

Inter-Generational Mission

Lizzy Iweala

Christian mission is a call for all believers to participate in God's mandate of restorative work in the world as we share the love of Christ in practical ways. We, as believers in Christ, should exemplify Christ by becoming living epistles that people within our communities and circles of influence can read and be inspired by to learn more about Him and His message of salvation.

There are different types of missions geared toward fulfilling biblical mandates. Some of these mandates include:

- a. **The Great Commandment:** Matthew 22:37–39 contains Jesus' summary of the greatest commandments. He states: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Additionally, in John 15:12, believers are instructed to love God supremely and love one another just as Christ loves the Church.
- b. **The Great Commission:** An explicit mandate given by Christ to His disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," according to Matthew 28:19–20.
- c. **The Ministry of Reconciliation:** A responsibility entrusted to all believers as ambassadors of Christ to bring peace to a troubled world, and justice and reconciliation to a broken world, based on 2 Corinthians 5:18–19.

Nevertheless, in advancing the Gospel, the Great Commission, and the Ministry of Reconciliation alongside, evangelism, discipleship, compassion, and justice can be considered effective means of achieving the Gospel mandate. Incorporating intergenerational mission can also be viewed as an inclusive approach to propagating of the Gospel.

For the purpose of this paper, however, I will discuss intergenerational missions and their relevance in advancing the work of God's Kingdom.

WHAT IS INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION?

According to Randy Shepley (Baptist News, 2012), intergenerational mission consists of people from different age groups connected through various forms of relationships. Within a denomination or church community, individuals from different generations

share faith, dialogue, mutual respect, friendship, and a common commitment to the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A mosaic of mission is created when all generations participate in mission together, making it an integral part of the identity of every age group and stage within a congregation. It communicates that mission has no age boundaries but is instead an essential part of lifelong faith formation. Although there may be obstacles in the process, the fact remains that mission is an open invitation for everyone to serve Christ. In doing so, it demonstrates that all believers can serve and love those within their spheres of influence, including neighbors and colleagues in the marketplace.

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An intergenerational short-term mission trip is a typical example of how intergenerational mission can be enhanced. Such trips often consist of multiple age groups that are not necessarily related to one another and may come from different ethnic backgrounds, yet they participate together in the same mission. This blend of ages and ethnic diversity adds significant value to the team.

Intergenerational teams can include children, youth, young adults, adults, and seniors. When all these groups come together for a short-term mission trip, it sends a powerful message. As Ida Hermanson, a church planter in Sweden, stated:

"Having teams with all ages gives the trip more credibility. It opens doors. The dynamics of a team change when there are children all the way to senior adults. People notice and are more attracted to what the team is doing."

When a host city or country sees a diverse group

of people from different age groups and cultures gathered in one place for the same purpose—fulfilling God’s mandate through the propagation of the Gospel, the questions, “Where are the youth?” or “Where are their parents?” become irrelevant because intergenerational mission bridges those gaps.

Another advantage of intergenerational mission trips is the promotion of discipleship and long-term healthy relationships. Younger participants can be paired with older individuals, creating opportunities for mentorship, spiritual growth, and mutual encouragement.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I strongly believe that if intergenerational mission is encouraged and promoted, the Church will experience both spiritual and numerical growth.

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