

INTERGENERATIONALITY: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS



Allan G. Harkness

Asia Graduate School of Theology Alliance

Abstract: This article provides a brief overview of key biblical and theological foundations for intergenerational processes in Christian faith communities. On the strength of these perspectives, it advocates that intergenerational interaction is imperative for personal Christian growth and for corporate church life if the practices of both are going to be consistent with their ecclesiology.

Key Words: Intergenerational education, theology, theological foundations, faith development

Introduction

Some years ago the following question was asked in the context of North American society: “What would happen if the generations started seeing themselves not as separate teams but as players on a single team?” (American Association of Retired Persons, 1993, p. 8). The same question has been—and is being—asked around the world in Christian faith communities.¹ Such intergenerational concern is not simply a recent development:

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. (Harkness, 1998, p. 431)

Secular theory and research demonstrate that the impact of intergenerational interactions on personality and societal development is substantial. But is that sufficient reason for advocating for intergenerationality for Christian nurture in Christian settings?

This article gives biblical and theological foundations for intergenerational interaction as imperative in Christian faith communities. This article is limited to a brief overview, but it reinforces the conclusion enunciated by Australian Kevin Smith who noted that bringing the generations together is seen as a deviation from “normal”; on the contrary, according to Smith, from God’s viewpoint “we must see ‘*generational streaming*’ [separating the

generations] as the deviation from ‘normal!’” (personal communication, February 3, 1996).²

Terms comparable to *intergenerational* have a variety of connotations. In this article, I use the term to differentiate between people on the basis of perceived differences directly attributable to chronological age. As such, the age differences may be less than the chronological interval between parents and their offspring: In Western societies, the significant age-spread differences could allow for six or seven “generations” across the total lifespan.

Also significant for this article is that intergenerational activity refers to interaction across age groups in which there is a sense of mutuality—that is, where participants both give to and receive from those of other ages. It is much more about collaborative involvement *with* others, rather than simply ministry *to* others.³ The challenges and opportunities are accentuated when thinking about children—much of the literature responds to the need to incorporate children into church life—but other interage combinations need to be kept in mind as well:

This vision includes the whole church, not only children and teens, but senior adults too who “are capable of continued growth in faith, insight and zest for living.” It is a vision which understands that the exclusion of any from our midst weakens us and keeps us from wholeness. (United Church of Canada, n.d., pp. 1–2)

Intergenerational Interaction in the Biblical Record

Many examples of intergenerational interactions are seen in the Bible. A sampling of these, apart from obvious and numerous family ones (e.g., parents with their children, such as Noah or Abraham and their sons), includes: Moses and Jethro (Exod 18); Ruth and Naomi (Book of Ruth); Samuel and Eli (1 Sam 1–3); David and Saul (1 Sam 16–31); Mary and Elizabeth (Luke 1:39–56); Simeon and Anna, responding to the presentation of Jesus in the temple as a newborn child (Luke 2:22–38); Jesus in discussion with the teachers of Israel in the temple precincts (Luke 2:41–47); Jesus’ disciples and the boy with five loaves and two fish (John 6:1–14); the various interactions between Jesus and young people he healed, for example the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–17), Jairus’s daughter (Matt 9:18–19, 23–26; Mark 5:21–24, 35–43; Luke 8:40–42, 49–56), and the boy with an evil spirit (Matt 17:14–21; Mark 9:14–29; Luke 9:37–45); Paul and Timothy (Acts 16; 1 & 2 Tim); the baptism of the Philippian jailer “and his entire family” (Acts 16:29–34); Paul and Eutychus (Acts 20:7–12); and Paul with the Christians in Tyre, including “wives and children” (Acts 21:3–6).

Skeptics of the intergenerational concept may suggest that such a list, abstracted from a volume as large as the Bible, fails to provide sufficient evidence of an inherent principle of intergenerational interaction. But a key hermeneutical principle needs to be recalled: the books of the Bible were written in historico-cultural contexts, generally as occasional documents addressing specific concerns. Because the faith communities of both the Old Testament and New Testament were naturally intergenerational communities, the comparative silence on major concerns relating to the intergenerational principle may lead us to reasonably assume that they were functioning adequately as such. In the light of this, the number of intergenerational interactions “coincidentally” recorded is heartening rather than discouraging.

Two areas addressed in the New Testament are especially significant in presenting the necessity for intergenerational interaction: the nature of discipleship outlined by Jesus, and the “household tables” in the New Testament letters.

Discipleship—An Intergenerational Imperative

Arguably the most significant intergenerational interactions in the Gospels are in the pericopes in which Jesus used children for his teaching about life in God’s “kingdom community” (Matt 18:1–7; Mark 9:33–37; and Luke 9:46–48; Matt 19:13–15, Mark 10:13–16; and Luke 18:15–17). These interactions are central in the concept of discipleship that Jesus presented to his followers and that was adopted by the New Testament churches: Jesus is shown using the character and behavior of children to alert adults to the challenges of living with integrity in their covenant relationship with God. Here, Jesus cut incisively through the prevailing attitudes towards both childhood and membership of the kingdom of God by declaring that “it is to such as these [children] that the kingdom of God belongs” (Mark 10:14b), and then continuing, “Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it” (Mark 10:15).

In saying this, Jesus challenged his listeners to reconceptualize their value systems by calling into question the commonly held ideal of the maturity of adulthood. Jesus was not, of course, calling adults to *childishness*, but rather to an acknowledgement that the independence, power, and responsibility normally associated with “grown-up-ness” may be illusory and self-deluding, and a hindrance to “a more fundamental dependence on God as the source of our being, our meaning, our motivations” (Dunn, 1992, p. 24). Such a dependent attitude is inherent in *childlikeness*, with its vulnerability and general sense of insignificance. Relearning these values was to be essential for disciples—something that the rich young ruler (in the pericope immediately following Jesus’ blessing of the children in the Synoptic Gospels) was clearly not able to do.

Thus, for Jesus, children were bearers of the essence and spirit of God's kingdom (Stewart, 1978, p. 45); they can be perceived as divine representatives, mediating the values of God's kingdom and being channels of God's grace (Drane, 1989, p. 14; Weber, 1979, p. 51). This quality may well be a major reason why Jesus warned his listeners against doing anything that would cause "these little ones" to stumble in their belief (Matt 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:1–2).

In short, because it is the qualities of childhood that Jesus promulgated as appropriate for God's "kingdom community," a major means by which adults will become aware of them will be through meaningful interaction with those who generally demonstrate such qualities—children.

The Haustafel ("Household Tables")

In the first-century world, the three key social relationships of wives, children, and slaves within a typical household were normally subordinated to the head of the household (*paterfamilias*) and subject to his wide-ranging powers (*patria potestas*). However, Paul offers new insight into the importance accorded these relationships in the New Testament churches in the household tables of Ephesians 5:22–6:9 and Colossians 3:18–4:1. In a remarkable and radical way, Paul argues for the churches to demonstrate "the reconstruction of communal relations" (Judge, 1985, p. 10). David Balch (1988) suggests, "[This] integrating power of the early Christian congregation [was] something entirely new in ancient social history" (p. 33).

This insight has significant bearing on our appreciation of intergenerational interaction. It is of particular interest that Paul included children, for this makes apparent that children in the early churches "were regarded as responsible agents who could be addressed and encouraged" in their interactions with others in the community (Banks, 1993, p. 24). John Pridmore (1977), in his seminal thesis on the New Testament theology of childhood, expounded this view further:

A point of fundamental importance emerges from Ephesians 6:1–4 and Colossians 3:20–21. Paul could hardly have addressed the children in the terms he does unless it was taken for granted that they were fully members of the Christian community. Their status as members of the Church is as sure as that of their parents for the whole Christian household is ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ [in the Lord]. (p. 185)

Thus, within the dynamics of the Christian faith communities, the guiding principle of Ephesians 5:21 ("Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ") took on an intergenerational dimension radically different from the prevailing cultural norms. Paul was not advocating a classless society;

what he affirmed was that distinctions of age, sex, and social standing are secondary to one's membership in the faith community and the associated mutual interdependence implied by that membership (Banks, 1994, pp. 107–126).

The pastoral letters, in which Paul instructed his reader(s) that his purpose in writing was that “you [singular] may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God” (1 Tim 3:15), provide further indications of how the communal reconstruction could be worked out practically. In 1 Timothy 5:1–16 and Titus 2:1–10, for example, Paul encourages a series of intergenerational relationships that normally existed in the typical Graeco-Roman extended-household context to contribute to the corporate growth of the Christian community. These relationships include those of Timothy to older men, younger men, older women, and younger women (1 Tim 5:1–2; Titus 2:2–7); the children or grandchildren of widows being urged to take responsibility for the care of their parents and/or grandparents (1 Tim 5:4); and the role of older women in the training of younger women (Titus 2:3–5; see also 1 Tim 5:9–16 for the expectations laid on widows, both younger and older).

In summary, Paul's purpose in urging people in the different generational cohorts to make these cross-age linkages was, at one level, to enhance the quality of community life, while at a deeper level they were to epitomize, and live in a manner consistent with, the distinctive theology of the newly constituted Christian communities. By so doing, they were demonstrating the radical nature of the Christian gospel to the watching but skeptical culture surrounding them.

Theological Foundations for Intergenerationality

A number of theological perspectives inform advocacy for enhanced intergenerational attitudes and practices in Christian faith communities. Three key perspectives are that

- intergenerationality is an expression of who God is,
- intergenerationality is the essence of the church, and
- intergenerational processes are integral to personal faith development.

Intergenerationality as an Expression of Who God Is

In their brief but excellent book on intergenerationality, Mountstephen and Martin (2004) say that the imperative for Christian community being all-age inclusive

... is rooted both in the Story of Scripture and in the character of the God revealed in Scripture; ... a community of love is at the heart of God. It is what he is. And of course what he is, his people are to be, that his character might be formed in them. (p. 5)

This sense of community is deeply Trinitarian, that is, God “being in communion,” the term popularized by the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas (Mountstephen & Martin, 2004, p. 5). Thus, expressions of community that reflect God’s relational nature require the inclusion and valuing of all the diversity of humanity in a covenant relationship with God if they are to witness to the one who created and sustains community as an expression of his nature. And this must include age diversity.

So, reflecting on God’s communal nature, it comes as no surprise that the majority of the biblical images of church have an underlying community dimension as a fundamental feature: “the people of God,” “the Messianic community,” “the body of Christ,” or “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” Thus Gordon Fee (1989) postulated, “The New Testament knows nothing about individual ‘saints,’ only about Christian communities as a whole who take up the Old Testament calling of Israel to be ‘God’s holy people’ in the world” (p. 5).

The stress on church as a corporate entity continued through into the post-biblical era. The Apostles’ Creed refers to “the communion of the saints,” and theological statements since have continued to affirm this. In short,

... to follow the Messiah is to live in solidarity with the messianic community. Christianity has never been simply a matter of one man and his God, or of one woman and her God—it is essentially a communal religion. It has always been this way and, hopefully, always will be. (Gill, 1990, p. 65)

A memorable phrase of Walter Brueggemann’s is that the Israelites needed to “remember who they are by remembering whose they are” (as cited in Kelly, 2011, p. 24). Likewise, inclusive Christian community is not an “optional extra”; it is at the heart of who God is.

Intergenerational Community as Normative Church

What defines normative Christian faith community? There are wide ranging answers to this question, but theologically relational terms like *koinōnia* and the Orthodox *sobornost*⁴ must form part of any definition. And we can state with some certainty that an intergenerational element will feature.

Intergenerationality was a distinctive feature of the faith communities in both the Old and New Testament eras. This perspective was inherent in the sense of corporateness of the Old Testament Hebraic tradition, which was integral to the covenant concept so fundamental to the relationship of God to his people and which impacted the place accorded children in the Israelite nation:

The religion of the Old Testament is not an individual adult affair to which a child's relationship is uncertain, but a communal and corporate life of faith and obedience to Yahweh in which the child has his own rightful and unquestioned place. (Pridmore, 1977, pp. 28–29)

The churches of the New Testament maintained the intergenerational model drawn from their Old Testament roots, with persons of all ages considered to be integral. Children were present in most of the activities and meetings—and even persecutions—of those communities (Banks, 1980/1990, 1994). Indeed, the life of both the Israelite and Christian communities was made distinctive by their intergenerational constitution:

Although both communities exhibit less of a welcoming and inclusive attitude to children than that of Jesus, in their time each was unique. Their experience of God helped them view children differently to surrounding cultures. Thus their treatment of children in family and community life reflected their relationship with God. (The Uniting Church in Australia, 1989, p. 6)

Through much of its history since the New Testament era, the church has continued to express a sense of intergenerationality. Up to the Protestant era, intergenerationality happened through aspects of ecclesiastical life such as religious instruction, art, worship, season observances, and life rites (White, 1988, pp. 75–79). But a by-product of the Reformation stress on “The Word” and the Renaissance (and later) conceptualizations of childhood led to children being increasingly marginalized and isolated in the rituals and life of the congregation (White, 1988, pp. 79–81).

However, an integral component of Christian ecclesiology continues to be that communities of the Christian faith—churches—should normatively comprise persons of all ages. Thus, George Koehler (1977), in a series of affirmations about the church, could confidently list as his primary affirmation the following:

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. (p. 10)

This age-inclusiveness was clearly articulated in *The Manila Manifesto* of the second International Congress on World 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* [emphasis added] which divide other communities. (Lausanne Movement, 1989)

The third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (2010) reinforced this value further in *The Cape Town Commitment*:

We commit ourselves to . . . take children seriously, through fresh biblical and theological enquiry that reflects on God's love and purpose for them and through them, *and by rediscovering the profound significance for theology and mission of Jesus' provocative action in placing "a child in the midst* [emphasis added].” (Lausanne Movement, 2010)

Unfortunately, much of the theological literature fails to identify any sense of age-inclusiveness. Concepts like “the priesthood of all believers,” “every member ministry,” and “the church as a community of God's chosen people” are commonly espoused; yet one strongly suspects the writers primarily have adults in their sights, rather than persons across the full age spectrum.

Intergenerational Interaction as Integral to Personal Faith Development

The common thread in much of the literature on the intergenerational imperative for faith development is expressed as Perry (1994) states it below:

Our children and youth develop and grow in the faith by walking and celebrating with us [adults]. The delightful surprise is that our adult faith too will develop and grow in unexpected ways as we receive gifts of ministry from the children and youth in our midst. (p. 17)

While this comment was written from the perspective of adult faith development being enhanced by children, the thrust of it—the sense of mutuality—is applicable across all generational boundaries. Six areas in which theological perspectives undergird the necessity for intergenerational interaction for personal faith development may be identified (albeit very briefly). None of these areas is *per se* uniquely intergenerational. What the intergenerational element contributes is a qualitative factor consistent with the nature of faith development and of such significance that it may be considered imperative.

Common faith development needs to cross the age groups. Humans across the age span—made in God’s image—are more alike than they are different, and common needs and concerns can be identified, which people in all generational groups express as components of their humanity and religious quest. These relate, for example, to the human aspirations for transcendence, significance, and community (Stott, 1991).

Thus the emotional needs that children have for protection and affection, without which they cannot learn to trust themselves or others (as a key element of faith development), need to be provided for also in adolescence and adulthood. Likewise, adolescents and adults experience the need for perception that incorporates all of a child’s senses—again, as an element in the holistic growth of faith.

Growth in faith will be enhanced as people draw from the wealth of perspectives on these common concerns provided by interaction with those of different ages, and so come to appreciate and interpret the meaning of their—and the others’—experiences; wholeness, as a goal of faith development, requires such mutuality (Seymour, Crain, & Crockett, 1993).⁵ The surprised sense of discovery made by interacting with those of different ages is expressed by one adult: “My task, I’m finding, is no longer to impart spirituality to my children. Rather, I share this journey with them. I, too, have much to learn” (Russell, 1992, p. 100).

Acceptance and affirmation is enhanced by intergenerational contact. Optimal faith development cannot happen in social isolation, for persons’ sense of acceptance by God and their own self-identity is closely related to their acceptance by, and of, other people (see, e.g., 1 John 4:7–20). This theological principle has been expressed in this way:

God, living now in His people, communicates His presence among them through the love relationships that develop. The Christian community’s acceptance, forgiveness, and commitment to one another in the sharing of material resources and in the sharing of joys and sorrows give

God's love living and visible expression. (Richards & Martin, 1981, pp. 189–190)

Faith development is linked closely to the quality of relationships one has, especially with people for whom the key commonality is seeking “to do God’s will” (Mark 3:31–35). As faith communities are normatively intergenerational in nature, this principle will operate normatively across the generational spectrum; so, for example, the injunctions in the New Testament letters relating to “building up one another” (see especially Paul’s letter to the Ephesian church) need to be read from an intergenerational perspective. This recognizes the power of affirmation and encouragement when expressed by those of a different age group, rather than predominantly by those in the same age-band. Thus, “a congregation does a great disservice when it completely delegates nurture [of its members] to specialized age-level ministries” (Jones, 1987, p. 86).

Spiritual qualities that lie at the heart of faith need intergenerational expression. Any appreciation of what it means to be “faith-ful” persons must draw on the insight that people of different ages are all potential gift-bearers for the others by virtue of the qualities they bring at their particular age and stage of development.⁶

Jesus’ treatment of children (see above) is a salutary reminder that a gift that children *qua* children offer to their faith communities is to “remind adults about who adults are and what they should become. Children are ‘a creative event if ever there was one’” (Aleshire, 1988, p. 102). Various biblical statements indicate children and young people can also open themselves to being recipients of the gifts of expressions of maturity, wisdom and knowledge, and stability (also marks of the “faith-ful” person) that adults of their faith community provide.

Intergenerational interaction reinforces discipleship as an age-related journey. An important image of the Christian life is that of a journey—epitomized by the classic book *Pilgrim’s Progress*. This concept is readily accepted as normative for children and adolescents as they pass through obvious growth phases. Adulthood, however, is often perceived as a fairly static, monolithic stage marked by a sense of “having arrived”—and many adults seem to have stayed with a faith and view of God that stopped developing at about the same time they left behind their “spiritual growing and learning days” (e.g., upon leaving Sunday school). The irony in this is that they have stayed with a child-*ish* faith but left behind the child-*like* qualities expected of the disciple of Jesus Christ. Interacting with people from other generational groups can help to redress this state of affairs.

John Westerhoff (1976/2000) has reinforced this perspective with a broad, three-generational sweep:

True [Christian] community necessitates the presence and interaction of three generations. . . . 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. (p. 53)

Significant intergenerational encounters have potential to set in motion an “edification spiral,” in which members of a faith community can (even if perhaps unconsciously) promote an ongoing renewal process in the faith journey of other members. This comes about as, for example, older people observe the enthusiastic spiritual growth and conversion experiences of young people; the adults’ reflection on this may lead to a recollection of their own previous spiritual experiences and perhaps even some degree of reliving them through the activities of the younger people—resulting in encouragement and/or challenge to renewal and continued growth in the adults’ faith beliefs and practices. The effect of change in the adults may then be observed by the younger members of the faith community, motivating the younger ones to continue and persevere in their faith journey. And so the spiral maintains its momentum for mutual upbuilding.

Holistic faith development requires intergenerational interaction. An unfortunate legacy of the Enlightenment is the assumption that the most significant area of spiritual growth lies in knowledge or the intellect; this has reinforced the perspectives that children are in some manner “deficient” spiritually until they are able to articulate verbally the propositions of their faith, and that spiritual maturity can be ascertained on the basis on one’s ability to verbalize the propositions of the faith without giving due regard to behavioral and attitudinal factors.

An intergenerational faith community provides the setting for enhancing spiritual formation in a more integrated and holistic way:

For the Christian, real growth is growth towards God—to “become like Christ.” That is essentially a moral and spiritual process. It is not going to be learned [only] from books and study, but from personal interaction

with God, his word, his world, and other people. If the church is, as we say, a family, then openness to one another—adults and children together—as well as to Word and Spirit are fundamental elements of Christian growth and discipleship. (Drane, 1989, p. 17)

Again, the dynamic of the “edification spiral” of mutual encouragement and motivation between generational groups is a probable outcome.

Intergenerational interaction enhances Christian integrity. Consistency is difficult for Christians of any age, and yet integrity is an important value for life in God’s kingdom community.

Persons, regardless of age, are usually slow to spot inconsistency and/or apparent hypocrisy in themselves, but quick to do so in others. But interaction with people from different generational groups can challenge one’s integrity, especially in terms of consistency between one’s stated beliefs and the behavior that demonstrates the reality in one’s faith. When people are prompted in some way to live consistently with the values they are espousing to others, powerful forces can be unleashed. These forces may be either positive (if consistency is achieved) or negative (if there is an internal struggle to achieve consistency). For example, “it is amazing how people learn to become ‘real’ as they learn to interact with children. Nothing strips the masks of our sophistication off quite like simple interaction with a child” (Phil Wyman, personal communication, January 26, 1996).

In a functional intergenerational faith community, adults, by virtue of their experience, can help children in this area, while children, by virtue of their natural tendency to integrate the different facets of their lives, are in a position to help adults.

The overall picture from a biblical and theological perspective is that intergenerational interaction is crucial to enable Christians to move towards increasing maturity in their faith, through the unity of word, behaviour, and attitude, which was modeled and advocated by Jesus himself and which was integral to the ecclesiology of the early church. Heightened intergenerational expression is also crucial for most Christian faith communities if they are going to develop their corporate identity in line with, and to ensure their practices are congruent with, their stated ecclesiology and divine commission.

REFERENCES

- Aleshire, D. O. (1988). *Faithcare: Ministering to all God’s people through the stages of life*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press.
- American Association of Retired Persons. (1993). *Intergenerational projects ideas book*. Washington, DC: AARP.

- Balch, D. L. (1988). Household codes. In D. E. Aune (Ed.), *Greco-Roman literature and the New Testament: Selected forms and genres* (pp. 25-50). Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.
- Banks, R. (1980/1990). *Going to church in the first century: An eyewitness account*. Jacksonville, FL: Christian Books.
- Banks, R. (1993). The biblical approach to community. *Christian Education Journal*, 13(3), 18-28.
- Banks, R. (1994). *Paul's idea of community: The early house churches in their historical setting* (Rev. ed.). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Drane, J. (1989). *Back to our roots*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Dunn, J. D. G. (1992). *Jesus' call to discipleship*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Fee, G. D. (1989). Laos and leadership under the new covenant. *Cruz*, 25(4), 3-13.
- Gill, A. (1990). *The fringes of freedom: Following Jesus, living together, working for justice*. Sydney, Australia: Lancer Books.
- Harkness, A. G. (1996). *Intergenerational Christian education: Reclaiming a significant educational strategy in Christian faith communities* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Murdoch University, Perth, Australia.
- Harkness, A. G. (1998). Intergenerational education for an intergenerational church? *Religious Education*, 93(4), 431-447.
- Harkness, A. G. (2000). Intergenerational and homogeneous-age education: Mutually exclusive strategies for faith communities? *Religious Education*, 95(1), 51-63.
- Harkness, A. G. (2003). Intergenerational corporate worship as a significant educational activity. *Christian Education Journal*, 7(NS)(1), 5-21.
- Jones, S. D. (1987). *Faith shaping: Nurturing the faith journey of youth*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press.
- Judge, E. A. (1985, March 13). *The churches and the teaching of Paul on women*. Text of lecture delivered at the Continuing Education Seminar on Women in the World of the New Testament, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.
- Kelly, G. (2011). *Memory loss?* In *Encounter with God*, Bible readings for October-December (p. 24). Milton Keynes, UK: Scripture Union.
- Koehler, G. E. (1977). *Learning together: A guide for intergenerational education in the church*. Nashville, TN: Division of Education, Board of Discipleship, the United Methodist Church.
- Lausanne Movement. (1989). *The Manila manifesto*. Retrieved from <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/manila-manifesto.html>
- Lausanne Movement. (2010). *The Cape Town commitment*. Retrieved from <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/ctcommitment.html>
- Mountstephen, P., & Martin, K. (2004). *Body beautiful? Recapturing a vision for all-age church* (Pastoral Series P99). Cambridge, UK: Grove Books.
- Perry, M. (1994). A way of life: Embodying the "intergenerational" vision. *PMC: the Practice of Ministry in Canada*, 11(1), 22-23.
- Pridmore, J. S. (1977). *The New Testament theology of childhood*. Hobart, Australia: Ron Buckland.
- Richards, L. O., & Martin, G. R. (1981). *Lay ministry: Empowering the people of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Russell, E. B. (1992, June). A shared journey [Letter to the editor]. *Friends' Journal*, 100.
- Seymour, J. L., Crain, M. A., & Crockett, J. V. (1993). *Educating Christians: The intersection of meaning, learning and vocation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

Stewart, S. (1978). A changed heart [Summary of an address]. In *Papers from the Congress on Children and Families—a Christian response for today* (pp. 42–47). Wellington, New Zealand: Scripture Union in New Zealand.

Stott, J. R. W. (1991). Secular challenges to the contemporary church. *Crux*, 27(3), 2-8.

United Church of Canada (Division of Mission in Canada). (n.d.). *Worship and education in the Christian community: An intergenerational perspective*. Toronto, ON: The United Church Publishing House.

The Uniting Church in Australia. (1989). *Christian learning for children: A “Children and Your Church” strategy paper*. Melbourne, Australia: Uniting Church Press.

Weber, H-R. (1979). *Jesus and the children: Biblical resources for study and preaching*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches.

Westerhoff, J. H. (1976/2000). *Will our children have faith?* Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse.

White, J. W. (1988). *Intergenerational religious education: Models, theory, and prescription for interage life and learning in the faith community*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.

Wright, D. F. (1988). Sobernost. In S. B. Ferguson and D. F. Wright (Eds.), *New dictionary of theology* (p. 645). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Christian community other than the structure commonly termed *local church*. It is outside the scope of this article to map these developments—but an earlier article does so up to the late 20th century (Harkness, 1998), and more recent writing in this field is reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *CEJ*.

²See Harkness (2000) for a discussion of intergenerational vs. homogeneous-age strategies. My conclusion is that both strategies should be complementary, but with the intergenerational approach taking primacy over the age-segregated approach.

³See Harkness (1996, pp. 285–299) for a more comprehensive set of criteria for intergenerational processes in Christian faith communities. Generally these intergenerational processes need to be broader than relationships in kinship family units.

⁴There is no direct English equivalent of *sobornost*, with its “unique synthesis of freedom and unanimity, diversity and unity” which is akin to *koinōnia* (Wright, 1988, p. 645).

⁵Seymour et al. identified three dimensions of wholeness: (a) ‘wholly’ connected with God; (b) interconnected with others; and (c) personal wholeness (pp. 86–88).

⁶This perspective may be expressed especially in the setting of corporate worship, the most important time in most local churches for people of all ages to be together (see Harkness, 2003).

¹In this article, I use *Christian faith community* in preference to *local church* or *congregation* because it better reflects the dynamic of the communal reality inherent in the biblical concept of *church*. It also validates expressions of

AUTHOR

Allan Harkness (PhD, Murdoch, Western Australia) is Dean and Education Programs Director of AGST Alliance, South East Asia. Email: allan.harkness@gmail.com