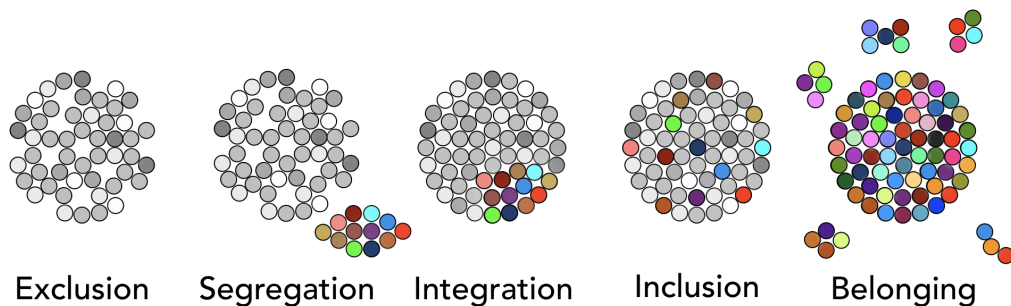


INCOMPLETE WITHOUT YOU: RESEARCH ON DISABILITY, INCLUSION, AND THE CHURCH

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I grew up in the absence of people with developmental disabilities. Or so it seemed. At the time I was born (the early 1970s), children with intellectual disability, Down syndrome, autism, and other developmental disabilities were often *excluded* from public education in the United States. As schools opened their enrollment in the late 1970s and 1980s—the years I attended elementary and secondary schools—many children with developmental disabilities were *segregated* into separate schools comprised only of disabled students. Others were *integrated* into their neighborhood schools, but they attended special education classrooms apart from their peers without disabilities. As a teenager, I rarely saw adults with disabilities working in the businesses where I shopped, walking in the neighborhoods where I lived, participating in the groups I joined, or worshipping in the churches I attended. The portraits of community I experienced growing up are arrayed on the left side of Figure 1. When it came to disability, experiences of *inclusion* and *belonging* were elusive.

Perhaps the same has been true for you. Perhaps the same is true for your church now.



Amid this personal history, a career focused on fostering communities of inclusion and belonging for people with and without disabilities would have been the furthest thing from my mind. But an unexpected encounter changed my trajectory and transformed my views about what it means to be a faithful and flourishing community.

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As a first-year college student, I stumbled into the lives of three young adults with intellectual disability through an outdoor recreation program. I was captivated by the friendships we formed. And I was compelled by the testimonies they shared. As someone who thought my worth was measured most in my accomplishments and abilities, each relationship reminded me that neither is what makes me lovable and valuable. I finally received the gifts of individuals who I had long overlooked and I gave my life to Christ.

As a researcher and professor at Vanderbilt University, one strand of my work now focuses on the intersection of faith and disability. I study the place of faith in the lives of people with disabilities and their families, the postures and practices of churches that embrace (or exclude) them, and the pathways to inclusion and belonging for both. In this article, I will highlight recent research that might inform how you move forward as a church. I begin by featuring six key findings that emerge from numerous studies and projects. I then suggest eight ways churches might respond in both attitude and action. Other essays in this issue will showcase theological work related to disability, but I suspect you will see some convergence in the conclusions drawn from empirical work as well. For some readers, my article will offer reminders of what you already know firsthand. For many others, however, it may provide new insights into a segment of your community that you too have inadvertently overlooked. My hope is that it stirs you to strive more fully toward becoming a community marked by both inclusion and belonging.

Research Reflections

Scholarship at the intersection of faith and disability is still fairly new. Yet six key conclusions emerge from empirical work in this space.¹

1. Disability is an ordinary and natural part of the human experience.

My own early experiences growing up were misleading. Every community across the country has members who experience conditions and barriers that are disabling. People with disabilities do indeed have a presence in *every* community across the United States—and all around the world. Although disability is defined in many different ways, national studies indicate that between 15–20 percent of all Americans have a disability. For example:

¹ Erik W. Carter, “Research on Disability and Congregational Inclusion: What We Know and Where We Might Go,” *Journal of Religion and Disability* (forthcoming).

- Nearly seven million children in the United States receive special education services; about one in every seven children.²
- One in four households has at least one member with a disability.³
- One in three adults aged 65 or older experience disability at any given time.⁴
- More than seven million Americans have intellectual disability.
- Almost everyone will personally experience some form of disability at some point in their lives.

For churches that are called to love their neighbor and reach their community, two conclusions are clear. First, your church is already filled with individuals and families impacted by disability—directly and indirectly, visibly and in less apparent ways. Second, there are people living throughout your neighborhood or city who may still be awaiting your invitation.

2. Faith matters immensely to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Faith can have salience and significance in the lives of children and adults with disabilities. Like anyone else, people with disabilities want to know and be known by God, to discover and live out their calling, to love and serve others, to be faithful and faith-filled, and to be part of a caring community. A growing number of studies illustrate the myriad ways in which their involvement in worship, learning, fellowship, and service within the local church can be a source of deep meaning, joy, and growth.⁵ Indeed, one national study found that an almost identical percentage of Americans with and without significant disabilities considered their faith to be an important aspect of their lives.⁶ The faith I first encountered among my new friends

² Bill Hussar et al., *The Condition of Education 2020* (Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 2020), 40–43, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020144.pdf>.

³ Barbara M. Altman and Debra L. Blackwell, “Disability in U.S. Households, 2000–2010: Findings from the National Health Interview Survey,” *Family Relations* 63, no. 1 (February 2014): 20–38.

⁴ William Erikson et al., *2018 Disability Status Report: United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, 2020), https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2018-PDF/2018-StatusReport_US.pdf.

⁵ Erik W. Carter, “Spirituality and Supports for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Their Families,” in *APA Handbook on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, ed. Lorraine M. Glidden, Len Abbeduto, Laurie L. McIntyre, and Marc J. Tassé (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2021), 419–42.

⁶ National Organization on Disability, *NOD/Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities* (New York: Harris Interactive, 2004).

with intellectual disability was strong, vibrant, and attractive. There should be no surprise that God would use these three faithful disciples to share His love and mercy with a prodigal like me.

Faith can also be central to the flourishing of their families. Like anyone else, parents of children with developmental disabilities often speak of their faith as a special source of strength, support, and connections to others. Numerous studies illustrate the varied ways in which the beliefs and church involvement of families can help them cope with daily stressors; shape their understanding of disability; bring a sense of purpose and direction; influence their decisions; sustain them in the midst of advocating for their child's needs; and provide access to an array of practical (e.g., respite, financial assistance), emotional (e.g., pastoral counseling, encouragement), and relationship supports.⁷ Faith is also a prominent predictor of quality of life and flourishing for these families.⁸

3. The embrace of the local church has been especially uneven.

Many churches have enthusiastically welcomed the presence and participation of people with developmental disabilities and their families. Yet experiences of wounding or exclusion still abound. Studies exploring the church stories of individuals or parents often reference inaccessible facilities, inadequate supports, hurtful attitudes, injurious stares, or misguided theologies. Indeed, our own research found that one in three families (32 percent) had previously left their church because their child with developmental disabilities was neither welcomed nor included.⁹ Whenever comparisons are made between the church involvement of people with and without disabilities, a substantial participation gap is almost always apparent.¹⁰ Although faith is no less important to people with disabilities, participation in church is often less likely. Moreover, while more and more congregations are willing to welcome individuals with developmental disabilities and their families whenever they arrive, it is still quite rare to find churches that are actively pursuing those who remain absent. If *ministry apart* from people with disabilities

⁷ Carter, "Spirituality and Supports," 419–42.

⁸ Thomas L. Boehm and Erik W. Carter, "Facets of Faith: Spirituality, Religiosity, and Parents of Individuals with Intellectual Disability," *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* 57, no. 6 (December 2019): 512–26.

⁹ Melinda J. Ault, Belva Collins, and Erik W. Carter, "Congregational Participation and Supports for Children and Adults with Disabilities: Parent Perceptions," *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* 51, no. 1 (February 2013): 48–61.

¹⁰ Carter, "Research on Disability."

describes your church, it is not because they are not in your midst or uninterested in attending. Something else is standing in the way of welcome.

4. The call to include is clear.

Churches are not often seen as leaders within the contemporary inclusion movement. Such a passive posture stands in contrast with the clarity of this call. As Christians, we are required to love (all of) our neighbors, to upend societal hierarchies, to welcome the stranger, to move the margins to the middle, to see each person as indispensable, and to affirm the *imago Dei* in every person. Themes of inclusion, hospitality, restoration, care, and community abound throughout the Bible. And scores of denominational statements and formal resolutions emphasize why and how churches should be fully inclusive of people with disabilities.¹¹ Although churches are exempt from many of the legal mandates that often drive inclusion in schools and workplaces, they are never excused from the call to widen their welcome. The call to *ministry with* people with disabilities is both resounding and personal.

5. Faith communities are richer for responding.

Churches have much to gain by receiving the presence, friendship, gifts, talents, and contributions of their brothers and sisters who have disabilities. As a teenager, I would have never anticipated the blessings I enjoyed through relationships with my peers with Down syndrome or autism. My views about what mattered most were transformed and I found great joy in time spent together. Similarly, churches sometimes struggle to see inclusion as a boon instead of a burden, a strength rather than a strain. They may initially worry about perceived costs or wonder how church members might react to changing longstanding practices. Yet *ministry by* people with developmental disabilities can enrich and enliven a faith community. This is the recurring lesson for churches that remove barriers to full participation and welcome the presence of people with disabilities.¹² Reciprocity is experienced when people with and without developmental disabilities befriend, love, serve, support, and pray for one another. Moreover, as churches strive to become more accessible

¹¹ Erik W. Carter, *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families, and Congregations* (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 2007).

¹² Angela N. Amado et al., “Accessible Congregations Campaign: Follow-Up Survey of Impact on Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD),” *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health* 16, no. 4 (November 2012): 394–419; Joshua E. Callaway, “The Impact of Special Needs Inclusion within Selected Southern Baptist Churches in North Carolina: A Phenomenological Study” (EdD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

to their members with disabilities, they discover ways of gathering that often work better for everyone.¹³

6. Inclusion and belonging are absolutely possible.

Although many churches still struggle to move forward in this area, others embody this commitment wholeheartedly. Numerous churches have learned how to plan worship and other congregational activities with *all* of their community in mind. They have discovered adaptations, alternatives, and supports that ensure every member—with and without disabilities—can participate meaningfully in the full life of their church. Individuals with developmental disabilities and families within such congregations might even encounter extravagant welcome and authentic delight each Sunday morning when they arrive. Each of these churches can offer advice and examples to others that want to start this journey. Likewise, numerous studies address the postures and practices that contribute to inclusion and belonging within the church, or that lead away from each.¹⁴ For churches that do want to respond to this call, there is no need to go it alone.

Faithful Responding

What movements will lead churches toward greater inclusion and belonging? Consider the following eight steps as work to widen your welcome for people with developmental disabilities and their families.¹⁵

Reflecting

Each local church is unique with regard to its history, culture, traditions, priorities, resources, size, and membership. Decisions about your next needed steps should be made through a process of prayerful and collaborative reflection. This is not recipe work; every church has a different starting point. Key areas to consider are (a) the current involvement of people with disabilities and their families in all aspects of faith community life; (b) postures and practices in the church that either support or hinder their active participation; and (c) the resources and opportunities in your midst. Involving a cross-section of congregation members—such as pastors, min-

¹³ Barbara J. Newman and Betty Grit, *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship* (Grand Rapids: CLC Network, 2014).

¹⁴ Carter, “Research on Disability.”

¹⁵ Erik W. Carter, “From Barriers to Belonging for People with Disabilities: Promising Pathways Toward Inclusive Ministry” in *Religion, Disability, and Gender Violence*, ed. Andy J. Johnson, J. Ruth Nelson, and Emily M. Lund (New York: Springer, 2017), 25–44.

istry leaders, members with and without disabilities, seniors, and parents of younger children—can ensure multiple vantage points are considered.¹⁶ For churches with limited experience or expertise in this area, a variety of reflection tools exist to guide churches in examining pressing needs, existing barriers, available assets, and practical strategies. Brief summaries of several are provided here, along with links in the footnotes:

- **Architecture:** Examine how the physical features of your sanctuary, classrooms, offices, restrooms, fellowship areas, and other facilities could inhibit or enhance the participation of individuals with disabilities.¹⁷
- **Facets of Accessible Worship:** Consider how each of fifteen aspects of your worship service and space could impact the involvement of those with disabilities: *architecture, liturgy, theology, attitudes, commitments, expectations, communication avenues, intellectual demands, technology use, sensory considerations, available supports, opportunities to contribute, social interactions, sense of community, and transportation.*¹⁸
- **Dimensions of Belonging:** Reflect on the extent to which people with and without disabilities in your church are *invited, present, welcomed, known, accepted, supported, cared for, befriended, needed, and loved.*¹⁹
- **Indicators of Welcome:** Explore ways of demonstrating hospitality in the areas of worship services, religious education, service, outreach, fellowship, family supports, general awareness, community partnerships, and accessibility.²⁰
- **Community Attitudes:** Examine whether prevailing views reflect each of the five stages of attitude: *ignorance about, pity toward, care for, friendship with, or co-laboring alongside* people with disabilities.²¹

¹⁶ Erik W. Carter et al., “Community Conversations on Faith and Disability: Identifying New Practices, Postures, and Partners for Congregations,” *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 5 (May 2017): 575–94.

¹⁷ Examples include: <https://www.gcfa.org/media/1773/umc-accessibility-audit-2019-final.pdf>; <https://canaccess.org/accessibility/survey-introduction/take-the-survey/>.

¹⁸ Accessible Worship Project, “Lend Your Voice,” www.accessibleworship.org.

¹⁹ Erik W. Carter, “A Place of Belonging: Including Individuals with Significant Disabilities in Faith Communities,” in *Inclusive Practices* (forthcoming). To learn more: <https://youtu.be/sRZHwj6CarM>.

²⁰ Erik W. Carter, *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A Guide for Service Providers, Families, and Congregations* (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 2007). Download at https://christianhorizons.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Indicators_of_Belonging_Checklist.pdf.

²¹ Dan Vander Plaats, *There is No Asterisk: Changing Attitudes About Disabilities Through the 5 Stages* (Chicago: Elim Christian Services, 2016). Read more at <https://www.the5stages.com>.

Such reflection should be ongoing, involve people with disabilities and their families, and lead to noticeable action.

Inviting

The neighborhoods that surround your church are filled with people with disabilities (see Research Reflection #1). Although there is value in announcing that your church is a welcoming place (e.g., on your website, social media, and outreach materials), personal invitations are often the best way to address their absence. This requires shifting from a passive posture of waiting for people to arrive to your church and toward an active approach of pursuing people who are not yet there. For a segment of the community whose company is not often sought out, hearing the message “we need you here” can be quite powerful. Ask members of your church to be more lavish with their invitations. Likewise, partner with local disability organizations (e.g., local chapters of The Arc, autism societies, Down syndrome associations), independent living centers, residential and employment agencies, parent networks, and county programs to forge connections to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. No faith community should gather in the absence of people with disabilities.

Preparing

Every church should be ready to welcome people with developmental disabilities and to weave them fully into the fabric of their faith community. Yet uncertainty and hesitation are still quite prevalent within most congregations. Indeed, Christians hold many of the same attitudes and misconceptions about disability that exist throughout contemporary society. Taking steps to build commitment and capacity throughout your church can ensure members and leaders are ready to respond well to increasing diversity. Such efforts can take a variety of forms:

- The messages and priorities pastors communicate from the pulpit shape the views of the congregation. When disability is described as the outcome of sin, when the image of God is defined in terms of abilities and intellect, or when people with disabilities are seen as needing special healing, marginalization often follows.
- Many churches dedicate specific worship services to the topic of disability (e.g., “Inclusion Sunday”) or participate in various awareness months (e.g., World Down Syndrome Day, Autism Awareness Month, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Mental Health Awareness Month).
- Some churches develop and share awareness resources (e.g., blogs, bulletin inserts, videos)—or they incorporate units within religious education programs—that address the gifts and lives of those with disabilities.
- Periodic training for ministry leaders and volunteers can ensure they have

the knowledge and skills needed to support the involvement of individuals with disabilities in various church programs and events.

- Some churches host community-wide gatherings designed to foster awareness of the importance of inclusion and to promote collective action.²²

Supporting

Churches that are committed to inclusion and belonging ensure every member has the support they need to participate in meaningful and valued ways. Addressing accessibility concerns and adopting universal design principles²³ are two important ways of broadening participation and advancing *ministry with* people with disabilities. However, individuals with developmental disabilities may still need additional or ongoing supports to experience full access. This might include providing personal assistance during worship services or religious education classes, transportation to events, modifications to activities, accessible materials, explanations of concepts, behavioral supports, individual mentorship, technology aids, adapted equipment, or help from a peer. Meet individually with people with developmental disabilities and their families to determine which supports matter most and are preferred by each person. Avoid assumptions about what you think would work best, as each person is unique in their preferences, needs, and personal goals.

Parents of children with disabilities may also benefit from supports that extend beyond those available to anyone in the congregation. In a study of more than four hundred parents, we found that many highly valued supports like respite care, parent support groups, spiritual counseling, information about community resources, access to a church advocate, financial assistance, and the adoption of disability awareness initiatives within the church.²⁴ Each of these supports can enable parents to participate more deeply in the life of the church or help them meet other pressing family needs. For both parents and individuals with disabilities, it is important to revisit these supports periodically as needs and priorities can change over time. The provision of individualized supports does much more than enable people's participation; it also communicates a clear commitment to—and desire for—their ongoing presence.

²² Erik W. Carter et al., "Community Conversations on Faith and Disability: Identifying New Practices, Postures, and Partners for Congregations," *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 5 (May 2017): 575–94.

²³ Newman and Grit, *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship*.

²⁴ Erik W. Carter et al., "Supporting Congregational Inclusion for Children and Youth with Disabilities and Their Families," *Exceptional Children* 82, no. 3 (April 2016): 372–89. Download the practice guide at <https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/resources/CongregationPracticeGuide.pdf>.

Serving

Although most conversations about inclusive ministry center on Sunday worship and religious education classes, churches should be similarly focused on addressing practical or pressing needs the other six days of the week.²⁵ *Ministry to people with disabilities and their families involves also caring about their flourishing in other areas of life as well. Consider the following examples:*

- Recognizing the high unemployment rates of people with developmental disabilities (i.e., 80 percent or more), churches are coming alongside interested members with disabilities to (a) identify their gifts, sense of calling, and work goals; (b) draw upon the personal and professional networks of other church members to identify potential employers; and (c) invite those other church members to support them in preparing for, finding, and keeping a new job.²⁶
- Churches are addressing the paucity of community living options by supporting or providing faith-based residential programs, advocating for local affordable housing, facilitating connections to roommates and host families, meeting the material needs of individuals with developmental disabilities living independently, or providing occasional financial assistance.
- To meet the transportation needs of those adults with developmental disabilities who cannot drive, churches are arranging carpooling, utilizing church vans, coordinating trips with residential staff, or providing monies for independent transportation (e.g., ride sharing, bus/taxi fare).
- Churches—on their own or in partnership with other area congregations—are hosting regular respite events designed for parents or for siblings.
- Ordinary gestures of care can also have a noticeable impact, such as stopping by someone’s home to check in, praying with them, sharing a meal, sending a card, accompanying them to a medical appointment, helping pay a bill, calling to say hello, assisting with housework, or just being present together.

²⁵ Erik W. Carter, “After the Benediction: Walking Alongside People with Significant Disabilities and Their Families in Faith and Life,” *Journal of Religion, Disability, and Health* 15, no. 4 (November 2011): 395–413.

²⁶ Erik W. Carter et al., *Putting Faith to Work: A Guide for Congregations and Communities on Connecting Job Seekers with Disabilities to Meaningful Work* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 2016). Learn more at www.puttingfaithtowork.org.

Receiving

Like anyone else, people with disabilities have spiritual gifts that are given by God and needed by others. Moreover, each person possesses distinct talents, abilities, knowledge, passions, and experiences that can benefit and enrich their faith community.²⁷ But these potential contributions must be recognized, invited, and supported in order to be received by others. Far too often, people with developmental disabilities are seen only as the focus of ministry rather than as individuals with precious gifts to give. Yet being part of a community that values and needs you is central to belonging.²⁸

Members with developmental disabilities should be expected (and supported) to serve actively in and through their church. This might include being a greeter or usher, assisting in the nursery, visiting members who are sick or homebound, volunteering with an outreach project, joining the prayer team, setting up fellowship events, assisting with the worship service, going on a mission trip, serving on a committee, singing in the choir, or contributing in a myriad of other ways. This is *ministry by* people with disabilities. It begins by getting to know people with disabilities personally, helping them discern their gifts, and then scouring the faith community for areas in which their gifts are exactly what is needed—just as you would with any member. A church that cannot find a place for the gifts of people with developmental disabilities is not a faithful community.

Befriending

Healthy churches are marked by a deep love for one another. Fellow members come to know, enjoy, serve, and care for each other as they navigate life and faith together. Moreover, they forge relationships that extend outside the walls of the church and maintain beyond the benediction. True inclusion entails more than sharing space; it requires sharing lives. Inclusion never takes place at arm's length. Welcoming people with disabilities into the church also means weaving them into the relationships that define the church. It requires fostering friendships.

Such relationships are especially important for people with developmental disabilities. Studies find that children and adults with intellectual disability or autism often

²⁷ Erik W. Carter et al., “Known for My Strengths: Positive Traits of Transition-Age Youth with Intellectual Disability or Autism,” *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities* 40, no. 2 (June 2015): 101–19.

²⁸ Erik W. Carter, Elizabeth E. Biggs, and Thomas L. Boehm, “Being Present Versus Having a Presence: Dimensions of Belonging for Young People with Disabilities and Their Families,” *Christian Education Journal* 13, no. 1 (May 2016): 127–46.

have few friendships.²⁹ The encouragement, enjoyment, support, and companionship that come from time spent with one's peers also matter for people with disabilities. The absence of these relationships can impact one's well-being, health, and quality of life. The same is true for families impacted by disability. The relationships they form with others in their local church can be a significant source of emotional, spiritual, and practical support.³⁰

Belonging requires personal investment and relational engagement. Although there is no guaranteed friendships formula, relationships are usually formed through shared activities around common interests over time. Therefore, provide opportunities and encouragement for people with and without developmental disabilities to serve together, to sit with each other in church, to join the same small group or Sunday school class, to share a meal at the Wednesday potluck, to attend a retreat or mission trip together, or to somehow connect throughout the week. Likewise, facilitate introductions with others in the church who share their interests, hobbies, passions, background, or community involvement. Finally, avoid segregated classes, special worship services, or separate ministries in which the lives of people with and without developmental disabilities rarely intersect, even though everyone attends the same church. Shared space in the absence of shared lives reflects only a veneer of inclusion.

Advocating

As congregants come to know their brothers and sisters with developmental disabilities personally, they become aware of the systemic barriers and stigma that exist throughout society. Fragmented service systems, inaccessible activities, inadequate supports, and inhospitable hearts are still the rule rather than the exception. Soon, an inward commitment to inclusion is joined by an outward investment in advocacy.³¹ Inclusive churches seek to be a voice for change in the culture and in their local community. For example, churches have launched "faith inclusion networks" to support and encourage other local churches in this area of ministry. Some churches also support the work of local disability organizations to

²⁹ Elizabeth E. Biggs and Erik W. Carter, "Supporting the Social Lives of Students with Intellectual Disability," in *Handbook of Research-Based Practices for Educating Students with Intellectual Disability*, ed. Michael L. Wehmeyer and Karrie A. Shogren (New York: Routledge, 2017), 235–54.

³⁰ Thomas L. Boehm and Erik W. Carter, "Systematic Review of Informal Relationships Among Parents of Individuals with Intellectual Disability or Autism," *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities* 41, no. 3 (September 2016): 173–90.

³¹ Michelle Larocque and Rick Eigenbrood, "Community Access: A Survey of Congregational Accessibility for People with Disabilities," *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* 9, no. 1 (January 2005): 55–66.

expand community access and advocate for needed policy changes. Finally, congregation members can be asked to personally advocate for change in their own workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and elsewhere. What a profound statement it would be if churches were the most inclusive places within a city and the leading influence for community-wide transformation.

Moving Forward

As you consider your own church—and any other communities you care deeply about—which of the five portraits depicted in Figure 1 most closely reflect what you see? Does the way and with whom you gather reveal a community characterized by exclusion or segregation? Or are you forging a community marked by inclusion and belonging? The research findings described throughout this article highlight both possibilities and pathways. My prayer is that you too will discover the richness of *ministry with* and *ministry by* people with developmental disabilities. The call on your church is quite clear. What will be your response?