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INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATION FOR AN INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH?

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Abstract

From the biblical era, Christian faith communities have been intergenerational entities. This article examines how Christian education strategies have expressed intergenerationalism; suggests three major reasons why intergenerational Christian education should be developed with more vigor (Christian theology, spiritual formation, and societal fragmentation); and provides clues for facilitating intergenerationalism in faith communities.

Ever since the development of Christian faith communities in the post-Pentecost era of Christianity, there has been a consciousness that such communities need to encourage and embody a genuine intergenerationalism.

Is this same emphasis demonstrated in the Christian church today? Lip service is paid, often eloquently, to the church as intergenerational, yet in practice a rampant segregationism obtains in many congregations in the key aspects of congregational life: worship and education.¹ Within the field of Christian education, it is a discouraging exercise to search for literature that develops an intergenerational methodology, for the vast majority of resources assume a closely age-graded, segregated model. Seldom do Christian-education textbooks allude to intergenerational Christian education (IGCE²), and a re-

¹ The writer appreciates the wide range of meanings given the term "Christian education." In this article, "Christian education" is used to refer to the educational endeavors of Christian faith communities, enabling persons to understand, appropriate and apply the Christian faith.

² "Intergenerational Christian education" (IGCE) is used in this article because the focus is specifically Christian. Some writers prefer the broader term "intergener-

view of the cumulative indexes of specialist periodicals fails to yield much fruit.

This writer is convinced that the topic can no longer continue to be played down as a peripheral concern by Christian educators. Instead, intergenerational strategies are sufficiently relevant to be addressed as a significant aspect of the dialogue on the educational task of Christian faith communities, with the potential to complement or even refocus current Christian education methodologies and theory.

There have been encouraging developments with IGCE in a cross section of cultural, ethnic, and denominational settings over recent decades—developments in which it is not sufficient simply to have a group of people of differing ages together, but rather in which elements of intentional and mutual interaction in a multiage grouping are consciously encouraged.³ In the 1970s a small number of books were published outlining intergenerational programs in faith communities. Three of those books have since become benchmark titles in subsequent IGCE development: Sharee and Jack Rogers's *The Family Together: Intergenerational Education in the Church School* (1976), Don and Pat Griggs's *Generations Learning Together* (1976), and George Koehler's *Learning Together: A Guide for Intergenerational Education in the Church* (1977). These were primarily practical guides, based on the authors' own experimentation, but they also suggested limited theoretical bases for their approach. Elsewhere⁴ developments similar to those in North America were occurring, notably in Australia/New Zealand where the Joint Board of Christian Education (JBCE, the educational unit for a consortium of denominations comprising the Uniting Church in Australia, Anglican and Churches

ational religious education" (IGRE), even though they are addressing a predominantly Christian context.

³ These elements are essential. George E. Koehler (cited in White 1988, 19) defined "a setting for intergenerational education" as "a planned opportunity for teaching-learning as a faith community in which a major purpose is to engage persons of two or more generations in shared experiences/interaction, caring and mutual responsibility for learning." Charles R. Foster (in Taylor 1984, 282) puts it slightly differently: "Intergenerational education gathers people from at least two and preferably three or more age-groups or generations into a teaching-learning process in which all members give and receive from the experience."

⁴ The literature examined is limited to what has been reported in the English language. However, personal correspondence from Christian educators in Asia and Europe suggests that IGCE is an area which has not been explored significantly in non-English-speaking countries.

of Christ churches in Australia/New Zealand, and Methodist and Presbyterian churches in New Zealand) was publishing the first titles in its SPAN series of resources, "designed to help churches to work with families and with other groups which span the generations" (Burnham 1977, 1978).

The major trigger for this approach was the growing concern that children were not being adequately catered for in the traditional church education programs, with their usually unquestioned commitment to segregated learning. Fuel was added by reports of decreasing numbers of children in Sunday schools (British Council of Churches 1976; Richards 1983; Stewart 1976). The titles above arose out of a hunch, leading to a firm conviction, that intergenerational educational opportunities could counter this trend; hence their "experimental" nature. But the developing focus of the discourse in Christian educational theory was also contributory: the writings of C. Ellis Nelson (1971) and John H. Westerhoff III (1970, 1972), with their emphasis on the community context of Christian education, were cited in most of these early IGCE writings.

The initial enthusiasm for IGCE appeared to wane for some years following, although the chapter it was accorded in *Changing Patterns of Religious Education* (Foster, in Taylor 1984) was positive. However, 1988 saw the publication of James White's *Intergenerational Religious Education*.⁵ This is an impressive attempt both to provide a philosophical and theological undergirding for IGCE and to present a "total parish paradigm" based on this theory and White's own experiences. An ancillary service White also provided was an extensive list of resources available in North America for IGCE programs (White 1988, 58–65). This diverse range of material (which includes a small number of Jewish perspectives) adds credence to Foster's contention (ibid., 278) that such intergenerational educational development has been essentially a grassroots development.

White's listing of predominantly North American resources is impressive, but it highlights the continuing need for more effective international networking in Christian education because a number of IGCE practitioners in other countries were also making a contribution. For example, in Australia, Michael Lush (1983, 1986) and Megan

⁵ White used the term "intergenerational *religious* education" in order to be inclusive of any religious community; but his focus was predominantly Christian faith communities.

Coote (1988) had written handbooks of practical resources; while in England, heightened awareness of possibilities for children and adults to be more closely integrated in their church-related activities spawned a range of resources (Dean 1992; General Synod Board of Education 1990; Privett 1993). In South Africa, Eddie Prest authored *From One Generation to Another* (1993).

A significant complementary development through the latter years of the 1980s was that some publishers of Christian-education curriculum resources were adopting this intergenerational perspective as a key feature of their ethos: the JBCE in Australia/New Zealand⁶; Scripture Union in England, with its international *Learning Together* curriculum,⁷ and the lectionary-based *The Whole People of God* curriculum in Canada are significant examples.⁸ These curricula provide integrated program resources comprising both age-related teaching modules and significant intergenerational opportunities.

Another feature of IGCE was its close link to more meaningful intergenerational worship experiences, a recognition that corporate worship is an important component in the educational strategy of a faith community. Thus a feature of all three of the curricula above is that they are designed for educational processes that normally start in Sunday services where persons of all ages (young children through to senior adults) meet together for at least some time before the children are ushered off to their age-graded Sunday-school programs. Encouragement is given to make at least part of the worship service inclusive and relevant to people across the age spectrum and to integrate the theme of the educational activities with that of the worship services. It is also recognition that the corporate worship event has educational

⁶ From 1993 the JBCE curricula developed into the *Life Plus* resources, designed "to make Christian education . . . more about the community of the church learning and worshipping together . . ."

⁷ Margaret Old, former editor of this curriculum, writes: "When Scripture Union materials were renamed *Learning together* in 1984, that was a reflection of the need to move away from any emphasis on teacher and taught to a realization of what it means to be a family of all ages, adults as well as children, *learning together*" ("Sunday School must go!" *Teaching 7-11's*, January-March [London: Scripture Union 1989], 36). This curriculum has continued consistently along this track, being renamed *SALT* (Sharing And Learning Together) in 1993.

⁸ I have also recently been alerted to (but have not sighted) resources produced as part of the *Jubilee* curriculum by the Mennonite Brethren in Winnipeg, Canada. These resources are apparently both intergenerational and sensitive to the "Judeo" aspect of our Judeo-Christian faith.

significance. In many faith communities the focus is on incorporating children (perceived as a neglected group) more effectively into the processes of corporate worship, and a number of books have been written to specifically address this issue (e.g., Gobbel and Huber 1981; Graystone and Turner 1993; Ng and Thomas 1981; and Stewart, Stewart and Green 1987). However, all age groups need to be considered in intergenerational worship/learning to enhance the sense of belonging and unity within the faith community, even though this may require special sensitivity to ensure genuine mutual acceptance of the participation and contributions of, for example, adolescents and youth.

The place of the family as society's most common intergenerational entity cannot be sidestepped in this discussion. For some, the major motivating factor behind the development of IGCE was the breakdown of the family unit, not least in churches, and so it is not surprising that IGCE models have focused on family units. During the 1970s this concern for family was addressed by writers like Henry and Henry (1978), Hilyard (in Perry 1979), and Rogers and Rogers (1976). Furthermore, Margaret Sawin's (1979) "family cluster" model of church-based education, developed then as a strategy to recognize and strengthen family as "a system of continuous, interacting human relationships among individuals of different generations" (1988, 130f), has continued to be promoted by practitioners such as Mary Ann Brittain (see Strobel 1988) and family therapist Robert Stogner (1988). A more recent model worth examination is Kathleen O'Connell Chesto's (1991) *FIRE (Family-centred Intergenerational Religious Education)*, a Roman Catholic, parish-based program with a four-year curriculum cycle of resources. Pancoast and Bobula's *Building Multi-Generational Support Networks* (in Garland and Pancoast 1990, 171–183), while not directly on IGCE, contributes to raising the profile of the need for significant interfamily (and hence intergenerational) networks within Christian faith communities.

It is encouraging to see the substantial body of literature which attempts to meet the need for Christian education within family units. However, educators in Christian faith communities need to be aware of a danger: IGCE models which focus on family units rather than commencing with the congregational unit often fail to take sufficient cognizance of the reality of many contemporary congregations which comprise a wide range of people for whom a "family" model for church may be unhelpful. Indeed, an irony in many faith communities

is that a strong affirmation of “the family” is made while concurrently the bulk of the communities’ programs practically deny genuine intergenerational interaction! In an attempt to overcome some of the restrictions inherent in a “family” model of church, some Christian educators (e.g., General Synod Board of Education 1988; Graystone 1989) are advocating a “pilgrim church” model—“a pilgrim community [comprising] a band of people all sharing in and learning from common experiences” (General Synod Board of Education 1988, 33). Such a model recognizes the primacy of the faith community rather than the family as the milieu for Christian growth, a point treated with vigor by Rodney Clapp (1993).

Currently, new IGCE resources are being produced,⁹ but the critical question remains: Is IGCE merely a fad, or is it an area into which more creative energy needs to be poured? There are three major reasons why this author believes the development of relevant intergenerational strategies is not merely a passing craze, but will continue to be critical for effective Christian education in faith communities:¹⁰

1. Our theology demands it.

Intergenerationalism was a feature of the faith communities in both the Old Testament and New Testament eras. Such a perspective was inherent in the sense of corporateness of the Old Testament Hebraic tradition, with the outcome that

children, representing the new generation were not merely included in the religion of Israel, they were assimilated or incorporated with a deep sense of belonging into the body or the family of God’s covenant people. (Prest 1993, 25)

From its Old Testament Jewish roots, the early Christian church maintained its intergenerational entity with persons of all ages considered to be integral parts of it. Robert Banks (1980, 1988) points to the early churches being intergenerational, with children present in most of the activities and meetings—and even persecutions! Given this context, the range of metaphors used by the New Testament writers to stress the corporate nature of the church (especially “the people of God,” “the Messianic community,” “the body of Christ,” “the fellow-

⁹ E.g., the catalog for Abingdon Press reveals a steady stream of new titles.

¹⁰ The scope of this article necessarily limits me to painting in broad strokes. To do full justice to the following areas would require separate, detailed analytical articles.

ship of the Holy Spirit,” and “the family of God”) arguably have an inherent sense of intergenerationalism about them.

That the church is a community made up of persons of all ages is an integral component of Christian ecclesiology. Thus Koehler (1977), in a series of affirmations about the church, can confidently list as the primary one that:

The church is all generations. From the newly baptized infant to the homebound, aged widow—all are members of the faith community. None are potential members; none are ex-members. Though some congregations may have no younger members (and a few no elderly), most have all five generations. And all are members of the Body. (Koehler 1977, 10)

Similarly, a report from the United Church of Canada lists as characteristics of Christian community that

[t]he faith community is understood to be ageless . . . Age, time and generations are transcended . . . All members, regardless of race, sex, age, cultural background, economic status are to be included in the full life, work and worship of the church. (Division of Mission in Canada 1986, 2)

A prime example of a generational grouping which is particularly likely to be marginalized within local congregations is children. The often-held view is that they are “the church of tomorrow,” but they belong to the gathered community, and

are not to be kept in cold storage for the church of tomorrow. They have not been sent by the devil to distract you but by God to enrich you. (Stewart, Stewart and Green 1987, 113)

Ron Buckland, long-time advocate for enhancing the place of children in the church, highlights particularly clearly the dilemma faced in the inclusion of children in Christian faith communities:

Do children belong to the church? We can answer that question on at least two levels. Their inclusion in the network of relationships, the family of families, which makes up the local congregation is usually unchallenged. At the same time, their inclusion in formal membership of the congregation or of the denomination of which they are part is often rejected. We seem to want children as members of *the* church, but not members of *our* church! (Buckland 1988, 93f)

There are three main theological arenas in which writers have attempted to deal with the basis of the inclusion of children as members in the church. The theological stance a congregation adopts on

baptism usually influences the perspective taken on the place of children in its life: It is not surprising that churches from denominations which hold the stance that paedobaptism is normative as the rite of entry into the church have tended to occupy the IGCE stage.¹¹ Proponents of conversion-baptism ("believers' baptism"), especially those who limit baptism to adults, tend to see children as in a preparatory stage in which they are clearly not-yet-members, and so see little reason why, theologically, there need to be intergenerational processes based on a sense of membership equity. Such equity of children in faith communities is justified by other commentators on the bases that they belong to the church on the basis of God's unqualified grace to all (a position summarized by Smith 1984); and by virtue of their status within the Kingdom of God (see Buckland 1988; Pridmore 1977; Weber 1979).

The preceding paragraph has focused on children, but similar pleas for fuller inclusion and systemic integration can be made, for example, for senior adults, too often isolated from the mainstream of the congregation; for single adults in congregations comprised predominantly of family groupings; or for youth who *prima facie* prefer generational segregation but whose needs as they are growing toward maturity are best met by involvement in both family and the surrounding community (East and Roberto 1994). Mutual enrichment in relationships and ministry with persons of the other generations is not optional, for

intergenerational relationships are of the essence for the contemporary church, and . . . serious thought and experimentation is called for, for the church to be true to its Biblical basis. (Prest 1993, 4)

2. *Our personal spiritual formation requires it.*

Participation in Christian community is important for personal spiritual formation, for the transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit is not completed in a social vacuum. Julie Gorman writes:

The formation of the person in Christ is not autonomous. It is the community, both historical and present, that forms the network of

¹¹ E.g., Koehler (1977) writes from the context of the United Methodist Church; White (1988), the United Church of Christ; and Ng and Thomas (1981), the Presbyterian Church. However, Lush (1983, 1986) is a Baptist; and the Scripture Union curriculum resources, written for use across a predominantly evangelical denominational spectrum, are used comfortably by congregations holding a conversion-baptism position.

relatedness and support for security in risking transformation. It is the community that also gives opportunity for expression of the character being formed. (Gorman 1990, 69)

It is in an intergenerational community that this formation is likely to be optimized, for each age group has unique contributions to make to the other age groups. John Westerhoff perceptively details a major area in which this can happen:

True community necessitates the presence and interaction of three generations. Too often the church either lacks the third generation or sets the generations apart. Remember that the third generation is the generation of memory, and without its presence the other two generations are locked into an existential present. While the first generation is potentially the generation of vision, it is not possible to have visions without a memory, and memory is supplied by the third generation. The second generation is the generation of the present. When it is combined with the generations of memory and vision, it functions to confront the community with reality, but, left to itself and the present, life becomes intolerable and meaningless. Without interaction between and among the generations, each making its own unique contribution, Christian community is difficult to maintain. (Westerhoff 1976, 53)

The impact of this interaction can be especially striking as adults allow themselves to learn from children. Paul Welter (1984), for example, provides data from numerous interviews with adults to demonstrate that children can teach adults faith, hope, love, the healing process, and growth as a way of life. Welter encourages adults to view children as potential spiritual mentors, a suggestion Sondra Higgins Matthaei (1991) similarly proposes for teachers, counselling them to be more open to a reciprocal faith-mentoring role between themselves and students in the classroom. The traditional school model of Christian education and nurture, which continues to maintain the roles of adult-as-teacher and child-as-learner, needs to be reexamined and a greater codependence encouraged which allows for mutual teaching and learning, a view advocated on both sides of the Atlantic by the General Synod Board of Education (1988, 28ff) and Seymour, Crain and Crockett (1993, 137ff). This perspective recognizes that different people have different kinds of knowledge, skills, and experiences, and all need more than one kind of these. However,

if we in the church are serious about the idea of children as leaders, then we must state strongly and clearly our view of children against the way our culture defines them . . . For Christians, all children are gifts of God to the whole community. (Williams 1993, 11)

Another Christian educator summarizes this point lucidly: "We not only do well to learn from children, *we must*" (Stretton 1993, 34).

This article does not allow for a detailed discussion of the benefits of interactions between other age groups, but the overall picture demonstrates that a faith community which encourages intentional intergenerational educational processes will enhance in its members the development of the spiritual (as well as psychological and social) qualities needed for personal growth and maturity that might otherwise remain dormant or unfulfilled. This is clearly a major objective of our Christian education endeavors.

3. *Society is searching for it.*

In recent years numerous commentators, secular and religious, have registered their concern that *contemporary postmodern western society is showing itself adept at fragmenting itself*. White (1988, 4) describes as "almost a conspiracy" the way in which social institutions such as work, schools, government, clubs and organizations, and the media and entertainment industry encourage age segregation,¹² with *resulting degrees of social impoverishment arising from this lack of intergenerational contact* (Pancoast and Bobula 1990, 173).

This is a state of affairs which many find quite unsatisfying. Howard Snyder suggests that if we

listen carefully, [we] will hear the muffled cry and sigh for community today. . . . Many people, Christians as well as nonbelievers, long for more intimate and meaningful relationships with other persons. (Snyder 1983, 112)

In a similar vein, noted Anglican theologian John Stott (1991) argues that one of the three contemporary quests of humankind, along with transcendence and significance, is the quest for community.

In this context, it is encouraging to observe that intergenerational programming and exchange is a growing movement in some western countries. For example AARP (1993) and Wilson (1994) list a wide range of current programs in communities across the U.S.A. The challenge facing the Christian church, existing as "the only institution in society with people of every age as its constituency" (White, in Neff and Ratcliff, in press, 22) and "with the whole family as its client"

¹² An historical analysis of this trend is given by Peter N. Stearns in Newman and Brummel (1989, 21–32).

(Eastman 1989, 201), is to be in the forefront of developing this movement, for, as Howard Snyder again comments,

[U]ndermining community in the church destroys the best hope for community in the world, the best chance for rebuilding community in society. When the church is a genuine community experiencing real koinonia, it is the most potent source of community in the world. (Snyder 1983, 114, emphasis his)

This message was strongly reinforced in the *Manila manifesto* of the 1989 International Congress on Worldwide Evangelization:

The church is intended by God to be a sign of his Kingdom, that is, an indication of what human community looks like when it comes under his rule of righteousness and peace. As with individuals, so with churches, the gospel has to be embodied if it is to be communicated effectively. It is through our love for one another that the invisible God reveals himself today, especially when our fellowship is expressed in small groups, and when it transcends the barriers of race, rank, sex *and age* which divides other communities. (Douglas 1990, 34; emphasis mine)

The local church has the potential to be *the* institution to which people come to achieve their aspirations as persons created for community, a countercultural organism with the dynamic to transcend social barriers—including age—and from within which people can be helped to appraise their culture. A key aspect of this process is learning with and from the other members of the community, whatever their age. However, as James White (1994) comments, “ageism is very deeply cultural,” and no one pretends that it is easy to integrate theology and practice in intergenerational matters when so much of our cultural conditioning militates against it. But the Division of Mission in Canada report reminds us of the potential impact of a movement toward increasing our commitment to intergenerational ministry:

Being an intergenerational community is more than whether there is juice along with the coffee, ramps for easy access to rooms and crayons to colour with. It is also a grand vision of who we are as a church. It involves us in changing how we define, picture and live as a Christian community. (Division of Mission in Canada 1986, 2)

As a result of the insights above, readers may well be stirred to move the educational program of their faith communities in a direction which is more effectively intergenerational. The following steps may help to facilitate such change:

1. *Raise the subject with interested people and decision makers.*

Talking with individuals will help to clarify the vision, give people a chance to think about it at their own pace, and avoid the potential confrontation that could arise if the matter is raised "cold" in an open meeting. Discuss the issue with people from the different generations (including children), especially those who are the opinion leaders, for change is more likely to happen when it becomes "our goal."

It is also well to remember that the question "How can we be more intergenerational?" must be asked in the context of the primary theological question for faith communities, "How can we be more effective in our life and mission under God?"

2. *Raise the level of congregational intergenerational consciousness.*

A starting point for involving the whole congregation may be teaching biblical principles on the nature of church as an intergenerational community, complemented by the opportunity for people to internalize their discoveries and be involved in consultation on areas of possible outworking. Change is unlikely to happen with the "theological fix" of one quick sermon, for concept development and attitude change take time. Avoid the tyranny of haste, and build the probability of success into the process.

3. *Find entry points in your own faith community.*

Each faith community is unique: What works for one may not be directly transferable to another because of different contextual factors. Look for natural opportunities that arise in existing programs to build in intergenerational components or to complement the present segregated activities. These openings may be in large- or small-group settings, formal or informal situations, using existing interfamily structures or ad hoc times in usually age-graded environments. A suitable opportunity may arise when the educational curriculum is being reviewed. Corporate congregational worship is perhaps the key environment for enhancing IGCE integration for many faith communities, and resources abound to assist development in this context.¹³

¹³ See the books referred to in the comments on intergenerational worship above; in addition, *PMC (the Practice of Ministry in Canada)* 11: 1 (February 1994), was devoted to the theme of intergenerational worship.

4. *Recognize factors which enhance intergenerational involvement.*

People of different ages and temperaments learn best in a variety of different ways.¹⁴ Four factors will especially encourage greater enjoyment and involvement by people of all ages in IGCE events:¹⁵

- (i) ***Build in variety:*** Plan for a variety of experiences to provide a means for both exploring and responding. Variety may be in the range of teaching-learning experiences used, whether people respond together or individually, the choice of music, how the Bible is used, a balance of silence and sound, cognitive and affective focus, and so on. In a recent intergenerational worship and learning program on the theme of "Jesus—the good shepherd" co-led by this author, the range of experiences included singing, listening (to the Bible passage and an interview with two shepherds), discussing in small groups, personal reflection, praying, participating in a range of craft activities, writing (a personal commitment for the year ahead) and eating (sheep-shaped biscuits!). A note of warning, however: Avoid undue complexity in the activities which may lead to confusion and divergence of attention from the main thrust of the program.
- (ii) ***Integrate IGCE programs around a central theme:*** A central theme serves as an organizing focus for both leaders and participants. As all activities chosen support this concept, so participants will find themselves leaving the program with a clearer appreciation gained of the topic. In the worship component of the "Good Shepherd" program, several adults commented that they "missed having a sermon." What they failed to realize was that the whole program was "the sermon," for all the components contributed to the theme! The most helpful themes are those that are relevant to common life-needs of the participants and which draw on their varied experiences.
- (iii) ***Encourage participation:*** The active involvement of all participants is important, while at the same time ensuring people are not coerced into situations in which they feel too high a level of discomfort. There will need to be a balance between activities

¹⁴ A helpful introductory article is Zettler (1987).

¹⁵ The original source of these four factors is not clear. However, I am indebted to fellow IGCE pilgrims Michael Lush and John Emmett for some of the ideas.

based on cognitive/abstract thought processes on one hand and affective/"concrete" processes on the other. Plan also throughout each program for meaningful, nonthreatening interaction between people across the generational barriers. A key to enjoyable participation is providing a balance of activities, for while movement and action are especially important for some age groups, and stillness and quiet reflection provide significant learning environments for others, there is potential for all to learn to draw on the strengths of approaches they are less familiar with. In the "Good Shepherd" program, adults and children alike were encouraged to use the percussion instruments, to make the biscuits, to participate in the craft activities, and so on, but at no time was strong coercion used. **This element of voluntariness was itself, somewhat paradoxically, what led some of the adults to try things they would have resisted if they had felt any sense of pressure.**

- (iv) **Utilize as many of the five senses as possible:** Christian education is often stereotyped as being excessively cognitive. But creative IGCE facilitators will recognize that each of our senses can provide a means of experiencing the world and so encourage "whole of life" learning. Children do this with intuitive ease, but older people can be helped to reverse their conditioning and rediscover that learning consistent with the quality of life we seek to bring to spiritual growth can be enhanced if more than one of the senses is engaged, and this process is often easier in a relaxed intergenerational context. Thus sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell can all be used to good effect. In the "Good Shepherd" program all the senses were used at least a little: sight (two live sheep, creating a large banner), sound (the spoken and sung word, percussion instruments, and the occasional bleat!), touch (the greasiness of natural wool, using a spinning wheel, the texture of biscuits), taste (sheep-shaped biscuits), and smell (sheep, and freshly-cooked biscuits). All contributed to a program that combined the different spheres of learning—cognitive, affective, dispositional, and relational—into a holistic learning and worshiping experience.

5. **Review prayerfully.**

It is God's Holy Spirit who is instrumental in bringing about the changes envisaged at the heart of the educational ministry of faith communities. Acknowledging this is especially important in the development and review of IGCE programs because of the increased

potential for misunderstanding that arises from bringing people from different generations together for meaningful interaction. But as prayer permeates all stages of the IGCE endeavor, so God's perspectives will be discovered for each unique faith community.

A key challenge always facing the Christian church is for its practices to be congruent with its biblical and theological foundations. If faith communities are to be faithful to their divine commission, their educational strategies must reflect an authentic intergenerationalism. Strategies to achieve this must therefore be placed considerably higher on the Christian education agenda!

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