The first generation must develop a thorough awareness of the culture and context where the second generation has been growing up.
- ❖ Both generations must apply themselves to learn core Biblical values with a more pragmatic approach than blindly following their learned or traditional cultural practices.
- ❖ The approach of the second generation towards life is more practical than theoretical, making it easier for them to unlearn, relearn and practically apply what is relevant.
- ❖ Churches must change their approach to teach the Word of God, using contextualized and contemporary life applications.
- ❖ Churches must organize strategies to reach out to the groups who have left, being cognizant of others who are ready to follow them.
- ❖ Enable members of the second generation to assume more leadership roles that will play a more practical and meaningful part of the growth of the church. They can have a positive impact on the other members of the second generation.
- ❖ Churches must be more missional with an expanded worldview of the Kingdom

and must involve the second generation actively in this process.

- ❖ Churches must reach outside of the four walls of the building, engaging in social and charitable activities, which excites the second generation.
- ❖ Churches must use the available resources of pastors and counselors to provide more opportunities to openly address the present day inter-generational challenges through seminars, counseling, and even sermons, for parents, children, and youth.
- ❖ As the generation gap widens due to language, style and comfort factors, using a combination of integrated services which accommodates the needs of both generation will strengthen the churches.
- ❖ More awareness through seminars and outreach must be created among the first generation to learn to live with their children more harmoniously at home, which will radiate to the church atmosphere.
- ❖ More emphasis must be given in improving communication between both generations, which will strengthen families as well as the church.
- ❖ Churches must be willing to set practical, measurable goals for improving inter-generational relationships.

According to David Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist and philosopher,

“Each new generation is reared by its predecessor; the latter must therefore improve in order to improve its successor. The movement is circular.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, generations cannot exist in isolation, since they are interrelated. They need each other and they contribute to

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/e/emiledurkh556227.html#rX5LrhM7BqXQemvD.99> (Accessed 2/12/2015).

each other for their own welfare and the welfare of the community. Here is the importance of improving inter-generational relationships.

Promoting or building a meaningful and progressive inter-generational relationship is an arduous task. When people are born and raised in different generations and different countries and cultures, their ideas about the world can be quite diverse. This can lead to difficulties in understanding one another. Due to this gap in understanding between generations, it is important to find links to maintain a healthy community and as well as a community of faith.

Intergenerational relationships within a community are not a novel idea, as they have existed from the very beginning of human history. The term “generations” means the people born and living at about the same time. Thus the term ‘intergeneration’ means more than one generation living together. The Psalmist says, “One generation shall commend your works to another,”<sup>2</sup> which particularly speaks about different generations living together in a trusting and loving relationship, opening the door for all to understand the work of the Lord and proclaim God’s greatness.

Like any other immigrant community, Indian Pentecostal churches in the United States also are undergoing the same challenges in terms of inter-generational relationships, especially in areas of marriage, church, parenting and worldview. Future researchers may want to explore additional intergenerational challenges in areas not covered by this project.

The focus of the study was very relevant to the present day Indian Pentecostal community. The topic addressed a real issue that many families face in their daily lives.

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<sup>2</sup> Psalms 145:4 (English Standard Version).

The community has been seeing and facing an increase in challenges related to inter-generational relationships. Working on this project gave more of an insight into how parenting, marriage, church and worldview are so inter-connected.

Indian culture and geographic origin define the identity of who they are, and where they came from. As Christians, one should have a good set of Bible-based beliefs and values, more than cultural values. This should be the fundamental basis to guide and raise children.

Dikembe Mutombo, a Congolese American retired humanitarian worker, said “God put us here to prepare this place for the next generation. That's our job. Raising children and helping the community, that's preparing for the next generation.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/d/dikembemut607945.html#xWZsMKP5fvCr0hWe.99> (Accessed 2/13/2015).

## APPENDIX 1

### OUTLINES OF THE WORKSHOP PROGRAMS

All four workshops program formats were almost same:

1) Marriage 2) Parenting 3) Church 4) Worldview

- Opening Prayer
- Song
- Introduction of Speaker and Participants
- Presentation of Topic
- Speaker Task
- Breakout Session
- Reflections by Group Leaders
- Recap
- Closing Prayer
- Refreshments



## APPENDIX 2

### GUIDELINES FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

1. The purpose of the seminars/workshops and other exercises is not to find out the right or wrong answer about the subject which is being presented.
2. The focus of all exercises is to experience true dialogue in which we attempt to interconnect honestly and listen actively to each other.
3. Open your hearts and minds to experience and embrace new ideas and challenges.
4. The facilitator may not be an expert in answering all your questions and dispelling all your doubts. Please raise questions with intent for collective learning.
5. Facilitators will be well versed in each subject. However, his/her role is to provide a structure and process by which we can better understand the relevant subjects and not to give concrete solutions to issues identified.
6. It is of utmost importance to keep the personal information shared in these consortiums confidential, thus facilitating candid discussions of subjects.
7. Please be present to the sessions on time.
8. The primary medium of communication will be English.

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