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# Meeting the Challenge of Diversity: Ministry and Mission in a Multicultural Milieu

Chadwick L. Short

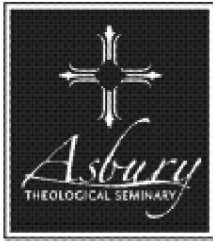
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## ABSTRACT

Meeting the Challenge of Diversity:

Ministry and Mission in a Multicultural Milieu

Chadwick L. Short

This dissertation examines the practices and theology that enable multicultural churches to maintain unity across cultures, while at the same time engaging effectively in mission and experiencing growth. Although the United States is increasingly a culturally diverse nation, only a small percentage of churches are culturally diverse. Although there have been brief forays into multicultural ministry at various times in the history of the nation, such ventures usually were short lived. Recent years, however, have seen the emergence of a number of strong, dynamic multicultural churches. The goal of this dissertation has been to explore the dynamics behind these churches.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation explores briefly the historical and social background that makes the topic of multicultural ministry timely and relevant. It examines responses to cultural diversity in society and in the church. Chapter 2, "Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology" introduces the theory that guided the research for the dissertation. The central guiding theory was Berger and Luckmann's well-known work, *The Social Construction of Reality*, which enabled research to pursue the question of how multicultural churches are constructing an alternative perception and experience of reality wherein the idea of the church as a multicultural family of believers becomes plausible in thought and realized in practice.

Chapter 3, "Biblical and Theological Foundations for Multicultural Churches" traces the Old Testament outworking of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that

he and his lineage would be a blessing to the nations. Working in the New Testament Scriptures, the chapter observes a dynamic tension between passages emphasizing that reconciliation and unity have already been accomplished in Christ, and those that instruct believers to pursue unity and reconciliation. Observations about contemporary theological reflection on these concerns are also included.

Chapter 4, “Practices and Theology of Multicultural Churches” explores what multicultural churches are doing and teaching to maintain unity. Chapter 5, “The Role of Pastoral Leadership in Multicultural Churches” examines the understandings and practices whereby pastors help their membership to accept and embrace as a plausible reality the church as a multicultural fellowship.

Chapter 6, “Growth in Multicultural Churches” seeks to answer how churches with culturally diverse memberships are growing. Chapter 7, “Intercultural Sensitivity in Multicultural Churches” presents the results of the Intercultural Development Inventory which was administered to pastors and members of the churches that participated in the study. Chapter 8, “Summary of Findings” outlines the major discoveries of the research project and offers suggestions for further research.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation, entitled

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requirements for the degree of

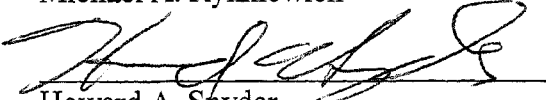
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March 2006

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Ministry and Mission in a Multicultural Milieu**

**A Dissertation**

**Presented to the Faculty of  
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**In Partial Fulfillment of the  
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**Chadwick L. Short**

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## Chapter 1

### Responses to Cultural Difference in Society and Church

The year was 1897, the place, Hartselle, Alabama. In many ways, the scene was typical of religious meetings in the Post-Civil War South. In the rented meeting hall Blacks occupied one half of the room, Whites the other. A rope divided the two sections. The occasion of the gathering was the Alabama State Camp Meeting of a holiness group that would later call itself the Church of God Reformation Movement (known today as the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana). In other ways, the scene was anything but typical of religious meetings in the Post-Civil War South. One atypical feature of this meeting was the fact that the preacher was a woman, Lena Shoffner, a fiery evangelist who had traveled across the Midwest and even crossed the Atlantic preaching for the movement (Smith 1980:115, 129). Church of God historian Merle Strege narrates the scene:

Lena Shoffner rose to preach the sermon of the hour. She looked out on a congregation of people divided by a rope—black people on one side, white people on the other. Her text, in part, was Ephesians 2:14: “For he . . . hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” Someone in the crowd could not bear the contradiction between those words and the taut rope dividing Christians in that tent. The rope fell slack, and blacks and whites mingled around an altar of prayer. (Strege 1991:6)

In one sense, what happened in that rented hall was ahead of its time. Although slavery as an institution in the American South had been dismantled decades earlier, racial tensions were high, legislation relegated Blacks to second-class citizenship, and lynchings were not unheard of. What *was* unheard of was Blacks and Whites worshipping together, praying together in an undivided room. In another sense, the event was behind its time. The Apostle Paul had written that passage over 1800 years before that dividing rope came down.

Many, including the next generation of leadership of the Church of God, apparently thought such a thing was too far ahead of its time. Employing what Strege calls “a seat-of-the-pants version of the homogenous unit principle,” Church of God leadership decided to segregate camp meetings by race “where integration hindered evangelism” (1991:8).<sup>1</sup> Even a movement that was initially committed to culturally diverse congregations, and was succeeding at it, eventually failed to live up to the ideals it saw in Scripture. The story is gripping because it brings to life an ideal that is seldom achieved, even among Christians. For followers of Jesus the story reveals a disconnect between the ideal of Scripture and the reality of church life in the majority of Christian congregations in the United States. This gap between the teaching of Scripture and Christian practice must be understood against the backdrop of American history.

### Cultural and Historical Context

While the history of indigenous peoples in North America goes back thousands of years,<sup>2</sup> the European settlement of the continent is relatively recent. In that more recent history, in addition to normal biological multiplication, the population of the continent has expanded especially rapidly because of immigration. The United States, as a modern nation state, is a nation of immigrants. Distinguished historian Oscar Handlin wrote, “Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that

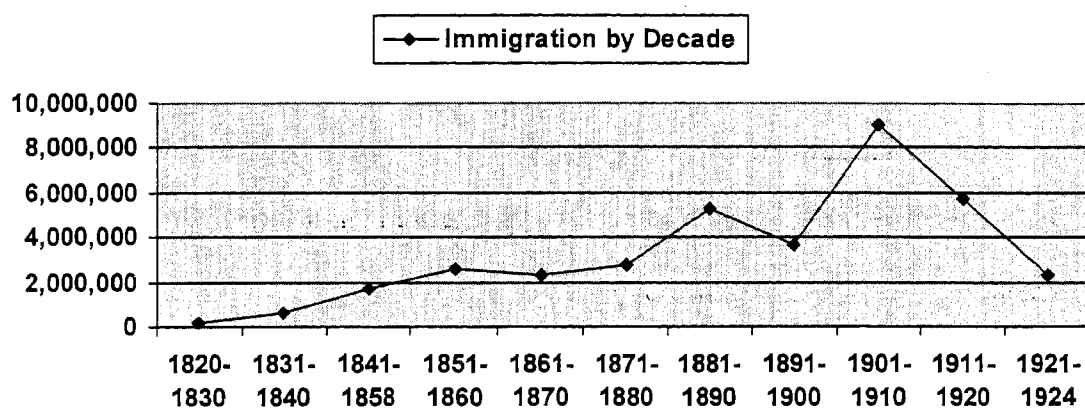
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<sup>1</sup> This conscious separation took place in 1917, roughly the same time as the state of Indiana saw resurgence in the activity of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan flourished in the South from 1865 until 1872, when it was forced to disband by the federal government. A reorganized Klan began in Georgia in 1915, and was officially organized in Evansville, Indiana in 1920 (Luthholz 1991:22-27).

<sup>2</sup> Some estimates put the arrival of the first human inhabitants of the North American continent as early as 20,000 to 30,000 years ago, during the last ice age. “The oldest documented Indian cultures in North America are Sandia (15000 BC), Clovis (12000 BC) and Folsom (8000 BC)” (<http://nativeamericans.com/>).

the immigrants *were* American history” (1981:3, italics in the original).<sup>3</sup>

Between the census of 1820 and 1924, the year the National Origins Act was passed, tens of millions of immigrants made the journey across the Atlantic to the New World (See Figure 1). While most of these early immigrants were European, many enslaved Africans were forcibly brought to the continent.<sup>4</sup> The presence of numerous indigenous peoples added to the cultural mix on the continent.



**Figure 1: Immigration to the United States by Decade** (after Daniels 2002:124)

The Declaration of Independence of 1776 affirmed that the new nation taking shape would be committed to certain ideals. As the Declaration states it, “We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Despite the stated commitment to this ideal of equality, many throughout the

<sup>3</sup> Handlin is correct insofar as he refers only to the history of America as a modern nation state. The history of the original inhabitants of the continent goes back much further, as noted in the preceding footnote. The European immigration to this land goes back only four hundred years.

<sup>4</sup> There are varying opinions on the total number of Africans taken from their homelands in the colonial era. According to Daniels (2002), the number is around ten million. Joseph Ajayi Fashagba puts the number at 35 million (1999:17).

history of the nation have not been treated as equal. This was the experience of many immigrants. Waves of immigration often prompted negative reactions from those already settled in America, including riots in immigrant districts, the burning of immigrant churches and schools, the propagation of violent racist ideologies, and the enactment of punitive legislation intended to limit immigration (Gerstle 2000:68).

The first major piece of such legislation was the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, a law that held until 1943. The 1924 Immigration Restriction Act was “stunningly successful,” severely curtailing immigration from the non-Western world so that “within 20 years, America had ceased to be an immigrant society” (Gerstle 2000:69-70).

The 1940s and 1950s saw barriers against Asian immigration removed, as well as the desegregation of the United States armed forces in 1948. In 1954, the Supreme Court declared racial segregation unconstitutional. Even so, African Americans moving into neighborhoods populated by people of European descent in northern cities were met with “furious and often violent resistance” because, as Gerstle explains, “These European ethnics had acquired whiteness<sup>5</sup> and were determined to enjoy its privileges” (2000:72).

Others, such as President John F. Kennedy, took a more positive view of immigration. He saw immigration as “a source of national strength” (Daniels 2002:338). Some 2.26 million persons were admitted as refugees between 1945 and 1980. Total legal immigration for that period stands at nearly 11 million (Daniels 2002:337). The Immigration Reform Act of 1965, signed by President Lyndon Johnson, “changed the whole course of American immigration history,” greatly increasing the overall number of immigrants, most strikingly, the number of Asian and Latin American immigrants (Daniels 2002:341). The Refugee Act of 1980 led to the admission of 468,214 refugees

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<sup>5</sup> See Hitchcock (2002:73ff.) for an extended treatment of the development of “whiteness.”

and asylees between 1981 and 1985 (Daniels 2002:346). The Immigration Reform Act of 1986 led to an increase in the number of immigrants admitted to the United States.

This history of immigration, plus the presence of numerous indigenous people groups, has made the United States one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse nations in the world. In the year 2000, according to the U.S. Census, 12.3 percent of the population was Black or African American, 12.5 percent of the population was Hispanic / Latino,<sup>6</sup> and Asians comprised 3.6 percent of the population.

Typically, immigrants have tended to gravitate toward large metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City, Chicago and Detroit. However, the 2000 Census showed pockets outside the major urban centers. A 2004 report by the Census Bureau shows that the percentage of new immigrants settling in areas that have typically been “immigrant magnets” is decreasing. Roughly 60 percent of new arrivals settled in urban areas of California, New York, Florida, Texas, Illinois and New Jersey between 1995 and 2000, compared to 73 percent a decade earlier (El Nasser 2004).

Southern states such as Florida and Georgia have historically had significant percentages of African Americans, and Western states such as California have historically had significant numbers of Latinos and Asians. Statistics from the United States Census Bureau indicate that cultural diversity is increasing in areas of the nation that have historically not manifested such diversity.<sup>7</sup> The Midwest exemplifies this increase of diversity.

Latinos, for example, are dispersing throughout the nation, beyond the large urban

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<sup>6</sup> The Census Bureau released a report in June 2004 showing that the rate of increase among Hispanics was four times the rate of the overall population of the United States, and fourteen times the rate of non-Hispanic whites ([http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2003-09-18-hispanic-growth\\_x.htm?POE=click-refer](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2003-09-18-hispanic-growth_x.htm?POE=click-refer)).

<sup>7</sup> Midwestern metropolitan areas such as Detroit and Chicago are obvious exceptions.



centers to medium-sized and smaller communities. Des Moines, the largest city in Iowa, had fewer than 200,000 people in 2000.<sup>8</sup> Yet, cultural diversity is on the increase. The 1990s saw the Hispanic population of Iowa increase by 153 percent, to 82,472. Seven counties in Iowa saw a ten-fold increase in their Hispanic populations. While Iowa has not generally seen permanent settlement of Hispanics, recent job expansions in the meatpacking industry have attracted Hispanic workers. In the year 2000, for example, “70 percent of the production workers at the Swift and Company plant in Marshalltown<sup>9</sup> were Latinos” (Woodrick and Grey 2002:8).

It is not only Latinos who are relocating to Iowa; “African and Bosnian refugees and immigrants from Asia, Micronesia, South America and Eastern Europe have also arrived, revitalizing many Iowa communities. Immigrants have brought population increases to shrinking communities, schools and churches” (Woodrick and Grey 2002:2). Such immigration has partially compensated for recent population losses in Iowa due to decreased birth rates, out-migration,<sup>10</sup> and job loss.<sup>11</sup>

In Minnesota, the overall Latino population is officially 2.9 percent, but with the presence of “illegals,” that number is likely higher.<sup>12</sup> Several largely rural counties in Minnesota show populations well above the official average: Kandiyohi County, 8 percent; Watonwan County, 15.2 percent; Nobles County, 11.2 percent; and Freeborn County, 6.3 percent. The Asian population of Hennepin County (Minneapolis) stands at 4.8 percent.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census 2000 showed population for Des Moines at 198,682 (<http://factfinder.census.gov>).

<sup>9</sup> Total population 26,009, U.S. Census 2000 (<http://factfinder.census.gov>).

<sup>10</sup> For example, In the year 2000, “almost 60% of University of Iowa graduates took jobs out of state. In the same year, 46.9% of Iowa State University and 30.4% of University of Northern Iowa graduates left the state” (Woodrick and Grey 2002:2).

<sup>11</sup> Several companies including Ertl Toy in Dyersville, Fisher Controls in Marshalltown, and Hon Industries in Muscatine relocated production outside of the United States (Woodrick and Grey 2002:7).

<sup>12</sup> The question of illegal immigrants is an important issue that calls for a response from the church. See the suggestions for further research in Chapter 8 for more on this.

One would expect the metropolitan areas to manifest more cultural diversity, but Olmstead County (Rochester) with a total population 124,000 has an Asian American population of 4.3 percent and Nobles County in rural southwestern Minnesota (fewer than 21,000 total population) shows an Asian American population of 4 percent (<http://factfinder.census.gov>).

Wisconsin has experienced recent immigrant influx as well. In 2001, for example, there were approximately 80,000 Hmong Americans living in Wisconsin, including about 3,000, or 5 percent of the population, in Eau Claire; roughly 1,000, or 6.6 percent of the population, in Menomonie; about 3,400, or 6.6 percent of the population, in LaCrosse; and more than 15,000 in Milwaukee<sup>13</sup> (<http://home.earthlink.net/~laohumrights/2001data.html>). Elsewhere in the Midwest, the figures are similar. The Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland area of Michigan has a Hispanic population of 6.3 percent; the Elkhart-Goshen area of northern Indiana shows a Hispanic population of 8.9 percent (<http://factfinder.census.gov>).

In the Pacific Northwest, the numbers are even higher. The overall percentage of Latinos in Idaho is officially 7.9 percent. Several counties show significantly higher percentages: Owyhee County, 23.1 percent of a total population of 10,644; Cassia County 18.7 percent of a total population of 21,416; Clark County, 34.2 percent of a total population of 1,022. Washington State has an overall Hispanic population of 7.5 percent. Yakima County shows the Hispanic population at 35.9 percent, and the Richland-Kennewick-Pasco area stands at 21.3 percent. The Hispanic population of the Seattle-Tacoma area stands at only 5.2 percent<sup>14</sup> (<http://factfinder.census.gov>).

In addition to Blacks, Latinos and Asians, and other non-White immigrant

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<sup>13</sup> Total populations 61,704; 14,937; 51,818; and 596,974 respectively (<http://factfinder.census.gov>).

<sup>14</sup> In Spring 2004 I asked a Latino pastor who had recently moved from Washington state to take an associate position in Lexington, Kentucky, about the high percentages of Hispanics in the Pacific Northwest. He indicated that, although historically the Hispanic presence in the region has been migrant workers laboring in the fruit industry, more recently Hispanics have taken up permanent residence.

groups, we must consider Native Americans. Although the Native American population is small in comparison to the Hispanic population, for example, they must not be overlooked when considering ethnic and cultural diversity in this nation. The states with the largest populations of Native Americans are California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Alaska, Washington, Arizona, Texas and North Carolina (<http://factfinder.census.gov>). Currently, 66 percent of the Native American population resides in urban areas (Woodley 2005).

All these statistics suggest that while cultural diversity may not be as prominent outside the large urban centers of the United States as it is inside, such diversity is nonetheless a growing phenomenon in a number of smaller communities and in rural areas as well. It is not strictly an urban issue anymore.

As a whole, the nation is more culturally and ethnically diverse than ever before in history. That does not mean communities are more culturally integrated. Recent research by the Harvard Civil Rights Project (Dobbs 2004:A7) shows desegregation in schools reaching its zenith in the late 1980s, but the trend since has been toward *de facto* segregation. The landmark case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) triggered efforts at integration, particularly in the south, “where the percentage of blacks attending predominantly White schools increased from zero in 1954 to 43 percent in 1988.” By the year 2001, however, “the figure had fallen to 30 percent” (Dobbs 2004:A7). Hispanics are less integrated than African Americans, while Asians are the most integrated of the three (Dobbs 2004:A7).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The article does not indicate whether the study includes both public and private schools, or only public.

### Society Responds to Diversity

Immigration in the United States has led to increasing diversity of various types. Among Europeans in the New World, diversity was along socio-economic lines. The first British colony at Jamestown, Virginia (1607) was composed of some members from the elite class of English society but mostly of common people. The social stratification of England carried over to the New World as “the commoners faced oppression from the elite, who often spoke of the English poor as ‘brutes’ and ‘savages,’ and exposed them to harsh treatment that degraded and dehumanized their existence” (Hitchcock 2002:74).

Throughout the history of the United States, there have been various responses to the increasing diversity. One commonly held belief, tied to the image of the “melting pot,” was that “nationalities and ethnic groups (but not races as we understand the term) would fuse into one” (Daniels 2002:17).

A similar view held that immigrants would eventually conform to Anglo culture.<sup>16</sup> While many immigrants to the United States assimilated easily into the existing culture, some did not “melt” so readily. Some European immigrants chose not to melt. Sometimes this was in the interest of preserving cultural identity; sometimes the interest was political. Glazer and Moynihan contended that various cultural identities such as Irish, Italian, and Black are constructed in an effort to gain political and economic power (1970). “[T]he point about the melting pot,” argued Glazer and Moynihan, “is that it did not happen” (1970:1; cf. Van Engen 2004:9). Oscar Romo concurs: “It is said that America is a melting pot where the English language is the ‘language’ and the ‘Anglo’ (European) culture is superior. In reality, there are 500 ethnic groups who daily speak 636

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<sup>16</sup> See Wagner (1979:46-47) for a discussion what has been called the “Anglo-Conformity” theory of assimilation.

languages of which 26 are considered major languages” (1993:207).

A second response to the diversity of a new nation was to maintain separation of cultural groups. While some Europeans, the Irish for example, experienced initial difficulties with acceptance in American society, most assimilated easily,<sup>17</sup> particularly in comparison to other groups such as Native Americans and Africans. The latter two groups in particular, were accorded second-class status and were not permitted all the privileges that went along with citizenship.

In the early days of the colonies, tensions with native populations, among other factors, helped forge a common English identity between the elites and the commoners as over against Native Americans. In later years, Native Americans suffered unspeakable violence at the hands of European Americans. As labor supply from indentured servants diminished, and the supply from the African slave trade increased, the common English identity, and later a common “White” identity was forged as over against African Americans. “By the mid-1700s the term ‘white’ was used clearly, unambiguously and unapologetically in reference to the dominant European-American culture. It was equally clear that black people and Indians were not white, and accordingly, not part of the dominant mix” (Hitchcock 2002:91).

Even today, a century and a half after the Emancipation Proclamation, and decades after the repeal of anti-immigration legislation and the Civil Rights movement, the United States remains a highly “racialized” society, in which “race matters profoundly for life experiences, life chances, and social relationships,” and which “is characterized by low intermarriage rates, de facto segregation, socioeconomic inequality, and personal identities

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<sup>17</sup> There are exceptions to this general rule, of course, as noted in the preceding section.

and social networks that are racially distinctive” (Emerson and Smith 2000:154).<sup>18</sup>

The latter half of the twentieth century saw a number of positive developments in terms of intercultural relations. One of those is cultural pluralism, the understanding that being an American was not inherently linked to a particular cultural identity, which, according to Daniels, first emerged in the years following World War II (2002:305). The Black Power movement, the Civil Rights movement, and the emergence of Black theology are manifestations of pluralism. Such movements helped forge a positive Black self-identity (Peart 2000:68) and drew attention to the Black struggle for liberation.

Multiculturalism, which arose as an ideology in the late 1980s, is another manifestation of pluralism. At its best, multiculturalism is an acknowledgement that Americans are a diverse lot, culturally speaking, and that there must be mutual respect despite cultural differences. Respect, however, does not necessarily connote unity. Michael Novak has recently voiced concern about the direction of multiculturalism in the United States. Novak and many others view multiculturalism as divisive, and fear that American society is becoming fragmented<sup>19</sup> (Novak 1996:xvii-xviii, cf. Lamm and Imhoff 1985, Bonfante 1991, Tyson 1994, Hardin 1995, Beck 1996, Hanson 2003, Wooldridge 2003).

The current state of intercultural relations in the United States is one of tension and ambiguity. Answers to these problems are not readily forthcoming. It is imperative

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<sup>18</sup> Although the overall number of interracial marriages is “low” (Emerson and Smith 2000:154), the rate of interracial marriages is on the rise. According to the Population Reference Bureau, “Interracial couples increased from less than 1 percent of married couples in 1970 to more than 5 percent in 2000. Increased numbers and proportions of interracial couples reflect both population growth and an increased tendency to marry across racial lines” (Lee and Edmonston 2005:11). This is an important trend when considering the case for multicultural churches since interracial “couples and families will look for congregations that can meet their needs for cultural and racial pluralism” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:132).

<sup>19</sup> This is only one out of nine critiques Novak levels at the direction multiculturalism is taking in the United States. This particular elements of his critique was chosen because it is most relevant to the interests of this dissertation.

that the church speak to this situation prophetically out of its all too often untapped resources to offer hope in the midst of a difficult situation.

### The Church Responds to Diversity

According to the recent Multiracial Congregations Project recent funded by a grant from the Lily Endowment, only five percent of Christian congregations in the United States can be considered multiracial, where a multiracial church is defined as one in which “*no one racial group accounts for 80 percent or more of the membership*” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:2-3, italics in the original). Although the majority of churches in the United States are monocultural, there have been brief forays into multicultural ministry.

During the Great Awakening of the 1740s, and in subsequent periods of revival and evangelism, large numbers of Whites and enslaved African Americans were drawn into the Christian faith. Increasingly African Americans joined in the services held at White congregations or at camp meetings. “What the Africans found in the camp meetings of the Great Awakening was *acceptance and involvement as human beings*” (Lincoln 1990:48, italics in the original). Out of those camp meetings multicultural congregations sometimes emerged, with Whites and Blacks worshipping together, and even addressing each other as “brother” and “sister.” In the latter half of the eighteenth century, African Americans even served in pastoral positions in some of these congregations. Although Native Americans and Whites worshipping together was even more rare than Blacks and Whites participating together in churches, there were a few exceptions among Methodists in the early nineteenth century.

These initial ventures into multicultural ministry eventually faded into history

with congregations returning to culturally homogeneous forms of church life. The situation was similar in both Protestant congregations and in Catholic parishes. Even the Quakers, with their outspoken opposition to slavery, saw very little involvement by Blacks in their societies (DeYoung, et al. 2003:46-51). In the early nineteenth century, overt discrimination toward black members in Methodist churches led to the formation of three Black Methodist denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion in 1821.<sup>20</sup> The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, was formed in 1870.<sup>21</sup> Divisions over slavery later in the nineteenth century led to North / South splits among Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and other groups. Following the Civil War and Emancipation, there was a “mass exodus” of Blacks from White denominations (Reimers 1965:31-32). Catholicism also saw many African Americans members leave to join newly forming Black denominations (Ochs 1990:36).

During the Reconstruction era, although some attempts were made at developing multicultural churches, there was little success. The early 1880s saw the emergence of a holiness group known as the Church of God Reformation Movement, currently known as the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana). The movement preached a message of holiness and unity, defining holiness in relational terms. They taught that in embracing God’s holiness, people would be enabled to love one another. Thus, holiness leads to unity. This message was particularly attractive to African Americans who “hungered for a Christianity that could cross the racial divide” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:53-54).

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<sup>20</sup> Sources: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\\_Methodist\\_Episcopal\\_Zion\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Methodist_Episcopal_Zion_Church), and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\\_Methodist\\_Episcopal\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Methodist_Episcopal_Church). Although the Zion church had a number of active churches before 1821, this is the official date for the formation of the denomination.

<sup>21</sup> The group changed its name to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in the 1950s ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_Methodist\\_Episcopal\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Methodist_Episcopal_Church)).



Although the movement's early leaders boldly held to the message of unity, in some cases even defying local laws in the South to establish multicultural congregations, the second generation of leadership allowed for some exceptions to that message. By 1910, culturally diverse congregations of the Church of God throughout the Northern regions of the United States had split along cultural lines (Telfer 1981:49). In 1912, at the national convention of the Church of God, Blacks were encouraged to establish their own national camp meeting. This exacerbated the already tenuous relationships across racial lines and eventually a number of African Americans organized under the name National Association of the Church of God, "a parallel organization offering a Christian witness counter to the racism in the Church of God" (DeYoung, et al. 2003:55). In 1917, the National Association held their first camp meeting in West Middlesex, Pennsylvania (Strege 1991:7).

In roughly the same era in which the Church of God was wrestling with issues of race and cultural difference, within the Roman Catholic Church in England the Saint Joseph's Society of the Sacred Heart for Foreign Missions, also known as the Josephites, was founded. Part of this society was charged with the task of evangelizing African Americans in the United States. Initial advances by the Josephites were squelched by negative reactions from Catholic priests and members (Ochs 1990:2-4).

The meetings of the Azusa Street Revival in the early 1900s were multicultural gatherings. According to Vinson Synan, "people of all types—educated, uneducated, rich, poor, African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, whites, men, women, native born, recent immigrants, and foreign visitors—prayed, sang, and came to the altar together" (2001:54). One minister in Los Angeles commented, "The 'color line' was washed away

in the blood” (Bartleman 1980:54). Although the revival continued for three years, due to racist attitudes the congregation birthed during the revival struggled to maintain its multicultural quality, and “eventually became a small predominantly African American congregation” (DeYoung, et al., 2003:59). Following Azusa a number of other denominations underwent splits along racial lines (DeYoung, et al. 2003:59-60). It is important to note that these initial experiments in multicultural church life took place during periods of revival and intense evangelism. As movements became more routinized and established, they also became more homogeneous.

The post-World War II era was a time of “experimentation with multiracial congregations and racial reconciliation” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:63). Among the first of such experiments was the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco, California. Led by the interracial team of Alfred G. Fisk, an Anglo American and Howard Thurman, an African American, the church eventually grew to a local membership of around 350, with over a thousand more from around the nation designated as members-at-large. Although the membership has dwindled considerably,<sup>22</sup> “[i]t still serves as a signpost for anyone stepping out in faith to believe that first-century Christianity can be reproduced” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:65).

Other congregations, both Protestant and Catholic, in various regions of the United States also made forays into multicultural ministry in the 1940s and 1950s. The Civil Rights movement of the 1960s “brought greater awareness to the church’s role in racial division and its potential for racial reconciliation” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:71), and in the 1970s “the multiracial spirit of the Azusa Street Revival returned to some congregations within Pentecostalism,” notably the Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York

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<sup>22</sup> A 1982 doctoral study put the membership at 35. A 1997 estimate put membership at under 100.

City. In the intervening years, more multicultural churches have emerged,<sup>23</sup> and the issue of multicultural ministry has been the subject of a number of recent books including *United By Faith* (DeYoung, et al. 2003), *Separate No More: Understanding and Developing Racial Reconciliation in Your Church* (Peart 2000), *Where the Nations Meet: The Church in a Multicultural World* (Rhodes 1998), *Divided By Faith* (Emerson and Smith 2000), *One Body, One Spirit* (Yancey 2003), *Living In Color* (Woodley 2001) and numerous other titles.<sup>24</sup>

*United By Faith* (DeYoung, et al. 2003) received national attention in the April, 2005 issue of *Christianity Today*. Along with an excerpt from the book, the issue featured a response from four pastors, including Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois. Hybels recounts that when they were starting Willow Creek, they based their approach on the homogeneous unit principle. Reflecting on the church's beginnings, Hybels muses, "So now, 30 years later, as I read this book, I recognize that a true biblically functioning community must include being multiethnic. My heart beats so fast for that vision today. I marvel at how naïve and pragmatic I was 30 years ago" (Gilbreath and Galli 2005:37).<sup>25</sup>

Despite such attention, and the growing number of congregations in the United States that are working at multicultural ministry, and an increasing selection of books that address the topic, only five percent of churches in the nation are multicultural, i.e., "less

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example, the website [www.mcmweb.org](http://www.mcmweb.org). This website includes the homepage of the Multiracial Congregations Project, funded by a grant from the Lily Endowment. Churches that are multiracial may register at this site.

<sup>24</sup> This list is only representative. Additional titles may be found in the References Cited section of this paper.

<sup>25</sup> Hybels concern is one example of a growing concern among conservative evangelicals over social issues. Rick Warren's initiative in Africa confronting disease, poverty and illiteracy (Morgan 2005), and the "greening of evangelicals" exemplified by the environmental activism of the Academy of Evangelical Scientists and Ethicists (Cochran 2005) are other examples of this trend.

than 80 percent of the membership is from any one cultural group” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:74). The observation made by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1960s that the Sunday morning worship hour is the most segregated hour in America (Washington 1986:101) has been often quoted, but is worth mentioning again.<sup>26</sup>

### Missiological Responses to Diversity

The question of the church’s response to cultural diversity has been considered not only at the level of the local congregation, but at the academic level as well. Theologians and missiologists have discussed and debated the matter at great length. While there are some areas of agreement, significant areas of disagreement remain. It is beyond the scope of this paper to reconstruct the conversation that has taken place over the past three or more decades, however, a brief summary of the debate is helpful and necessary. The purpose of this summary is neither to denounce, nor to endorse theories such as the “homogeneous unit principle,” nor to deny that dynamics of homogeneity are at work in Christian ministry.<sup>27</sup> Rather the purpose here is to report on the development of the discussion that has surrounded the homogeneous unit principle. It is important to note that Christians of good will and honest intent reside on both sides of the discussion.

The genesis of an influential idea. During his time in India as a missionary and researcher, Donald McGavran made an observation which has subsequently come to be known as the “homogeneous unit principle.” McGavran observed, “People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers” (1990:163).<sup>28</sup> He

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<sup>26</sup> The original source of this observation is unclear. King himself credited it to Liston Pope, who set it off with quotation marks in his book *The Kingdom Beyond Caste* (1957:105), but did not attribute it to anyone in particular.

<sup>27</sup> There are cases, such as a deaf congregation, in which a church composed of a single culture would be an appropriate model.

<sup>28</sup> The revised edition is preferred here because Wagner, in editing McGavran’s 1970 work, employs inclusive language.

draws an important distinction between biblical and non-biblical barriers to coming to faith. Biblical barriers include the offense of the cross, repentance, and open confession of Christ. These barriers, McGavran asserts, “must remain, to be accepted and surmounted as part of the test of a Christian” (1990:168). In contrast, “Nothing in the Bible . . . requires that *in becoming a Christian* a believer must cross linguistic, racial, and class barriers” (1990:169, emphasis in the original).

McGavran’s point is valid, particularly in regard to the linguistic barrier. Contemporary voices making a renewed call for integration recognize this as a valid argument. Curtiss DeYoung and his co-authors, for example, although consistently arguing that whenever possible churches should be culturally diverse, recognize the legitimacy of monocultural churches in the case of first generation immigrants, as language differences pose a legitimate barrier to multicultural congregations (2003:132).<sup>29</sup>

McGavran cautions that the homogeneous unit principle should never be applied in such a way that it fosters exclusivism, racial pride, or ethnocentrism (1990:177). Furthermore, he does not say that Christians of different homogeneous units should never work toward integration. “If each homogeneous unit is disciplined,” McGavran says, “nothing can prevent God from merging them into one fellowship” (1990:177). McGavran calls this type of congregation, comprised of more than one homogeneous

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Although Peter Wagner later called McGavran’s idea the “homogeneous unit principle,” McGavran himself avoided this language. “McGavran remained strictly descriptive in his observations about homogeneity—and he predominantly used the concept of homogeneity as a tool of social analysis of the reality outside the church” (Van Engen 2004:16).

<sup>29</sup> It is important to distinguish here between the obligation of a seeker and the obligation of a believer. McGavran’s point about creating artificial, nonbiblical barriers for seekers, must not be allowed to overshadow the obligation of believers to include and embrace other believers regardless of race or ethnicity. While seekers are not required to cross linguistic, racial and class barriers, it is incumbent upon believers to cross them, making “every effort to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2), as they build the community of faith.

unit, a “conglomerate congregation” (1990:261). It is thus evident that, from its inception, the homogeneous unit principle has not been understood as an absolute to be applied in all contexts, or for all purposes, or for all phases of church growth.

Tetsunao Yamamori has articulated a more nuanced approach to the homogeneous unit principle. He presents two basic approaches churches can utilize to reach groups that are culturally different from themselves: assimilationist approaches which are more common, and “identificational” approaches. Identificational approaches are based on the assumptions of the homogeneous unit principle, and promote “the development of distinct, monoethnic churches and missions” (1993:90). According to Yamamori, the degree of “ethnic consciousness” within a group determines which approach to take. (See Yamamori’s “Measurement of Ethnic Consciousness” in Appendix C.) Thus, Yamamori asserts that the homogeneous unit principle is not an absolute to be applied in all circumstances; application is context dependent.

The idea becomes a principle. Building on the original explication of the homogeneous unit principle by McGavran, Peter Wagner presented a comprehensive explanation and defense of the principle in *Our Kind of People* (1979).<sup>30</sup> Wagner drew from a range of theologians, summarizing and answering the arguments they advanced for integrated churches. He also surveyed the work of a number of non-White theologians to glean their perspective on the issue of integration versus non-integration.

Wagner addressed the homogeneous unit principle in several other works: *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (1981), *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church* (1976), and *Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Mission*

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<sup>30</sup> The most recent reformulation of the homogeneous unit principle that has had broad influence is by Rick Warren in *The Purpose Driven Church* (1995:155-172).

*and Evangelism* (1987). He noted in *Leading Your Church to Growth* (1984:44), that there were exceptions to the homogeneous unit principle. Furthermore, according to Van Engen, Wagner has been “changing in his assessment of the HUP, and moving in the direction of grudgingly affirming the possibility that planting multi-ethnic congregations may be appropriate” and “by 1996 Wagner was willing to view a multi-ethnic congregation with in [sic] a somewhat more positive light” (2004:33-34).

Although Wagner has addressed the homogeneous unit principle in various later works, his most comprehensive defense of the theory is *Our Kind of People* (1979). From this volume, two main reasons emerge for advocating the homogeneous unit principle. The first relates to the issue of church growth and evangelistic effectiveness. The second has to do with the thorny issue of racism.

One of the primary reasons Wagner advocates the homogeneous unit principle relates to evangelistic effectiveness. Based on various failed attempts at interracial ministry he observed in the 1960s, he concluded that such churches could not grow (Wagner 1979:147-148). The intervening years, however, have seen the emergence of a number of large, multicultural churches that are growing.

The second main area of concern drawn from *Our Kind of People* is perhaps the part of Wagner’s and McGavran’s argument that is least understood. George Hunter believes that those who have reservations about the homogeneous unit principle have often not paid the price to understand what McGavran and other proponents of that principle are really saying. Hunter insists that the homogeneous unit principle as McGavran understood and promoted it was not intended to be exclusive, but rather was intended to foster inclusiveness (Hunter 2004).

At the congregational level, the homogeneous unit principle appears to separate cultural groups one from another. At a broader level, the homogeneous unit principle works to include. According to the logic of the homogeneous unit principle, a church that hosts three different homogeneous congregations, although those groups worship separately, can be considered more inclusive than the church composed of one worshipping congregation with a smattering of persons from other cultural backgrounds.

Key to understanding Wagner's argument for the homogeneous unit principle is his concern over various forms of assimilationism. He is concerned that churches not only embrace and include individuals, but also show respect for their cultures.

The annals of cross-cultural missionary work are cluttered with examples of missionaries' confusing the Christian gospel with the cultural values through which they themselves had come to understand Christianity. Preaching the gospel has too often meant 'become a Christian like me and my people.' Becoming an adherent of Christianity implied in many cases undergoing a "cultural circumcision" or, in extreme circumstances, committing ethnocide. (Wagner 1979:82)

Insofar as Wagner's assessment of cross-cultural mission is accurate, his concern is reasonable. Attempting to force others into a dominant group's cultural mold betrays a lack of understanding, as it fails to embrace "God's passion for ethnic diversity" (Woodley 2001). However, in highlighting the assimilationist character of some cross-cultural mission efforts, Wagner glosses over numerous positive examples.

Early debate on the homogeneous unit principle. One of the earliest large-scale debates on the homogeneous unit principle took place in a meeting of the Lausanne Theology and Education Group in 1977. Five professors from the Fuller School of World Mission presented position papers, in response to which five discussants presented



papers.<sup>31</sup> John Stott (1996:61-72) compiled the results of the discussion. The participants were all committed to the unity of God and the unity of the church, and recognized the church's responsibility to maintain that unity. All participants agreed,

The dividing wall which Jesus Christ abolished by his death was *echthra*, "enmity" or "hostility." All forms of hatred, scorn, and disrespect between Christians of different backgrounds are forbidden, being totally incompatible with Christ's reconciling work. But we must go further than this. The wall dividing Jew from Gentile was not only their active reciprocal hatred; it was also their racial and religious alienation symbolized by "the law of commandments and ordinances." This, too, Jesus abolished, in order to "create in himself one new man in place of two, so making peace" (Ephesians 2:15). (Stott 1996:63)

While acknowledging the unity of the church, the panel also recognized that such unity "did not mean that Jews ceased to be Jews, or Gentiles to be Gentiles. It did mean, however, that their racial differences were no barrier to their fellowship" (Stott 1996:63).

The panel agreed that among the New Testament churches there were likely both multicultural churches, and monocultural churches, and that in some contexts a monocultural church is "legitimate and authentic." It was agreed, however that homogeneous churches should be encouraged to take "active steps to broaden [their] fellowship in order to demonstrate visibly the unity and the variety of Christ's church" (Stott 1996:64).

Where the panel disagreed on the homogenous unit issue was about evangelism. While acknowledging that homogeneous churches generally grow faster than multicultural congregations,<sup>32</sup> some members in the discussion did not believe that rapid growth was "the most important Christian priority" (Stott:1996:64; cf. Newbigin 1989:135). While an alien culture can be a barrier to faith, "segregation and strife in the church" can also be barriers to faith (Stott 1996:64; cf. Carl Henry's comments in Yates 1994:201-202).

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<sup>31</sup> The presenters were Donald McGavran, Charles Kraft, Ralph Winter, C. Peter Wagner, and Arthur Glasser. The respondents: Harvie Conn, Robert Ramseyer, Victor Hayward, John H. Yoder, and René Padilla.

<sup>32</sup> Stott does not indicate whether any empirical evidence was presented in support of this statement.

The panel acknowledged that both homogeneous unit churches, with an emphasis on the evangelistic mandate, and integrated congregations, with an emphasis on the concern for unity and justice, could be defended scripturally. However, the report laments, “The synthesis between these two still eludes us, although we all accept our Lord’s own words that it is through the brotherly love and unity of Christians that the world will come to believe in him (John 13:35; 17:21, 23)” (Stott 1996:65).

One of the discussants at the meeting of the Lausanne Theology and Education Group in 1977, René Padilla, later developed a comprehensive critique of the homogeneous unit principle (1985). Drawing from a number of biblical texts, Padilla argued that the New Testament takes for granted “the oneness of the people of God” as “a oneness that transcends all outward distinctions” (1985:142). He affirmed also that Apostolic practice and the early church worked to break down barriers between Jew and Gentile in response to “God’s purpose of unity in Jesus Christ” (1985:146). While acknowledging that living out that unity was often difficult, Padilla asserts that the Scriptures admonish Christians to make every effort in maintaining it.

In light of the teaching of Christian Scripture, Padilla concluded, “the use of the homogeneous unit principle for church growth has no biblical foundation. Its advocates have taken as their starting point a sociological observation and developed a missionary strategy; only then, a posteriori, have they made the attempt to find biblical support” (1985:168). Furthermore, Padilla argued, “the Church Growth emphasis on homogeneous unit churches is in fact directly opposed to the apostolic teaching and practice in relation to the expansion of the church” (1985:168). A missiology based on the homogeneous unit principle “reinforce[s] the status quo” and fails to speak prophetically to churches “in

which the bourgeois is comfortable but remains enslaved to the materialism of a consumer society and blind to the needs of the poor” (Padilla 1985:169). In contrast to missiology based on homogeneity, Padilla called for an understanding of mission brings forth the church as “the firstfruits of a new humanity made up of persons ‘from every tribe and tongue and people and nation’ who will sing in unison a new song to the Lamb of God (Rev. 5:9)” (Padilla 1985:169).

#### Relevance of this Project: A Changing Social Milieu

It has been two decades since Padilla called for a new understanding of mission, and nearly three decades since the meeting of the Lausanne Theology and Education Group where the homogeneous unit principle was debated. Much has changed in American society in the intervening years. The changes taking place may well be creating a society in which the culturally integrated congregation is becoming a more viable option than had previously been thought. Donald McGavran himself suggested a social milieu in which a culturally diverse congregation might be the most appropriate model:

Only in true social melting pots is it [integrated ministry] a significant option. The old segments of society are in fact breaking down. Many mixed marriages are taking place. Children growing up together in school regard each other as essentially one people. There conglomerate congregations are both possible and desirable. There the best opportunities for growth may truly be that of bringing into one congregation converts of the new people being formed (1990:261).

The situation McGavran suggests as the exception to the rule in regard to the homogeneous unit principle is more a reality in the United States now than ever before. Sociologist George Yancey affirms that the sociological milieu described above is more of a reality than ever before, and that within this context multiracial churches not only have the potential for growth, but actually are growing (2003:35).

George Yancey believes that visible unity is an important form of witness, and

suggests that “if American can see Christian institutions as a solution to racial alienation, then the message of Christianity will have more relevance” (2003:45-46). This is particularly true for the church that is ministering in a multicultural milieu. According to Yancey, more Americans than ever before feel at ease in multicultural settings, particularly those who reside in integrated subcultures such as college campuses, the fine arts community, and Generation Xers (2003:41). Kevin Ford<sup>33</sup> describes the longing of this generation:

My generation wants to know that God will bring about reconciliation, that he will heal our hurts and that he will accept us unconditionally. Unfortunately, most of us Thirteeners [one of Ford’s alternative terms for Generation X] have not found this in church. . . . We see the church taking hard-nosed doctrinal stands that divide people and put certain groups down. We see hypocrisy. We agree with Gandhi, who said, “I like your Christ. But I don’t like your Christians—they are so unlike your Christ.” (1995:139-140)

Ford continues, expressing the desire of younger believers for a church experience that is “inclusive and affirming” rather than “exclusive and dreary” (1995:140). There are many types of division and exclusion, and although Ford does not specifically mention racial division, he does touch on the issues of division and exclusion among Christians. Patrick Mays’ research with Gen Xers affirms Ford’s point. “Accustomed to diversity in society, Xers tend to have less patience with lingering racial and gender inequalities, especially in churches. Churches and Christian messengers who want to gain a hearing with Xers will show that reconciliation with God has a positive impact toward reconciliation between races, genders, and generations” (1999:177).

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<sup>33</sup> Ford, son of Leighton Ford and grandson of Billy Graham, has been a campus minister with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and is currently involved in ministry consultation. *Jesus for a New Generation* is, in part, an outgrowth of the Baby Buster Consultation cosponsored by InterVarsity and Leighton Ford Ministries.

Tim Celek<sup>34</sup> and Dieter Zander,<sup>35</sup> both seasoned Gen X ministers, clarify the perception many Gen Xers have of the church:

They view the church as being separatist, segregated, institutional, irrelevant, judgmental, holier-than-thou, controlling, authoritarian... Busters see Christianity as a divisive faith. They see it as the haves and the have-nots, the insiders and the outsiders. Busters are culturally sensitive people. They're the ones who want to break down all traces of dividing lines. We have to help them understand that's what Christianity is all about—reuniting estranged humans with each other and with their Creator (1996:88-89).

If churches reflect the division and exclusion of American society rather than living as a prophetic community that challenges the status quo and offers hope for a better way, Gen Xers may well find the church's message irrelevant to some of their deepest concerns.

Gen Xers may not be the only one to find the church's message irrelevant in an emerging multicultural milieu. A 2003 poll conducted by the Gallup Organization for AARP and the Leadership Council on Civil Rights found that 70% of whites say they approve of interracial marriages. In addition, 66% of whites indicated, "they would not object if their own child or grandchild chose a black spouse" (Goodheart 2004:36-37). The poll also found "When it comes to choosing neighbors, an inclusive spirit again prevails: majorities of blacks, whites, and Hispanics all say they would rather live in racially mixed neighborhoods than surround themselves with only members of their own group" (Goodheart 2004:37).

Beyond the church, in the broader society, there is a growing awareness of the problems of race. While atrocities such as "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and genocide in Rwanda seem distant to people living in the relative safety of the United States, events

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<sup>34</sup> Celek is senior pastor of Calvary Church Newport Mesa, in Costa Mesa, California.

<sup>35</sup> Zander founded the Buster targeted New Song Church in Covina, California and later worked to develop a GenX ministry at Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, Illinois.

closer to home force us to ask whether the same forces that fuel violent acts half a world away might not lie brewing just below the surface. Events such as the riots in Los Angeles following the acquittal of the police officers that had brutally beaten Rodney King, and the race riots in Cincinnati following the police shooting of a young African American in 2001 confirm such fears.

Curtiss DeYoung says, “During the past few years in the United States, we have had to face the truth of our own hostility and separation” (1997:3). DeYoung cites the diverse response to two famous court cases of the 1990s, including the King case, as illustrations of the tension between the races. He notes the different responses to both the acquittal and to the riots. “While many whites disagreed with the verdict, some believed that the police officers were just a few ‘bad apples’ in an otherwise good system of law enforcement. Persons of color often saw these police officers as the tip of an iceberg in a corrupt system” (1997:4). While the trial and the riots sparked much conversation and several books including *The Coming Race Wars?* (Pannell 1993) DeYoung says that still, “the core issues undergirding our distrust and division remained largely unaddressed and unchanged” (1997:4).

The second trial DeYoung mentions is that of O.J. Simpson. Of the reactions to that trial he writes,

Certainly the racial gulf was clearly seen. The reactions of many African Americans and whites differed dramatically. When the verdicts were announced, many African Americans cheered and applauded. This was interpreted by some whites as a case of African Americans celebrating the release of “one of their own.” Yet many of those who were cheering stated that their joy was rooted in finally seeing the system work for a black man. . . . Some whites decided that the judicial system was broken. Some people of color responded that they had known this for years” (1997:4-5).

All of this, DeYoung contends, points to the existence of deep divisions in

American society. Moreover, DeYoung's example only touches on the issue of black – white relations. Factor in changes such as the new immigrants coming from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the complexity of intercultural relations is multiplied many times over.

These issues are raising concern in the broader society beyond the walls of the church. The business community, for example, is seeking answers on how to manage diversity. The University of Michigan Business School publishes a management series subtitled “Innovative Solutions to the *Pressing Problems* of Business” (emphasis added). One of the titles in that series is *Creating the Multicultural Organization* authored by Taylor Cox Jr.<sup>36</sup> (2001). The concern to live and work in harmony goes beyond the business community. Jeff Hitchcock<sup>37</sup> believes most Americans want to have a “unified American society” and want to “achieve a multiracial society” (2002:3 cf. Goodheart 2004).

What is the church's response to the state in which American culture finds itself? How does a changing social milieu shape the way the church carries out mission and ministry? George Hunsberger has identified what he has called “The Newbigin Gauntlet,” that is, the challenge present in the writings of Lesslie Newbigin to develop a “domestic missiology for North America” (Hunsberger 1991:390). Hunsberger and several other missiologists formed the Gospel and Our Culture Network to promote the development of such a missiology. While this network has focused primarily on the challenges of mission and ministry in a postmodern context, the domestic missiology Hunsberger has called for must surely also include a focus on cultural diversity.

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<sup>36</sup> Cox is associate professor of organizational behavior and human resource management at the University of Michigan Business School, and a consultant in organizational change.

<sup>37</sup> Hitchcock is co-founder and executive director of the Center for the Study of White American Culture.

Does the church have anything to say in response to the dividedness of American society? Is reconciliation part of the church's ministry in the world? The late Samuel G. Hines, longtime pastor of the Third Street Church of God (Anderson, IN) in Washington D.C., used to say that reconciliation is God's "one item agenda." Given that more Americans, particularly the younger generations, are yearning for answers to the problems associated with cultural differences, perhaps the social milieu that McGavran suggested as an appropriate and fertile context for culturally integrated ministry is at hand.

### Falling Short of the Goal

The presenting problem is this: Despite the growing diversity of the population of the United States in both large urban areas and in smaller communities, only five percent of Christian congregations in the United States reflect the diversity of the broader society (DeYoung 2003:2). The answers that have traditionally been put forth in response to this challenge are not adequate. Assimilationist models of ministry fail to appreciate the richness of other cultures; they tend to confuse unity with uniformity at the expense of diversity. Pluralistic models of ministry, while they appreciate cultural diversity, often sacrifice unity.

The homogeneous unit principle, as Wagner has presented it, forces the church into a false dichotomy. Wagner argues that culturally integrated ministry has always been assimilationist in nature, i.e., the dominant group forces the non-dominant group into its own cultural mold. His solution is to establish culturally homogeneous congregations. The false dichotomy, then, is assimilationist integration or no integration.

Moving beyond the dichotomy presupposed in this version of the homogeneous unit principle, a growing number of congregations are managing consistently to transcend



boundaries of culture to form multicultural communities of faith. They have discovered a third way, a middle path that allows them to appreciate the riches that are present in cultural diversity, while maintaining a counterbalancing emphasis on unity.

The research problem is this: assuming the church model in which people of different cultural backgrounds gather in worship and fellowship to be a scripturally valid pattern, how have churches which have incorporated such diversity been able to transcend cultural differences to become multicultural congregations, and how are they able to sustain the vision of a multicultural community of faith while at the same time experiencing growth? This research problem is broken down into five subproblems.

#### First Subproblem

Establish a biblically and theologically grounded rationale for multicultural ministry. The development of this rationale focuses on the biblical themes of unity and reconciliation, with particular attention to the biblical connection between unity and witness.

#### Second Subproblem

Identify the biblical and theological resources used by the multicultural churches in the study to make the biblical mandate for unity and reconciliation an experiential reality. In other words, identify the building blocks the churches use to create an alternative understanding of reality and thus make multicultural ministry plausible in thought and in realized in practice.

#### Third Subproblem

Document and analyze the growth pattern of multicultural congregations. Church Growth strategies that are of particular interest for this project include: identifying receptive people, reaching out across social networks, and establishing need meeting ministries.

#### Fourth Subproblem

Determine the level of “intercultural sensitivity” (Bennett 1993) present in the congregations participating in the research project. Intercultural sensitivity, as understood by Milton Bennett (1993) can be measured using the Intercultural Development Inventory, a survey instrument developed by researcher Mitchell Hammer, based on Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

#### Fifth Subproblem

Based on the data collected in addressing the preceding subproblems, develop a set of interpretations that explains multicultural church growth. In addressing this subproblem, the research brings together the biblical and theological grounding for multicultural church with the practices of the churches under study, to explain their pattern of growth.

### Definition of Terms

A number of authors use some of the same terms to describe different or overlapping phenomena. It will be helpful, therefore, to offer working definitions of several key terms for the sake of clarity.

#### Race

Although contemporary research in both the behavioral and empirical sciences has shown that the idea of race is based on faulty assumptions (e.g., Schaefer 2001:9), there can be no denying that it continues to play an important role in the way we relate to one another in American society. In popular usage, race generally refers to skin color and other readily observable physical characteristics. Inasmuch as the term race is used in this paper, it refers to such characteristics.

## Ethnicity

Glazer and Moynihan have correctly observed that the term ethnicity is a confusing one, as it is used in a number of ways.

It may be either a *residual* category, designating some common group tie *not* identified distinctively by language, color, or religion but rather by a common history and coherence through common symbols . . . or it may be a *generic* term which allows one to identify loosely *any minority* group within a dominant pattern, even though the particular unit of identification may be national origin (Irish, Italian, Pole in the United States), linguistic, racial or religious. (Glazer and Moynihan 1975:156, emphasis in the original)

Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian Kwan provide the following definition of ethnicity.

“An ethnic group consists of those who conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of their common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others”

(1965:47). Richard Schaefer adds that “Ethnic groups are groups set apart from others because of their national origin or distinctive cultural patterns” (2001:6). Ethnicity, as used in this project, has two sides: the understanding a group of people holds about themselves, and the understanding others have about a group, whether that understanding is real or fictive, based on elements such as common ancestry, shared national origin, and distinctive cultural traits.

## Culture

While the idea of culture is related to ethnicity and race, there are important differences between the terms. Just as the term ethnicity has acquired a number of meanings, so has the term culture. Various authors have set forth definitions of culture. Craig Storti’s succinct definition is helpful for understanding the term culture as used in this project: “Culture is the shared assumptions, values, and beliefs of a group of people which result in characteristic behaviors” (Storti 1999:5). Darrell Whiteman’s definition adds that ideas find expression in both material products and visible behavior (1981:224).

Another important aspect of culture is its fluidity. A number of authors have observed that culture is always in flux; that is it not static (Rynkiewich 2002, e.g.) . Drawing from both of the above definitions, plus the observations made by Rynkiewich and others, the term culture as used in the proposed project will be understood as the shared ideas, assumptions, values, behavior, and material products that are constructed and contested by a given group of people as they interact with one another.

The culture of a church, *i.e.*, its shared ideas, assumptions, values, behavior and material products, does not find expression as regularly as a more stable social entity—a socially isolated village, for example. Therefore, it may be appropriate to refer to the culture of a church as “occasional culture.”<sup>38</sup> This term highlights the reality that church culture does not find expression everyday, as members may not interact on a day-to-day basis.

#### Multiracial, Multiethnic, or Multicultural?

The literature most relevant to the topic at hand uses all three of the above terms—sometimes with hyphens, sometimes without—to describe similar phenomena. Curtiss DeYoung, et al., (2003) prefer the adjective multiracial when referring to churches with diverse memberships, while Manuel Ortiz (1996) uses multiethnic. A third term seen in the literature is “multicultural.” All three terms refer to churches whose membership is diverse. Although these different terms signify similar phenomena, throughout this paper, the term multicultural is preferred for two central reasons.

First, because culture refers to ideas, assumptions, values, and behavioral patterns, the term multicultural, as an adjective to describe a church, refers to the presence of more than one set of ideas, assumptions, values and behavioral patterns interacting together, and hopefully with the result that people experience mutual enrichment and edification.

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<sup>38</sup> Credit for this term goes to James Spradley via Mike Rynkiewich.

The term *multiracial*, by way of contrast, suggests only the presence of different skin tones in a church. *Multiethnic*, suggests the presence of more than one group of people each with their own distinct shared history or lineage, but may miss the interaction of ideas, assumptions, values and behavioral patterns.

The second reason the term *multicultural* is preferred is that the theory underlying the proposed research is drawn primarily from the behavioral sciences, particularly Anthropology, which prefers the term *culture*. Therefore, throughout this paper, the term *multicultural*, as an adjective to describe a local church, is preferred over *multiethnic* and *multiracial*, with the understanding that the term is related to the other two. The exception to this preferred usage is in the case of quoting, or interacting directly with, a source that uses other terminology.

A fourth term describing some of the church models represented in the pertinent literature is “*multilingual*.” This term refers to churches with two or more congregations that speak different languages, for example, a church with a congregation that conducts services in English and a congregation that conducts services in Spanish.<sup>39</sup> DeYoung, et al. (2003) call for culturally diverse congregations, but recognize the monocultural fellowship as appropriate where language differences pose a barrier to fellowship, such as first generation immigrants. I agree that in the case of a linguistic barrier a homogeneous congregation is appropriate.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See Table 3 for the authors who present this model and the terms they use.

<sup>40</sup> Edward T. Hall has called culture the “silent language” (1959). Thus it could be argued that cultural differences are as much a barrier to the multicultural fellowship as language itself. However, as Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (explained in Chapter 7) demonstrates, the ability to relate cross-culturally can be learned. Furthermore, one of the points raised in this dissertation, and in a number of other works, is that the interaction of different cultures (sets of assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviors) enriches and strengthens the church.

### Designations for Identifying Groups

Numerous terms are currently in use for identifying various groups of people in the United States (DeYoung, *et al.*, 2003:ix). For example, both “Black” and “African American” (and “Latino” and “Hispanic”) are common in the pertinent literature and are used interchangeably in the current project. Compound terms such as “Asian American” are also used in this paper, referring, for example, to a person with an Asian cultural background living in the United States.<sup>41</sup>

### Delimitations

In this particular project, a number of delimitations were set in order to maintain focus and clarity. They include narrowing the topic of concern to cultural diversity in churches, limiting the number of churches studied, and the treatment of evangelism and church growth as secondary concerns. Further explanation of these delimitations follows.

### Focus on Cultural Diversity

Numerous categories are used to think about and to discuss the diversity that characterizes the United States as a nation, including culture, race, ethnicity, socio-economic level, religion and gender. While each of these constructs for processing diversity is important, this project has focused on cultural diversity. The central reason for the focus on cultural diversity specifically is that the theory undergirding this study is primarily concerned with things that pertain to culture. The idea of culture as constructed, contingent and contested (Rynkiewich 2002), for example, is from the field of Anthropology, the central concern of which is culture.

While gender, for example, is also important in the consideration of diversity, this

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<sup>41</sup> The terms Black and White in reference to individuals or groups of people are capitalized at the recommendation of Dr. Russell West.

study has chosen not to focus on gender diversity. To deal adequately with the issue of gender diversity it would have been necessary to introduce another body of literature, that of Gender Studies. To introduce theory from that body of literature would have made the project more complex and larger than could reasonably be managed. The inclusion of theory from Gender Studies literature in the theoretical framework would have increased the amount and type of data being sought in interviews. The interpretation of that data would undoubtedly have produced additional material, perhaps even additional chapters. Thus, the project focuses primarily on one type of diversity, that of cultural diversity. Ethnic and racial diversity, as well as socioeconomic diversity, are closely related to cultural diversity, and occasionally surfaced in the course of interviews. Inasmuch as this project addresses these types of diversity, it is largely because respondents raised them. Respondents, conversely, did not raise the question of gender diversity.

#### A Limited Number of Churches

As noted above, only five percent of the Christian congregations in the United States qualify as multiracial / multicultural churches (De Young, et al. 2003:2). Even with such a small percentage of congregations, it would be impossible to study all such congregations. Therefore, this research project has been limited to the study of six congregations. The rationale for this number, and the method of selecting congregations to participate in the study is explained in Chapter 2.

#### Church Growth as a Secondary Concern

A third delimitation has to do with the place of church growth in this study. While this is an important consideration, it is not the primary focus of the project. The primary concern is to understand the processes by which an alternative experience or perception

of reality is constructed, a perception of reality wherein the multicultural fellowship becomes plausible in thought, and realized in practice. Church growth is related to the central question in that it addresses the way a church includes new members, enabling them to experience and perceive reality in a new and different way. Terminology relating to this secondary concern is clarified in Chapter 6.

### Organization of the Study

It will be beneficial to outline the rest of the dissertation at this point to give the reader an idea of the flow of thought through the paper. Chapter 2 outlines the missiological theory undergirding the research project, and explains the research methodology of the project. Chapter 3 develops the Biblical and Theological foundations for multicultural ministry (first subproblem). Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the themes that emerged from the data collected in the course of research (second subproblem). Chapter 4 addresses major findings from the data regarding theology and practices of multicultural churches that tend toward the development and maintenance of unity, while Chapter 5 discusses the role of pastoral leadership. Chapter 6 presents research findings pertaining to growth in multicultural churches (third and fifth subproblems). Chapter 7 addresses the question of intercultural sensitivity in multicultural churches (fourth subproblem). Chapter 8 rounds out the dissertation with some conclusions about multicultural ministry, the applicability of the lessons learned in other contexts, and suggestions for further research.



## Chapter 2

### **Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter two-fold. First, this chapter outlines the basic theory that guided the research project and that served as a grid through which the data collected in the project was interpreted. The second aim is to explain the strategy and methodology by which the research on multicultural churches was carried out.

#### Theoretical Framework

In developing a framework for the interpretation of data to be collected in this research project, two components emerged as primary considerations. The first, the biblical / theological component, is developed extensively in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. The second major component, behavioral sciences, is outlined below.

#### Behavioral Sciences Component

There is little argument that reconciliation is a biblical ideal. There is, however, a gap between the biblical ideal of reconciliation and the way it is carried out. The ontological unity of the church is acknowledged, but experienced reality lags behind. It is an instructive exercise to juxtapose the titles of two recent books. Emerson and Smith (2000) contended that Evangelicalism in America was *Divided by Faith*. In response, DeYoung, et al. (2003) countered that despite the general trend, a number of culturally diverse congregations were *United by Faith*.

One question that follows from the former title is “Why?” Why are Evangelicals divided by faith? A question that follows from the latter title is “How?” How have some congregations overcome the barriers that have kept others divided? Although differences

in theology may have something to do with the experience of reconciliation, I also suggest that such differences are only part of the issue. The Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) for example, has historically held to the doctrine of unity, yet at an organizational level, and in most local congregations, is divided along racial lines.

Evangelicals are marked by their strong commitment to Scripture as normative for Christian faith and practice, and thus would not deny the doctrine of unity or reconciliation. What then, besides theology, distinguishes a congregation that is *Divided by Faith* from one that is *United by Faith*? This project pursued the answer to that question through various theories drawn from the behavioral sciences.

Social Construction of Reality. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their classic text, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967), describe their work as “a systematic, theoretical treatise in the sociology of knowledge” (1967:v). In thus describing it, they mean it is a study of how knowledge of all types is developed, transmitted, and maintained in a society. Their basic contention in the book, as suggested by the title, is that “reality is socially constructed” (1967:1; cf. Kuhn 1970, R. Wagner 1995, Rynkiewich 2002). An important term they introduce is *plausibility structure*. Perception and understanding of reality are subjective and they depend on the plausibility structures for their maintenance. They offer two examples – one general and one with reference to religious identity in particular: “One can maintain one’s self-identification as a man of importance only in a milieu that confirms this identity; one can maintain one’s Catholic faith only if one retains one’s significant relationship with the Catholic community; and so forth” (Berger and Luckmann 1967:154-155). It could accurately be

said, then, that one's self perception as a member of a multicultural community faith requires maintenance and continual reaffirmation.

The sociology of knowledge is important for this study because it recognizes that culture and identity are socially constructed. Berger and Luckmann explain that the sociology of knowledge seeks to understand the processes by which "human 'knowledge' is developed, transmitted and maintained in social institutions . . . in such a way that a taken-for-granted 'reality' congeals for the man in the street" (Berger and Luckmann 1967:3). As part of the Theoretical Framework, this field can help us understand how multicultural churches frame reality such that it becomes plausible for people of different cultural backgrounds to enter together into a common body of believers, such that it "congeals" for the person in the pew (or moveable seating as the case may be).

Symbols and Symbolic Interactionism. Symbols are part of the process of social construction and may be linked to the values, ideas, and assumptions, i.e., the culture, of a given group of people. George Herbert Mead originally formulated the propositions of Symbolic Interactionism (SI) in *Mind, Self and Society* (1934). Herbert Blumer later sought to solidify the position and methodology of SI, identifying three fundamental assumptions: First, "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them." Second, "the meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows." Third, "these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he [sic] encounters" (Blumer 1969:2)

Symbols for Mead include what he called gestures, both physical gestures and things such as "requests, orders, commands, cues, and declarations" (Blumer 1969:9).

Gestures may hold similar or dissimilar meanings for different people, and “the gesture has meaning for both the person who makes it and for the person to whom it is directed.” Blumer explains the importance of this reality: “When the gesture has the same meaning for both, the two parties understand each other” (Blumer 1969:9).

Symbolic Interactionism enables us to ask questions such as, What symbols, gestures, and objects are present in multicultural churches that help to create and maintain an alternative view of reality? How do multicultural churches invest these symbols, gestures, and objects with shared meaning to facilitate unity rather than division? As Joel Charon puts it, symbols “*make our complex group life possible*” (Charon 2001:89, italics in the original).

Ritual Process. Traditional societies have often used rites of passage to mark a person’s transition from one status and role in society to another. Schreiter has noted, “The church has a number of internal resources to aid in the ministry of reconciliation. . . . The first is the power of ritual” (Schreiter 1992). A particularly notable example of the church’s use of ritual is the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (Finn 1989).

The power of the ritual process is its ability to refashion the being of the participant (Turner 1997 [1969]:103) as participants may be “more open to new ideas, more impressionable than at other times” (Courson 1998:304). Ritual process also helps participants bond to the community and bond to meaning (Zahniser 1991:76). As an interpretive element, ritual process can help explain how multicultural churches help their members bond to the values and ideals of the community, and to one another.

The Importance of Narrative. A growing body of literature recognizes, and is calling attention to, the way narrative shapes communities (Hauerwas 1981, Strege

1991:xii, Van Engen 1996:44ff, Bradshaw 2002). It is appropriate, therefore, to take into consideration the narratives of the congregations under study as their narratives may play a key role in helping to construct a sense of reality that makes the multicultural worshipping community plausible in thought and practice.

### Evangelism and Church Growth Theory

Although salvation is ultimately a work of God, human agents do play a role in the process. The Church Growth movement has developed a number of principles that highlight the way human agents cooperate with the work of God. Several emerge as primary strategies, three of which will serve as means for understanding the evangelistic practices of the churches studied in this project.

The principle of receptivity. The first strategy is “Identifying Receptive People” (Hunter 1987:64). George Hunter notes, “Using common sense we may observe that some people are more receptive to the gospel than others, and that a given person is more receptive now than last year” (1987:64; Cf. McGavran 1990:179ff.).

A number of factors play into receptivity, including social networks, awareness of needs, level of indigeneity of the presenting group, growth or decline of any religion in a region, major cultural change, socio-economic level, level of similarity with the existing church, personal dissatisfaction, and life transitions (Hunter 1987:77-84). The principle of identifying receptive people is helpful in understanding the way multicultural churches identify and attract potential members.

The principle of social networks. A second strategy is “Reaching Out Across Social Networks” (Hunter 1987:92). This principle proposes that “the Christian faith spreads across the social networks of active credible Christians, especially new

Christians” (Hunter 1987:92). In their book *The Master’s Plan for Making Disciples*, Win and Chip Arn (1998) deal extensively with the importance of existing social networks for the purposes of evangelism. They see such networks as a critical component of the early church’s evangelistic strategy. “The means of church growth was through the individual Christian’s interlocking social system—his or her family, friends, and associates” (1998:29). Working within existing relationships, the early church encountered people who were receptive to the gospel message. Arn and Arn see two reasons for this:

First, the caring and love that characterized the household relationships implied a level of trust, friendship, and common concern. In the household a person’s concerns and convictions were respected and heard. Second, those intimate with the new believer could witness the reality of a life changed by the power of the Master’s love. Such a change in a person’s lifestyle naturally had a significant impact on one’s friends and family. (1998:29)

The purpose of including this particular principle in the Theoretical Framework was to discern the extent to which evangelism in multicultural churches takes advantage of existing social networks. A secondary question is whether those networks are homogeneous or heterogeneous.

Need-meeting ministries. The third strategy considered here is “Ministering to People’s Needs” (Hunter 1987:131ff.). This type of ministry is exemplified in the ministry of Jesus. Matthew’s gospel records that “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matthew 4:23). The practical, need-meeting aspect of Jesus ministry was as integral to his overall ministry as his proclamation of the Kingdom. One could say that Jesus both proclaimed and demonstrated the presence of the Kingdom. The early church engaged in need-meeting ministries such as caring for the sick during times of plague (Stark 1996:73ff.). Under the leadership of John Wesley,

early Methodism also had a very practical, need-meeting aspect (Hunter 1987:131). One of the burgeoning areas of need-meeting ministry is the Christian recovery movement. Saddleback Community Church in Orange County, California has pioneered “Celebrate Recovery,” a faith-based recovery program that has been replicated across the country.<sup>42</sup>

The purpose of using need-meeting ministries in analyzing multicultural churches is to discern what kinds of need-meeting ministries might be most common among them. In other words, what kinds of need-meeting ministries are effective in a multicultural milieu? For example, some of the people in a multicultural setting may be recent immigrants. Are there needs unique to recent immigrants that multicultural churches seek to meet?

### Intercultural Studies

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is a survey instrument based on Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, and research carried out by Mitchell R. Hammer. The use of the IDI adds a quantitative dimension to the research on multicultural congregations. Because intercultural sensitivity does not come to human beings naturally, Bennett presents a “developmental model” for moving from “ethnocentrism” to “ethnorelativism.” Bennett defines ethnocentrism as “assuming that the worldview of one’s own culture is central to all reality” (1993:30). Ethnorelativism refers to the development of greater recognition and acceptance of cultural differences. More specifically, ethnorelativism “is the assumption that cultures can only be understood relative to one another and that particular behavior can only be understood within a cultural context” (Bennett 1993:46). Ethnorelativism, then, is a stance that allows individuals to suspend judgment on behaviors that they find strange or perhaps even offensive, with the goal of developing understanding and fostering cooperation toward a common goal.

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<sup>42</sup> See Hunter (2003) for an extended treatment of recovery ministry.

Movement from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism, Bennett proposes, takes place in a series of stages (1993:29ff.): Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration. The first three of these stages are related to ethnocentrism; the second group is related to ethnorelativism. For each of these six stages Bennett suggests a number of developmental strategies. Chapter 7 explains the DMIS and IDI in greater detail. The current project employs this model as a theoretical construct through which to interpret the data gathered in field research. Specifically, it uses the DIMS and the IDI to determine the level of intercultural sensitivity necessary to sustain a multicultural fellowship.

#### Research Strategy: The Case Study

The strategy for studying the multicultural congregations in this research project was the case study. Paul Leedy observes that the purpose of a case study is “to shed light on a phenomenon, be it a process, event, person, or object of interest to the researcher” (Leedy 1997:157). A case study involves the collection of “detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time” (Leedy 1997:157, quoting Creswell). The case study approach was appropriate for this research project as the aim of the research was to “shed light” on the ideology and practices of multicultural churches that enable them to maintain unity across cultural lines, while experiencing growth. More specifically, this research project was a Multiple-Case Embedded Study (Yin 1994) involving six churches. It was an embedded design because it involved multiple units of analysis including the congregation as a whole, the role of leadership, the role of members, and other dimensions.



### Design Components

Yin identifies five elements of case study research: the questions to be pursued in the study (outlined as the research problem and subproblems above), the propositions that call attention to the issues to be researched (discussed in the Theoretical Framework), the unit(s) of analysis, the logic that links the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin 1994:20ff.). This project employs these elements as follows:

Units of analysis. The Unit of Analysis for this project was at the congregational level; specifically, the research sought to identify the ideology and practices of a multicultural church that enable them to maintain unity across cultural lines while experiencing growth.

Logic linking data to propositions. This step is essentially the analysis of data collected in the case studies. Without a strategy for analyzing data, “investigations easily become stalled” (Yin 1994:102). The strategy for analyzing the data collected during research was “*Relying on theoretical propositions*” (Yin 1994:103-104, italics in the original). The theoretical propositions outlined in the Missiological Theory Framework served as a grid through which to analyze the data.

Another approach incorporated in the analysis stage is interpretational analysis, which “refers to examining the data for constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon studied” (Leedy 1997:158). This method of analysis examines the data collected through interviews and by other means for themes and patterns across the selected cases in the study.

Criteria for interpretation. Interpretation of the data involved two principal strategies. First, the Theoretical Framework served as a grid for the interpretation of qualitative data. Second, information presented at IDI Qualifying Seminars, the *Intercultural Development Inventory Manual* (Hammer and Bennett 2001), and a computer program developed by the Intercultural Communication Institute served as criteria for the interpretation of the quantitative data.

### Research Methodology

The research that led to this dissertation took place between May and August of 2005. Initial research, preceding field research, was carried out in order to identify and clarify the missiological problem, and to develop a pool of potential churches, from which primary test cases would be selected.

#### Choosing the Churches

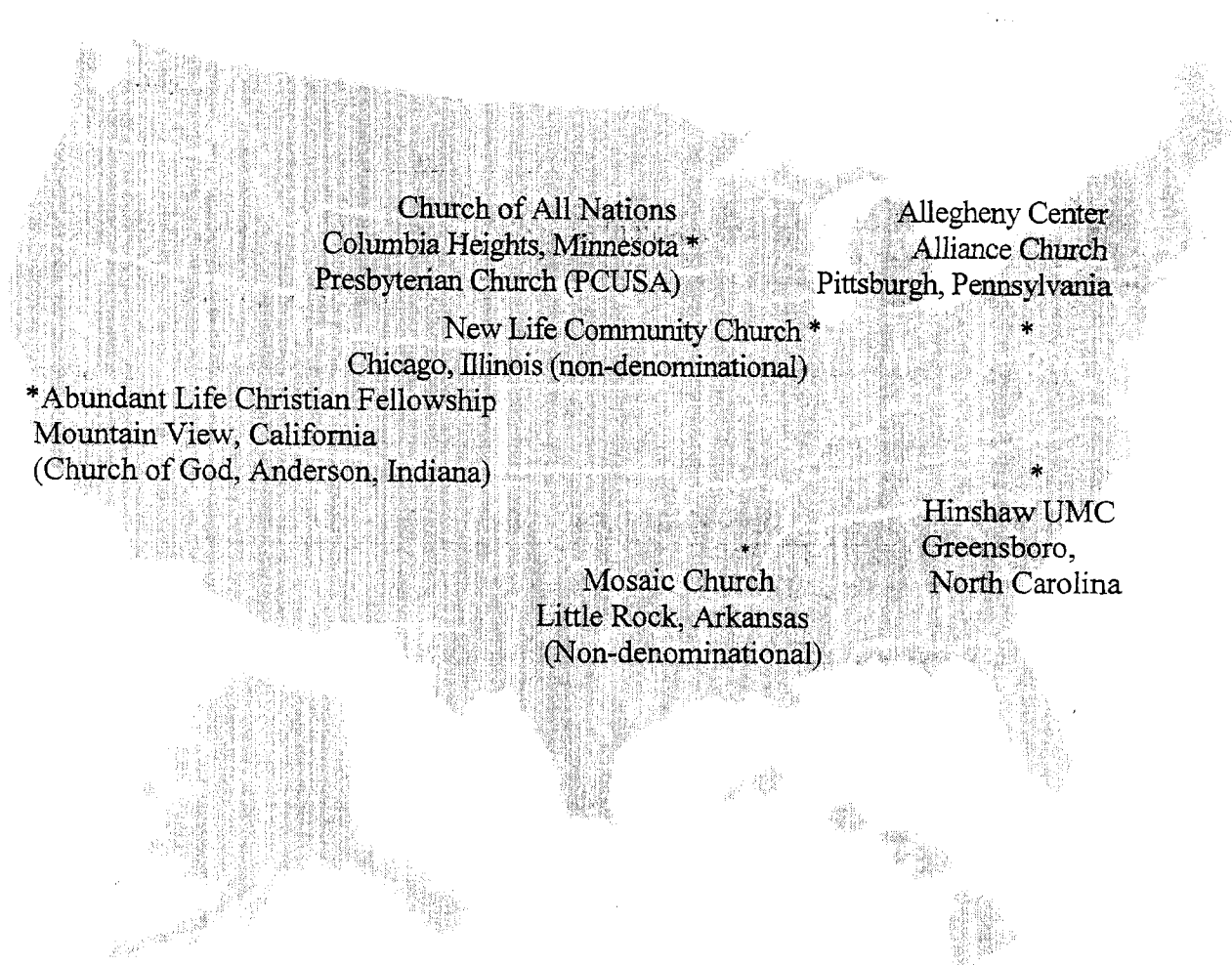
While the percentage of churches that may be considered multicultural by the criteria set forth by DeYoung, et al. (2003) is relatively small, the number of multicultural churches in the United States prohibits a study of all of them.<sup>43</sup> To make the research project manageable, it was necessary to choose a limited number of churches. I chose six churches in order to attain regional and denominational diversity, (See Figure 2), as well as cultural diversity among pastoral leadership.

Regional diversity was a consideration in the choice of churches because different regions of the United States have historically had different attitudes regarding cultural difference. For example, the Ku Klux Klan historically had more influence in the South

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<sup>43</sup> On the homepage for the Multiracial Congregations Project ([www.congregations.info](http://www.congregations.info)), funded by a grant from the Lily Endowment some 300 churches have registered as multiracial churches. This number is likely only a fraction of the churches engaged in multicultural ministry. It is impossible to determine the exact number.

than in the North. Since ministry is always related to context, studying churches in different regions of the nation allows a fuller picture of multicultural ministry to develop. Diversity of cultural background among pastoral leadership was a consideration in the choice of churches because cultural forces, in part, shape one's approach to ministry and mission. In other words, a Black pastor would have an understanding of ministry distinct from that of a White pastor, which would be distinct from that of a Korean American pastor.



**Figure 2: Map Showing Regional Diversity of Test Cases**

I sought denominational diversity in choosing churches as different denominations bring different theological resources to bear on the challenge of cultural diversity. The answers the Wesleyan tradition offers, for example, are different from those the Reformed tradition and the non-denominational churches offer. Gender diversity among pastors was not a goal for this project, and while it is related to cultural diversity, I considered it sufficiently distinct to introduce another variable into an already complex study. In addition, the issue of female leadership in a multicultural church is significant enough to warrant separate study. (See “Suggestions for Further Research” in Chapter 8.)

In addition to considerations already mentioned, other criteria were used in selecting churches. First, churches had to meet the standard proposed by DeYoung, et al. (2003), i.e., the majority group in the church could not comprise more than 80 percent of the active participants in the church. All of the churches participating in the study met this criterion. Second, the churches had to be growing, preferably by conversion, at least in part. The churches in this study are all growing, by a mixture of transfer and conversion.

Hinshaw Memorial United Methodist Church appears to be an exception with a net loss in members, but I kept Hinshaw as a primary test case because that loss is due to a large number of deaths in the congregation. The statistics are somewhat misleading. Despite the net decline, the church has taken in a significant number of new members with Bart Milleson as pastor. As a secondary concern, I wanted to see the development of crosscultural, relationships beyond corporate worship. Participating churches all had venues that encouraged such relationships. (See the statistical profile of the six primary test cases on the following page.)

Statistical Profile for Primary Test Cases				
Church Name	Makeup of Congregation	Year church started or transition point	Active membership then and now	Average Annual Growth Rate <sup>44</sup>
New Life Community Church, Chicago, Illinois	Varies by location <sup>45</sup>	1986: Mark Jobe is called as senior pastor	1986: 18 2005: 2300	26%
Abundant Life Christian Fellowship (Church of God, Anderson) Mountain View, CA	African American: 55% White: 35% Asian: 15% Other: 5% <sup>46</sup>	1989: Paul Sheppard is called as senior pastor	1989: 34 2005: 3000	25.3%
Church of All Nations (PCUSA), Columbia Heights, MN	Korean: 51% Black: 17% White: 16% Int'l Adoptees: 10% Other Asian: 3% Bi-racial 3%	1999: Jin Kim is called by KPCM to start English language ministry	1999: 85 2005: 203	15%
Hinshaw Memorial UMC Greensboro, NC	White: 76% Black: 24% Other: < 1% (Latino, Native American)	1999: Bart Milleson is appointed senior pastor	1999: 153 2005: 146	-0.85% <sup>47</sup>
Mosaic Church Little Rock (non-denominational), Arkansas	White: 50% Black: 27% International: 23% <sup>48</sup>	2001: Mark DeYmaz forms core group	2001: 45 2006: 584	66.5%
Allegheny Center Alliance Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	White: 73% Black: 27%	1986: Rock Dillaman is called as senior pastor	1986: 400 2005: 3000	11.3%

**Table 1: Statistical Profile for Primary Test Cases**

<sup>44</sup> Growth rate is calculated according to *The Church Growth Survey Handbook* (Waymire and Wagner 1980).

<sup>45</sup> Statistics for Irving Park Location: Latino: 80%, White: 10%, Other: 10% (Includes African American, Asian, and Native American)

<sup>46</sup> Including Latino, Indian, Pacific Islander, Arab.

<sup>47</sup> As an older congregation, Hinshaw has had a significant number of deaths since 1999. Although Hinshaw shows an overall decline in active membership since 1999, the church took in 29 new members in 2005, a 25% increase for that year. In addition, the number of active Black members has gone from 1 (less than 1%) in 1999 to 35 (24%) in 2005, representing an average annual growth rate of 70% among Black membership.

<sup>48</sup> Figure includes 24 nationalities.

A list of potential churches was compiled through reading and suggestions from friends and colleagues. The primary test cases on the preceding page were chosen from this initial list based on the goals of achieving regional diversity, denominational diversity, cultural diversity among leadership, and on their ability to cooperate with the proposed time frame for my research. In all, I visited eight different churches during my research. I interviewed senior pastors at seven of those congregations. In six of the congregations I visited, I also interviewed members who were active in the congregation. Brief historical profiles for the churches follow.

New Life Community Church of Chicago. In 1986, a small church on Chicago's southwest side called 21-year-old Mark Jobe as their new pastor. Reorganizing under the name New Life Community Church, the congregation had a vision "to meet people where they were at spiritually and introduce them to an authentic relationship with the living God." The church began to attract people without church connections and the growth has continued through the years as people experienced transformed lives (New Life Community Church 2003). Currently (2005), New Life has 2300 worshippers at weekend services in eight locations, with services in both Spanish and English (Shelley 2005).

Their stated purpose is,

To take people from wherever they are at spiritually into a process of growth that will lead them into a deepening relationship with God through Jesus, authentic community with others, inner growth and transformation, empowerment to influence their world and a heart that worships freely. . . . To be a family of love that cooperates with God in making fully devoted, fruitful followers of Christ. (New Life Community Church 2003)

They seek to capture the dynamism of the New Testament church's community life, prayer, cultural diversity, unity and outreach. They envision reaching one percent of the population of Chicago, or 30,000 people. Among their core values is a commitment to

“modeling a church that is multi-racial, multi-cultural and diverse” (New Life Community Church 2003).

While New Life is a diverse church, they do not embrace diversity as an end in itself. Jobe explains: “Our calling is to reach all the people in our community, and that’s what has driven our focus on diversity. Any church that takes seriously the Great Commission is going to have to be intentional about diversity” (Quoted in Shelley 2005:21).

Ministry in a diverse context brings to light an aspect of the gospel that is often overlooked when mission is guided by the concept of targeting, that is, identifying a particular population for evangelism. The often-overlooked part of the gospel is reconciliation “across ethnic, generational, and economic barriers” (Shelley 2005:22).

As New Life has expanded its ministry, it has become a multi-site church with eight locations in and around Chicago. This is a way to combine the advantages of a large church with the advantages of the small church, “to produce a more effective and healthy body” (New Life Community Church 2003). Pastors from the eight locations collaborate on sermon preparation so that on a given Sunday the same sermon topic is addressed in all locations. Other ways unity is maintained is through combined home group leader training, administration out of a central office, a unified church calendar, and combined membership classes several times throughout the year (New Life Community Church 2003).

Abundant Life Christian Fellowship. The Church of God of Palo Alto, California was established in the early 1960s, and later changed its name to East Palo Alto Church of God. When Pastor Paul Sheppard arrived at the church in March of 1989, the average

attendance at Sunday worship was 34. In July of 1989, accepting a proposal by Sheppard, the congregation agreed to change its name to Abundant Life Christian Fellowship, although it retains its affiliation with the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana). Part of the reason for the name change was to avoid being misidentified as a congregation of the Church of God in Christ, or other denominations with similar titles. More importantly, Sheppard explained that “the new name reflected the positive, hope-filled message of Christ as well as the essence of New Testament Christianity—fellowship with other believers” (Abundant Life Christian Fellowship 2004:3).

Abundant Life has grown to over 3000 in weekend attendance. In addition, the church has transitioned from an African American congregation to a multicultural body of believers from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. ALCF is one of the most rapidly growing congregations in the Bay Area. Their website explains, “‘It’s worth the drive if the church is alive’” seems to be the sentiment of many who attend ALCF. In fact, our members drive in from 153 different cities [sic] and towns throughout the Bay Area and other parts of northern California!” (Abundant Life Christian Fellowship 2005) Abundant Life takes their mission and purpose from Luke the historian’s account of the early church. “ALCF exists to exemplify the seven habits of Acts 2:42-47: Learning God’s Word, Building godly relationships, Praying with authority, Giving sacrificially, Praising God, Influencing the world, Leading others to Christ” (Abundant Life Christian Fellowship 2005).

Church of All Nations. In 1999, the Korean Presbyterian Church of Minnesota (KPCM), in Brooklyn Center, a suburb of Minneapolis, called Pastor Jin Kim to pioneer and lead an English language ministry for second generation Koreans. Under Pastor



Kim's leadership the English ministry became a multicultural fellowship of believers, and in 2004 was chartered as a new congregation of the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). Since its inception as an English ministry, the group has been housed in KPCM's facility in Brooklyn Center. Church of All Nations recently moved to its own facility in Columbia Heights, Minnesota to accommodate its growing membership and range of ministries.

Church of All Nations is an intentionally diverse community. However, "The Church of All Nations is not diverse for diversity's sake. It is diverse in order to embody God's all-inclusive embrace of creation, and to be an agent of God's reconciling love" (Kim 2005b:2). The practice of hospitality and embracing those who are culturally different has made Church of All Nations a diverse community of faith. As of April, 2005, the cultural makeup of the church, including adults and children was 18% Black (African immigrant and African American), 12% White, 6% non-Korean Asian, 49% Korean, 11% international adoptees, and 4% biracial (Kim 2005b:12).

Church of All Nations' purpose is "To empower, equip and encourage believers to serve faithfully in increasingly complex cultural and ecclesiastical contexts, transitioning the church from institutional preservation to missional purpose in obedience to Jesus Christ, who sent the church into the world for the salvation of humankind" (Church of All Nations 2004).

Hinshaw Memorial United Methodist Church. In 1999, Pastor Bart Milleson was appointed to an aging United Methodist congregation on "Restaurant Row" in Greensboro, North Carolina. Seventy percent of the congregation was sixty-five and older. The Western North Carolina District of the United Methodist had considered closing the church and using the proceeds from the sale of the building and property to

start a new church in a different part of the city. But the congregation felt God still had a purpose for them where they were. Pastor Milleson, with a vision for cross-cultural ministry, helped the church find that purpose.

High Point Road, where Hinshaw is located, is an economically and culturally diverse retail area. “Public housing, apartments and million-dollar homes dot the area just miles away in different directions” (Colvin 2004:32). In this diverse context the church membership now consists of members from “Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Sudan, Mexico, Bosnia, Jamaica, Nepal and a host of other nations” (Colvin 2004:32).

Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas. Pastor Mark DeYmaz began Mosaic Church in response to a specific call he had sensed from God. His first step was to diversify the leadership of a church that was not yet in existence. DeYmaz called African American Harold Nash, with whom he had previously discussed the possibility of a partnership in ministry. Nash committed to the work. Beginning in June of 2001, Pastor DeYmaz began to share his vision for a multicultural church with groups of people. On July 8, 2001, nearly fifty people gathered for a time of worship on prayer at a Baptist church in Little Rock. Over the course of the following months, the fledgling congregation met in various settings. “Mosaic was officially born in a service at Faith United Church on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2002” (DeYmaz n.d.:3). By July of 2003, Mosaic had a space to call its own – an 80,000 square foot abandoned Wal-mart. Currently, nearly 600 people gather every Sunday for worship.

Commitment to diversity continued to shape the addition of leadership. Chinese American Harry Li joined the staff of Mosaic in 2002. Li shares preaching responsibilities with DeYmaz and Nash, and oversees the development of community life

at Mosaic. César Ortega joined the staff in the summer of 2003 and preaches weekly in the Sunday evening Spanish language service and once every six weeks in the morning service. His message is in Spanish, with translation for the English speakers in the service.

Developing cross-cultural relationships is vital to Mosaic's ministry. The leadership puts considerable effort into creating opportunities to make those connections. "Acts 2 Fellowships" are monthly gatherings in homes where the primary agenda is fellowship. Another monthly event, every third Sunday, is a community meal and baptismal service. DeYmaz explains one source of the church's zeal for multicultural ministry. "At Mosaic, it remains our firm conviction that the Kingdom of Heaven is not segregated along ethnic or economic lines. At Mosaic, we will continue to ask and to respond [to] the question, 'So why on earth is the church?'" (DeYmaz n.d.:8)

Allegheny Center Alliance Church (ACAC). The Christian and Missionary Alliance has been in the Pittsburgh area since 1894 when A. B. Simpson, founder of the Alliance, established a local branch in the city. Like many new congregations, the Alliance branch met in a series of rented facilities until it acquired property and built a sanctuary in 1911. Over the years, North Side Alliance Church grew until it became necessary to move again. In 1950, the church moved to its current location, where it continued to grow through the 1950s and 1960s (ACAC 2005).

The 1970s brought significant demographic changes to the North Side of Pittsburgh. The church began to lose members, and by the early 1980s it had lost over half its members, decreasing from a congregation of over 900 to fewer than 400. The members that remained

were largely from suburban communities, not from the North Side community itself.

In the mid 1980s, under the leadership of Pastor Rockwell Dillaman, the church began to take up the challenge of the church's mission in the community. Adjustments were made in the style of ministry and in the way the church reached out to the community. Since then, the church has grown into a vibrant multicultural fellowship of nearly 3000. The church has numerous outreach ministries that impact the North Side community. In the 1990s, the Urban Impact Foundation was established with the goal of serving the neighborhood through community development projects. Significant numbers of the church's membership now come from the surrounding community.

Other ministries. In addition to the six churches that served as primary data collection locations, several pre-test and collateral cases provided data for this study. In addition to the six primary test cases, I visited Park Avenue United Methodist Church and The Sanctuary Covenant Church, both in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I also interviewed Pastor Ferdie Llenado, of the United Methodist Church of Union, New Jersey before my field research.

Churches other than those I visited have also helped me understand multicultural ministry through various books in which they are featured. Possibly the best example of such a church is Bridgeway Community Church (non-denominational) in Columbia, Maryland. Senior Pastor David Anderson, in his book *Multicultural Ministry* (2004) draws primarily from ministry experiences at Bridgeway, offering numerous helpful insights.

### Data Collection Methods

Data collection for this research project proceeded in several primary ways. The first source of data was participant observation. I participated in and observed worship in eight different multicultural churches. In addition to worship services, I participated in other activities such as Sunday school classes, membership classes, and Vacation Bible School where schedules permitted.

The second source of data was interviews. I interviewed senior ministers from all six primary test cases, and one of the other two churches I visited.<sup>49</sup> I also interviewed the senior pastor of a ninth church I did not have opportunity to visit.<sup>50</sup> In five of the six churches serving as primary cases, I also had opportunity to interview associate pastors, with a preference for those working in evangelism or outreach.

In all six primary cases, I interviewed active members, at least four per church. Respondents were chosen based largely on recommendations by senior pastors. I had indicated my interest to the pastors in interviewing members who were actively involved and who had come to embrace the idea of church as a multicultural fellowship.

In addition, I sought a pool of respondents that reflected the diversity present within the congregation. While interviews generally followed the questions as outlined in the Interview Schedules (Appendices A and B), I sought to be sensitive to the flow of the interview in order to pursue potentially fruitful areas of discussion not anticipated in the schedule.

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<sup>49</sup> The Sanctuary Covenant Church is the only church I visited where I did not have opportunity to talk with the senior minister.

<sup>50</sup> United Methodist Church of Union, New Jersey, senior pastor, Ferdinand Llenado.

<b>Table of Research Activities</b>				
<b>Church Name</b>	<b>Senior Pastor Interview / IDI (Yes/No)</b>	<b>Associate Interviews / IDI</b>	<b>Participant / Observation Events</b>	<b>Member Interviews / IDI</b>
<b>The Pretest and Collateral Churches</b>				
Union UMC, Union, New Jersey	Yes / No	0 / 0	None	0 / 0
Park Avenue UMC, Minneapolis, Minnesota	Yes / No	0 / 0	Sunday worship, June 5, 2005	1 / 0
The Sanctuary Covenant Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota	No / No	0 / 0	Sunday worship, June 5, 2005	0 / 0
<b>The Primary Test Cases</b>				
New Life Community Church of Chicago	Yes / Yes	0 / 0	Sunday worship, June 19 and 26, 2005; New Members Class June 26	8 / 7
Abundant Life Christian Fellowship, Mountain View, California	Yes / No	3 / 3	Sunday worship and, "Life in Christ" class, July 10, 2005	9 / 9
Church of All Nations, Columbia Heights, Minnesota	Yes / No	0 / 0	Sunday worship and post-church fellowship / meal on July 31, 2005	4 / 4
Hinshaw Memorial UMC, Greensboro, North Carolina	Yes / Yes	2 / 1	Sunday worship (2 services), August 7; Vacation Bible School August 4-6, 2005	12 / 9
Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas, Little Rock	Yes / Yes	2 / 0	Sunday morning worship and evening Spanish service, August 14, 2005 Staff meeting August 15	12 / 6
Allegheny Center Alliance Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Yes / Yes	4 / 3	Young Adult Gathering, Friday, August 26; Saturday worship, August 27; Sunday worship August 28	9 / 8

**Table 2: Research Activities**

The third source of data was the Intercultural Development Inventory. I administered the inventory to pastors and members in all of the primary test cases. The fourth source of data was materials collected on site. Pamphlets, brochures, audiotapes, compact discs and other promotional or instructional materials provided valuable insight into the ministries of the churches that participated in this project. (See Table 2.)

### Interpretation of the Data

Following the collection of data, I began a process of interpretation. Different types of data were interpreted in different ways. The first type of data was that collected by participant observation in the primary test cases. The unique challenge for this type of data is that it involves subjective impressions and observations. For instance, in some of my visits to primary test cases, I had the distinct sense of the presence and blessing of God that I had not experienced in other churches. Such impressions, while important, do not in and of themselves adequately explain the process of social construction in a church. Therefore, I looked for corroboration of my impressions among the interview data from church members. When responses from church members confirmed my impressions, I interpreted them in light of the theoretical framework. That is, I sought to explain how those impressions related to the process of social construction in the churches.

The second and largest data source was interviews with pastors and members. Interpretation proceeded in the following series of steps. Step One: Interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word documents, and grouped by church, so that all the interviews from one church were in a single document. In each of these documents, I included, in addition to interview data, any information gathered from pamphlets,

brochures, and other instructional or promotional materials I deemed pertinent based on the information that was being sought in response to the subproblems.

Step Two: I proceeded to do an initial inductive analysis on the interview data from Mosaic<sup>51</sup> using a printed copy of the document. This initial analysis yielded nearly 40 categories. I regrouped the categories, subsuming some of the categories under others, or creating overarching categories that included several smaller categories. This reduced the number of categories to around 20. Step Four: Following this initial analysis, working in Microsoft Word, I coded the data using a level one heading for codes. Step Five: Using a level one heading in Word to code the data allowed me to use the sort function of Word to compile everything about small groups, for example, together in one place. Step Six: With everything respondents said about a given topic in one place, I then analyzed the Mosaic data, searching for patterns or themes within categories.

Step Seven: Using the reduced number of categories, I then coded, sorted and analyzed the data from the other primary test cases. The result was that I had identified patterns or themes within categories for all six primary test cases. Step Nine: Once themes were identified within each church, I looked for patterns or themes across the primary test cases. For example, I compared the themes that emerged in the category of small groups from the Mosaic data against the themes that emerged in the category of small groups from the New Life data. This allowed me to determine whether themes were important in one church only, or in several of the churches. Step Ten: Finally, the themes were interpreted in the light of the theoretical framework, determining how each theme contributed to the process of social construction in these churches.

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<sup>51</sup> I began with Mosaic for two reasons. 1) Mosaic was the first church for which I had completed transcriptions. 2) My initial sense, after conducting interviews in all six primary test cases, was that Mosaic had the broadest range of factors contributing to the process of social construction.



A third type of data was that collected via the Intercultural Development Inventories. This data set was interpreted in two ways. First, the Intercultural Communication Institute provides qualified administrators<sup>52</sup> of the IDI with a software program that generates a printable profile.<sup>53</sup> This profile shows where respondents, as a group, are in terms of developing intercultural sensitivity. The second part of interpreting the results of the IDI uses information in the IDI manual, and information presented in IDI qualifying workshops.

#### Confidentiality and Informed Consent

The ethics of research is an area of growing concern (Rynkiewich and Spradley 1976; Van Willigen 2002:47ff.). The privacy of individuals who participated in this research project is a crucial concern. Information disclosed in interviews could conceivably damage an individual's relationship with the church. Therefore, as part of my interview research, I explained the nature of my research project, and assured participants that I would preserve their anonymity. I indicated that I would seek their express permission if I desired to identify and quote them in the case of a particularly striking statement they made. The purpose of the interviews, I informed them, was to identify themes and patterns, rather than to subject the experiences of individuals to scrutiny. In administering the Intercultural Development Inventory, I took similar precautions. I informed participants that purpose of the inventories was to develop a profile of the church as a group, not to identify the level of intercultural sensitivity for individuals, and that inventories were for my research only. In the case of pastoral leadership, I sought and received permission to identify and quote at length.

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<sup>52</sup> I attended an Intercultural Development Inventory workshop in June 2005 where I was qualified as an administrator of the inventory.

<sup>53</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 7 for the composite profile of all respondents.

## Chapter 3

### **Biblical and Theological Foundations for Multicultural Churches**

One of the most poignant, compelling pictures of the church as a multicultural family of believers is found in Revelation, chapter 7. John's vision captures the beauty and wonder of redeemed humanity worshipping God, and at peace with one another.

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9-10, cf. 5:9)

The last book of the Bible offers the hope of humankind reconciled to God and to one another. There is no racial tension, no ethnic conflict as all nations gather to worship God. The natural question, from the perspective of twenty-first century America where race relations are in a lamentable state of disrepair, is "How can that be? How can people of multiple cultural backgrounds be so united?" For Christians, the answer to that question lies in the message of Scripture.

This chapter outlines the biblical and theological foundations for multicultural churches. It unfolds in four sections: the Old Testament Underpinnings, focusing on the call of Abraham and God's promise to make Abraham and his lineage the mediator of blessing to all the families of the earth; the New Testament Central Disclosure, which examines the scriptural evidence for the church as a multicultural fellowship; Contemporary Theological Reflection, which sharpens the focus, clarifying the role of the church as a multicultural fellowship in a world characterized by broken and fragmented relationships, and finally insights from pastors and other practitioners working in the areas of multicultural ministry and reconciliation.

### Old Testament Underpinnings for a Theology of Multicultural Ministry

Perhaps the most referenced passage in all of Christian Scripture in setting forth a biblical theology of mission is Matthew 28:18-20 and its parallels in other gospels and in Acts. While the commission to make disciples of all nations is an important element in developing a theology of mission, to begin developing this theology with the end of the first gospel is to miss the rich perspective offered by the Old Testament. This is particularly true in developing a biblical basis for an understanding of mission in a culturally diverse context. The biblical foundation for a theology of multicultural ministry has its roots in the opening chapters of Christian Scripture.

#### God's Good Creation

The Christian Scriptures begin with God creating the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). Part of God's good creation was humankind. "God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'" (Genesis 1:26-28, NRSV). God creates and sees that creation is "good," even "very good" (Genesis 1:31). There is harmony and peace; humankind has fellowship with the creator and with one another, and together they live in interdependence with one another, and exercise benevolent co-dominion over the rest of creation (Genesis 1:27).

#### The Breaking of Relationship

Four events bring disruption to this state of harmony. The first is the disobedience of Adam and Eve, through which their fellowship with God and peace with one another is

broken. The murder of Abel at the hands of his brother, Cain (Genesis 4) is further evidence that human relationships are devolving, moving away from the intended state of harmony, which God intended. The power of sin worked outward through all the earth until “The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5, NRSV). The growth of human wickedness results in the flood, but even after the post-flood new beginning for humankind, there is rebellion and discord.

God had commanded humankind to fill the earth, but humankind had a different plan. Some sought unity amongst themselves on their own terms, not on God’s terms. The proposed unity was to be based on human achievement, not on a common relationship with God. “Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. They said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth’” (Genesis 11:1, 4, NRSV). It is also possible that the proposed unity is an imperially imposed unity since chapter 10 mentions diversity of language (10:20). Rebellion against God leads to the realization of their worst fear. The language of humankind is confused and the people scatter.

John Driver comments that the three stories that precede the Babel story all “end with a glimmer of hope. . . . However, all hope is missing from the Babel story, and on this negative note the first chapter of salvation history closes” (1997:24). Davie Napier calls the situation at the end of Genesis 11 a “state of existence intolerable both for humanity and God” (1981:39).

### God's Desire to Bless the Nations

Against this backdrop of intolerably hopeless existence, the call of Abram takes place. The Lord had said to Abram:

Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:1-3).<sup>54</sup>

The call of Abram is an event of inestimable significance. Robert Alter calls it a "turning point" in human history "as blessings instead of curses are emphatically promised" (1996:50). This divine intent to bless has a universal quality to it. Claus Westermann observes the progression in these verses, as the blessing conferred upon Abraham in verse 2 moves outward from Abraham, eventually affecting the whole of humankind (1985:146).

Thus far, it is evident that God desires to bless the nations through Abraham and his descendents. Less evident is the idea that the intended blessing includes the reconciliation of humankind one to another. To make such a case, it is necessary to consider two points: the content of the blessing, and the relationship implied by the blessing. The basic meaning of the Hebrew radical *brk*, translated as bless, relates to "benevolent power, health-creating power" (Jenni and Westermann 1997:268). The content of the blessing to be conferred upon the nations through Abraham's line, then,

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<sup>54</sup> The translation of 12:3 is a matter of much debate. Paul Williamson notes two chief lines of explanation: the first seeing the Hebrew radical *brk* as a passive, in which case it would be rendered "all the families of the earth shall *be blessed* through you," and the second seeing it as a reflexive, in which case it would be translated "by you all the families of the earth shall *bless themselves*" (Williamson 2000:223). Williamson (2000:223 ff., Cf. Speiser 1964:86) includes an extended discussion of the options, but regardless of which interpretation is chosen, "There can be little doubt that the central theme of this pericope is that of blessing" (Williamson 2000:229), i.e., blessing to the families of the earth.

has to do with creating—or perhaps more accurately, restoring—health. The Hebrew worldview of the Old Testament era was more unitary than the Enlightenment-influenced, dualistic worldview with which most Westerners are familiar. The Hebrew worldview would have understood health more in terms of *shalom*. It is not solely a description of the physical condition, but of the whole person: physical, emotional, social.

Although the theme of reconciliation is not explicit here, God's intention to bless the nations surely carries within it a reconciling component, given the unhealthy state of division and alienation in which humankind finds itself in Genesis 11. God intends to bless, through Abraham and his lineage, all the nations, all the peoples of the earth: peoples caught in the alienating effects of noncompliance with their creator's directives, peoples tainted and estranged from one another by jealousy and murderous intent, peoples alienated from one another through disobedience to God. Such is the state of the peoples whom God desires to bless through Abraham's line.

The Hebrew *brk* indicates not only some content to the blessing, but a relationship between the party conferring the blessing and the party receiving the blessing. Kent Richards explains that while biblical scholarship has traditionally focused on the substance conveyed in a blessing, such as material benefits, power or fertility, another facet of blessing is emerging as primary.

The primary factor of blessing is the statement of relationship between parties. God blesses with a benefit on the basis of the relationship. The blessing makes known the positive relationship between the parties, whether a single individual (Gen 12:1-3) or a group (Deut 7:14-16). The recipient and others become aware of the value of the relationship and hence its desirability (Job 42:12). Human blessings portray the goodwill between parties and find their basis in the human-divine relationship. . . . The focus on relationship rather than content permits a wide range of lexical meaning. . . . What is conveyed, regardless of translation, is always based on the favorable relationship between parties. (Richards 1992:754)

Thus, God's intention to bless Abraham, to make Abraham a blessing, and to

bless the nations through Abraham implies the aspect of reconciliation. It suggests the offer of reconciliation, or healthy relationship, between God and the nations, and it implies the offer of reconciliation or healthy relationships between Abraham's line and the nations. Such blessing, however, is not automatic. Rather, Paul Williamson notes, the blessing intended for the nations is "contingent upon a specific response on their part," i.e., good will toward Abraham and his descendents (Williamson 2000:233). Although God's blessing is conditional, the divine intention is clear. Napier comments:

The theological theme, sometimes subdued and even momentarily lost, is unmistakable. Abraham is a *chosen* person. The chooser is Yahweh. The reasons behind the choice of Abraham (and not some other) are decidedly unclear, but the purpose behind the choosing is most explicitly affirmed. It is to give a land (remember the Garden, 3), peoplehood (recall the Brothers, 4), the blessing (contrast the Flood, 6-9), and a name (see the Tower, 11). (Napier 1981:1981:55-56, italics in the original)

The outworking of God's intention to bless the nations through Abraham's line progresses throughout the book of Genesis. Matt Zahniser (1987:22) describes Abraham's attitude toward the nations in this outworking as "peace-loving acceptance of the cultural forms of the people of the land," and observes a similar "irenic persistence" toward the people of the land in the Isaac narrative (Genesis 26:12-33).

Genesis Chapter 15 repeats the promise of blessing. Williamson (2000:140ff.) calls attention to a certain "promissory selectivity" in this chapter. God promises Abraham an heir (v. 4), numerous descendants (v. 5), and possession of the land (vv. 18-20). The promise of blessing to the nations is "noticeably absent" as "the broader, international dimension of the patriarchal promise finds no echo whatsoever" in Genesis 15 (Williamson 2000:140).<sup>55</sup>

While the promise of blessing to the nations is absent in chapter 15, chapter 17

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<sup>55</sup> See Williamson (2000:140 ff.) for an extended discussion of possible reasons for this omission.

highlights it. Williamson contends that the central thrust of the chapter involves “Abraham’s phenomenal expansion in a multinational sphere. Abraham will be a ‘father’ to this international company, not in the sense of being their progenitor, but rather through his special status and the particular responsibilities that he will discharge on their behalf” (2000:168).

Genesis 21 shows initial evidence for the fulfillment of God’s promise to bless the nations through Abraham. That chapter records the relationship between Abraham and Abimelech the Philistine king at Beersheba. Abimelech recognizes the special relationship between Abraham and God (21:22), and presses for favorable relationship between his people and the household of Abraham (21:23). Williamson notes that the establishment of a covenant relationship between Abraham and Abimelech is significant. “There are clear allusions here to the promises of 12:3, which again suggests that the narrator is primarily concerned with the fulfillment of the second aspect of the promissory agenda (i.e., the mediation of blessing to the nations)” (2000:257).

Genesis 22 reiterates the promise of blessing to the nations following the testing of Abraham. “I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring [or seed] all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me” (Genesis 22:17-18). Williamson sees Genesis 22:17-18 as promising that Abraham will become “the father of an international community by mediating blessing to them through an individual royal descendant” (Williamson 2000:258).

Relational dynamics similar to those observed between Abraham and Abimelech



in Genesis 20 and 21, are also seen between Isaac, the continuation of Abraham's line, and Abimelech in Genesis 26, particularly the recognition of a special relationship between Yahweh and Isaac (vv. 10-11, 28-29), and the desire to be at peace with Isaac (vv. 28-29). This same chapter repeats the desire to bless the nations through Abraham's line. The Lord promised Isaac, "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Genesis 26:4). Genesis 28 restates it once again. The Lord appeared to Jacob at Bethel, saying,

I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. (Genesis 28:13b-14)

Westermann calls attention specifically to the story of Jacob, which "shows how the blessing granted to Jacob also affects Laban; it is a power which is effective on the environment through and beyond the one blessed" (1985:150). The story of Joseph, with God blessing the house of Potiphar because of Joseph, carries a similar theme (Genesis 39:5, See Gunkel 1997:164).

In Genesis 48, there is a break in the pattern. Whereas Genesis records God appearing to Abraham (chapter 12), to Isaac (chapter 26), and to Jacob (Genesis 28), stating God's intention to bless them, and the nations through them, there is no such appearance to the sons of Jacob. Rather, Jacob recounts for Joseph God's appearance to him at Luz: "There he blessed me and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you'" (Genesis 48:3-5).

God's promise to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob had been two-fold: the promise

to bless Abraham and his line, and the promise to make Abraham and his line a blessing to the other nations. In recounting God's appearance to him at Bethel, Jacob fails to mention the second part of the promise: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring" (Genesis 28:14b). The promise God repeated to three generations is truncated. The promise to bless Abraham and his line is emphasized, while the promise to bless the nations through Abraham's line is de-emphasized.

### The Calling of a Missional People

From the end of Genesis to the beginning of Exodus some 400 years pass, with the Israelites' status devolving from welcome guests (Genesis 47:1-11) to unwanted intruders perceived as a threat (Exodus 1:6-17). In the Exodus story, God delivers the people of Israel out of bondage with the intention of leading them back to the land of Canaan, the land God had promised to Abraham for his descendants. On the verge of the Promised Land, Moses urges them to heed the laws and instruction of God.

You must obey these laws and regulations when you arrive in the land you are about to enter and occupy. The LORD my God gave them to me and commanded me to pass them on to you. If you obey them carefully, you will display your wisdom and intelligence to the surrounding nations. When they hear about these laws, they will exclaim, "What other nation is as wise and prudent as this!" (Deuteronomy 4:5-7, NLT)

The law of God, given to Israel, is designed to capture the attention of the surrounding nations. Walter Brueggemann sees Deuteronomy 4:5-7 as denoting Israel's status as a contrast society. "It is as though Moses intends that Israel should be 'bragged upon' by the other nations who will be dazzled by what they see lived out in Israel's existence" (Brueggemann 2001:52). Scholar Christopher Wright explains that Israel's obedience to the law, and her visibility among the nations was "a deliberate part of its theological identity and role as the 'priesthood' of Yahweh among the nations"

(1996:47). Ridderbos states the missiological intention of the command even more strongly:

The point is that if Israel would live as God intended, then *the nations* would notice. Israel existed for the ultimate purpose of being the vehicle of God's blessing the nations. That was in their 'genetic code' from the very loins of Abraham. Here we find that at least one aspect of the blessing of the nations would be that when exposed to such a model of social justice, the nations would observe and ask questions. The missiological challenge, therefore, is that the ethical quality of the life of the people of God (their obedience to the law, in this context) is a vital factor in the attraction of the nations to the living God. The motivation for God's people to live by God's law is ultimately to bless the nations. As so often in the OT, mission and ethics are inseparable. There is a vital link between the religious claims of the people of God (that God is near them) and their practical social ethic. The world will be interested in the former only when it sees the latter. (Ridderbos 1984:48-49)

So, in faithfully living out their religious tradition, Israel stands as a witness to the goodness of God among the nations. Although in the Old Testament God never explicitly sends Israel to the nations, with the exception of Jonah, there is evidence that Israel had the chance to display the wisdom of God's instruction to foreigners within the boundaries of their own land. Though it does not specifically articulate the reconciling component of God's blessing to the nations, the Old Testament legislation that directs Israel's interaction with the aliens in their midst does suggest the idea.

Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice. . . . When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. . . . When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. (Deuteronomy 24:17-22)

In Deuteronomy, Moses instructs the Israelites that they are not merely to tolerate the aliens among them, but to show them kindness. The Levitical legislation carries this command a step further. "The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God"

(Lev. 19:34). Deuteronomy moves yet another step beyond that: “[The Lord] defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens” (Deuteronomy 10:18-19). Canonically, the movement regarding treatment of aliens is from not oppressing and mistreating, to loving, to the recognition that God cares for the alien and the stranger, i.e., there is movement in the direction of reconciliation, at least insofar as those who become incorporated into Israel are concerned.

It may be that the aliens in Israel’s midst are the results of Israel’s adherence to the law of Yahweh as suggested in Deuteronomy 4:5-7. The Hebrew word translated as alien (*ger*) means literally *sojourner*. The cognate terms in some other ancient near eastern sources indicate a patron-client relationship between Israelites and sojourners (Kellerman 1977:440-441). Thus, sojourners were considered protected residents of the land. A. H. Konkel adds that the *ger* “as a resident enjoys the rights of assistance, protection, and religious participation” (1994:838). Other texts indicate the degree to which sojourners participated in the life and cult of Israel. Deuteronomy 31:12 instructs the Israelites to “Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law.” This text “does not mean that the *ger* was understood absolutely as a full-fledged member of the cultic community, but that he was exposed to the demands of the law” (Kellerman 1977:445). Part of the sojourner’s obligation under the law involves religious loyalties. Leviticus 17:8 warns the *ger* that offering sacrifices to foreign deities is punishable by death. In Leviticus 16:29, Israel is commanded to permit the *ger* to participate in the festival of the Day of Atonement. Kellerman draws out the theological implication of

such legislation: “Like the orphan and widow . . . the *ger* is in special need of protection. Israel’s God is his protective Lord” (1977:449). The community of Israel is to act as God’s agent in providing these benefits. Konkel adds, “The term is used especially in those texts referring to the inclusion of the resident alien as a full participatory member in the religious community (ca. 70x), giving it the nuance of the later, more technical meaning of a convert” (1994:838).

This is the trajectory that is seen in the later development of the word as it was understood in Aramaic. The Aramaic noun *giyor* means *proselyte* and the Aramaic verb *gayer* means *proselytize* (Brown, et al. 1979:158a). Given this trajectory, one could assume that the aliens in Israel’s midst are in some sense the objects of mission. Jenni and Westermann suggest that the rendering of the Hebrew term *ger* as *proselytos* in the Septuagint indicates an “understanding of the *ger* as a proselyte in the technical sense, i.e., as one who, through the act of initiation (circumcision), has identified himself with Judaism” (1997:309). The Israelites are to extend to the alien the blessing God has extended to them, the blessing first promised to Abraham and through Abraham to the nations that implies both content such as prosperity and fertility, and harmonious relationship. In so doing, there exists at least the possibility that the sojourner will become part of the community of faith.

The theme of blessing to the nations is subdued through the period of the conquest, the turbulent period of the judges and through the writings that record the monarchy and the divided kingdom. The period of the conquest is particularly problematic in terms of reconciling the commands to annihilate entire nations with the promise that Abraham and his lineage would be a blessing to all nations. The tension

must be viewed with all the whole promise in mind; in addition to making Abraham a blessing, God promised that those who cursed Abraham would be cursed. And, as Marten Woudstra has noted, “Canaan, by its frantic preparations for war against Israel, is clearly shown to belong to those who ‘cursed’ Abraham and his offspring” (1981:38). This highlights that the contrasting reality to reconciliation is judgment. God’s promise of blessing to the nations is not unconditional, but rather is based on the stance of the nations toward Abraham’s lineage.

Joshua 8:30-35 records the renewal of the covenant between the Lord, the God of Israel, and the Joshua’s generation of Israelites. Despite the nationalistic character of the book, Hess observes, “Behind it lies the promise to Abram that through Israel all the nations of the world would find blessing” (1996:52-53). God’s intent toward the nations is evident by the double mention of the aliens in the midst of the Israelites (Joshua 8:33, 35). One such alien in the midst of Israel was Rahab. Her presence is a sign of the out-working of God’s promise to make Abraham’s lineage a blessing to all the families of the earth. Of particular interest is the later inclusion of Rahab in Matthew’s genealogy (Matthew 1:5) (Howard 1998:163).

#### The Attenuation of Israel’s Missionary Role

The theme of blessing to the nations, subdued through the conquest, remains so also in the period of the monarchy. Rex Mason (1997:149-150) has suggested that the promise of blessing to the nations through Abraham’s line even became a justification for imperial expansion through military conquest during the reign of David. Expansionist policy was a mark of Solomon’s reign, as well (cf. 2 Chronicles 9:26), although he exercised it more through diplomacy and political maneuvering than through military machinations. Expansion

minded though he was, Solomon understood in some measure God's intention to bless the nations through Abraham's line. At the dedication of the temple, he prayed:

When foreigners hear of you and come from distant lands to worship your great name—for they will hear of you and of your mighty miracles and your power—and when they pray toward this Temple, then hear from heaven where you live, and grant what they ask of you. Then all the people of the earth will come to know and fear you, just as your own people Israel do. They, too, will know that this Temple I have built bears your name. (1 Kings 8:41-43 NLT)

While Solomon does not explicitly mention constructive relationship between Israel and the nations, the theme is implicit, for a necessary precondition of foreigners having access to the temple would be positive and peaceful relations between Israel and her neighbors. It is ironic, however, that the vision of the nations coming to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh is distorted when Solomon's wives bring their gods to Israel.

### Prophetic Hope for the Nations

The spark of recognition toward the promise to Abraham seen in Solomon's prayer becomes a blaze of hope in the prophetic literature. God's desire to bless the nations through the descendants of Abraham reemerges powerfully Isaiah's vision:

In the last days the mountain of the LORD'S temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3).

Isaiah also calls out: "Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for *all the nations* to see! For the glory of the LORD is shining upon you. Darkness as black as night will cover all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the LORD will shine over you. *All nations* will come to your light. Mighty kings will come to see your radiance" (Isaiah 60:1-3, emphasis added).

Napier observes in texts such as these from the prophetic literature the anticipation of an event equal in significance to Israel's exodus from Egypt, the

establishment of the monarchy, and the exile. This last of four “central events” of the Old Testament around which the story of Israel unfolds is an “undefined consummation” which is affirmed in “prophetic faith-knowledge” (Napier 1981:6).

And what is the nature of the event? The blessing of the families of the earth (Gen.12:3). Someone “upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore” (Isa. 9:7). The healing of the world’s internal estrangements (Isa. 11:6-9). The bridging of the chasm between God and people in a redefined and recreated covenant (Jer. 31:31ff.). The restoration of God’s creation of humankind. (Napier 1981:7)

“In its ultimate projection,” Napier contends, “prophetic faith points, if not beyond history, at least to a history radically transformed” (1981:256). Even when, in the prophetic literature, the immediate focus seems to be on the restoration of Israel, “the prophetic intensity of feeling and pressure of conviction mark the intent to be universal” (Napier 1981:257). Napier calls attention to passages such as Isaiah 51:9-11; Hosea 2:18-23; Jeremiah 23:5f., and Isaiah 9:2-7. “In all these the prophetic disposition and intention embraces all humanity in all the earth” (1981:257). This same intention is evident in Isaiah 19:23-25:

In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.”

Norman Gottwald (1964:227) sees this passage as a fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3), and finds a similar theme in Jeremiah 4:1-2: “If you will return, O Israel, return to me,” declares the LORD. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, ‘As surely as the LORD lives,’ then the nations will be blessed by him and in him they will glory.” Gottwald notes the implication: “Not through conquest but through fidelity to its own

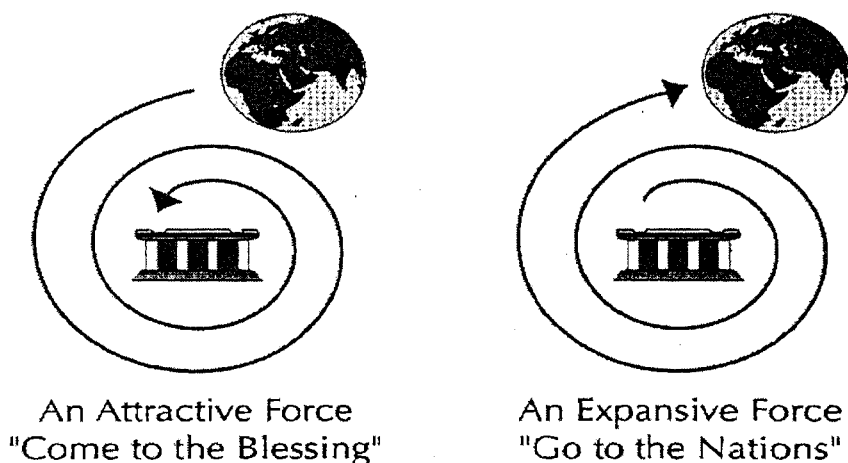


religious tradition Israel will succeed in attracting the nations” (1964:295).

The call for Israel to live out her role faithfully as mediator of blessing to the nations is consistent through the Old Testament. That role of mediator implies not only content of blessing such as prosperity, but also reconciliation between Israel and the nations, for without peace and goodwill between the mediator and the recipient of blessing, there can be no mediation of blessing.

### Conclusion

Johannes Blauw (1962) proposed understanding mission in two modes: centripetal—the nations coming to Israel, and centrifugal—the church sent to the nations. (Jonathan Lewis illustrates these two modes graphically in Figure 3.) Blauw saw mission in the Old Testament as being almost exclusively centripetal, that is, the nations would come to Israel to encounter Yahweh. Blauw (1962:39) saw Isaiah 42:4 as containing the only clear indication of a centrifugal aspect of mission in the Old Testament. David Bosch has nuanced Blauw’s construct to include more of a centrifugal dimension in the Old Testament.



**Figure 3: Two Dimension of Mission** (After Lewis 1999:61)

Bosch sees light as an apt metaphor for capturing both dimensions of mission. “A light shining in the darkness draws, people toward it, centripetally, yet at the same time it goes outward, crossing frontiers, allowing, in the words of Isaiah 49:6, God’s salvation to reach ‘to earth’s farthest bounds’” (1999:60).

The centripetal/centrifugal construct is helpful for drawing conclusions about mission in general in the Old Testament, and about reconciliation in particular as a dimension of mission in the Old Testament. While the Old Testament presents mission as predominantly centripetal in character, it does affirm God’s concern for the nations. In particular it affirms God’s desire to bless the nations through Israel. Keeping in mind that the Hebrew radical *brk* (to bless) also implies favorable relations between two parties, the Old Testament also establishes a foundation for more centrifugal expressions of mission, including the development of multicultural communities of faith, in the New Testament. Without this foundation, it is unlikely that the early church would have viewed the Gospel as good news for all peoples. Indeed, even with this foundation, the church was slow to recognize God’s intention that the good news should be for all the nations.

#### New Testament Disclosure for a Theology of Multicultural Ministry

As the focus transitions from the role of Abraham’s line in the Old Testament to the role of the church in the New Testament, it is necessary to identify a scriptural link between the two. In Romans 4:16, Paul affirms, “Abraham is the father of all who believe” (NLT). Those who come to God by faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of culture, social status, gender or language are the descendants of Abraham, heirs to the promises given to Abraham. The church of today, the descendants of Abraham by faith, is the beneficiary of the promises, and the bearer of the ministry of reconciliation. The Old

Testament underpinnings for a theology of multicultural ministry anticipate and find their fulfillment in the New Testament.

Perhaps the most moving expression of desire for the unity of the church in the New Testament is found in John 17, where Jesus prays for his disciples, not only for those who had walked with him in his earthly ministry, but for those whom he anticipated would become his followers:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Andreas Köstenberger affirms that Jesus' central concern, his "greatest burden as his earthly mission draws to a close" is for the unity of his followers (2004:497). Note particularly the strong connection between unity and witness: a unified church makes for an effective, believable witness (See Köstenberger 2004:498). Conversely, the witness of a divided church will be less effective, less believable. "When we are not in unity, it causes the world to doubt and disbelieve, and real people suffer an eternity without Jesus" (Woodley 2001:181-182).

A similar expression of desire for the unity of believers is found in Romans 15: "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5-6). Douglas Moo (1996:871) calls this a "prayer-wish," offered by Paul on behalf of the Roman Christians, which serves as "an indirect means of exhortation." The connection here is not between unity and witness, but between unity and doxology. A church where unity and reconciliation

are present is a church that rightly praises God. John 17 also implies this connection.

The first of these two passages express the deep longing within the heart of Jesus for the unity of his church. Paul affirms it in the second. These two passages open the discussion on the rest of the New Testament. The treatment of New Testament passages in this section unfolds in two sections: reconciliation as an accomplished reality, and reconciliation as a goal believers are directed to pursue. The purpose of this division is to call attention to the already-but-not-yet dialectic at work in the New Testament. Some passages declare that Christ has already brought about unity and reconciliation. Others present unity and reconciliation as ideals toward which the church must work.

#### Reconciliation as Accomplished Reality

Reconciliation as an already-accomplished reality embraces two key areas. The first area concerns the various models found in the pages of the New Testament, primarily in the gospels and in Acts, such as the life and ministry of Jesus and the early congregations of the church. The second area, drawing more from the Epistles, concerns the various statements by New Testament writers about the unity of the church.

A word on “models”. Much will be said in the following sections about the ministry of Jesus and the early congregations of the church, particularly Antioch with its culturally diverse leadership team, as “models” for ministry today. Howard Snyder explains the nature and use of models: “A model is to some degree an intentional abstraction from reality in order to clarify issues” (1999:119). This is my purpose in using the ministry of Jesus and the early churches as models. I mean to highlight and clarify the issues of unity and reconciliation by noting the ways in which Jesus and the early churches exhibited unity and reconciliation, and by calling attention to the

ways in which Paul encouraged and exhorted believers toward unity and reconciliation in his letters.

The Gospels and Acts: Models for multicultural ministry. The opening chapter of the New Testament foreshadows the inclusive nature of the Gospel. Matthew's genealogy includes four women from the nations: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. The birth narratives of the New Testament echo the adumbrations of the Isaiah passages cited above (Isaiah 2:2-3; 60:1-3), revealing the inclusive nature of Jesus' ministry as a model for contemporary mission.

In Luke's birth narrative, he recounts that when Jesus' parents presented him at the temple, Simeon, a "righteous and devout" man, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, took Jesus in his arms and praised God: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation *to the Gentiles* and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32, emphasis added). The visit of the Magi in Matthew's gospel (Matthew 2:1-12) likewise foreshadows the inclusive, centripetal, reconciling nature of Jesus' ministry.

Beyond the birth narratives, Matthew affirms these qualities in the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Matthew announces Jesus' ministry by quoting from Isaiah 9: "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, *Galilee of the Gentiles*—the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned" (Matthew 4:15-16, emphasis added). Historian and Biblical scholar Paul Barnett notes the significance of Jesus geographic location:

His home was not the sacred temple-city, Jerusalem, the world center for the rabbinic academies, but Nazareth in Galilee, a region surrounded by Greek states and permeated by Hellenism. It is appropriate that a message that was to be taken to the Gentile world should be centered on one who was nurtured and raised in Galilee of the Gentiles. (Barnett 1999:105)

Jesus' choice of the disciples who would be his closest companions reveals a commitment to foster the horizontal dimension of reconciliation. Among his followers were Matthew the tax collector, a former agent of the Roman occupation, and Simon the Zealot, likely a member of a group that advocated the violent overthrow of the Roman occupation. Jesus' band of followers also included a number of women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, Salome and Mary the mother of James and Joses (Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40-41).

Jesus indicated that the source of unity among his followers, was not similar background or interests or even like political convictions, but their common experience of Jesus' lordship, and their common experience of God as Father: "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ" (Matthew 23:8-10).

In his ministry, Jesus "intentionally reached out broadly to all he encountered, inviting them to participate in the life of his 'congregation' of followers" (DeYoung, et al. 2003:16). Jesus had table fellowship with those whom the religious establishment considered "sinners" (Luke 11-15, esp. 15:1-2) He crossed all the boundaries of social convention to touch the untouchable and befriend those whom society had excluded. Jesus reminded Israel of God's reconciling intention for the peoples of the earth when he cleared the temple courts and declared "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'?" (Mark 11:17) Jesus revealed that the full scope of

humankind was to be included in God's new community when he commissioned his disciples to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). He told them they would be his witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

The remainder of Acts, then, records the carrying out of that commission. As the Apostles carried forth the Good News about Jesus, the church was planted in subsequent locations. The church, although initial converts were all Jews, including proselytes, came into being as a multicultural community of faith. Luke the historian records that on the day of Pentecost "there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). He lists specifically "Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs" (Act 2:9-11). The crowds gathered for the Jewish festival of Pentecost were religiously and ethnically Jewish, with the exception of proselytes, but they comprised a cultural and linguistic *mélange*. Out of that sundry group, the church was born. From the 120 followers of Jesus gathered in the upper room on that day, the Jerusalem church grew to over 3,000. As DeYoung, et al. observe, "The church was multicultural and multilingual from the first moment of its existence" (2003:22). While the church was characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity at its inception, aside from those who had converted to Judaism, it was not truly multiethnic until the church at Antioch (Acts 11-13). Even so, in the midst of cultural and linguistic diversity, there was a tremendous expression of unity. "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had" (Acts 3:32). Luke then makes a vital connection between unity and effective witness:

“With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

James Montgomery Boice sees here, in the church’s shared life, fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer for unity among his followers in John 17. He also rightly calls attention to the connection between unity and the effectiveness of the church’s witness. Their changed lives, manifested in their unity verified their message (1997:91-92).

In the ensuing chapters of Acts, we see the church reaching out to embrace people of different cultural groups including Samaritans and Gentiles in various locations. In Acts 8, Philip takes the good news to Samaria. Michael Green writes that one of the distinctive features in the mission to Samaria was “*costly reconciliation.*” This reconciliation between Jew and Samaritan was necessary because of the history of hostility between the two groups. Without reconciliation, Green says,

There would have been an apartheid church at Samaria, growing up in separate development from the Jerusalem church. Then there would have been another one for ‘Godfearers’, based on a famous church in Caesarea, perhaps led by Cornelius. And then there would have been another for Gentiles. And so it would have gone on. And the pagans would have seen precious little reconciliation, which was supposed to lie at the heart of the gospel message (Green 2004:147-148).

Green sees a similar dynamic in the church at Caesarea. Peter had crossed cultural boundaries in order to share the gospel with Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, birthing a community of faith in that city (Acts 10). The quality that stood out for this church was “*the refusal to be prejudiced*” (Green 2004:153, italics in the original).

The church in Antioch was a mix of Jews and Gentiles. The case of the Antioch church is significant because of the social situation in that city. DeYoung, et al. explain: “Ethnic strife was intense. Enslaved persons composed close to one third of Antioch’s population. . . . Race riots were common because so many people of differing ethnic and



cultural groups lived together in cramped, overcrowded conditions” (2003:27).

Sociologist Rodney Stark describes Antioch as “A city filled with hatred and fear rooted in intense ethnic antagonisms and exacerbated by a constant stream of strangers” (1996:160-161). The Antioch church, by contrast practiced “inclusive table fellowship” patterned after the ministry of Jesus. In the Antioch church, all members of the fellowship experienced affirmation for their cultural backgrounds. “Yet each also adopted a higher calling through allegiance to Jesus Christ. Jews and Gentiles continued to embrace their culture of origin but broke with certain cultural rules that inhibited their ability to live as one in Christ” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:28). Stark says that in a city filled with ethnic tensions, “Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity” (1996:161). One of the defining characteristics of the church at Antioch was their “*transcultural fellowship*,” which was seen even among the leaders, a “mixed cartel . . . with an amazing variety of backgrounds” (Green 2004:154).<sup>56</sup>

The strategy that was used in establishing the Antioch church, appears to have become the primary strategy for the expansion of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean region. The normal strategy of the Apostle Paul and his team was to preach in the synagogues, reaching first some Jews and Gentile “God-fearers,” who, in turn reached Gentiles involved in pagan cults or emperor cults. In a number of major cities across the Roman Empire, Paul and his team pursued this strategy, establishing culturally diverse communities of faith (DeYoung, et al. 2003:29).

William Webb explains the importance of the church becoming a multicultural community of faith. If Christianity was to become more than a Jewish sect, if it was to

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<sup>56</sup> “Barnabas was from Cyprus, and he was a Levite and a farmer. Simeon the Swarthy was clearly a Nilotic; Lucius of Cyrene was another North African of lighter hue; Manaen came from the court circle round the Herods, and Saul from Tarsus in Turkey” (Green 2004:154).

carry its message of redemption for all peoples beyond Palestine, equality between Jew and Gentile was necessary. “What was redemptively true needed to become a practical reality. The ontological or salvation equality needed to transform the functional level. Otherwise, the roots of Judaism would strangle its own offspring” (Webb 2001:86).

It was not always easy to maintain the unity of the church. “The idea that Gentiles and Jews could or should worship and socialize together in the same congregation was foreign to the worldviews of most people” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:33). Paul often found it necessary to remind the churches of their unity in Christ (Romans 10:12; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-26; Ephesians 4:3; Colossians 3:11). Through such reminders, Paul reinforced a central aspect of the gospel. René Padilla concluded, “The breaking down of the barriers that separate people in the world was regarded as an essential aspect of the gospel, not merely as a result of it” (1985:166).

One of the greatest threats to the unity of the church across cultural boundaries came from Jerusalem.<sup>57</sup> Some Jewish believers were convinced that Gentile converts were required to become culturally Jewish, e.g., submitting to circumcision and following dietary regulations, before they could become Christians. The Jerusalem council (Acts 15) ruled that Gentiles did not have to convert to Judaism in order to be Christians. DeYoung, et al. note the effect of the council’s decision: “The decision at the Jerusalem council preserved the unity of the Antioch congregation and that of the church at large. It also empowered Paul and others to forge ahead in their ministry of reconciliation. The result was the founding of multicultural congregations wherever they went” (2003:36).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Dale Walker (2005) observed that the Jerusalem church may well have perceived the threat to unity coming from the Gentile converts who refused to submit to circumcision and dietary regulations.

<sup>58</sup> Walker (2005) observed that the decision of the Jerusalem council could also be seen as allowing the unity of the church to be based on something other than conformity to Jewish law.

Speaking of the early church in general, Green writes,

There was no sniff of racism in the early church. Romans and Samaritans, eunuchs and priests all come in on the same level. The gospel is good news for all simply and solely because all men stand in equal need of it. Black and white, slave and free, Jew and Greek, educated and barbarian – all the traditional ‘apartheids’ of antiquity were smashed by this totally new thing, the gospel of Christ. You could not find it anywhere else. It was intensely beautiful, profoundly threatening, and utterly unique. (Green 2004:196)

Although Green perhaps overstates the case, given the attitudes and tactics of the Judaizers, his point is well taken. The early church, though it at times experienced division and strife, managed to present a credible witness of unity. To use Fernando’s language, the multicultural congregations of the early church served as “the mirror of the Trinity.” Unity is possible but it must be guarded and maintained. DeYoung affirms that reconciliation is costly. “When God, through grace, reconciled us, it came with a price, the crucifixion of God’s son, Jesus Christ. *What has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Costly reconciliation is the Incarnation of God*” (DeYoung 1997:xviii, italics in the original).

While the book of Acts is clear that the leadership of this church was culturally diverse, it is not possible to determine the degree to which house fellowships in Antioch were culturally diverse. The same is true of the church in Rome. It is clear from the greetings in Romans 16 that the church throughout Rome was also comprised of people from different classes and cultural backgrounds, (See discussion below.) but again, it is difficult to say to what degree the house fellowships were culturally diverse. What is clear from the discussion below of the greetings in Romans 16 is that Paul was exhorting the various house fellowships, that were likely more or less homogeneous, to interact with one another and to develop relationships across boundaries of culture and class.

The Epistles: Ontology for multicultural ministry. Moving from the models of unity and reconciliation observed in the ministry of Jesus and the early church, this section now explores various statements about the nature of the church. Key for apprehending the ontology for multicultural ministry is Paul's understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the church. In his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul makes clear the connection between the Spirit and unity. "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by *one Spirit* into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given *the one Spirit* to drink" (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, emphasis added).

Here the emphasis is on the unity of the body within the context of its diverse parts. Raymond Collins explains the way the Spirit brings about unity: "Paul's normal usage and the use of a baptismal formula in v. 13b suggests . . . that Paul is making reference to Spirit-inspired baptism as the act of incorporation into the one body. In baptism the power of the Spirit is at work" (1999:463). Fee sees Paul referring more to their common experience of the Holy Spirit, rather than baptism (1994:181). There is no need to choose between these two interpretations. The experience of the Spirit at conversion, as noted by Fee, is a more inward experience. The experience of baptism, a Spirit-inspired act according to Collins, is more of a public, outward experience. Both experiences highlight the important role of the Spirit in bringing about the unity of the church.

Paul addresses this reconciling work again in his second letter to Corinth, noting his own role in that work: "God has given us the task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others" (2 Corinthians

5:18-19 NLT). It is important to note that Paul is talking primarily of reconciliation with God in this passage. That dimension of reconciliation was central to Paul's message and ministry (see NRSV), and should be central to the mission of the contemporary church as well (Baker 1999:234). However, we must also note that Paul promotes the ministry of person-to-person reconciliation with equal conviction in other writings.

The most concise statement on the oneness of the church in Scripture is perhaps Galatians 3:28. This verse must be understood in context: "All of you are God's children because of your faith in Christ Jesus. And when you were baptized, it was as though you had put on Christ in the same way you put on new clothes. Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman" (Galatians 3:26-28 CEV).

Biblical commentator Richard Longenecker has suggested that this passage was a pre-Pauline baptismal confession: "Early Christians saw it as particularly appropriate to give praise in their baptismal confession that through Christ the old racial schisms and cultural divisions had been healed" (1990:157). Ben Witherington concurs with Longenecker's assessment, suggesting this formula was likely a means of distinguishing followers of Jesus Christ from adherents to other religions, particularly Judaism, and also from Gentile religious and social norms (1998:270). Wayne Meeks sees this passage as "performative language," describing its function in this manner:

A resident of one of the cities of the province of Asia who ventured to become a member of one of the tiny Christian cells in their early years would have heard the utopian declaration of mankind's reunification as a solemn ritual pronouncement. Reinforced by dramatic gestures (disrobing, immersion, robbing), such a declaration would carry—within the community for which its language was meaningful—the power to assist in shaping the symbolic universe by which that group distinguished itself from the ordinary 'world' of the larger society. (Meeks 1974:182)

The parallel passage to Galatians 3:28 is Colossians 3:11. “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.” The ontological statement about the oneness of the community of faith is surrounded by practical exhortation on how to live out that oneness (Colossians 3:1-10, 12ff.). The unity toward which Paul is directing the believers in Colossae is specifically unity that bridges cultural differences. Paul’s main concern relates to “diverse individuals—Greek, Jew, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free—being joined together in one community” (Garland 1998:211).

The ontological foundation for reconciliation in the human family is most comprehensively presented in Ephesians 2. Addressing primarily the non-Jewish members of the church at Ephesus, Paul explains the foundation for the unity of the church:

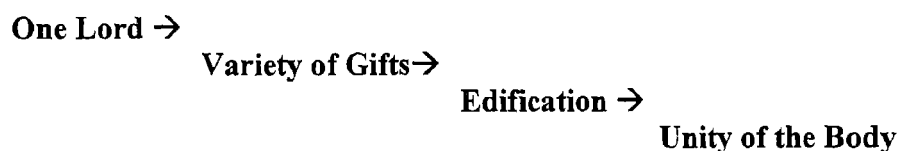
Don’t forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders by birth. You were called “the uncircumcised ones” by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from God’s people, Israel, and you did not know the promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ.

For Christ himself has made peace between us Jews and you Gentiles by making us all one people. He has broken down the wall of hostility that used to separate us. By his death he ended the whole system of Jewish law that excluded the Gentiles. His purpose was to make peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new person from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. He has brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and to us Jews who were near. Now all of us, both Jews and Gentiles, may come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us (Ephesians 2:11-18 NLT)

Fernando comments on the Trinitarian construction of verse 18: “In this verse, ‘both’ refers to Jewish and Gentile Christians, implying that despite big cultural and racial differences, we are one because of our common experience of the Trinity” (2000:244). This

passage calls attention to the dual focus of God’s reconciling work. There is person-to-person reconciliation, and reconciliation between humankind and God.

Paul continues the theme of unity in Ephesians chapter 4, where he affirms, “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4-6). Paul goes on to clarify that unity does not mean uniformity for the one Lord has graced believers in a variety of ways. “It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11). The function of these various manifestations of grace, Paul affirms, is to “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13). It may be laid out graphically like this:



Paul’s flow of thought begins with ontological unity, proceeds to diversity within that unity which, he asserts, will lead to edification, which reinforces the unity of the church. The mature church is characterized by adherence to sound doctrine (v. 14), the ability to speak truth in love (v. 15a), the grace to emulate Christ-likeness (v. 15b), and by mutual contribution and edification (v. 16).

#### Reconciliation as a Goal to Pursue

In addition to presenting reconciliation and unity as accomplished realities, the Epistles also contain a number of key passages in which they are presented as goals to

pursue. The book of Romans is important in developing a biblical foundation for multicultural ministry. Bible scholar Robert Jewett<sup>59</sup> has analyzed the list of names in Romans 16:3-15, concluding that the list includes seventeen Greek names, one Jewish name (but 6 other individuals with Jewish identities), and eight Latin names, signifying that the Roman church was culturally diverse (2005:12). Note the mention of the feminine names Phoebe (16:1), Prisca / Priscilla (16:3), Mary (16:3), and Junia (16:7). In the New International Version, Paul identifies Phoebe as one who has been “a great help to many, including myself” (Romans 16:2). *Young’s Literal Translation* (n.d.) has Paul commending Phoebe to the Roman church “for she also became a leader of many, and of myself” (Romans 16:2 YLT). Young’s literal rendering of the Greek *prostatis*, attested only here in New Testament Greek, highlights the probability of women in leadership roles in the early church. New Testament scholar Brendan Byrne, S. J. has noted that the way Paul identifies Phoebe indicates that she is “a personage of stature within the churches of the East” (1996:447). While brief, Paul’s commendation of Phoebe evidences the role of women in leadership in the early church (Byrne 1996:448). Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza states the case even more strongly.

The significance of Phoebe’s leadership is also underlined by the third title (after “sister” and *diakonos*), *prostatis*. . . . The usual meaning of this expression is “leader,” “president,” “superintendent,” or “patron,” a translation which is supported by the verb form which is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 and 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and 5:17. It refers in 1 Thessalonians to the leadership of the community and in 1 Timothy to the leadership function of bishops, deacons, and elders. (Fiorenza 1986:426, cf. Moo 1996:914)

While it is difficult to say with absolute certainty the status Phoebe occupied in the church, it can be stated with reasonable certainty that she was highly respected in the

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<sup>59</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Jewett for e-mailing me a copy of the manuscript for chapter 16 of his forthcoming commentary on Romans, to be published in the *Hermeneia* series Fall 2005.



church, and even by the Apostle Paul himself. So great was Paul's confidence in Phoebe that he entrusted to her the task of raising "support for the difficult venture of the Spanish mission" (Jewett 2005:22).

Another feminine name to consider the greetings of Romans 16 is Junia. Although there have been attempts to construe Junia as a masculine name, Jewett notes the opinion of several authoritative scholars affirming that the name Junia is feminine (2005:3). Paul calls Junia his compatriot,<sup>60</sup> and identifies her as "outstanding (NIV)" or "prominent (NRSV)" among the apostles, indicating that the leadership of the Roman church was diverse in terms of gender as well. Furthermore, Jewett notes that the list of names in Romans 16 includes names that were common among slaves and former slaves, freeborn, and noble freeborn (2005:14, 17), indicating that the church was diverse in terms of socioeconomic levels. Paul instructs the church to greet "those who belong to the family of Aristobulus" (16:10) and "those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus" (16:11). Jewett considers these probable references to slaves belonging to the two households (2005:41, 43). Thus, there was socioeconomic diversity in the Roman church as well. The apparent randomness of the names is intentional, according to Jewett, as Paul aims to affirm the equality of the individuals and groups in the Roman congregations. (2005:9)

Jewett further observes that Paul uses the second person form of greeting, indicating that Paul desires the different groups in his audience to extend his greeting to one another, and to establish "a series of close and friendly bonds" (2005:11). The implication here is that Paul is encouraging crosscultural interaction. "Paul wants every Believer in Rome to greet every other Believer" (Jewett 2005:8). The purpose of

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<sup>60</sup> Noted as an alternate translation to "relative" in the NRSV.

greeting, according to Jewett, is to express and strengthen the relationship with other believers (2005:9). Jewett explains the desired effect of the mutual exchange of greetings is to create “emotional and affectional bonds” (2005:11). Paul’s intention, then, as he instructs the believers in Rome to greet one another, is to strengthen and affirm the unity of the church across the lines of culture, socioeconomic level, and gender.

In addition to the exhortation to greet one another in chapter 16, Paul offers some practical instructions for getting along in a multicultural church environment.

Accept him whose faith is weak,<sup>61</sup> without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man’s faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:1-8, cf. 14:19-23)

Biblical scholar Matthew Black clarifies the parties Paul is addressing here. “The fellow-Christian here is the Jewish Christian still harbouring legalistic scruples about feast-days or food, and still, no doubt, finding it difficult to accept Gentile participation in the Gospel” (1973:164). David Bartlett makes another important observation about the parties Paul is addressing in Romans. Paul wrote Romans after Emperor Claudius had died. In A.D. 49, Claudius had issued an edict expelling Jewish people, including Jewish Christians, from Rome. By the time Paul wrote Romans, Claudius’ successor, Nero had

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<sup>61</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield observes, “The weakness in faith to which this chapter refers is not weakness in basic Christian faith, but weakness in assurance that one’s faith permits one to do certain things” (1979:700).

lifted the ban and Jewish Christians, such as Priscilla and Aquila, had begun returning to Rome. Paul's concern as regards the returning Jewish believers is that "the church will find a place for all believers—Gentiles and Jews alike" (Bartlett 1995:2-3).

The Greek verb translated here as "accept" or "receive" [Προσλαμβανασθε], is the central command in the passage, and includes "both the official recognition by the community . . . and also the brotherly acceptance in everyday intercourse" (Cranfield 1979:700). Paul is clearly addressing people of different cultural backgrounds. Dissimilar understandings about what kinds of food a Christian may or may not eat, and about which days may or may not be sacred arose in the churches because of cultural differences. Paul is urging the believers in Rome to avoid dividing the church over differences of opinion involving "disputable matters," differences that in this case are based on culture. Paul rounds out his practical exhortations to the Romans with an urgent plea for acceptance: "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God" (Romans 15:7). Once again, it is instructive to note the connection between the unity of the community of faith, and effectiveness in witness. The acceptance Paul calls for is tied to mission:

For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name." Again, it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples." And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." (Romans 15:8-12)

Moving from Romans, First Corinthians presents more evidence to consider. The church in Corinth was beset by problems that believers had brought into the church from their former life in paganism. In particular, a form of hero worship was creating factions within the church. Thus, Paul wrote:

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:10-13)

David Garland describes the situation in Corinth that prompted this exhortation.

"The proclivity toward factiousness was present in Corinth long before Paul appeared, and the new converts apparently continued to manifest this competitive spirit in their interactions with their fellow believers after their conversion" (2003:42). While the source of division in Corinthians was not specifically cultural differences, an application can be drawn out. Paul admonished the Corinthians not to bring the same sort of divisions they had experienced in the broader society into the church. Commentator Simon Kistemaker clarifies the heart of this exhortation. "They should be at peace with each other. Paul is not pleading for uniformity of opinion but rather for a loving disposition that strives for harmony and peace. . . . The Greek word *katartizein* means to make a person what God intends him or her to be, namely, perfect" (1993:44-45). Paul, then, is encouraging the church in Corinth to leave behind the kinds of attitudes and loyalties that divided people in society and to live in unity and harmony with one another as God intended.

The theme of unity is subtler in Galatians than in other Pauline writings as his focus in that particular letter was to dissuade the believers in Galatia as they were turning aside from grace to embrace the Law. Suffice it to say that in Galatians, as Paul urges the believers to stand fast in their liberty in Christ (5:1), they have no doubt that he is talking about both Jew and Gentile, both slave and free, both male and female (3:28). Cultural,

socio-economic, or gender differences amount to nothing in terms of one's acceptance of grace.

One of the strongest imperatives directing the church toward unity is Ephesians chapter 4, where Paul makes the connection between the Holy Spirit and the unity of the church. He admonishes the church to "make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Markus Barth notes the force of this command:

It is hardly possible to render exactly the urgency contained in the underlying Greek verb. Not only haste and passion, but a full effort of the whole man is meant, involving his will, sentiment, reason, physical strength, and total attitude. [It] excludes passivity, quietism, a wait-and-see attitude, or a diligence tempered by all deliberate speed. Yours is the initiative! Do it now! I mean it! *You* are to do it! I mean it!—such are the overtones in verse three. (1974:28, italics in the original)

Barth clarifies that "spirit" in verse three does not refer to a human spirit, but to the divine (1974:428). Paul reinforces his point about unity, reminding his readers that there is *one Spirit* (4:4). Gordon Fee, commenting on the series of "ones" in 4:4-6 writes, "pride of place is given to the Spirit, precisely because the *one body*, which is Paul's present concern, is the result of their common experience of the *one Spirit*, whose presence in their lives is also the predicate of their *one hope*" (Fee 1994:699-700, italics in the original). Fee goes on to reinforce his point about unity and the Spirit.

The "unity of the Spirit" does not refer to some sentimental or esoteric unity that believers should work toward. Rather, Paul is speaking of something that exists prior to the exhortation. Whether they like it or not, their lavish experience of the Spirit, which they have in common with all others who belong to Christ, has made them members of the one body of Christ, both on the larger scale and in its more immediate expression in the local community and in their own (believing) households. So they may as well get on with "liking it" and demonstrate as much by the way they live. All of this, then, underscores that for the unity of Jew and Gentile to happen on the larger scale, it must first of all happen among people who regularly rub elbows with one another. The *are* the one body of Christ by their common life in the Spirit; the exhortation is that they bend every effort to maintain this unity of which life together in the Spirit is the predicate (1994:701, emphasis in the original).

Both Barth and Fee strongly affirm the connection between the Holy Spirit and the unity of the church. Barth sums up the message of Paul's letter to the believers in Ephesus: "The witness of Ephesians to Christ is that Christ has broken down every division and frontier between men . . . . To confess Jesus Christ is to affirm the abolition and end of division and hostility, the end of separation and segregation, the end of enmity and contempt, and the end of every sort of ghetto" (1960:37).

Philippians 1:27 reads, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel." In treating this verse, Gordon Fee calls attention to various NT passages such as Ephesians 2:18 and 1 Corinthians 12:13 where Paul emphasizes the believers' common experience of the Holy Spirit "*as the basis for their unity*" (Fee 1995:165-166, italics in the original). "Paul's point is that their being one in Christ is the direct result of the *one* Spirit's presence in their individual and community life. So too in this case." Similarly, in Philippians 2:2, "the accent is on unity within the community of faith" (Fee 1995:185).

In Colossians 3, Paul makes an assertion about unity similar to the one he made in Galatians 3:28. "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Colossians 3:11). This is an indicative statement, to which Paul quickly adds an imperative:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. (Colossians 3:12-15a)

The appropriate response to the grace of God at work in all the varied people groups represented in the Colossian church is to walk in unity (cf. Ephesians 4:3). Walsh and Keesmaat see Paul in Colossians as “describing the church as a community alternative to the empire” (2004:172). In this alternative community, “the old imperial divisions that provided the grounds for marginalization and exclusion no longer have any validity in a community renewed in the image of God” (2004:173). Rather, this community is called to be the embodiment of reconciliation as it practices “hospitable inclusiveness” (2004:173).

### Summary

It is clear from this survey of New Testament passages that reconciliation and unity are important themes within the Christian Scriptures. In those Scriptures we see a dynamic already-but-not-yet tension in regard to reconciliation and unity. They are presented as already accomplished realities, but not yet fully realized in experience. Within this tension, believers are consistently exhorted to pursue unity and reconciliation.

### Contemporary Theological Reflection

The interplay between unity and diversity is part of the nature of God. Recent theological reflection has seen a renewed emphasis upon the patristic concept of *perichoresis*. Theologian Colin Gunton describes *perichoresis* as the mutual sharing between Father, Son and Holy Spirit of “a dynamic mutual reciprocity, interpenetration and inter-animation” (1993:163). If the church is to be the “mirror” (Fernando 2000), the “echo” (Gunton 1993), the “image” (Volf 1998 cf. Snyder 2004:59) of the Trinity, the church should reflect this quality. R. Paul Stevens affirms that the church should be a perichoretic community, meaning that “*all the members of the laos of God belong to one*

*another, minister to one another, need one another and contribute to the rich unity and ministry of the whole*” (1999:62, 64, italics in the original).

Gunton further explains the meaning of *perichoresis* as “one way of expressing the unity and plurality of the being of the God whose interaction with the world is unified, yet diverse” (Gunton 1993:163). As the reflection of the Trinity, the church should exhibit the quality of unity in the midst of diversity. Scripture attests that the people of God, both Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New Testament, are to reflect this interplay of unity and diversity. There were twelve tribes within the one nation of Israel. The twelve disciples of Jesus were a diverse lot—Matthew was a former tax collector, working for the Roman occupation; Simon the Zealot was likely a member of an anti-Roman movement—yet they were unified in following Jesus. The one body of Christ is composed of many and diverse members (1 Corinthians 12). There are different spiritual gifts but one Spirit who gives them all (1 Corinthians 12). There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all, but different manifestations of grace and different functions of leadership: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:4ff.). The book of Revelation envisions one immense crowd of people composed of people from “every tribe and language and people and nation” united in one kingdom (Revelation 5:9). The categories John uses—tribe, language, people, and nations—are not mutually exclusive. There is overlap between categories. The point is that whether distinctions are made along tribal, linguistic, ethnic or political lines, all are included. The interplay between unity and diversity is in the very nature of God. It is God’s design that the people of God should reflect that same dynamic.



Another contemporary theologian addressing the unity of the church is Miroslav Volf in two volumes: *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996) and *After Our Likeness* (1998). In *Exclusion and Embrace*, Volf contends that in a world beset by division and exclusion, the gospel can speak a healing word. The nature of the Trinity is the basis of that healing word: “A genuinely Christian reflection on social issues must be rooted in the self-giving love of the divine Trinity as manifested on the cross of Christ” (Volf 1996:25). The central image Volf uses to discuss reconciliation is that of embrace. The basic thought expressed in this metaphor is that “*the will to give ourselves to others and ‘welcome’ them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity*” (Volf 1996:29, italics in the original. cf. Law 2000:42ff.).

In *After Our Likeness* (1998), Volf engages the ecclesiologies of Catholic theologian Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI), and Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas in critical discussion. He reflects on crucial issues such as the nature of the church as an assembly (1998:127ff.), the relationship between church and individuals (1998:159ff.), the correspondence between the Trinity and the church (1998:191ff.), the structure of the church (1998:221ff.), and the Catholicity of the church (1998:259ff.).

In answering the question, “What is the Church?” Volf seeks to distinguish between the “general and the particular presence of the Spirit.” He explains: “Wherever the Spirit of Christ, which as the eschatological gift anticipates God’s new creation in history (see Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph 1:14), is present in its *ecclesially constitutive* activity, there is the church” (1998:129).

The church, then, is a community of people, constituted by the Holy Spirit, which anticipates God's new creation. A significant aspect of that new creation is the gathering of the redeemed from "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9), "the eschatological gathering of the entire people of God" (Volf 1998:213). While Volf does not explicitly address the breaching of cultural barriers, the theological foundation he lays out in *After Our Likeness* is surely a solid enough one that it can support the construction of a theology of the church as a Spirit-constituted community embracing and including people of all cultural backgrounds.

A third work that addresses the issue of reconciliation is Robert Schreiter's work titled simply, *Reconciliation* (1992). Although the twentieth century was a particularly violent era in history, Schreiter holds forth the hope that the dawn of a new century may represent a moment of opportunity when a new order can be inaugurated. The shape of the future is not yet clear. "We find ourselves now, it would seem, between the times. We do not know how long this liminal situation will last, nor exactly what will take its place" (Schreiter 1992:10). The Christian idea of reconciliation, Schreiter contends, must be a resource for shaping a future that is more peaceful than the past. Yet, the church has too often said too little.

We are numbed nearly into silence before the enormity of violence that has been perpetrated upon peoples just within our lifetimes. But as Christians we cannot just stand by helplessly. Does not our Christian faith speak of redemption, of liberation, even of forgiveness of enemies? What does the message of Jesus contribute to the building of a new order in those situations that have been dominated by so much violence? What do Christians mean by reconciliation. (Schreiter 1992:17)

Schreiter observes three primary images relating to reconciliation in the Pauline writings: death, cross, and blood. These symbols, says Schreiter, carry "a thick network of meanings" (1992:48). Such symbols are powerful, and Schreiter contends that

“nothing less than such symbols are necessary to help us reach reconciliation. We are not saved by universal concepts, but through symbols that invite us to participate in their meanings” (1992:48).

One way Schreiter develops an understanding of reconciliation is to delineate what reconciliation is not. It is not a “hasty peace” wherein the memory of violence is suppressed. “To trivialize and ignore memory is to trivialize and ignore human dignity. That is why reconciliation as a hasty peace is actually the opposite of reconciliation. By forgetting the suffering, the victim is forgotten and the causes of suffering are never uncovered and confronted” (1992:18-19). True reconciliation, by contrast, is characterized by “a fundamental repair to human lives” (Schreiter 1992:21).

Second, reconciliation is not a substitute for liberation. Rather, liberation is a necessary prerequisite for reconciliation. “Liberation is not just liberation from the violent situation, but also liberation from the structures and processes that permit and promote violence” (Schreiter 1992:22). Thus, reconciliation is not a dimension of a relationship between people living free and people under oppression. Reconciliation is quality of relationship between two free people or groups of people.

Third, reconciliation is not a managed process coterminous with conflict mediation. It may have similarities, but it is reductionistic to view reconciliation as merely a “technical rationality” (Schreiter 1992:26). Schreiter observes:

North Americans and others who live in technology-rich societies may be prone to accept this understanding of reconciliation, but it departs significantly from a biblical understanding in which reconciliation is not a skill to be mastered, but rather, something discovered – the power of God’s grace welling up in one’s life . . . . Reconciliation becomes more of an attitude than an acquired skill; it becomes a stance assumed before a broken world rather than a tool to repair that world. Or put in more theological terms, reconciliation is more spirituality than strategy. (1992:26)

### Contemporary Ministry in a Multicultural Milieu

Though the trajectory of Scripture seems clear, the church still struggles with issues of racism, reconciliation, and models for multicultural ministry. Here I will examine four areas of concern: emerging ethnic voices, the “third way,” the connection between unity in diversity and the health of the church, and the connection between unity and the mission of the church. But first, we need to go back and call attention to important voices Wagner overlooked.

#### Correcting Wagner’s Oversight

In a section of his book, *Our Kind of People* (1979), titled “How American Blacks See the Issue,” Wagner surveys the writings of a number of Black theologians. His assessment of their theologies led him to conclude that non-White theologians wanted to keep their distance from White theology, and, Wagner concluded, from White churches. It is noteworthy that Wagner’s survey of prominent Black theologians and leaders overlooks Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although he does mention the civil rights movement on occasion, Wagner does not directly reference King, whose influence is undoubtedly more far-reaching than that of James Cone or other Black theologians Wagner surveys. King clearly called for desegregation of the social order at all levels, most notably in his “I have a dream” speech. He envisioned a day “when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: ‘Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!’” (Carson and Shepard 2001:85-87).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> King articulated similar themes in his speeches, “Where Do We Go From Here,” “The Birth of a New Nation,” and in a speech at the Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall, Detroit, Michigan on June 23, 1963 (Carson and Shepard 2001: 196, 41, 62-63).

James Earl Massey, a contemporary of King,<sup>63</sup> has consistently been an advocate for the experiential realization of the church's ontological unity. "The church *is* one. We must express that oneness by shared experiences and a visible fellowship. To understand this is to segregate and partition believers and groups no longer" (Massey 2000:91, emphasis in the original; cf. Peart 2004:14, Perkins 1995:22, Hines, et al., 2000:xxi). Wagner also fails to mention the ministry of Tom Skinner, an African American evangelical who has addressed conventions such as Urbana in 1970. Skinner has challenged both Whites and African Americans on the issue of reconciliation (Peart 2004:72).

#### Contemporary Non-White Voices

A review of more recent Black voices indicates that Wagner's assessment of "How American Blacks See the Issue" (1979:27ff.) is dated. George Yancey, an African American sociologist, lends his voice in making the case for multicultural ministry in two books: *United by Faith* (2003) and *One Body, One Spirit* (2003).<sup>64</sup> In *United By Faith*, Yancey co-writes with Curtiss DeYoung, Michael Emerson, and Karen Chai Kim, affirming that all churches, when possible, should be culturally diverse.

Tony Evans<sup>65</sup> invites White Christians to familiarize themselves with Black Christians and Black church practices in his book *Let's Get to Know Each Other* (1995). He argues that despite the biblical mandate for unity, a number of obstacles persist, such

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<sup>63</sup> Massey enjoyed a twenty-plus year pastorate in Detroit; was principal of the Jamaica School of Theology, professor at Anderson College and later dean of the Anderson School of Theology, and dean of the chapel at Tuskegee University. In the 1960s the largely black Metropolitan Church of God in Detroit intentionally reached out to whites to include them in their membership (DeYoung, et al. 2003:66).

<sup>64</sup> It is an interesting twist of irony, or perhaps divine humor, that an African American sociologist (Yancey) offers a theological / scriptural argument for integration while a white theologian (Wagner) offers a sociological argument against it.

<sup>65</sup> Co-founder and senior pastor of the Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas, Dr. Evans is the first African American to earn a doctoral degree from Dallas Theological Seminary.

as fear of losing racial distinction, cultural prejudice, the costly price tag of unity, and the church's failure to hold people accountable for racial prejudice (1995:118ff.). Evans calls for Christians to transcend these obstacles and pursue unity.

A number of recent books have been written by Black and White co-authors. In *More Than Equals*, Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice call for a lifestyle of reconciliation based on three crucial steps: admitting that separation exists, submitting to God, and committing to "loving our racially different neighbors as ourselves" (1993:18-19). In *Breaking Down Walls*, Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein also explore the intricacies of racial reconciliation (1993).<sup>66</sup> The call for reconciliation and unity is coming not only from American Blacks, but from Asians (Lee 1995, Matsuoka 1998), Native Americans (Twiss 2000, Woodley 2001), and Hispanics (Ortiz 1996) as well.

Korean-American author Jung Young Lee (1995) has made a case for reconciliation, and a way of being church together that transcends cultural differences. Lee sees marginality as key to relating to one another across such boundaries. He argues that Jesus was a marginal person and even still, he calls his followers to join him at the margins to create a new community. In such a community, where "everyone becomes marginal, there is no centrality that can marginalize anyone. Thus, marginality is overcome through marginality" (1995:151). Lee's idea of marginality is a way of avoiding the assimilationist tendencies often associated with integration.

Fumitaka Matsuoka (1998) expresses concern over racial, socio-economic and cultural divides in American society. In contrast to the broader society, the church should be a community that transcends these differences. "The community of faith is the

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<sup>66</sup> Washington and Kehrein put forth eight principles for successful crosscultural ministry: commitment to relationship, intentionality, sincerity, sensitivity, interdependency, sacrifice, empowerment, and call.

community of those who strive to ‘welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us’” (Matsuoka 1998:vii).

Christian First Nations leaders are also calling for reconciliation and diverse congregations. Homogeneity, Randy Woodley observes, is often presented as part of the formula for a rapidly growing church, because “people enjoy their brothers and sisters in Christ more when they are just like them; it is more comfortable that way.” However, Woodley counters, “I cannot recall Jesus ever calling us to build our faith on comfort” (2001:30). He asserts that numerical growth is part of God’s intention for the church, but not at the expense of inclusiveness and diversity.

The overall tenor of these emerging voices leans heavily toward reconciliation, based on theological convictions about the ontological unity of the church. Along with the call for reconciliation comes the call for an experiential, lived out unity. First Nations leader Terry LeBlanc (2005) clarifies the relationship between reconciliation and integration. Reconciliation, he believes, is commonly viewed as an event where words of confession and apology are offered; the apology is accepted and words of forgiveness are spoken. LeBlanc contends that this view of reconciliation is inadequate. LeBlanc agrees with the understanding of reconciliation as an ongoing process of living out the commitments made in an event of reconciliation. To describe the nature of this ongoing relationship, LeBlanc prefers the term interculturality to multiculturalism or integration. Interculturality goes beyond tolerance to embrace, and avoids assimilationist tendencies through embrace, i.e., actively welcoming and appreciating those with different cultural backgrounds.

### Dissenting Voices

In an effort to present a balanced view of current writings, attention now turns toward some of the writers who do not see the issue the same way as the above authors. Eugene Rivers sees a difference between the views of the Black intelligentsia and that of the “rank and file” Blacks. Rivers states the matter succinctly: “On questions of faith, religion and worship, African Americans have chosen, with minor exceptions, spiritual autonomy over integration” (Rivers 1990:28).

This separation-by-choice, Rivers contends, is not necessarily a bad thing. He explains, “[Martin Luther] King’s theological and racial liberalism gave inadequate attention to the primacy of culture, tradition, and history. The truth is, both blacks and Whites identify with their particular traditions—and that’s not wrong. It only becomes wrong when it promotes injustice” (Quoted in Gilbreath 2000). Commenting on King’s views on integration, Rivers notes a striking irony that King did not seek to desegregate Black congregations. “How is it that the apostle of integration never did this?” Rivers wonders. “My sense is that he understood that it was not in the best interest of black preachers to surrender their power by desegregating black churches” (Quoted in Gilbreath 2000).

Anthony Parker concurs with Rivers’ assessment of integration. He contends attempts at integration have hurt the Black community. “Inoculated with secular values emphasizing the individual instead of the community, and progressive politics over theology, young Blacks rarely recognize each other as brothers and sisters, or as comrades in the struggle. We’re now competitors, relating to each other out of fear and mistrust” (1990:11). He concludes that integration is not in the best interest of Blacks.



Rivers argues that the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* was based on false assumptions about integration. The adoption of the language of integration has caused evangelicals to “confuse reconciliation with integration.” Rivers explains: “The theologically conservative community, black and white, got caught up in the integrationist language, and so we ended up accepting the view that everything had to be salt and pepper for it to be equal and godly” (Quoted in Zoba 2001). Rivers elaborates further.

Now, I love my Calvinist brothers, but let's get beyond this notion that somehow I've got to sit in your one-hour service where you can hear a mouse yawn, or that the Calvinistic children have to come to my high-octane black service that lasts for four hours. We don't have to be together around everything to be reconciled. We may need to look at *Brown v. Board of Education* again. Could there have been circumstances under which *separate* could have been *equal*? (Quoted in Zoba 2001).

Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners* magazine, also has doubts about the value of integration for the Black community as it has failed to produce the desired results of equality and justice. “Instead of equality, integration has meant selective assimilation for middle-class Blacks while the urban underclass and rural poor are simply left behind” (1990:4).

The key issue for many of the writers voicing an anti-integration stance has to do with assimilation. For them, integration is virtually synonymous with assimilation. In essence, they are stuck in the false dichotomy into which the homogeneous unit principle forces us. More than they may realize or care to admit, however, they hold an important point in common with more recent writers who are calling for culturally diverse ministry. The newer writers do not see assimilation as an appropriate form of integration. Rather, these authors have their focus on the horizon where a third way, a middle path is emerging.

### The Third Alternative

One of the consistent questions related to theme of reconciliation in the pertinent literature is how to engage in multicultural ministry in such a way that individuals and groups feel valued not only for their humanity, but also for their cultural heritage. These kinds of resources give us tools to understand the third alternative that breaks us out of the false dichotomy posed by the homogeneous unit principle.

Perhaps the most influential of recent works addressing multicultural ministry is *United by Faith* (DeYoung, et al. 2003). Although DeYoung and his co-authors argue the case for integrated congregations,<sup>67</sup> they raise a number of concerns about the way integration should be done. They call for multiracial congregations that are neither racist nor assimilationist in character. “If being in a multiracial congregation simply means people of color have to conform to a dominant group’s beliefs and practices, then arguments for separation may well win the day. But if being a true multiracial church means spiritual *mestizaje*, then we have people and groups coming to worship, learn, and care for one another” (DeYoung, et al. 2003:139). George Yancey, one of the co-authors of *United by Faith*, makes a similar assertion in another volume:

It is important for leaders of multiracial churches to intentionally work to prevent the type of assimilation that disregards the racial culture of people from the nonmajority groups. In addition, if assimilation does occur, it is important for it to occur in a way that incorporates the cultural aspects of the different races in the church—so that all racial groups will gain a certain amount of respect. (Yancey 2003:153)

DeYoung, et al. suggest, “multiracial congregations should develop a hybrid

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<sup>67</sup> DeYoung and his co-authors, while they consistently build their case for integration, do allow for the exception of first generation immigrants. “As long as there is migration from other countries to the United States there may be a need for ethnic-specific congregations. Even with this allowance, some congregations can provide ways to meet the particular needs of these groups while integrating immigrants into a multiracial community.” (2003:132)

culture—a *mestizaje* culture—that is a unique blend of all the cultures in the congregation.” To understand the character of such a congregation, new images must be developed. The standard images of the melting pot, the stew pot and the salad bowl are inadequate; they are too static to capture the dynamic interaction that takes place when cultures intermingle.

Anabaptist writer Douglas Jacobsen uses the term *mestizaje* as well (2000:292). At a basic level the term means simply “mixed.” Jacobsen fleshes out the meaning of this term by exploring images from Latin-American theology, in particular the work of Cuban-American church historian and theologian Justo L. González and his image of the church as *romeria*.

*A romeria is a combination of religious pilgrimage, community picnic, and open invitation to a festival. As the people march in romeria toward a shrine, they stop along the way to invite others to join. A romeria is not like an army on the march, with its sharply defined and closed ranks. It is more like a snowball rolling down a mountain, gathering more and more snow as it gathers speed. People are invited to join, in part because there is food at the end, but also because there is fun and companionship along the way. . . . It is marching joyfully toward a promised future, but along the way it invites others to join the march to the fiesta, and even to have a little glimpse of the great fiesta while still along the way. (1997:86-87, italics in the original)*

Another helpful image from González is the Latin-American idea of family. This is typically a much larger group than the Western nuclear family. It is a community “of uncertain and ever expanding limits, that includes parents as well as aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces, cousins to various degrees, relatives by marriage, relatives of relatives by marriage, relatives by baptism . . . and a host of other possibilities” (1997:91-92, 94). This image, says Jacobsen, helps us envision the church “as an ever-enlarging and more complex web of connections between people seeking to follow the gospel in some way or another” (Jacobsen 2000). González emphasizes the interwovenness and

interconnectedness of the extended family, “so that it is virtually impossible to belong to only one family. . . . The church as the extended family of God means that its limits are impossible to define. All who belong to God are part of this family” (1997:91-92, 94).

Unlike other images put forth to visualize the interaction of cultures, González’s images capture the dynamic, relational capacity of human beings and are therefore more appropriate, and more helpful in breaking us out of the false dichotomy assumed by pluralistic models. It is evident from this discussion that these authors do not support the idea of assimilationist integration. It is also evident that a number of writers are seriously considering a new paradigm for integration, a third way, a middle path that balances the biblical themes of unity and diversity.

#### Strength Through Diversity

A third important theme that consistently emerged in the preliminary review of literature was the mutual enrichment that can take place in the body of Christ when cultures interact. Tony Evans, for example, sees the heritage of the Black church as a source of strength for the whole body of Christ. In particular, Evans observes that Christian Blacks can help the White church recover important biblical themes such as justice, liberation, ministry to the poor, “the communal nature of the church,” and holistic ministry (1995:79ff.).

First Nations authors articulate similar ideas about the enriching perspective their cultures offer to the body of Christ. Woodley explains, “God has allowed Himself to be known through His creation” (2001:135), and since culture is derived from that creation, there are elements in every culture that can help us understand God. Cultural elements such as ceremonies and traditions can “reveal truth. Since all truth is God’s truth, it

shows up in many different cultures in many different ways” (Woodley 2001:135).

Woodley explains how cultural diversity helps the church understand God more clearly. Being in relationship with Christians of other cultures facilitates a more comprehensive view of God. “Perhaps through many perspectives, people would then cherish His vastness and His purposes for unity within His great diversity” (2001:29).

Drawing on Paul’s body imagery in First Corinthians 13, Richard Twiss contends that American Christianity is suffering because it has said to Native American Christians, “I have no need of you. I don’t need your customs, your arts, your society, your language, concepts or perspectives.” Conversely, “the Euro-Americans have said to the Natives, ‘But you need us. You need our theology, our leadership, our traditions, our economic resources, education, sciences, Sunday Schools—ultimately, our civilization’” (2000:57-58). Because of this stance, Twiss contends, the body of Christ in North America is suffering.

### Unity and Mission

Not only do these current authors and others recognize the connection between unity in the church and the strength and health of the church, they also have a keen awareness of the connection between unity and mission. Jefferson Edwards, Jr.<sup>68</sup> sees the church as “the institution of God’s amazing grace and love whose foundation is to heal the hurts of humanity.” He sees reconciliation and unity as central to the church’s effectiveness in mission. “Blacks go to their churches, whites to theirs, and Hispanics to their own churches. This is why we Christians as a church lack power” (Edwards 1996:92-93, cf. Glover 2000, McKinney 2000, Sanders 1997, Smith 2000). Tony Evans likewise sees unity as essentially bound up with the church’s witness. “As Christians, we have a solution, because our oneness in Christ gives us the position and power to make a

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<sup>68</sup> Edwards is founder and pastor of Freedom Christian Center Church in Kansas City, Missouri.

statement to the world about the wonder of our faith. The very thing the world needs we have, but because we are so much like the world, the world does not know we have it” (Evans 1995:130; cf. Woodley 2001:98).

Yancey makes a similar link between reconciliation and mission. If the church can provide answers to the problem of racial alienation in American society, the gospel message will be seen as more relevant (2003:45-46, cf. McConnell 1997:388). This is particularly true for the church that is ministering in a multicultural milieu. According to Yancey, more Americans than ever before feel at ease in multicultural settings, particularly those who reside in integrated subcultures such as college campuses, the arts community, and Generation Xers. In fact, Gen Xers and other postmoderns demand it. The next generation is ahead of the church, and once again the church is inappropriately lagging behind culture. Patrick Mays’ research on Gen Xers bears this out.

Xers tend to have less patience with lingering racial and gender inequalities, especially in churches. Churches and Christian messengers who want to gain a hearing with Xers will show that reconciliation with God has a positive impact toward reconciliation between races, genders, and generations. (Mays 1999:177; cf. Ford and Denney 1995:139-140, Celek and Zander 1996:88-89)

If churches reflect the divisiveness and exclusiveness of the broader society, rather than living as a prophetic community that challenges the status quo and offers hope for a better way, Gen Xers may well find the church’s message and practices irrelevant to some of their deepest concerns. Gen Xers may not be the only ones to find the church’s message irrelevant in an emerging multicultural milieu. A 2003 poll conducted by the Gallup Organization for the American Association of Retired Persons and the Leadership Council on Civil Rights found that 70% of Whites say they approve of interracial marriages. In addition, 66% of Whites indicated they would be amenable to their grandchildren marrying cross-racially (Goodheart 2004:36-37). The poll also found that

most Blacks, Whites and Latinos would rather live in a culturally diverse neighborhood than in a culturally homogeneous neighborhood (Goodheart 2004:37).

### Models of Multicultural Churches

Another important part of the literature is the variety of models for engaging in multicultural ministry. In the following two tables, the models proposed by various authors are grouped by type. Each of the authors represented has much more to say about these models than the table indicates. This summary, however, should give the reader an idea of the range of models present in the literature. The first chart, based on DeYoung's typology (2003:165), compares models with varying degrees of integration. The second chart, based on the same typology, compares church models based homogeneity.

<b>Heterogeneous Church Models</b>			
	<b>Assimilated Multicultural Congregation</b>	<b>Pluralist Multicultural Congregation</b>	<b>Integrated Multicultural Congregation</b>
Organizational Culture	Reflects one dominant culture	Contains separate and distinct elements of all cultures represented in the congregation	Maintains aspects of separate cultures and creates a new culture from the cultures in the congregation
Culture of Leadership (Lay or Clergy)	Dominant group	Representative of the different cultures in the congregation	Representative of the different cultures in the congregation
Degree of social interaction across cultures	Can be high or low	Low	High
Other Designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multicultural (Appleby 1986:96)</li> <li>▪ Multiethnic (Ortiz 1996:64)</li> <li>▪ Assimilationist Churches (Yamamori 1979:173)</li> <li>▪ Dominant Culture Church (Pocock and Henriques 2002:134)</li> <li>▪ With Multicultural Fellowship (2002:136)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multicultural (Appleby 1986:96)</li> <li>▪ Multiethnic (Ortiz 1996:64)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multicultural (Appleby 1986:96, Pocock and Henriques 2002:139)</li> <li>▪ Multiethnic (Ortiz 1996:64)</li> <li>▪ Synergistic (Mok n.d.)</li> </ul>
Examples	Grace Episcopal, Sheboygan, Wisconsin (?)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mosaic, Los Angeles, California</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Characteristics of Multiracial Church Models**

<b>Homogeneous Church Models</b>			
	<b>Single Homogeneous Unit</b>	<b>Independent Multiple Homogeneous Units</b>	<b>Interdependent Multiple Homogeneous Units</b>
Organizational Culture	Reflects homogeneous unit	Each homogeneous unit self governing	Umbrella organization with representatives from homogeneous units
Race of Leadership (Lay or Clergy)	Homogeneous Unit	Each independent congregation is led by a person of that culture	Representative of different congregations
Degree of social interaction across races	Low	Generally low, but may happen occasionally in combined services	Can be high or low
Other Designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Churches started at a physical distance from the sponsor (Appleby 1986:84ff.)</li> <li>▪ Natural Birth</li> <li>▪ Adoption</li> <li>▪ Implantation</li> <li>▪ Identificational Models (Yamamori 1979:174ff.)</li> <li>▪ Monoethnic house church</li> <li>▪ Single / Multiple Sponsorship Monoethnic House churches</li> <li>▪ Ethnic-Specific Church (Pocock and Henriques 2002:135)</li> <li>▪ Total Transition (Wagner 1979:163)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More than one organized church meeting in the same building (Appleby 1986:88ff.)</li> <li>▪ Natural Birth</li> <li>▪ Adoption</li> <li>▪ Transition</li> <li>▪ Multicongregational (Ortiz 1996:66ff.)</li> <li>▪ Renting Model</li> <li>▪ Celebration Model</li> <li>▪ Identificational Yamamori 1979:174ff.)</li> <li>▪ Monoethnic church within White church</li> <li>▪ Ethnically changing churches</li> <li>▪ Multicongregation (Pocock and Henriques 2002:134)</li> <li>▪ Interethnic church celebration (2002:135)</li> <li>Temporary sponsorship (Wagner 1979:160)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More than one culture in one church organization (Appleby 1986:93ff.)</li> <li>▪ Multiworship</li> <li>▪ Multilanguage Classes</li> <li>▪ Integrative Model (Ortiz 1996:79)</li> <li>▪ Multiworship More than one culture in one church organization (Appleby 1986:93ff.)</li> <li>▪ Multiethnic Mutually Autonomous (Yamamori 1979:178-179)</li> <li>▪ Multicongregational (Wagner 1979:161)</li> <li>▪ Bi-lingual / Bi-cultural (Wagner 1979:162)</li> </ul>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Numerous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wheaton Bible Church, Wheaton, Illinois</li> <li>▪ Immanuel Lutheran, Chicago, Illinois</li> <li>▪ First Southern Baptist, Hollywood, California</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First Church of the Nazarene, Los Angeles, California</li> <li>▪ First Baptist Church, Flushing New York</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Homogeneous Unit Based Church Models (After DeYoung, et al. 2003)**

### Summary

A review of the pertinent literature suggests that authors from a variety of cultural backgrounds are seeing new possibilities, even a sense of urgency for multicultural ministry. In summary, these newer voices are offering ways to break the church out of the



false dichotomy posed by the homogeneous unit principle. They are mapping out a third way that enables people of different cultures to come together in a way that avoids assimilationism. They argue that there is strength in diversity, and contend that every culture has a contribution to make in regard to mission. Whereas Wagner (1979) found a call for separation, newer voices are calling for unity.<sup>69</sup>

### Conclusion

With this evidence before us, what are the biblical and theological foundations that emerge concerning multicultural ministry? The first is God's desire and intention to bless all the families of the earth through a chosen lineage. The descendants of Abraham were to be the chosen mediator of God's blessing to the nations. The idea of blessing includes both the tangible content of blessing, and the positive relationship by which the mediation of blessing can occur. The church, as the descendants of Abraham by faith, is heir to the blessings promised to Abraham, and is now to be the mediator of blessing to the families of the earth, which implies both substance of blessing and restored relationship between the families of the earth within the church.

The second biblical / theological foundation for multicultural ministry is the models present in the inclusive ministry of Jesus, and in the transcultural fellowships of

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<sup>69</sup> In addition to the specifically Christian resources reviewed above, a few secular resources are worth mentioning. Charles Hampden-Turner and Fons Trompenaars (2000) frame the issue of managing diversity in terms of six "dilemmas" that must be resolved in order to operate effectively in a multicultural environment. These dilemmas include: Universalism-Particularism; Individualism-Communitarianism; Specificity-Diffuseness; Achieved-Ascribed Status; Inner Direction versus Outer Direction; Sequential and Synchronous Time. For each of these dilemmas, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars provide stories and case studies that illustrate how differences can be resolved.

Tyler Cox of the University of Michigan's Business School has written a number of books on managing diversity. In *Creating the Multicultural Organization* Cox sees diversity as a "double-edged sword." The challenge is to "create conditions that *minimize* its potential to be a performance barrier while *maximizing* its potential to enhance organizational performance". Cox proposes that the higher the level of diversity in an organization, the higher the level of innovation (2001:8 ff.).

the early church. In addition to these models, the ontology that is consistently communicated throughout the New Testament affirms that unity and reconciliation across cultural barriers is God's intention for the church. Also consistently present in the New Testament is instruction on how to live out this ontological unity in practical terms.

As noted above, the term models as used here means an "abstraction from reality in order to clarify issues" (Snyder 1999:119). In looking to the ministry of Jesus and the early churches as models in this sense, I have highlighted but two related aspects of the early churches, unity and reconciliation. In highlighting these two, other issues, such as leadership in the early churches, are (unintentionally) obscured. The question pursued in this dissertation related to leadership then, is not whether pastoral leadership in these churches fits a New Testament model. Rather, the question regarding pastoral leadership is how persons in the role of pastor encourage and exhort their membership to embody unity and reconciliation as understood from the models seen in the ministry of Jesus and the early churches.

The third building block in the biblical / theological foundation for multicultural ministry is contemporary theological reflection. Such reflection acknowledges God's intention that the church should reflect the perichoretic community of the Trinity, i.e., the church should demonstrate unity within the context of diversity. Contemporary theological reflection also recognizes that the divisions between the families of the earth run deep. The church—not the church that is has been compromised by its captivity to culture, but the church as constituted by the Spirit—holds the remedy for these divisions. Both Scripture and contemporary reflection affirm that the church is the place where division in the human family is bridged, where the wounds of the past find healing, where

the hope for a more just and peaceful society can be found.

The following chapters present the findings that emerged the data as they relate to the themes of reconciliation and unity. To put it in the form of a question, How do the churches profiled in this project express, embody and propagate the themes of reconciliation and unity as seen in models such as the ministry of Jesus and the early churches?

## Chapter 4

### Practices and Theology of Multicultural Churches

This chapter explores the practices and theology of multicultural churches that contribute to the process of constructing and maintaining an alternative perception and experience of reality wherein the church as a multicultural fellowship becomes plausible in thought, and realized in practice. Key practices include intentional diversity, the use of symbols and ceremonies, and a vibrant prayer ministry. Theology of the Holy Spirit and of theology of the atonement will also be discussed.

When I visited Abundant Life Christian Fellowship, I was greeted at the door by a 50-something African American woman. She asked me whether I had anyone to sit with. I told her I was alone that morning. She took me by the hand and led me to the section where her family was seated. She introduced me to some family members and invited me to join them. As I sat and looked out over the crowd of worshippers at Abundant Life, I thought to myself, “This is what church ought to look like.”

After observing worship at Mosaic Church in Little Rock, I went out to lunch with senior pastor Mark DeYmaz and his family. He asked me about my initial impression of the church. I shared my thoughts about the church and told him about my visit to Abundant Life, and noted I had felt the same way about Mosaic. I told him I could not fully explain it, but I had sensed something in both churches that was unique in all of my church-going experiences. DeYmaz smiled and asked, “Do you know what that is?” I told him I did not know. “It’s the pleasure of God,” he said.

He went on to explain that Christians are always asking Jesus to answer their prayers, but there is only one prayer Jesus prayed that we can answer—the prayer Jesus prayed in John 17: “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me” (John 17:23). When a church answers that prayer, he said, it brings God pleasure (DeYmaz 2005b).

My intuitive observations about Abundant Life and Mosaic do not constitute a major finding in and of themselves. What they do uncover, however, is one of the ways an alternative perception of reality is constructed in multicultural churches. A number of respondents from Mosaic affirmed that they had experienced something at Mosaic that they had not experienced in previous churches. While no one called it the pleasure of God, as DeYmaz did, the comments offered by respondents are instructive. One member from Mosaic said that after he and his wife had visited for the second or third time, they felt strongly that if Jesus had had a church during his earthly ministry, it would have looked something like Mosaic. One member shared that there were times in the service when he could not stop crying. People spoke of a strong sense of the power and the presence of God. A fifty-three old African American man said “I’ve seen more powerful stuff at Mosaic . . . and I’ve been a Christian since age 21.”

Respondents expressed similar comments about ACAC. People find the church to be an energizing place. Pastor Rock Dillaman of ACAC said people “just feel this anointing of God and this richness that they say, I could never be satisfied again in a homogeneous place.” Respondents from all the primary test cases spoke of the warm, welcoming, and often unique atmosphere of their churches. (See comments in Chapter 6, pp. 234-235.)

Understanding how people perceive and experience the environment and atmosphere of a multicultural church is an important piece of the picture. Even more important, however, is understanding the attitudes and practices that help to create and sustain the environment and atmosphere. The current chapter discusses the function of practices and principles in the processes of constructing and maintaining an alternative perception of reality.

#### First Key Practice: Intentional Diversity

George Yancey identified diversity of leadership as one of seven principles of “successful multiracial churches” (2003:108ff). I was able to verify that the churches included in this study all exemplified this practice. Diversity was intentional not only at the leadership level, but at all levels in many cases. Their commitment to diversity is clearly communicated as a core value, and is lived out in practical ways.

#### Intentional Diversity as a Value

Communicating and reinforcing values in an organization is part of shaping that organization’s practices. Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner note,

Values also serve as guides to action. They inform our decisions as to what to do and what not to do; when to say yes, or no, and really understand *why* we mean it. If you believe, for instance, that diversity enriches innovation and service, then you should know what to do if people with differing views keep getting cut off when they offer up a fresh ideas [sic]. (Kouzes and Posner 2002:48, Cf. Burns 1978:43-44)

Values also motivate. They keep us focused on why we’re doing what we’re doing and the ends toward which we’re striving. Values are the banners that fly as we persist, and we struggle, as we toil. We refer to them when we need to replenish our energy. Through them we can answer the question, “Was it worth it?” (Kouzes and Posner 2002:49)

The churches studied in this project all held intentional diversity as a value, and phrased this value in various ways:

- Allegheny Center Alliance Church states it as a “Commitment to being a multiracial and international fellowship, modeling biblical reconciliation and unity in diversity“ (Allegheny Center Alliance Church 2005).
- Abundant Life conveys it as a commitment to “Unity rather than uniformity” (Abundant Life Christian Fellowship 2004)
- “Hinshaw Memorial United Methodist Church claims hospitality, holiness, and the ministry of reconciliation as the Christian way of life. We understand that when God birthed the church into being, he made the church to be an inclusive community of faith that includes persons of all ethnicities, nationalities, and socio-economic classes.” (Hinshaw Memorial United Methodist Church 2005)
- The value of intentional diversity is woven into the very identity of Mosaic. “Mosaic is a multi-ethnic, economically diverse church established by men and women seeking to know God and to make Him known through the pursuit of unity in accordance with the prayer of Jesus Christ (John 17:20-23) and patterned after the New Testament at Antioch (Acts 11:19-26; 13:1ff.)” (Mosaic 2005).
- New Life’s statement of values includes “modeling a church that is multi-racial, multi-cultural and diverse” (New Life Community Church 2003).
- Park Avenue UMC includes this value in their vision statement: “We are a sneak preview of heaven – socially, ethnically, culturally and economically diverse, who welcomes and invites all who enter to experience God’s kingdom here on earth. Embracing our diversity, we are a community of transformed disciples trained and equipped to lead in the church and the world” (Park Avenue United Methodist Church 2005).
- The Sanctuary Covenant Church includes the value of intentional diversity in their vision statement. “The Sanctuary is multi-ethnic, which means reconciliation will be a central focus. This focus on reconciliation extends beyond what is called, ‘race’ to also include class and gender issues as well. This means among other issues, the church is committed to multi-ethnic leadership, a multi-ethnic worship experience, as well as deal head on through discipleship with issues of racism, classism, sexism, justice, and oneness within the body of Christ” (Sanctuary Covenant Church 2003).
- Church of All Nations includes intentional diversity as part of the commitment of membership: “The congregation shall welcome all persons who respond in trust and obedience to God’s grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the membership and ministry of his Church. No persons shall be denied membership because of race, ethnic origin, worldly condition, or any other reason not related to profession of faith. Each member must seek the grace of openness in extending the fellowship of Christ to all persons. Failure to do so constitutes a rejection of Christ himself and causes a scandal to the gospel” (Church of All Nations 2004).

So, in conclusion, most multicultural churches explicitly state their commitment to intentional diversity. Although each church phrases it differently, the importance of this value for ministry in a multicultural milieu is evident.

### Intentional Diversity as a Practice

As important as intentional diversity is as a value, without practices that flow out of that value, it becomes empty and meaningless. The churches studied in this project worked out the value of intentional diversity in numerous and creative ways. Although there are undoubtedly more than the three I address in this section, I include these three here because they are broad categories. Other practices that reflect the value of intentional diversity are scattered throughout other sections of the paper. The three broad areas covered here are intentionally diverse leadership, intentionally diverse music, and intentionally diverse small groups.

Intentionally diverse leadership. Among the larger churches included in this study, where there were multiple pastors and staff, cultural diversity was a given. At the larger churches—Abundant Life, ACAC, New Life, Park Avenue UMC, and Mosaic—diversity on the pastoral staff was very much evident. All of the churches in the study exemplified the value of intentional diversity in other levels of leadership other than the pastoral staff.

Park Avenue UMC is located in a culturally diverse neighborhood. However, as Pastor Mark Horst<sup>70</sup> has observed, “The fact that you’re in a diverse neighborhood doesn’t mean that you’ll invariably reflect the community” (Horst 2005). There are homogeneous churches that serve the same area as Park Avenue. At Park Avenue,

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<sup>70</sup> Pastor Horst was the senior pastor at Park Avenue when he was interviewed for this project. He has since been appointed to a different congregation, and a new senior minister has been appointed to Park Avenue.



reconciliation is viewed as a gift, but a gift that must be maintained. Reconciliation is a divine initiative that requires human effort. One of the ways Park Avenue has worked at reconciliation is to have a racially diverse leadership team. The music director is an African American, as is one of the associate pastors. One of Park Avenue's worship services is held in Spanish, so there is Latino representation in leadership as well.

Achieving cultural diversity on a pastoral staff is not always easy. Sometimes assuring diversity meant passing on a very competent individual of one culture to hire a person of another. There is always the struggle to maintain cultural diversity without feeling as though the church is trying to fill quotas. The church wants to find a staff person who exhibits God's calling and the right gift mix to fill a given position, but who also maintains a level of diversity. The same intentionality to achieve diversity of pastoral leadership was observed at the lay leadership level among the churches I visited.

At The United Methodist Church of Union, Ferdie Llenado has worked to achieve diversity in the lay leadership of the church. Union's Pastor Parish Relations Committee consists of nine people. The committee is diverse in age, gender, and in terms of cultural background. The church is working toward this type of inclusiveness on all the committees in the church.

At ACAC, the staff is diverse, and so is the leadership from within the broader congregation. The two largest groups at ACAC are African American and White. The board of elders intentionally has representatives from both groups. The church wants to give opportunities for people from all cultures to participate in leadership. People at ACAC have become accustomed to seeing this type of diversity. The church recently had a time of recognition acknowledging Pastor Dillaman's twentieth year in ministry at the

church. The two lead elders, one African American and one White, were to participate in the service. The African American man was unable to be at all of the services due to other commitments. People noticed, and wondered, “Where are the African American men in honoring Pastor Rock?” Diversity has become the norm at ACAC, and when people do not see it, they question why.

Dillaman sees intentional diversity as having a pedagogical function. “When we have African Americans in important positions of leadership, that teaches. And when people sit under the leadership of an African American, that teaches. It begins to break down the preconceived stereotypes.” Intentional diversity as a practice begins to reframe reality for people; it begins the process of secondary socialization.

Intentionally diverse music. This particular topic is one of the issues in multicultural churches that challenges most strongly some of the assumptions of the Church Growth Movement. Rick Warren’s influential book *The Purpose Driven Church* strongly emphasizes the importance of choosing a single style of music that is appropriate to the target group a church is trying to reach.

The music you choose to use “positions” your church in your community. It defines who you are. Once you have decided on the style of music you’re going to use in worship, you have set the direction of your church in far more ways than you realize. It will determine the kind of people you attract, the kind of people you keep, and the kind of people you lose. (Warren 1995:280-281)

Warren’s counsel is undoubtedly true, and makes the issue of musical style a complex one for the multicultural church. If a church is known in a community as a multicultural church, if that is its “position” in the community, the music needs to live up to its reputation. The worship services at Abundant Life are a mixture of musical styles. They include hymns, along with more contemporary worship music and Black gospel. They use a various combinations of instruments from a praise band to an orchestra, and a

variety of choirs from traditional sanctuary choir to an African American gospel choir. Park Avenue has a similar mix of music. Occasionally they will even break out the Hammond B-3 organ when they are singing a song from the African American worship tradition.

Intentional diversity in worship is believed to be key to the cultural diversity at ACAC. They feel strongly that each culture has something of value to offer to the church. The leadership understands, and teaches the church that God has revealed God's self to people of every culture, and that every group has an understanding of God that will benefit and edify the rest of the body.

Mosaic has approached the question of diversity in music a little differently. Rather than incorporating different styles of music into one service, the style changes from one week to the next. A number of worship leaders take turns leading music. One week the worship will have a contemporary feel, the next it might have more of a Latin or a Black gospel sound. "The only thing we don't have," Harry Li explained, "is country or just traditional hymns. We do sing hymns, but not in the traditional style" (Li 2005).

Intentionally diverse small groups. Among the churches in this study, Mosaic most exhibited intentional diversity at the level of small groups. Pastor Harry Li oversees the Acts 2 Fellowships and has intentionally made the membership of those groups diverse in age and cultural background. The young adults ministry (YAM) at Mosaic is one of the more active groups in the church. At one point, they were meeting twice a month for dinner. There was no agenda other than eating together and having fellowship. One YAM regular remembered a time when she invited a Chinese co-worker to the group. "She absolutely loved it and she began attending church some because of that."

The group meets in different homes, with the host for a given meeting preparing a type of food that is common to their culture. The Acts 2 Fellowships have become an important way of building cross-cultural friendships. As one YAM member put it, “You cannot develop friendship without taking the time to understand. Understanding people from other cultures is a slow process that needs a lot of time, so, our church has a lot of activities where you just hang out; you just spend time.” A number of people from Mosaic indicated that the Acts 2 Fellowships, because they are intentionally diverse, are one of the most important things the church does to maintain unity.

Because Mosaic has been intentional about creating opportunities for building cross-cultural relationships in the small group setting, relating cross-culturally has become more natural in other settings. Every third Sunday, following the worship service the church shares a meal, which is followed by a baptismal service. One church member recalled that during her first few months at Mosaic she would look around the room during the fellowship meal to see whether people were relating cross-culturally. “I looked around to see, was this table all Black, and is this table all White.” It was important for her to know whether fellowship was occurring cross-culturally. If it was not happening, she felt, then what Mosaic is trying to do is not working. What she saw was people intentionally sitting with people who are different from themselves.

At ACAC, and Abundant Life, some of the small groups are homogeneous, and some are culturally diverse. It depends on the location. The groups that meet at the church facility tend to be more diverse, while geographically based home groups tend to be more homogeneous. At Hinshaw, Pastor Bart Milleson has encouraged small group participation, and has encouraged the groups to include people of different cultures. The

groups at Hinshaw engage in different activities such as going on walks in the community, prayer walking, sharing times, and interacting with people in the community.

A woman from Sierra Leone recalled the way the United Methodist Women's (UMW) group at Hinshaw worked to include her. In monthly UMW meetings at Hinshaw, there is normally some sort of presentation. It was not long after she started attending Hinshaw that this immigrant from Sierra Leone was invited to present a program on the history and worship styles of her home country. She recalled that the group response was very positive. The other women in the group were genuinely excited, curious and interested in her presentation. That experience helped her feel more a part of the church.

Another way Hinshaw is intentional about diversity is in the development of a multicultural task force, whose membership reflected the diversity in the congregation. They discussed issues such as ways of building unity, and how to help the older generation accept changes. They planned multicultural events with the intention of reaching out to the older members. Those who worked on the multicultural task force developed enduring cross-cultural relationships.

One of the most effective small group experiences for Hinshaw in terms of developing cross-cultural relationships was an eight-week study on the sacraments, which included a small group component. That experience gave people the opportunity to connect their theology, particularly theology of the sacraments, with the real life work of reconciliation and developing cross-cultural friendships.

Socioeconomic Diversity. A topic that surfaced in the course of interviews, particularly with pastors, was the issue of socioeconomic diversity. In addition to

working toward cultural diversity, Bart Milleson of Hinshaw is working to create venues where people can develop relationships across socio-economic class. He sees ministry to the poor as a non-negotiable. Jin Kim of Church of All Nations holds a similar view. He teaches, “Multicultural ministry means not just multiple ethnicities, but multiple generations, and geographical backgrounds and socioeconomic backgrounds. Too many churches are socio-economically homogeneous” (2005a).

People of little financial means view Church of All Nations’ stand for the poor positively. One respondent from that church made a connection between the church’s treatment of the poor and the efficacy of its witness:

We’re not financially well off. The church has helped us. Christians overall don’t have such a great name because of what Christians have done in the past and how Christians continue to treat other people. They say they are Christians and rarely act as true Christians. I try to keep that in my mind when I’m in the world to try to promote living life as a true Christian, treat others as a Christian, and try to follow the teachings of Christ. I think we really need to work hard in the world to bring back the names of Christians and the name of Christ as well.

The commitment to socioeconomic diversity is part of Mosaic’s identity as well. The back of Mosaic’s worship folder says, “Mosaic is a multi-ethnic and economically diverse church established by men and women seeking to know God and to make Him known through the pursuit of unity . . .” New Life’s values include a statement on socioeconomic diversity. Their goal is “to become a church comprising one percent of the city—approximately 30,000, representing all strata of Chicago—black, white, Hispanic, Asian, CEOs, and street people” (20). Similarly, Abundant Life seeks to be a church “for the Ph.D. and the GED.”

Gender diversity. While this study is not primarily about gender diversity, this issue is related to the question of cultural diversity, and thus is an important consideration for this project. Gender diversity among the staff was evident in all the churches. The

degree to which women participate in leadership of the different churches, however, is unclear. I interviewed roughly equal numbers of men and women in the churches. Among the women I interviewed, there was no indication that they felt unappreciated as women, or that they were made to feel inferior to men. Aside from noting the various types of programming for women, virtually no information on gender equality emerged from the interview data. Therefore, while this remains an important issue, no conclusions can be drawn from this study about regarding gender equality in multicultural churches.

Conclusion. While a number of the observations made about multicultural churches in the course of this project might also be made about homogeneous churches, the commitment to intentional diversity is unique to the former. The other practices that follow are an outworking of that commitment.

#### Second Key Practice: The Use of Symbol and Ceremony

“Is this for me?” Amer asked, looking at the bread and the cup on the communion table before him. It was November of 2001, during Mosaic Church’s first communion service. He had developed a relationship with a member of Mosaic’s fledgling congregation, who had invited him to attend the service on the first Sunday of Advent. When it came time for communion, Amer felt compelled to go forward, but was hesitant, not knowing whether he was supposed to. “Is this for me?” he asked Mark DeYmaz, senior pastor of Mosaic. DeYmaz explained that communion was for people who had trusted Christ as their Savior, “But,” he added, “maybe now is your time, Amer.”

It was indeed Amer’s time. The 31 year old Muslim from Saudi Arabia, had come to the United States to convert as many people as possible to Islam, however, as Amer says, “The Lord had another plan for me. . . . I discovered that Lord loves me and

forgives me” (Mosaic 2003). Shortly after becoming a believer, Amer shared his story publicly at Mosaic. As a result, two more people came to faith in Christ—a 19 year old student from Japan, and an older African American man. Several days later, a student from Austria also received Christ as a result of Amer’s testimony.

### The Role of Symbol and Ceremony

Although many modern Christians minimize the importance of symbol and ceremony (Zahniser 1997:74), Gary Burge, professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, has observed a growing trend among his students. “Say ‘liturgy’ and my evangelical college students have a reflex akin to an invitation to take a quiz. Say ‘mysticism’ and they are drawn, fascinated, eager to see what I mean” (Burge 1997:21). One student explained her disillusionment with a large, conservative evangelical church near the college. “There was no imagination, no mystery, no beauty. It was all preaching and books and application.” By contrast, she describes her experience at an Episcopal church. “I truly worship there. It’s the wonder, the beauty I love. It feels closer to God” (1997:22). Although he is a committed evangelical, he senses that something is wrong within evangelicalism. “Something is missing . . . somewhere the mystery of God has been lost” (1997:22). He elaborates:

Good Christian behavior has become the expression of true, spiritual worship. Sunday worship hour has become an equipping/training station for the world. Rather than being an “otherworldly” encounter rending us of our heavenly identity, it has become “worldly” in the sense that its focus is horizontal, sharpening our discipleship in the world.

I see this horizontal emphasis symbolically in our use of the sacraments. In what sense is the Lord’s Supper a unique meal with Christ? What has become of the church’s historic interest in “divine presence” in these elements? Does this meal emphasize fellowship and confession (namely, our efforts), or does it represent communion and encounter (God’s efforts)? (Burge 1997:23)



Darrell Whiteman contends that much discipleship in North America overemphasizes the cognitive side of learning, and “often misses the power of symbols and ceremonies” (in Foreword to Zahniser 1997:ix). Burge’s observations and Whiteman’s comments raise an important issue for understanding how the idea of the multicultural fellowship becomes plausible in thought and realized practice, i.e., how a sense of reality *vis a vis* multicultural church congeals for the person in the street (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1967:3).

### Rediscovering the Means of Grace

Amer’s story is but one illustration of the way that some of the churches involved in this research project have recaptured the power of the sacraments, and sacramentals.<sup>71</sup> John Wesley understood the sacraments to be means of grace, that is “outward signs, words, or actions ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, [prevenient],<sup>72</sup> justifying or sanctifying grace” (Wesley 1991b:160). Wesley saw three chief means of grace: prayer, the reading and study of Scripture, and the Lord’s Supper. Laurence Stookey notes the level of importance the Wesleys assigned to the Eucharist. In 1745, they published a collection of 166 Eucharistic hymns to be used at home in preparation for communion, or for meditation following communion. The collection went through eleven printings (Stookey 1993:162). In his sermon, “The Duty of Constant Communion,” John Wesley wrote, “As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and the blood of Christ. This is the food for our souls. This gives strength to perform our duty,

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<sup>71</sup> This term was suggested by Matt Zahniser to describe symbols and practices that have a sacramental effect, i.e., they lead us on to maturity in Christ, but are not recognized as sacraments by the church.

<sup>72</sup> The original word here is “preventing” grace. I have substituted “prevenient” because it is the more familiar of the two terms, i.e., more common in contemporary usage, and it is less confusing.

and leads us on to perfection” (Wesley 1991a:503).

Bart Milleson has appropriated the Wesleyan understanding of the means of grace in his ministry at Hinshaw Memorial United Methodist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. Milleson’s convictions about the role of the sacraments in building cross-cultural unity came about as a result of personal experience. Milleson recounts an experience he had at Christ House Church, a ministry offshoot of Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C. At dinner, “everyone present took turns passing the basket of bread to their neighbors saying, ‘The body of Christ given for you.’” Throughout the mealtime, they conversed with one another, sharing their stories. One of the men at their table spoke little. Milleson recalls,

His presence reminded us that it is important to eat with sisters and brothers who are hurting. Being at table together over time is healing, but breaking bread together also exposes brokenness. After we ate together, the pastor shared a brief sermon. We sang some songs, prayed, and went from person to person in the room hugging and sharing the peace of Christ. When we returned to the table, we passed the wooden shaped fish containing small cups of grape juice to one another. I receive the grape juice from Larry, who spoke the only words I heard him say that evening, “The blood of Jesus, for you.” After passing the cup, we all stood in a big circle, held hands, and sang, “Bind us together, Lord. Bind us together in love.” On the way back to our room, Jerry and I proclaimed, “I can’t believe how much I feel like I’m part of that church, and we only shared one meal together. Now that was holy communion. (Milleson 2004:12-13)

Theological reflection on the sacraments has also led Milleson to his convictions about the transforming, sanctifying role of the sacraments, particularly as transformation and sanctification relate to cross-cultural ministry. The sacraments have become for him invaluable resources to minister effectively in an emerging multicultural context.

Milleson explains, “I’ll go back to the Lord’s Supper for instance. . . . I’ll look at the theology of the Lord’s Supper and try to discuss an ecclesiology out of that” (2005).

A key passage for Milleson in developing such an ecclesiology is 1 Corinthians

11. This passage addresses the problem of class-based divisions within the Corinthian church. At communal meals, the wealthy members were gorging themselves while the poorer members of the faith community were ignored and excluded.

Paul reminds them that the Lord's Supper is about holy communion. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." This means that the Eucharist is much more than an ordinary meal. It is a meal of remembrance. The ways in which the Corinthians shared the meal revealed that they completely forgot what the Lord's Supper was all about. If they remembered that the meal was about the death of Jesus on the cross, about his absence, as well as hope for his return; they would have treated one another differently. They would have realized that when they shared the agape meal together, they tasted the experience of abundant redemption the life of Jesus delivered. They would have shared the abundant love of Jesus Christ with one another. This would have been the foretaste of the life to come. (Milleson 2004:11)

When he first arrived at Hinshaw, Milleson taught frequently on cross-cultural relationships, particularly on the meaning of the sacraments as it applies to those relationships. Although he has not revisited that topic for some time, he believes it is important for reshaping the way people view crosscultural relationships.

Part of his early teaching on the role of the sacraments was done as part of his Doctor of Ministry dissertation, "Crafting Eucharistic Friendship Across Cultures." Milleson developed an eight-week small group experience focusing on the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. After participating in a series of small group meetings on Eucharistic friendship one African American college student commented:

When I was told about this program, I didn't want to participate. I have heard about programs before that were designed to help blacks and whites and other colors get along better, but they never really did any good. People I know who took part in these programs said they always felt disappointed because seldom did they get down to the *nitty gritty* of sharing from the heart. . . . What we need is a place that can help us get beyond our fears and really open up and share. After I participated in this program for a while, I have started to believe that the Lord's Supper sets the stage for sharing. That's why I wish that we had shared the Lord's Supper first before reflecting in our small groups. I feel like we would have had a whole lot more to share because the Lord's Supper removed the barriers so we could open up with each other. (Quoted in Milleson 2002:44-45)

The power of the Eucharist is in its ability to touch people at a level other than the rational. Milleson sees it as experiential. “It also can spark the thinking because my attention was caught and I felt this encounter with the living God. Now I’m more willing to reflect and think about why I was passionately caught. I think that is the power of the liturgy. I think we tend to begin in the sublimity, the experience of it. That can spark thought” (Milleson 2005).

Communion. Milleson has put much thought into the role of communion in developing and sustaining a multicultural community of faith. Moreover, he is intentional about creating an atmosphere where communion can make the greatest impact. A number of respondents from Hinshaw were impressed that Milleson calls everyone by name during communion, even visitors whose names he had learned just that morning. Generally speaking, in the smaller churches, maintaining the intimate feeling of communion is easier. In a larger church, such as ACAC, particular attention must be given to the way communion is done if it is to be a bonding experience. Sometimes during communion Rock Dillaman will stand before the congregation and say,

I wish you could be standing up here and see what I’m seeing as I look out. But take a moment and look around you. Yes, we’re different ages; we’re different genders, we’re different looks, we’re different races, we’re different cultures but in this moment we share one cup, one bread, we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Dillaman 2005).

Dillaman teaches his congregation that they have more in common with believers of different cultural backgrounds than they do with non-Christian members of their own families. Calling attention to the shared cup and the shared bread reinforces that believers have more in common with a Christian of different cultural background than they do with non-Christians of the same cultural background.

A respondent from Mosaic is intentional about noticing diversity, without anyone

necessarily calling attention to it from the front. “Sometimes I look around and just see – wow, look at all the people taking communion. There are people from all races and nations that I’m taking communion with.” Having observed communion at Mosaic, she believes it is especially powerful when people receive the elements from someone of a different cultural group. She sees that same dynamic at work when people receive teaching from someone of a different cultural group. “It’s a big deal for a White man to sit and be taught by a Black man in America, or for me to be mentored by a Black woman . . . That’s a challenge when you begin to be served by your brothers who are different from you. . . . It really exposes your heart.” Such events reveal hidden prejudices. Bringing those issues to the surface is the first step in dealing with them, and in overcoming them.

A number of respondents from different churches lamented the rushed feeling of communion, and expressed a desire that it could be a more meaningful experience. One respondent from a larger church felt communion as practiced in the Catholic Church could be a more meaningful observance. “It almost makes you stop and think what you are doing more than taking a cracker out of the basket. The interaction with another person. . . . There’s something to be said in terms of our spiritual connectedness with other people in the congregation. It’s not something we’re doing in isolation.” For her, the connection with another person is important.

A respondent from ACAC recalled a time when communion was particularly meaningful for him. He and his wife were married at a different church, but many people from ACAC attended the service. He recounted the experience:

It was just the way the congregation came around us when we were married. I think the church really supported us and just really helped us to have a great

wedding and reception. I think [there was] that sense not only of me owning the church, but of the church owning me, that the church was saying, “All right, this is my son.” As we were at the communion rail for our wedding and the congregation was coming up to partake of communion, there were so many people from this church kneeling next to me to receive communion while we were getting married. It was just a wonderful experience.

Being intentional about diversity is a small way of ensuring that communion will reinforce the idea of community. At ACAC, for example, the communion servers represent the diversity within the congregation. Although the connection is not as personal in the passing of communion trays as it is with a common loaf and a shared cup, people still take notice: “Who is distributing the elements to me? People who are different from me.”

The Wesleyan view of the sacraments as means of grace has particular application in the multicultural church. One dimension of Christian discipleship has to do with interpersonal relationships, including crosscultural relationships.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the perfection toward which the sacraments lead believers includes the development of bonds of love and affection across cultures. Robert Danielson’s study of the Eucharist affirms this particular meaning of communion. He identified six central meanings of communion: “remembrance, sacrifice, healing/reconciliation (which flows as a result from the forgiveness of sins), real presence, fellowship, and the eschatological dimension” (2005:50).

Of particular interest for this study is the healing/reconciliation dimension of communion. According to Danielson, “These meanings are combined into one as reconciliation can be viewed as the healing of community, while the term healing is

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<sup>73</sup> I argued extensively in Chapter 3 that the New Testament was written in a multicultural context, with a multicultural audience in mind. Therefore, the instructions in the Pauline epistles, for example, have direct application for crosscultural relationships.

usually applied to individuals. The forgiveness of sins, made possible through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, is the beginning of the process of reconciliation and healing for communities and individuals” (2005:52).

Danielson suggests that “evangelical churches are woefully in need of education about Holy Communion as the central act of worship of the universal church” (2005:192). I would add that part of the necessary education concerning communion is the meaning of healing and reconciliation. This need is particularly pressing for churches engaging in ministry and mission within a multicultural context. Bart Milleon has personally made the connection between communion and reconciliation, and has taught that connection to his congregation. I believe that in some of the other churches studied in this project communion functioned in that same way, although it may not have been explicitly stated.

Baptism. At New Life, they structure baptism so that it reinforces connection to the community. Pastor Asa App said that one clear indication that people understand the meaning of baptism is becoming involved in a home group. They understand that baptism connects them to a community, to a family of believers (App 2005). Normally, baptism is done within the context of a worship service, rather than at a separate time, signaling that it is an important event for the whole church. Another way New Life ensures that baptism reinforces connection to the community is through mentoring relationships. Candidates for baptism are mentored up to the point of baptism, and often the mentor or another person who was influential in candidate coming to faith is the one to perform the baptism. Elsewhere in this dissertation, the importance of narrative has been discussed in more detail, but a brief mention is necessary here. New Life also connects baptism with

narrative. People are encouraged to share their testimonies, highlighting in particular the difference in their life before Christ as compared to life in Christ. One respondent from New Life saw baptisms as important events in the church. “It’s real emotional, especially the people getting baptized. They see it as a huge step. The whole congregation is into it and it is a big event, a big day in the church. It is someone professing publicly that they follow Christ.”

Mosaic also has baptisms performed by persons other than the pastoral staff: friends, parents, mentor figures. A respondent from Mosaic described the impact on her:

Friends have been in the lake or at the horse trough to assist in the baptism of their friend; the individual who led them to the Lord is there to baptize them. And talk about something that draws from the heart of the body, to be a part of this because these people are taken from the body to assist and actually do the baptisms. So, that in itself is a drawing. You’re connected. I think of course you’re connected through leadership baptizing also, but that is a very intimate connection with these parents and friends and children.

Other respondents also indicated that baptisms reaffirmed their connection to the body. One person described baptism he had observed in other churches as “cold,” but at Mosaic, there was a “different sense,” something he could not quite describe with words. Mosaic’s baptismal services are held within the context of a community meal. Some see this as an important way to build community. It is “refreshing to observe. [It] reaffirms God’s grace is at work. The whole family is there.” Baptism does not affect everyone the same way. One respondent shared that when she was acquainted with the candidate it was a bonding experience, but not necessarily so with a stranger.

ACAC holds baptisms on a regular basis, but once a year there is a large service of baptism held at a lake where as many as seventy people might be baptized. Some experience that particular service as more of a community building experience than the regular baptism services. A strong sense of bonding occurs when two people who have



developed a cross-cultural friendship are baptized together. Pastor Rock Dillaman recalled one such occasion. The friendship that had been formed was between two women—an African American and a White. At the service, he introduced the two, and said, “They call one another sis. They really care about one another and they wanted to be baptized as sisters.” Dillaman commented on the effect of such an event: “You don’t need to add a whole lot more to that to have it be a wonderful, teaching, transforming event. In fact you can over speak. Let that reality speak for itself” (Dillaman 2005). The visibility of such a cross-cultural friendship becomes a powerful, visible symbol of the reconciliation that is possible in Christ. Similarly, when new members are received, the group being presented to the congregation is often culturally mixed. Dillaman takes that time to emphasize that God is building a community of faith, “knitting together” people of different races and cultures.

Foot washing. The sacrament of foot washing has also been an effective means of breaking down barriers of culture and class in some churches. The following experience, shared by a 60-year-old White male who has been a member of Hinshaw for many years, conveys the impact it can make:

If you’ve never experienced foot washing before, you can’t understand it. When I first realized that we were going to wash each other’s feet, I came very close to not participating. I felt real uneasy about it. Many people in the congregation didn’t come forward. Some persons who were in our small group did. I’ve worked with other people of different color and I don’t consider myself to be prejudiced. When I saw some members from my small group sharing group walking forward, I felt intimidated. I felt nervous. Then I thought about the woman who washed Jesus’ feet and how she dried them with her hair. I decided to walk forward. I don’t know how to explain what happened to me when I got down on my knees to wash the feet of a woman who participated in my small group. When I got down on my knees, I got down on the lowest level. I reached out my hands, took the water, and poured them over her feet. I wiped them dry with a towel. This was special to me because the woman whose feet I was washing was Yamu Kurewa (from Zimbabwe). Stooping down to wash someone’s “dirty” feet is a humbling

experience. Washing her feet changed me. I realized if I could stoop down and wash the feet of another person in the presence of my peers and the whole congregation, then I realized that I could do anything she asked me to do to help her, anything at all. If I could do that for her, I could do it for anyone. (Quoted in Milleson 2004:3-4)

Another long-time member of Hinshaw, a White woman in her seventies, shared after participating in the eight-week program: “I just didn’t want to do it. I just didn’t want to stoop down and wash somebody’s dirty feet that I didn’t even know, but after I washed that young black lady’s feet, I can’t explain it, but it changed the way I feel about her.” Milleson observes, “seemingly small, insignificant acts” such as participating in the sacraments with people of other cultural backgrounds has a profound impact on people (Milleson 2002:45-46).

Although Mosaic does not practice foot washing on a regular basis, it was observed as part of a Good Friday service in 2003. The worship facility was lit by candles, and divided into various sections: a prayer station, a communion station, etc. The elders selected various people present to have their feet washed. Pastors Harry Li and Mark DeYmaz were at the foot washing station. People who had their feet washed said that it was an experience like never before, a humbling experience. It was an act of servanthood that affected everyone present, not just those who had their feet washed. One member recalled that at the foot washing service there was “major weeping” and “not a dry eye in the place.” Another member remembered that time as a “powerful moving of the Holy Spirit.”

One respondent felt that foot washing had a particularly strong impact on the Whites in her church. “I think foot washing goes to humility. . . White people want to help black people because it makes them feel good. ‘I did something charitable.’ But washing feet is not a charitable thing; it’s a real act of humility.”

Conclusion. Not all the respondents who participated in this project found communion or baptism or services of foot washing to be particularly meaningful times in terms of deepening cross-cultural bonds. In some of the churches I visited, there was no indication that communion was seen as a time of reaffirming cross-cultural commitments, although it was meaningful in other ways. In some churches, some of the people felt that communion was a time when cross-cultural ties were strengthened, but in no church was there consensus among all interviewees that communion affected them in that way. Some respondents felt that often communion was rushed, that people were not given enough time for reflection. It seems that the bigger the church, the more difficulties are encountered in the logistics of serving communion, and in allowing enough time for reflection during communion.

The times when communion is most effective in reshaping members' perception of reality and reaffirming the multicultural vision in people's minds is when it is received personally from a person of a different cultural background. Although the size of some congregations would make it logistically difficult, it is a more formative experience to receive the bread and the cup from a person than taking a wafer and an individual cup from a tray. To have a White man break off a piece of bread from a loaf held by a Black man, and to hear him say, "the body of Christ, given for you" has a deeper impact than the same White man taking a pre-cut piece of bread out of a tray that is being passed through the pews by the same Black man. To have a Black woman dip the bread of communion into a common cup held by a White woman, and to hear her say, "the blood of Christ, shed for you," touches the individual at a deeper level than the same Black woman taking an individual cup from a communion tray being passed through the pews

by the same White woman. As one member of ACAC put it, “It almost makes you stop and think what you are doing more than taking a cracker out of the basket. The interaction with another person doing that, being the bread and the wine, there’s something to be said in terms of our spiritual connectedness with other people in the congregation. It’s not something we’re doing in isolation.”

A Member of Mosaic reaffirmed this. The communion servers at Mosaic are chosen from the congregation and are not necessarily in leadership. This practice, said one respondent, “gives us a sense of community and family because these are people who are taken in the body.” The sense of bonding she expresses is even more intense when a common loaf is used. “When you’re able to go up and break bread behind someone else, and of course their fingers have touched the bread and everything, I think that’s a bit of closeness, don’t you? . . . All of these things pull us closer together as a body.”

Where the size of the congregation would make this style of communion difficult, communion could be practiced in small group settings. At Mosaic, communion has been observed on occasion in home fellowship groups. One participant remembered that as a “bonding experience,” and believes that for the non-believers present in the group it was an “eye-opening experience.” The key point about the sacraments, about communion in particular, is that, structured properly, they can powerfully shape people’s perception of reality, contributing to the process whereby the idea of multicultural church becomes plausible in thought, and realized in practice.

### The Role of Ritual Process

A rite of passage, according to Turner (1997) involves three phases: separation, where initiates are separated from the “normal” flow of life, liminality, which is a chaotic

state of transition, and reintegration by which initiates are reincorporated into society in their new status and role. The power of the ritual process is its ability to refashion the being of the participant (Turner 1997:103) as participants may be “more open to new ideas, more impressionable than at other times” (Courson 1998:304). Ritual process also helps participants bond to the community and bond to meaning (Zahniser 1991:76).

Turner notes the importance of the liminal phase: “The wisdom (*mana*) that is imparted in sacred liminality is not just an aggregation of words and sentences; it has ontological value, it refashions the very being of the neophyte” (1997:103). The liminal phase of rites of passage is important for discipling because in that phase initiates are ripe for bonding to meaning. The marginal character of the liminal phase prompts reflection on the past and on the future. The incongruence between past and future forces the initiate to see himself in a new way, to envision himself in a new status and role.

#### Sacred Liminality in Multicultural Ministry

David Anderson, Pastor of Bridgeway Community Church in Columbia, Maryland, relates a small group experience he orchestrated in his church, which represents a creative use of sacred liminality. The group began meeting to discuss a series of introductory questions related to racial reconciliation (Anderson 2004:90):

1. What should our objective or purpose as a group on the topic of racial reconciliation be?
2. What do you hope will be accomplished for you personally by the end of the group?
3. What should our timeline be?
4. What should our rules of discussion be?
5. What themes do you think will or should dominate our discussions?

Part of the group’s journey together was to have every group member partner with a “reconciliation buddy” so that everyone could share their own stories, and listen to the

stories of their partners. The group gathered for six weekly meetings, plus time spent with reconciliation buddies. Anderson comments on the group members' experience: "It was wonderful to see people getting to know others from a different background. By the end of the six weeks we were together, the participants bonded to such a degree that they didn't want the group to end" (Anderson 2004:92-93).

The experience Anderson relates has elements of ritual process that helped group members bond to one another. Although there was no formal rite of separation for the group whose story Anderson recounts, there was a sense of separation inasmuch as the group members committed themselves, i.e., set themselves apart, for a specific task. An element of liminality is also evident in the group's experience. As they explored, many for the first time, crucial issues related to race relations, the group was venturing into unexplored territory. The six-week period was a time of transition where group members changed from a state in which they had no significant cross-cultural relationships, to a state in which they had meaningful cross-cultural relationships.

Anderson developed another project he titled "The Development of a Racial Reconciliation Model for Ministry," to explore how a small group experience might influence racial attitudes. He lists a number of goals in this project, two of which are of particular significance in regard to ritual process: "To provide each individual with the tools to continue their journey of reconciliation after the group has ended," and "To cultivate within each individual a vision to become an ambassador of reconciliation as they journey into the future" (Anderson 2004:93-94). The model consisted of a survey assessing racial attitudes, followed by six small group sessions, three of which focused on racism. After the six sessions, participants took the survey a second time, which showed a

significant improvement in racial attitudes (Anderson 2004:94). It would appear that the separation and liminal aspects of the small group experience helped participants see themselves in a new role within the church – that of reconciler – as had been envisioned in the goals of the small group project.

Another example of liminality is the use of retreats. This particular element showed up most strongly at New Life. The church organizes retreats of many types: singles retreats, marriage retreats, high school retreats, etc. One respondent from New Life described the purpose of retreats as “getting you out of your comfort zone and past your thinking that this church is not just met to have you sit in your comfort zone and see the same people every Sunday. . . . They very much will push the envelope with getting you involved.”

New Life’s “Encounter Retreat” in particular makes use of sacred liminality to refashion newer members and reinforce the bond to the community. One of the pastors intuitively grasped the importance of the liminal state. “To have an Encounter with God is to separate yourself from your daily activities, being home, phone calls, people— whatever gets in the way.” One respondent noted the goal of the Encounter Retreat. “We try to build the unity, to feel ownership, to reach out to the community.” Another member who had participated in an Encounter Retreat said, “It taught me how to have fellowship.” Others described it as a time when they experienced brokenness, an encounter with the Holy Spirit, or a renewed sense of God’s love. One of New Life’s pastors described the basic structure of the Encounter Retreat:

As you come in you are assigned a facilitator who will lead a group of men. As a topic is discussed, you break up into your group and go a little deeper with questions, not probing or prying, but as a person feels free to share, they share. You go in a circle and take the topic. . . . A lot of stuff is released and healing

occurs in this little group of men. The biggest thing is the sense of I'm not alone. I can relate to you, I've been there, I've gone through that, I'm going through that or I know someone very close who went through that. It's kind of building a person up and drawing them to God as the main source of healing and restoration. The boundaries are crossed easily when it's being driven by love. When love is the main ingredient, you're not looking at color or background.

As was noted above, the power of the ritual process is its ability to refashion the being of the participant, (Turner 1997:103), to evoke openness to new ideas (Courson 1998:304), and to help participants bond to the community and bond to meaning (Zahniser 1991:76). Pastor Jin Kim expressed his desire to see new members refashioned through the church's ministry. At Church of All Nations, Kim explained, "Our assumption . . . is that everyone starts tribal" (2005a). In other words, everyone has a set of loyalties limited to their own ethnic, racial, cultural or denominational group. Church of All Nations seeks to broaden that set of loyalties so that people understand themselves as members, not only of the local church, but also of the larger church, and as servant to a needy and hurting world. One of the ways Church of All Nations and other churches seek to bring about this transformation is through new members' classes.

New member class. Although the sense of liminality is not as strong in a new members' class as it is in a retreat setting, there is, nonetheless, a sense that such classes are a time of separating out, developing a new self-understanding, and attaining a new status within the community. The membership class at Church of All Nations is held one hour a week for eight weeks. Topics covered include what it means to be a Christian, what it means to be a church member, church history, Reformed theology, sacraments in the Reformed tradition, church and denominational polity, and in the last session, particular history, vision and ethos of Church of All Nations. Kim noted that some people



become Christians during the class. He sees the eight-week process as a form of enculturation, whereby new members become part of the culture of the church (2005a).

Ferdie Llenado of The United Methodist Church of Union sees the membership class functioning in a similar way. He views it as an orientation whereby he communicates the church's beliefs, values, and mission. An important goal of the membership class is to shift people from being new members to being active participants. Some of the lay leadership is also involved in the membership class, reinforcing that new members' connection is not just to the pastor, but to the other members of the church (Llenado 2005).

The membership class at New Life covers topics such as the meaning of membership, the church's story, statement of beliefs, values, vision, mission and the structure of the church. One respondent from New Life who had been through the class recalled the focus of the session. "Basically being a member of New Life is being part of the body and being willing to commit yourself. Its more of you're accountable to God. You're not really accountable to the church, but the church keeps you accountable as you grow, with your brothers and your sisters."

The membership class at ACAC is covers similar areas: history, vision, values, doctrine, etc. Following the instructional period, membership candidates complete an application and write out their testimony of the new birth. They are given the opportunity to ask questions about the doctrinal statement and share how the church has been most valuable to them, and what the church might do better. They are asked to affirm the membership covenant, committing themselves to take responsibility for making the church the community God wants it to be, and to be submissive to the leadership of the

church. Following the instructional period candidates meet with one of the elders.

Finally, they are officially received as members.

Not all the churches studied in this project have formalized membership classes. However, among the churches that do have such a class, it is considered an important element in forging a stronger connection to the church. Respondents from various churches who had been through a membership class indicated that it was a process they had taken seriously. It is clear that membership means more than being added to a mailing list. People viewed the class as a time to make firm commitments to the church.

Membership ceremony. Following membership classes, churches often have some sort of public recognition of new members. At The United Methodist Church of Union, new members are officially received by the congregation with a membership covenant ceremony. Ferdie Llenado described it as “a responsive reading between the new members, the sponsors, the congregation and me” (Llenado 2005). At Mosaic, although the membership class is less formalized, Pastor Mark DeYmaz usually recognizes and welcomes new members publicly.

At Hinshaw, in the ceremony for receiving new members, candidates stand at the front of the church, and established members agree to confirm and support the new members. Following the service, the newly received members stand with Pastor Milleson at the sanctuary doors where they are greeted by the congregation as they file out. One person recalled the Sunday she was received.

They hug you in welcome and are happy that you are here. Then they introduce themselves and say “I do such and such, call me if you need this.” Everyone just shook my hand and gave me great big hugs. Some people called me and I got cards from members of the church. It is a real church family and it is very, very special.

One of the older members, when asked about the liturgy, said it “[r]eminds us we

have a lot of work to do. We make promises. We have a part to play.”

At Church of All Nations, candidates for membership make a public profession of faith, or if they are new believers, undergo baptism. They kneel in the front of the sanctuary, and the congregation lays hands on them to physically incorporate them into the community. The goal of the membership classes and ceremony, Pastor Jin Kim explained, is “to help people find a new way of relating to God and to one another as Christians, against the forces of individualism, and consumerism, and racism, and denominationalism” (Kim 2005a).

One couple that had recently been received into membership at Church of All Nations said, “They had us stand in the middle and everyone in the church laid hands on us, formed a web. Almost like an extended family. I think everyone wants to go to a place where they feel welcomed and loved and that is what Church of All Nations is.” They remember it as a time when their commitment to the church was strongly affirmed.

During the membership ceremony at ACAC, new members are brought to the front of the sanctuary and introduced before the congregation. Pastor Rock Dillaman makes a statement reviewing the commitment they are making to the church, and about the congregation’s responsibility to them. Dillaman prays a prayer of thanks and greets each of them with a handshake. He then asks the congregation to express their welcome to the new members, which they do with applause.

### The Use of Symbols

Matt Zahniser has written and taught extensively about the importance of symbols in cross-cultural discipling. Zahniser sees symbols operating in a manner similar to the means of grace. “Symbols—authentic symbols—connect believers with God’s gracious

involvement in their lives” (Kim 2005a). In multicultural churches, symbols of various types are used. The gracious work of God to which these symbols point is the formation of a new community based not on culture, race, or ethnicity, but on the shared experience of the redemptive work of Christ.

Gestures and physical symbols. In some of the churches I visited, the pastor or worship leader instructed worshippers to reach out and hold the hands of the people next to them. This is not unique to multicultural churches, but reaching out to a person of a different cultural background does require individuals to move a bit further beyond their comfort zones than it does if the person is of a similar background.

Another gesture that is considered significant by some of the pastoral leadership is the passing of the peace. Some congregations observe a more formalized version such as saying to one another, “Peace be with you,” and responding, “and also with you.” Other congregations have a less structured time of greeting where people move about the sanctuary shaking hands and hugging one another. Again, the passing of the peace is not unique to multicultural churches, but to observe this practice in a multicultural setting affords people a small, but practical way to begin to embrace those who are culturally different from themselves.

Verbal symbols. Another type of symbol is the verbal symbol. Symbols, such as words and gestures, are not laden with universal content. Rather, they are invested with meaning through social interaction. When a symbol has the same meaning for two different people or groups of people, there is mutual understanding.

One verbal symbol that holds an important shared meaning at Mosaic is the Kingdom of Heaven. DeYmaz wrote, “At Mosaic, it remains our firm conviction that the

Kingdom of Heaven is not segregated along ethnic or economic lines. At Mosaic, we will continue to ask and to respond to the question, ‘So why on earth is the church?’” (n.d.:8) DeYmaz has effectively filled the symbol “Kingdom of Heaven” with specific content such that the term has come to represent for people the redeemed multicultural family of believers in Christ. A number of respondents from Mosaic, when asked why they chose to attend a multicultural church rather than a more homogeneous congregation, responded with a statement like, “Because that’s what heaven is going to be like.”

Jin Kim, Pastor of Church of All Nations in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, explains the importance of symbols. The name of the church is in itself a symbol that reminds members of their mission and vision as a church. Church of All Nations was originally the English ministry of the Korean Presbyterian Church of Minnesota, and chartered as a distinct congregation in 2004 (Kim 2005a). When it came time to choose a name for the church, the leadership considered various options. In the end, it came down to two similar choices: Church for All Nations and Church of All Nations. Kim insisted on the latter name, as it more accurately reflected their mission and vision to be a multicultural church. He argued that they could be a predominantly Korean church and still be for all nations. But to be a church of all nations required a different sort of commitment, a posture of welcome and embrace toward persons of different cultural backgrounds (Kim 2005a). The name of the church has become a symbol that continually reminds the membership of their mission.

An experience related by David Anderson, Pastor of Bridgeway Community Church in Columbia, Maryland, also highlights the importance of language symbols in focusing vision and mission. A small group at Bridgeway, focusing on reconciliation,

developed the following purpose statement: “To develop a deeper understanding and a greater respect for each other as we implement practical approaches to racial reconciliation” (Anderson 2004:90). To keep the purpose of the group continually before the members, Anderson printed this statement at the top of every handout that was distributed in group meetings.

Bart Milleson of Hinshaw is working to solidify some verbal symbols for the church. He wants the members of Hinshaw to develop the sense that “our doors are open” and that Hinshaw is “a church for all of God’s children.” By contrast, he expressed concern over the church’s current name. The Hinshaw for which the church was named died during the construction of the church’s present facility. Some members are beginning to own the conviction that the church should indeed be for all God’s children. Some are beginning to realize that a name change for the church might be in order. Milleson, however, is not forcing the issue. He is letting awareness build among the membership. Eventually, he believes, enough people will recognize that a fundamental shift has occurred in the ministry of the church and that a name change will be needed to solidify the church’s new identity.

Another verbal symbol Milleson has introduced to the congregation at Hinshaw is “Christ-like friendships.” A similar term, “Eucharistic friendship,” was part of his Doctor of Ministry Dissertation. Although I did not hear it directly from respondents at Hinshaw, Milleson said he has started hearing that sort of language from others in the congregation. Such verbal symbols have not been fully adopted by the membership of Hinshaw, but they are in the process of being invested with meaning, thus fostering more understanding and cooperation toward their mission in the community.

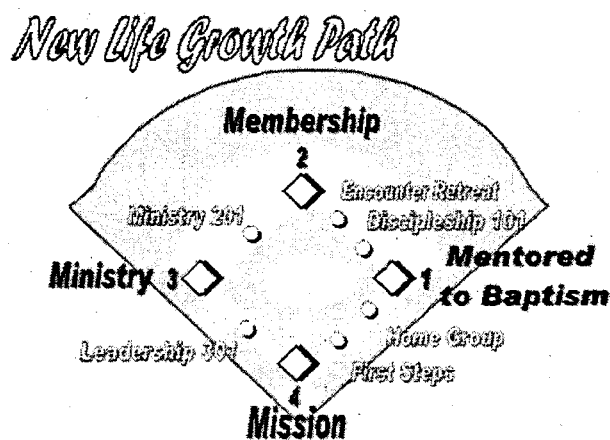
One important source of verbal symbols for Christians is Scripture. For Mosaic, the Church of Antioch is an important symbol. That church has become a symbol that people understand to embody the same mission and vision as Mosaic. People in interviews understood that the church in Antioch was a model for Mosaic, that the believers were first called Christians in that church, and that Antioch was the congregation that commissioned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Another passage that has become a symbol for Mosaic is the prayer of Jesus in John chapter 17, particularly where Jesus prays for the unity of the believers (John 17:20-23).

Small groups at Mosaic are called Acts 2 Fellowships. At one point there was some discussion surrounding the name. It was suggested that perhaps “Home Fellowship” would be a more appropriate name. One of the elders said, “We didn’t want to do that. It is kind of our DNA. It has a biblical basis. We can explain to people why we are doing it.” Acts 2 has become for Mosaic a symbol with mutually shared meaning. When someone refers to an Acts 2 group, others understand that it refers to a small group that meets in a home and is focused on fellowship and building relationships.

Although it is not drawn from Scripture, a parabolic illustration Mark DeYmaz has used on occasion has become another symbol for Mosaic. He compares the church to an extended, multi-generational family living in the same home. It goes something like this: The kids might not appreciate the liver that is served for dinner on Monday, but they come to the table and eat because they are part of the family. Grandma might not like the pizza that is served for dinner on Saturday but she comes to the table because she is part of the family. Likewise, a particular element featured in one worship service, or a particular style of music that is prominent in one service may not be someone’s favorite,

but they should come to worship and participate because they are part of the family.

Visual symbols. I began my research trips to various churches expecting to find visual symbols. To my surprise, I found very few. One of the few was the “New Life Growth Path.”



**Figure 4: New Life Growth Path (New Life Community Church 2003)** <sup>74</sup>

Several respondents from New Life referred to the Growth Path. While this visual symbol has come to have shared meaning, it is not directly related to their identity as a multicultural church. It may be indirectly related, in that it encourages people to connect with a mentor, and to attend an Encounter Retreat, both of which are potentially opportunities to develop crosscultural friendships.

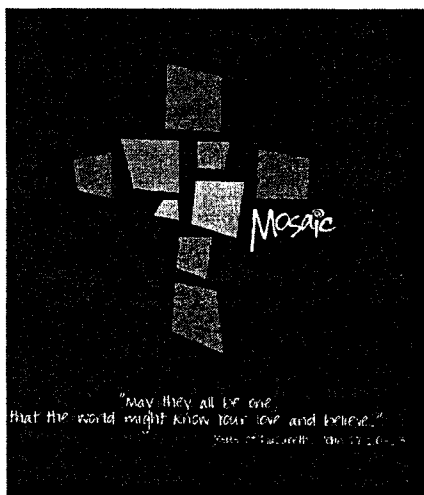
The one church with visual symbols directly tied to their identity as a multicultural church is Mosaic. The first is a cross designed in a mosaic style (See figure 5). The second is a licensed reproduction of the tile mosaic *Sevillanas* (Cohen n.d., See figure 6).<sup>75</sup> One or both of these symbols are found on most of the printed material

<sup>74</sup> This is an adaptation of Saddleback Church’s “Life Development Process” (Warren 1995:144)

<sup>75</sup> It is difficult to capture the impact of these two images in black and white. The images may be viewed at Mosaic’s website: [www.mosaicchurch.net](http://www.mosaicchurch.net)



Mosaic produces. DeYmaz saw the symbols playing both an artistic and a functional role. He felt that visuals become necessary as a church becomes larger. They speak to the values of the church, reinforcing visually what the church has communicated verbally.



**Figure 5: Mosaic Cross (Mosaic 2005)**



**Figure 6: *Sevillanas* (Cohen n.d.)**

Another visual symbol is flags. Mosaic has twenty-four flags around the sanctuary, a symbol of the cultural diversity within the Mosaic community. Pastor Harry Li explained that the visuals serve as reminders, as “things that constantly show who we are and what we stand for and why we are here.” Li says that the people at Mosaic are an important visual symbol as well. He recalled one visitor with a shaved head, multiple piercings and tattoos who told one of the pastors, “You know what is neat about this church is that I have longed to go to a church for a long time, but every time I have gone somewhere, I have always just felt out of place. The minute I stepped in here, I looked around and I saw so many different people, and I knew I wouldn’t stick out here.” The United Methodist Church of Union also displays flags representing members’ countries

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of origin, and encourages greeters to dress in the style of their home country.

### Conclusion

Symbols can communicate and reinforce values in powerful ways, but as Zahniser has cautioned, symbols are not magic (Zahniser 1997:76). Used correctly, symbols are part of a church's overall strategy and practice to construct an alternative perception of reality, a reality in which believers of different cultural backgrounds worshipping together becomes plausible in thought, and visible in practice.

### A Practical Theology of the Holy Spirit

In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul identifies the Holy Spirit as the source of Christian unity, admonishing the church to maintain what the Spirit has brought about. "Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Markus Barth clarifies that "spirit" in verse three does not refer to a human spirit, but to the divine (Barth 1974:428).<sup>76</sup> Gordon Fee similarly notes the importance of the Holy Spirit in the unity of the church. Commenting on the series of "ones" in 4:4-6 writes, "pride of place is given to the Spirit, precisely because the *one body*, which is Paul's present concern, is the result of their common experience of the *one Spirit*, whose presence in their lives is also the predicate of their *one hope*" (1994:699-700, italics in the original).

Given that the Holy Spirit play such a crucial role in maintaining the unity of the church, it is important to understand how the churches studied in this project understand and experience the Spirit. None of the churches is Pentecostal or Charismatic in the strict sense of the word, i.e., they do not trace their roots to the Pentecostal movement of the early twentieth century or to the Charismatic renewal of the 1970s, and they do not

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<sup>76</sup> See Chapter 3 for a fuller discussion by Barth on this point

emphasize speaking in tongues. While the theology of these churches is not strictly Pentecostal or Charismatic, there is nonetheless a strong sense that the Spirit is present and active. And, while a theology of the Holy Spirit is not as clearly articulated as it might be in the Pentecostal or Charismatic tradition, the theology of the Spirit that emerges is an eminently practical theology, i.e. it creates an openness to a dynamic experience of the Spirit.

Jin Kim of Church of All Nations says that they talk a lot about trusting the Spirit. This is countercultural in Presbyterianism where you trust the structure and the polity. “Even when you do trust the spirit, it’s within the parameters that polity allows.” At Church of All Nations, Kim observed, “Our ethos is generally to be risk taking. [We] don’t talk a lot about theology of the Holy Spirit . . . Rather, we say, ‘We are a church that takes risks for the Kingdom.’ How? Trust the Holy Spirit” (2005a). One example of that is in the way Church of All Nations approaches budgeting. Rather than determining the scope of the ministries based on the previous year’s income, they base their budget on the ministries they believe God is calling them to pursue.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance as a denomination has historically emphasized the importance of the Holy Spirit. E. D. Whiteside, an early leader of the movement in the Pittsburgh area, expressed their reliance on the Spirit in the extension of their ministry. “When God would have a branch of the Christian Alliance in any place He will bring it about Himself, for the Christian and Missionary Alliance is a Holy Spirit movement, and He furnishes and equips the instruments through which He operates” (Allegheny Center Alliance Church n.d.:2-3).

The movement’s early reliance upon, and openness to, the working of the Holy

Spirit is evident at ACAC. They understand the Spirit as the one who empowers the people of God for service. Part of that preparation for service at times is healing.

Regarding the healing work of the Spirit, one associate pastor said, "There's a sense of expectation. God not only can, but He does move in that way, will move in that way. . . . There is an openness." A promotional blurb for a men's retreat illustrates this sense of expectation: "The holy spirit will meet each man's needs at this retreat." ACAC understands the dual role of the Holy Spirit as both healer and the one that empowers for service. They have seen miraculous events such as a woman being healed from cancer, and trust that the Spirit gifts and equips people for ministry.

A member of New Life spoke of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit she had witnessed. She recalled the first time "Jane" had attended the church. She remembered Jane looking very haggard.

She was almost cowering. She would timidly respond. . . . Through the ministry here she accepted Christ and blossomed, transformed. She smiles when you come in, and is there to greet you and she gave a powerful testimony when she was baptized. Just to see that kind of transformation in someone's life is really powerful.

The power of God is seen in some striking ways at ACAC. Several years ago, Pittsburgh had its own "Rodney King" incident. A young Black man was pulled over for speeding in a White suburban community. Police officers at the scene thought they saw a gun and wrestled the man to the ground. He was restrained by an officer who held him down with a knee to the back. The driver ended up suffocating and dying at the scene. Public opinion was divided over the incident. Many Whites minimized the incident, arguing that the motorist was belligerent and that the officers had used appropriate force. "These kinds of things are going to happen," was the feeling among many Whites. The response of the Black community was, "Why do they always happen to us?"

One of the police officers was put on trial for brutality. It was decided that the verdict would not be announced until late in the afternoon on a Wednesday. Businesses closed early and people were encouraged to go home in fear that rioting would break out when the verdict was announced, if the officer were acquitted. The church had to decide early in the afternoon whether to go on with Wednesday evening kids clubs as usual. The decision was made to carry on with Wednesday evening activities. The tension in the city was high and the streets were virtually deserted. One of the associate pastors recalls pulling into the church parking lot, walking across the lot to the church, and entering the door:

What you saw were Black and White leaders with groups of Black and White children. It was organized chaos like any club night, but all these multiracial groups kind of going back and forth to the gym or wherever they were doing ministry, and Black children sitting on the knee of White leaders helping lead stories. It was just the reality that Jesus is the answer to this problem for this community today. They're out there searching for answers, saying there is no answer, and yet you walk through the door of the church and there is an answer and his name is Jesus and you can see that answer on display right here. . . . There are answers on display here that folks out there are searching to find, and they don't have – they can't find them. You walk through the doors of the church and here it is. It's in Christ; he's the one who brings us together.

It is crucial to note that these churches make a connection between unity and the experience of the Holy Spirit. One respondent from ACAC stated that connection explicitly.

Choosing to emphasize the work of the Spirit is very important. By our choices, we can quench the work of the Spirit or hinder the work of the spirit. The fact that we value certain things and we've emphasized the importance of respect and diversity and reaching out to people in a loving and graceful way enhances the work of the Spirit; [It] makes the Spirit flow in the midst of the church here. Whether we always recognize it or not, it provides an environment for the Spirit to work.

Mosaic makes that same connection. I asked Pastor Harry Li, "Do you think that the strong sense of the Holy Spirit is tied to the unity?" Li responded, "Absolutely. I cannot imagine it being here otherwise. I have been to a lot of churches, and other

churches that are spirit filled, and where it is obvious when you walk in the door that the Spirit is there, but I have never been to a church where it has been so consistent and so present always” (2005).

Several striking stories came from other churches as well. These are included in the following section on the role of prayer.

### Third Key Practice: Dynamic Prayer Life

Closely tied to the experience of the Holy Spirit is the practice of prayer. Among some respondents, there was a sense that the prayer life of their churches was richer and stronger because of the cultural diversity. Some at ACAC found that the African American members had contributed to a stronger belief in prayer. Reverend Bart Milleson of Hinshaw indicated that the African Christians in his congregation had awakened him to the importance of fasting, particularly as it relates to church renewal (Milleson 2005).

Speaking of Mosaic, one respondent said, “This is a church that believes in prayer, and who bathed itself from the very beginning in prayer.” She connected the practice of prayer and unity within the church. “When you pray with people and they hear your heart, when you allow people to hear your heart . . . That’s most intimate and that is one of those things that draws us closer together.” She recalled a particularly powerful time of prayer at one of Mosaic’s first meetings. A man in the group wept as he requested prayer for his wayward son who had recently been arrested in another state. Mark DeYmaz asked the brother of the wayward young man, “Would you come and sit in this chair to represent your brother? We’re going to call some people to come and stand around him with his parents, and we’re going to lay hands. We’re going to pray about

that wayward brother. We're going to ask everybody else in here to pray." She recalled that as people began to pray there was a powerful sense of God's presence in the room.

I felt a need to just get on my knees and pray, and this woman who I have come to know and love . . . got down and started praying beside me. All of a sudden, we just reached over, at that same time, and just started to hold each other's hands. . . . You just felt that all of a sudden that we were all embraced and there was something that took over that whole room. . . . I had never witnessed the presence of the Lord like that.

An African American man from Mosaic described the Latino population of the church as down to earth, with a strong devotion to the Lord. He admired them as examples of being in love with Christ. To him, the new immigrants are like a fresh breath. He described recent African immigrants in similar terms, seeing their dedication as a challenge to the "lackadaisical culture of the West."

The Latino core group at Mosaic fasts and prays on a regular basis. The result has been "miracle after miracle after miracle." A particularly striking example of this took place just two weeks before my visit to Mosaic in August. A Cuban-born woman from Miami had traveled to Little Rock for cancer treatment at a world-leading melanoma clinic. She was unable to stand and had been confined to a wheel chair for a year and a half. She and some family members arrived in Little Rock on a Saturday. A nurse at the hospital, who is a member of Mosaic, saw their desperation and invited them to attend church. They attended worship and cried through the entire service. Pastor Harry Li explains, "They had never experienced anything like it. There were members who just latched onto her with tremendous love and grace." That Monday was a day of fasting and prayer for the Latino core. They invited the woman and her family to come and pray with them. Li recalls,

It was a very powerful prayer time. The lady's daughter was just absolutely near hysterical at that point, but by the time the prayer ended, she had complete peace and she told Elizabeth [Ortega] that she thought God had healed her that night. Two days later when she went into the hospital for her testing, there were two

major tests, one was an MRI and the other was a PET scan. The MRI showed that her body had been ravaged by cancer. The nurse said there was over a hundred holes in her bones and that three of her vertebrae were to the point of crumbling, which is one of the main reasons she couldn't walk.

The other test, which shows where all the major active cancer is in your body, came out completely negative. . . . Instead of her having to go through intense chemotherapy, what they did spot they operated on and strengthened up those bones. Two days later she was walking, and three days later she was going back home to Miami. Even before she could come here to give a testimony, she was gone. Instead of being here six months, she was here 12 days. Instead of being in a wheel chair, she went back walking. (Li 2005)

A dynamic prayer life is not unique to multicultural churches. Many monocultural churches also have powerful ministries of prayer. The difference between a multicultural church with a vibrant prayer life and a homogeneous church with a vibrant prayer life is this: the multicultural churches see the effectiveness of their prayer ministries as being directly tied to the multicultural nature of the church. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity, and the Spirit of power. When the congregation intentionally works to maintain unity across cultural boundaries, it creates an atmosphere of openness to the work of the Spirit.

The Apostle Paul makes this connection in the final verses of Ephesians 4. Paul cautions the believers in Ephesus to avoid grieving the Spirit (4:30). The preceding verse instructs the church to avoid unwholesome talk, and to say only what is helpful for edifying one another (4:29). In the following verses, Paul admonishes the church to work toward peace: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (4:31-32). Keeping in mind that heterogeneity must be assumed in the Ephesian church, there is a connection between the activity of the Holy Spirit and cross-cultural unity. The churches in this study recognize this connection and see positive cross-cultural relationships as empowering their ministries.



### Theology of the Atonement

One assumption I held as I began this research project was that the churches participating in the project would have some distinctive theological emphases. In particular, I anticipated that I would find these churches presenting an understanding of the atonement other than the substitutionary model. A brief discussion of atonement theory is necessary to frame what was discovered in the course of research.

The understanding that Christ died for the sins of humankind is of central importance to the Christian message. In one of the earliest creeds incorporated into the Christian Scriptures Paul writes, “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . .” (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).<sup>77</sup> That the death of Christ for our sins is central to the faith is beyond question; exactly what that means is another matter. Even among the New Testament writers, there was no single, monolithic interpretation of the death of Christ for our sins. What Scripture contains, rather, is a mosaic of images and interpretations about the significance of Christ’s death.

While Christian Scripture contains a wealth of images related to the atonement, a single view of the saving significance of Christ’s death has come into a position of dominance within American Christianity. The penal substitutionary understanding of the atonement holds that “humanity has, in its sin, turned away from God and so merits divine punishment. Jesus, in his death on the cross, died in place of (as a substitution for) sinful humanity at God’s behest, and in doing so he took upon himself the punishment

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<sup>77</sup> Bible Scholar Craig Blomberg argues that this creed may have been formulated as early as two to five years following the resurrection of Jesus (see interview by Lee Strobel with Blomberg in Strobel 2000:34-35).

humanity ought to have suffered” (Green and Baker 2000:90).

Green and Baker voice serious misgivings regarding the penal substitutionary atonement model. They raise an important question: “If, at least to a significant degree, penal substitutionary atonement has been a ‘cultural product’ of life in the West, is it any surprise that proclamation of the gospel grounded in this theory has tended to fall on deaf ears in other social worlds?” (2000:29) This exemplifies a crucial point in the development of a contextual theology. As Robert Schreiter contends, in the process of theological contextualization, we must come to see church tradition as a series of local theologies (1985:32). Given this stance, Green and Baker raise another salient point: “If this theory has been well-suited to modern culture in the West, what will be its fate with the ascendancy of postmodern culture?” (2000:29) A more important question for the purposes of this research project is the validity of the substitutionary model in multicultural America.

Green and Baker call for a renewed study of atonement theory. Their chief concerns about the substitutionary model are as follows. The penal substitutionary model of the atonement:

- “Has engendered forms of Christian faith and practice that are suspect;
- “Has been construed by persons within and outside the church as a form of divine child abuse,” and so at the very least invites more careful articulation;
- “Has not been heard as ‘good news’ in contemporary cultures in and outside of the West which are not guilt based;
- “May well have increasingly less relevance among twenty-first century Christians; and

- “At the very least, constrains overmuch the richness of biblical thinking concerning the death of Jesus” (Green and Baker 2000:32).<sup>78</sup>

This critique makes the question of the atonement a pressing issue, and seeing church tradition as a series of contextual theologies opens up the possibility of considering models of the atonement other than, or in addition to, the substitutionary model. That possibility led me to research whether some model of the atonement were emerging in multicultural churches. A more apt metaphor for the atonement in a multicultural context would seem to be reconciliation. It avoids the overly individualistic tone of penal substitution since reconciliation includes restoration of human-to-human relationships. Reconciliation also suggests the beginning of relationship, not merely the completion of a legal transaction. Growth and development of that relationship is the motivation for moral behavior. Given the state of cross-cultural relations in the United States, reconciliation may well be a more appropriate understanding of the saving significance of Christ’s death.

In the process of researching this question, I found a diversity of positions. While some pastors expressed strongly the need to communicate the atonement in substitutionary terms, Mark Horst of Park Avenue UMC observed that John Wesley, in his preaching, drew from a number of New Testament images to explain the atonement. Horst himself does not feel constrained to talk about the cross in purely substitutionary terms, but rather, tries to draw on a range of images. Jin Kim of Church of All Nations understood the need for a model of the atonement that emphasizes reconciliation.

I realized over many years of ministry, in order to make the doctrine of the atonement make sense for my people I had to first make them Western, think in Western categories. I think the atonement is really, the purpose to not make us righteous but to reconcile us to God. So it’s a broken relationship that needs to be

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<sup>78</sup> Green and Baker discuss these points in greater detail in the preceding pages.

healed, and that's something that non-western people understand very well, because we're already relational. So actually, Western individualism, Western concepts get in the way of our natural understanding of reconciliation. It's very legalistic in my opinion, the whole atonement concept in the West. God has this universal law of righteousness; we violate that law; somebody has to pay the price; Jesus paid that price for us; now we can be reconciled to God that way. As if God's highest value were our meeting some legal standard that's outside of Him.

Really I think it's about the betrayal of who God is and who we are; we're made in God's image and our sin is betraying our true self, our true humanity that God created us to be. So when we approach it relationally, like God made us for himself and God created us for us to embrace our creatureliness, and recognize that's what it means to be human; and when we violate God's commandments we betray who we ultimately are and break that relationship. And by breaking that relationship with God we also break relationship with one another. That makes sense. (Kim 2005a)

Kim has an intuitive understanding that theology needs to be contextual. One of the issues theology needs to address in the West, Kim believes, is radical individualism, and as noted above, the substitutionary model tends toward individualism. In addition, Kim observes, "Substitutionary atonement is the language of the law court. [We] need to recover Jesus as the creator, who brings something out of nothing, who creates community of beings in the midst of the modern anxiety of annihilation or nothingness" (2005a).

Among the pastors I interviewed, Kim had the strongest sense of the need to articulate the atonement in terms other than that of substitution. Bart Milleson expressed a similar idea, suggesting that the atonement should be communicated in relational terms. For Milleson, justification by grace through faith is embodied relationally.

I think justification by faith through grace is not an individualistic reference so much as it is a relational reference. . . . We see different homogeneous groups have tended to separate unto themselves, now being able to relate with one another because of God's sacrificial gift of love embodied in the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When I think of atonement, I think in that moment God manifested God's agape. (Milleson 2005)

At ACAC, the central understanding of the atonement is related to the substitutionary model. There is, however, a strong theological undercurrent emphasizing the relational aspect of Christ's atoning death. One member from ACAC observed, "There's no such thing as a private relationship with Christ. If it weren't public, I would question the relationship. If I don't see that wall constantly being broken down, I really begin to question." Another respondent from ACAC said that while it is understood that "the cross is the place where the penalty for our sins was paid," it is also understood that "we are all joined in our need for atonement. No one escapes the need for atonement. But at the cross, we're all equal at the foot of the cross and everybody has need of this cross. . . . It took the exact same price to pay for all of us." Another respondent said, "It doesn't end with just God and me. We've been born again into the family of God, into a community of faith. . . . It's not just about me and God. It's about being part of His family and that you were born into a community of faith. . . . There's more of an emphasis on what happens after that."

Although some respondents, as indicated above, have some understanding of the atonement in terms of reconciliation, this motif is not predominant. If some understanding of the atonement other than the substitutionary model is communicated in these churches, it has yet to become an understanding that is in the forefront of people's thoughts. Among respondents, the most commonly articulated understanding of the atonement was along the lines of penal substitution. However, when asked about the ongoing implications of the atonement, a number of respondents indicated a clear understanding that Christ's death called for, and enabled a radical lifestyle change, including a change in the way people relate to one another.

One respondent expressed that the atonement meant coming out of sin into “new life, victorious life,” into “freedom from all things that would hold you back: anger, sin, guilt, shame . . . freedom from barriers. I’m free to overcome those barriers in Christ. You can have unity with other people who are different.” Another respondent said, “He didn’t save us for nothing, He saved us from our sins so that we could accomplish something in His name. And we’re missing the boat if we don’t take every opportunity to show His love and compassion for others. That’s how we show our love, by how we love others.” Another saw the atonement as empowering us to live as Jesus taught his followers to live. Others expressed similar thoughts about the significance of Christ’s death.

Regardless of the model or understanding of the atonement coming from the church leadership, there was generally a strong sense that the death of Christ did not accomplish merely initial justification, but that it had ongoing significance for daily living. Among some of the respondents, there was a strong sense that the ongoing significance of Christ’s death included the calling and enabling to cross cultural boundaries.

Whereas I had expected to encounter stronger articulations of an alternative to the substitutionary model, I encountered a variety of positions. I offer two considerations in closing the discussion on atonement theology. First, the way the atonement is framed is dependent upon the context. If the audience is non-Western, it may well be that the atonement as reconciliation is the most appropriate image. Non-Westerners should not be forced to think in Western categories to understand the gospel. Rather, the burden lies on communicators to frame the atonement in such a way that it makes sense for non-Westerners. This implies sensitivity to context, and the development of an appropriate

contextual theology that is both faithful to Scripture and coherent in context. Second, whether penal substitution or some other model of the atonement predominates in preaching, it is crucial in a multicultural setting to draw out the relational implications of Christ's death, particularly the implications for crosscultural relationships.

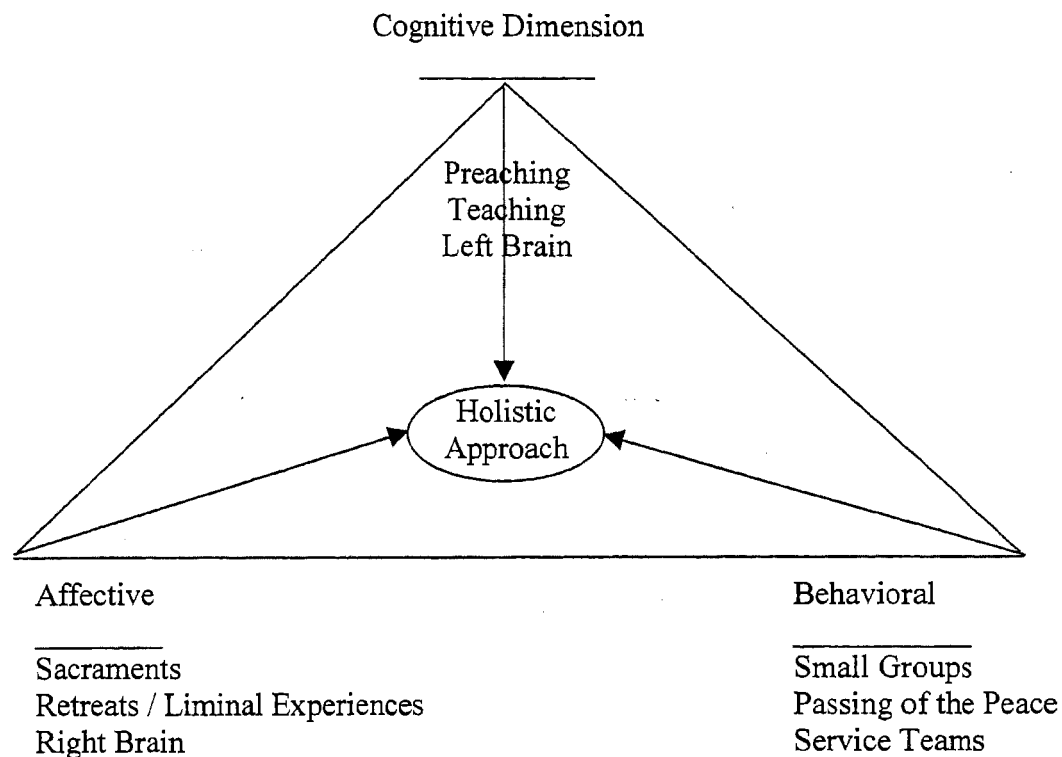
### Conclusion

The processes that tend toward the construction of an alternate perception of reality, wherein the idea of the multicultural church becomes plausible in thought and realized in practice, are multi-dimensional. Cognitive elements, affective elements, and behavioral elements all work together. Chapter 5 highlights the pastoral role, which deals largely with cognitive elements, while the current chapter has addressed the practices and principles of the church as a whole. The focus here has been more on affective and behavioral elements. Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia explained the nature of learning goals for the affective domain as "Objectives which emphasize a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection. Affective objectives vary from simple attention to selected phenomena to complex but internally consistent qualities of character and conscience" (1964:7).

The sacraments, for instance, do contain a cognitive element. As Danielson (2005:50) has observed, remembrance is one of the meanings of communion. However, the power of the sacraments to shape thought and behavior, to encourage the adoption of an alternative perception of reality, is more at an affective level. Similarly, while some of the practices considered under the rubric of ritual process do contain cognitive elements, their contribution to the construction of a different social reality is more at an affective level.

In every culture there are individuals with different learning styles, and a given

culture as a whole may prefer one learning style over others (Kraft 1996:120). So, whether a congregation is multicultural or monocultural, a variety of learning styles are certain to be represented, and a balance between cognitive, affective and behavioral elements is necessary in order to maintain an effective learning environment (See Figure 11)<sup>79</sup>.



**Figure 7: Holistic Learning Environment** (After Snyder 2003)

Another way to think about the different dimensions of learning is right brain / left brain theory. According to this understanding, the left hemisphere controls verbal and analytical processes, and the right hemisphere controls visual and perceptual processes. Left-brain subjects focus on logical thinking, analysis and accuracy. Right-brain subjects focus on aesthetics, feeling, and creativity. Warren Wiersbe explains the significance of this theory as it relates to religious practice:

<sup>79</sup> Adapted from a figure presented by Howard Snyder in *Biblical Theology of Mission* May 19, 2003.



Religion that's all feeling is shallow and extremely unpredictable, "a feeling-state without a home." The person lives on a roller coaster and is spiritually "high" one day and down in the depths the next day, and the depths keep getting deeper. However, religion that's all cognition is cold and calculating and lacks the excitement and enjoyment that ought to accompany faith in the living God (Wiersbe 1994:62)

In response to the question, "You claim that the imagination plays a big part in personal morality and Christian obedience. Please explain further." Wiersbe replies,

I fear that our "cerebral preaching" has created a church composed of people who have big heads but small hearts. The sanctuary has become a lecture hall and too many people are more concerned with filling their notebooks with outlines than filling their hearts with God's love. . . . As I hear the Word of God, unless a "connection" takes place between my mind and heart, I won't grow in a balanced way. (1994:312)

In whatever manner one chooses to categorize learning styles, the point is to work toward a holistic learning environment that engages the whole person. Churches that are consistently transcending boundaries of culture to form a multicultural community of faith, work toward a balanced, holistic learning environment. Working to engage the whole person is critical to the processes whereby a new perception and experience of reality congeals in the minds of believers.

## Chapter 5

### The Role of Pastoral Leadership in Multicultural Churches

This chapter develops the themes that emerged from interviews conducted with the pastoral leadership and members of the churches that participated in this study. According to the influential work of Berger and Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967:116), “Reality is socially defined. But the definitions are always embodied, that is, concrete individuals and groups of individuals serve as definers of reality.” The pastoral leadership of the churches studied in the course of this project all play key roles in “defining reality” for their membership, i.e., in constructing an alternative perception of reality wherein the idea of a multicultural community of faith becomes plausible in thought, and realized in practice.

In contrast to the reality observed in multicultural churches, for many Americans, their quotidian reality includes racial segregation. The idea of race has been a powerful and influential social construct throughout the history of the United States. It emerged “in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to justify the overtaking and enslaving of whole people groups” (Emerson and Smith 2000:8). The persistence of race as an accepted social construct has led to a “racialized society,” that is, “*a society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationship*” (Emerson and Smith 2000:7, italics in the original).

The pastoral leadership of these churches is constantly challenging this prevailing reality, working to make a new reality congeal for their membership, a new reality that the Apostle Paul calls the “one new man” (Ephesians 2:15), a community of faith where “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female” (Galatians 3:28).

The following themes emerged in the analysis of interview data from pastoral leadership and members: the importance of character and example, interpretation of Scripture, and pastoral vision. They reveal the attitudes and practices of pastors that enable the construction of a view of reality that stands in contrast to the broader society, an understanding of reality where crosscultural relationships are plausible in thought and realized in practice.

#### Leadership: The Importance of Character and Example

Aristotle recognized that persuasive communication was based on three elements: the ethos, or the character of the speaker; the logos, or the content of the message, and the pathos, or the emotion elicited by the speaker. In the course of research, many respondents discussed the preaching style of their pastoral leadership, but equally important to respondents from these churches was the character and example of leadership. Respondents in all churches felt that their pastors were trustworthy men of character who embodied the values and practices they were seeking to build into the church. As definers of reality, then, the first task of pastors in multicultural ministry is to embody the message they desire their congregants to adopt as their own. As Mark DeYmaz has it, “Only when people see us living out as leaders those things we profess to believe, will they be motivated to do so as well” (n.d.:27).

The commitment to develop cross-cultural friendships is evident in the way Pastor Bart Milleson carries out his ministry at Hinshaw. Most of the respondents from Hinshaw commented on Milleson’s intentionality about getting to know people. They noticed that he took the time to learn names of new people. I observed this myself during my visit to Hinshaw. Milleson took time to learn the names of some children who had come for the

first time to the church's Vacation Bible School. At communion, then, Milleson calls each person by name as he offers the bread and the cup.<sup>80</sup> This is one way Milleson sets an example of inclusiveness.

People at Mosaic spoke of the authenticity they saw in the pastors. People sense that the members of the teaching team "genuinely believe what they're saying." One respondent had been particularly impacted by a foot washing service in which the leadership washed the feet of some from among the members. "It was a way of these elders showing obedience to what the Lord would have them do at that time." That act of obedience stands as an example for others to follow. The spirit of humility and gentleness exhibited by the leadership of Mosaic at the foot washing service is manifested in other ways. Part of Mosaic's vision is to foster reconciliation across socio-economic barriers. One respondent from Mosaic recalled a particular telling moment:

The first time we came here, I cannot remember the sermon, but the pastor was preaching and a homeless man walked in and sat down. The churches I grew up in would probably have escorted him out. He didn't really fit into the church going crowd. Apparently he had visited the church several times before. He obviously had a drinking and/or drug problem, was jobless, with no place to live. The pastor stopped the sermon and said "Raymond is here. We need to gather around him and pray for him." So, the whole congregation just got up. There were probably 80 people there. They all put their hands on him and prayed over him. That really amazed me. So we knew this was a special place.

Senior Pastor Mark Jobe of New Life explains the importance of character as it relates to their vision of reaching their community. "By looking at character, calling, and effectiveness rather than education, we are raising up leaders from within the very communities we want to reach" (Quoted in Shelley 2005:23). One respondent from New

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<sup>80</sup> Rev. Milleson asked me to assist in serving communion in the early service. There is a family at Hinshaw from Croatia: a mother, father and two young girls. Milleson told me that two older children in the family had been killed in the war. I recall offering the cup to this man and woman who had endured more pain that I will likely ever experience. "The blood of Christ, shed for you." Although they did not speak English, and I did not speak Croatian, in that moment, we stood at the foot of the cross together, broken and in need of Christ's redemption.

Life's Irving Park location spoke of the pastor's passion, his love for God and love for people that he had noticed on his first visit to the church. Another member of New Life remembered being invited to the pastor's home on his first visit. Jobe's example at New Life involves foregoing his own preferences for the sake of the vision.

In the beginning the biggest barrier was myself. Although I spoke Spanish, the European culture I grew up in was very different from the urban Hispanic culture here. Put me in a plaza with a latte speaking to university students in Europe and I was comfortable. Put me on the southwest side of Chicago with Mexican immigrants and gangs, and we're talking about a totally different culture. I think it's a tendency of every person to think their own culture is better than the culture they're trying to reach. I had to learn that my personal style was secondary to my calling. (Quoted in Shelley 2005:21)

Respondents from ACAC spoke of Pastor Rock Dillaman with unfeigned admiration. They spoke of his authenticity, his love for the people, his humility. One member said, "I think he makes you want to follow." Dillaman is well aware that the right to lead must be earned. "I had to get it first, obviously, because you can't teach people what you haven't learned. . . . You can't lead people where you haven't been" (2005). Dillaman's commitment to the vision of multicultural ministry was exemplified by a move from the suburbs to the North Side of Pittsburgh where the church was located. Such are the commitments necessary to lead effectively in a multicultural context. Leaders that are unwilling to develop cross-cultural friendships, for example, will not be heard when they challenge the congregation to develop them. The character and example of the leader must embody the multicultural vision before it is communicated from the pulpit.

#### Hermeneutics and Homiletics in a Multicultural Context

Throughout its history, the church has sought to mould people's thinking and direct them to alternative ways of living through the preaching of the Christian

Scriptures. The impact of preaching has, at times, been felt beyond the community of faith. It has been suggested, for example, that the preaching ministry of John Wesley had a “calming influence” in British society, helping the nation to avoid a bloody revolution such as occurred in France (Andrews 1970:85-92).<sup>81</sup> While the humility of the pastors I interviewed would keep them from overestimating the influence of their own preaching, they would acknowledge that their preaching has, in significant ways, shaped the communities of faith they lead.

Two elements of preaching are considered here: hermeneutics, which is concerned primarily with the interpretation of Scripture; and homiletics, which deals primarily with issues of style and presentation. Although chronologically, the hermeneutical task precedes the homiletical task, the latter is discussed first.

#### Homiletics in the Multicultural Church

Given that the sermon is a central focus in the typical worship service, and that preaching style is often an important factor people take into account when choosing a church, it is instructive to explore the question of preaching style in this context.

Pastor Paul Sheppard of Abundant Life Christian Fellowship employs more of a conversational or teaching style with a mixture of topical and expository preaching. Because he chose not to preach in a traditional Black style, people see the teaching at Abundant Life as having cross-cultural appeal. Part of that appeal is the effective use of humor. In addition, his preaching maintains some African American distinctives, but also has enough “hooks and handles” for Whites that it appeals to them as well. One respondent from Abundant Life described Sheppard’s sermons as strong on application,

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<sup>81</sup> Andrews summarizes the “Halevy Thesis” of French historian Elie Halevy. See <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/ency/Protestant.htm> for a summary of this thesis.

but also strong on content, with “theology marvelously woven into the message.”

Pastor Rock Dillaman is primarily an expositor, working his way through a book of the Bible, with occasional topical sermons, for example a series on reaffirming the church’s values. A significant number of respondents from ACAC indicated that Dillaman’s preaching was one of the primary reasons they chose to remain at the church after the initial visit. People see Dillaman as having the ability to connect with a wide variety of people. One respondent described him as being “in touch with everybody, and not just one segment of the congregation.”

Pastor Bart Milleson has used a variety of preaching styles in his tenure at Hinshaw. Early on in his ministry at Hinshaw, he preached from the floor, rather than from the platform, to foster a sense of connection with the people. Some people describe his preaching currently as conversational. Some see him as using a variety of methods to connect with different kinds of people, making an effort to reach everyone.

At New Life, the pastors at the different locations collaborate on sermon preparation. Senior Pastor Mark Jobe chooses the sermon topic based on his vision for the congregation, the needs of the congregation, and where he perceives God to be leading the congregation. Pastors in the various locations then adapt the message to their congregation.

At Mosaic, each of the pastors on the teaching has a distinct style. Harold Nash is the “preacher,” i.e., he is more inspirational. People characterized Mark DeYmaz as a “speaker,” highly motivational and eloquent. Harry Li is seen as a “teacher,” very methodical with pertinent illustrations. César Ortega preaches in the main service once every six weeks with translation into English. Sermon topics are chosen based on needs

that are perceived in the congregation, and on a sense of leading from the Holy Spirit.

In looking at the various styles of teaching and preaching in these churches it becomes clear that there is no single style or method of preaching that “works” in a multicultural church. Two similarities, however, emerged. One that is not necessarily unique to the multicultural church, and one that is. In most of the cases studied, respondents indicated the preacher’s ability to connect Scripture with daily life. One respondent from New Life said that when Mark Jobe preaches, “Sometimes my wife and I look at each other and say, ‘How did he know that?’ It’s like, ‘Has he been listening in our conversations at home?’” Members of ACAC see Rock Dillaman’s preaching as a primary reason people are drawn to the church. They characterize his preaching as biblically and theologically sound, but practical. Respondents described the preaching of Bart Milleson, Paul Sheppard, and the teaching team at Mosaic in similar terms.

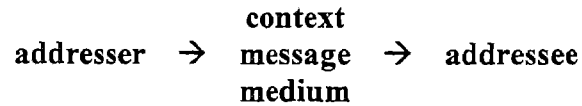
The second similarity that consistently emerged in the discussion of preaching was the impression held by church members that the pastor could connect with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds. This similarity is unique to the multicultural church. A number of factors undoubtedly play into that sort of cross-cultural appeal. However, issues of style aside, the question of hermeneutics is of primary importance for the purpose of this project. Preachers with cross-cultural appeal have developed what I am calling a “cross-cultural hermeneutic” that enables them to open Scripture in such a way that it connects with people of more than one cultural background.

#### Hermeneutics in the Multicultural Church

Joel Green has written that reading biblical texts is a form of communication, involving “an addresser (one who speaks), an addressee (one who hears), a context for



communication, and a message” (Green 1995:1).<sup>82</sup> He suggests that the process may be diagrammed as follows:



**Figure 8: Model of Communication** (Green 1995:2)

Green observes that “numerous ambiguities” make the process of communication more complex than this model allows (1995:2). One such ambiguity is the addressee’s context and experience. A second ambiguity is the addresser’s context. Thus, it is helpful to acknowledge that two contexts influence the transmission and reception of the message: the addresser’s context, and the addressee’s context. This presents us with two realities about the hermeneutical task. First, we must recognize then that the hermeneutical task involves understanding the context in which Christian Scripture was written. Second, we must recognize that the reading and interpretation of Scripture is shaped by the context of the reader. This creates an enhanced version of the model above.



**Figure 9: Enhanced Model of Communication**

An important element of hermeneutics observed in the multicultural churches studied in this project is understanding the context in which Scripture, particularly the New Testament, was written. As interpreters of Scripture, the pastors of multicultural churches read the New Testament with the assumption that the societal context is heterogeneous.

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<sup>82</sup> Although Green does not mention the role of the faith community here, it will be assumed that the “addressee” may be a group of people.

Second, as interpreters of Scripture, pastors of multicultural churches recognize that their own cross-cultural experiences have shaped their reading of the New Testament.

Pastor Bart Milleson of Hinshaw UMC explained that some of his early experiences shaped his understanding of Scripture. As a teenager in the work force, Milleson worked with African Americans and developed friendships with them, something that was highly unusual in the South at that time. When he was in college, Milleson had an African American roommate. They eventually became good friends and both are in pastoral ministry today. Milleson reports finding that his cross-cultural relationships shaped his reading of Scripture. Because of previous contact with people of other cultures, he developed a different hermeneutic.

Milleson's Doctor of Ministry dissertation, "Crafting Eucharistic Friendship Across Cultures" (2002), sets forth an extensive biblical framework for the understanding and practice of multicultural ministry. One of the texts he addresses is 1 Peter 2:9-10. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Milleson comments on this passage:

Through baptism, we receive a new identity. No longer do we seek to cover our broken-ness by "making a name for ourselves." Instead, we receive the new being identity we receive as persons clothed with Christ. No longer do we seek to set ourselves a part [sic] and achieve recognition based upon characteristics such as skin color, nationality, amount of material possessions, or intellectual achievements. Instead, we surrender ourselves to Jesus Christ. We die to self-sufficiency. We rise to resurrection life. We arise to experience communion with the true [sic] God. As Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians 3:26-28, "For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Milleson 2002:32)

Like his comments on the passage from 1 Peter, much of Milleson's theological reflection has centered on the sacraments and their role in the development of cross-cultural friendships. He consistently interprets scriptural texts relating to the sacraments with this end in mind.

Crosscultural experience has likewise shaped Rock Dillaman's reading of Scripture. After several years as pastor of ACAC, Dillaman moved from the suburbs to a neighborhood on the North Side of Pittsburgh. Having been raised in a predominantly White community—there was one African American in his high school graduating class of 1100—thinking about racial issues and cultural difference had never been a necessity. As a college student at Duquesne University in the late 1960s, he witnessed the outbreak of race riots in the city of Pittsburgh, but even then, in some ways the issues seemed distant. When Dillaman accepted the call to pastor ACAC at age 34, he began to process issues of race and cultural difference in an intentional way. Now, having lived in a neighborhood where he and his family are in the racial minority, he has come to interpret Scripture in the light of his cross-cultural experiences. As an expository preacher, Dillaman does very little topical preaching, preferring to preach through a book of the Bible. He explains how his reading of Scripture has been impacted by his cross-cultural experiences:

As I go through those books, having lived in a multicultural urban neighborhood, and having intentionally sought to learn about other cultures and then bring that information to the interpretation of Scripture, I have found that Scripture, once you begin to approach it with that sensitivity, is just chock full of truth that debunks the homogeneous principle and reinforces unity in diversity and reconciliation and brethren dwelling together in unity. And so, I really have found that I don't have to do a topical series on unity, racial reconciliation or whatever. As I've gone through Matthew, for example, I've come to realize and appreciate that a great portion of Matthew, beginning in chapter one with the genealogies, is emphasizing that Messiah and the kingdom were intended to be for all mankind and that God's new community was meant to be an all *ethnos* community, living together in unity and respect and understanding. (Dillaman 2005)

An example is his preaching on the phrase, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). That prayer, Dillaman explains, is an economic prayer. “That’s a prayer for jobs. That’s a prayer for wages. That’s a prayer for health care. That’s a prayer that affects taxes, management, employees” (Dillaman 2005). Living in a largely Black neighborhood, Dillaman became more aware of the racism that is present in American society. That awareness, again, informed his reading of Scripture. “It opened my eyes as I read Scripture to be sensitive to all of those places where God is delineating principles that fly in the face of the prevailing cultural construct” (Dillaman 2005)

Paul Sheppard demonstrates a similar sensitivity to the multicultural character of his congregation in his teaching. In addition to changing his preaching style from the “hooping” of the African American tradition to more of a teaching style, Sheppard works to address issues specific to a multicultural church. In the summer of 2005, he preached a six part series titled “Can’t We All Just Get Along?” out of the book of Romans. In the first part of that series, he highlighted the diverse character of the church at Rome, and that Paul was emphasizing the need for the church to walk in unity. As a diverse church, Sheppard sees Rome as a prototype for culturally diverse churches in later years.

Paul’s interest was in helping them to understand that they needed to walk in unity; that if God was going to use them in a city, and in a province like Rome. . . if the church is going to make its mark, Paul is suggesting that there must be unity. A divided church will not impact a sinful world. A divided church will not have the message and the anointing to proclaim the message that it ought to have. And not only was that true in the first century, but my friend, that’s true in the twenty-first century. That the church will be better off in America and in places around the world when we come to understand how important Christian unity is. It is a major theme of the New Testament. It was a major theme in the teaching of Jesus as he taught us to love one another and serve one another and be united with others and it’s a major theme in the writings of the apostles as they came to understand that a divided church would not get the job done . . . . We’ve got to understand that unity is God’s priority for the church. (Sheppard 2005a)

In that message, Sheppard went on to connect unity with the church’s

effectiveness in witness to the community, and offered practical steps for learning to walk in agreement despite cultural differences. He framed the quest for unity in musical terms, comparing melody and harmony. In a particularly effective illustration, he played on a piano through the melody line of *Amazing Grace* in two octaves. He then played the same phrase adding all the harmony parts, and commented,

Harmony doesn't require sameness. Harmony just requires that there is a goal that different parts seek to reach together without giving up their individuality . . . . Harmony is the idea of not surrendering difference, but making difference work toward a common goal. Now, that's what Paul was suggesting the church must have happen. He doesn't want Jews to become Gentiles; God made them Jews. He doesn't want Gentiles to become Jews; God made them Gentiles. But what they've got to learn to do is to work together and harmonize and blend their differences to the glory of God and to the effective witness for Christ in this world. (Sheppard 2005a)

One of the most problematic issues in the pursuit of unity, Sheppard taught, is equating what Paul calls "disputable matters" with the heart of the gospel message.

We take things that we are passionate about and we take things we have preferences for. But we take our passions and our preferences and out of them we create prejudices. We decide that the things I feel strongly about, or the things I prefer are right not only for me, but they're right for everybody. And so you end up taking what could have just been a preference and turning it into a polarizing prejudice. (Sheppard 2005a)

Sheppard teaches his congregation that they should not minimize differences, but recognize that we need people who are different from us.

Mosaic has developed a cross-cultural perspective on Scripture in a couple of ways. First, the teaching team is culturally diverse. DeYmaz is White, Harry Li is Chinese American, Harold Nash is African American, and César Ortega is Latino. The diversity within the teaching team ensures a cross-cultural perspective on Scripture. But DeYmaz himself comes to Scripture with a cross-cultural hermeneutic. While the church at Antioch is the model Mosaic looks to most often, DeYmaz demonstrates from the book

of Acts and from Paul's letter to the Ephesians that the church at Ephesus was also a culturally diverse congregation.<sup>83</sup>

DeYmaz traces the beginning of the church in Ephesus to Paul's second missionary journey. In Acts chapter 19, Luke records that in Ephesus Paul encountered a number of disciples of John the Baptist, explained the gospel to them, and baptized them into Christ. Paul and his team then spent three months in Ephesus reasoning with the Jews in the local synagogue, gaining some converts from among them. Over the next two years, Paul taught in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, presumably to a Gentile audience. Luke records that during that time, "that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts 19:10).

In Acts 19:17, Luke recounts that seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, impressed with the miraculous power demonstrated by Paul, tried to duplicate an exorcism using the name of Jesus. In response, "the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding" (Acts 19:16). DeYmaz comments on these events:

By verse 17 of this same passage, Luke states implicitly that the name of the Lord (through the witness of Paul) had expanded beyond the Jewish community, and was being magnified among "both Jews and Greeks who lived at Ephesus." In Acts 19:20, he adds, ". . . the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing. . ." among them (i.e., both Jew and Gentile alike). Even Paul, himself, speaks to the multi-ethnic nature of the emerging church in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:21). (DeYmaz 2005a:3)

DeYmaz continues to build his case for the congregation at Ephesus as a multicultural congregation from the book of Ephesians. In Ephesians 1:15-16, Paul commends the Christians at Ephesus: "For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith

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<sup>83</sup> The full text of DeYmaz's article "A Biblical Mandate: Insights from the Book of Ephesians" can be read at <http://www.mosaix.info/Ephesians.doc>. This is part of the social construction of reality for Mosaic Church.

in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.” DeYmaz calls attention to Paul’s use of the word “all” in verse 16. “To whom is Paul referring and why, we might ask, does he employ such an inclusive notation?” DeYmaz contends, “Paul most certainly has in his mind the multi-ethnic nature of this church, through which both Jewish and Gentile converts worship God together as one” (2005:5). DeYmaz continues tracing the multicultural theme of Ephesians in chapter two.

In Ephesians 2:11, Paul specifically turns his attention to the Gentile community within the church. The very plain and passionate language of this text (Ephesians 2:11-22) makes it clear that the Gentiles are no longer to think of themselves (or to be thought of by the Jews) as “excluded from . . . (or) strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world,” (Ephesians 2:12). Through the blood of Christ, Paul’s point is that Gentiles have not only been reconciled to God through faith (c. Ephesians 1:3-11 ff.), but that they also have been reconciled to the “commonwealth of Israel.”

To Paul, this reconciliation is not just theoretical or an otherwise mystical notion: It is to be lived out (demonstrated) practically through the local church whereby “. . . you (Gentiles) are fellow citizens with the saints” (Jewish converts, Ephesians 2:19), a “whole building being fitted together . . . (and) growing into a holy temple (Ephesians 2:21), “. . . being built together (both Jew and Gentile) into a dwelling (place) of God in the Spirit,” (Ephesians 2:22). This, then, is Paul’s vision and mandate for the local church. (DeYmaz 2005a:5)

DeYmaz continues this line of thought, drawing insights from chapter three of Ephesians, then turns his focus toward chapter four, typically understood as the practical application section of Paul’s letter. What is often missed in addressing the practical implications of what Paul has taught in the first three chapters, DeYmaz argues, is that Paul is assuming a multicultural church. In 4:1, Paul writes, “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” DeYmaz asks, “What is the calling that they (we) have been called to walk worthy in? It is the call to love and to walk as one with diverse believers in the context of the local church” (2005a:10). The question that follows

is, “How can this, realistically or practically, be achieved?” (2005a:11)

Paul says it can happen (only) when believers walk together, “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve *the unity* (emphasis mine) of (made possible by) the Spirit in the bond of peace,” (Ephesians 4:2, 3). Here he outlines for us, then, the fundamental principles upon which the multi-ethnic church can be established. (DeYmaz 2005a:11)

DeYmaz’s treatment of the book of Ephesians illustrates the type of hermeneutic that brings to light the multicultural nature of the early church. He makes a strong case that the New Testament cannot be read with an assumption of homogeneity. Rather, in reading and teaching Scripture, one must assume the heterogeneity of the early church. In that light, the practical application sections of Paul’s letters such as Ephesians 4-6 and Romans 14-16 take on a heightened significance for the increasingly multicultural context of the United States.

Pastor David Anderson, of Bridgeway Community Church in Columbia, Maryland offers another example of the type of hermeneutical approach that is common in the multicultural church. Anderson sees Colossians chapter three as a key text for understanding reconciliation, and for developing practical steps for working at the process of reconciliation. Based on that chapter, he developed what he calls “The Racial Reconciliation Matrix” (Anderson 2004:76, See Figure 10).

Anderson takes a passage that could easily be understood as having application to relationships in general, and gives it application specifically to cross-cultural relationships. The practical application steps from Colossians 3 are “bear with each other,” “forgive each other,” and “love each other” (2004:76). In applying these action steps to cross-cultural relationships specifically, the grievances that need to be forgiven, for example, are those that have arisen because of cultural differences.



## THE RACIAL RECONCILIATION MATRIX

### Colossians 3

<sup>1</sup>Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

<sup>5</sup>Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

<sup>7</sup>You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup>But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

<sup>9</sup>Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

<sup>11</sup>Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

<sup>13</sup>Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. <sup>14</sup>And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

#### Identity

- Died to self
- Raised with him
- Seated with him
- Life in Jesus Christ
- Appear with him

#### Idolatry

- Sexual immorality
- Impurity
- Lust
- Evil desires
- Greed

#### Old Clothes

- Anger
- Rage
- Malice
- Slander
- Filthy language

#### New Clothes

- Compassion
- Kindness
- Humility
- Gentleness
- Patience

#### Practical Application

- Bear with each other
- Forgive each other
- Love each other

Figure 10: Reconciliation Matrix (Anderson 2004:76)

Preaching and teaching of Christian Scripture that is directed toward a multicultural audience must understand Scripture in such terms. General application will not suffice. The preaching that will reshape perception of reality so that the idea of the multicultural community of faith becomes plausible in thought and realized in practice is fed by a hermeneutic that sees the multicultural milieu behind the Christian Scriptures. If homogeneity is assumed in Paul's epistles, for example, the lessons that must be drawn from them for the development and maintenance of a multicultural church will be missed.

### The Goal of Preaching

As preaching occupies a central place in Christian worship, including the worship practices of the churches studied in this project, it is important to explore how these churches understand the practice of preaching and the role of theology in their ministries. To facilitate this exploration, I have set up a continuum that ranges from doctrinal minimalist on the one end, to doctrinal dogmatism on the other (See figure 11). A discussion of these terms follows.

Donald Miller in *Reinventing American Protestantism* (1997) discusses what he calls "New Paradigm Churches," which include the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Calvary Chapel, and Hope Chapel. According to Miller, these churches differ from evangelicals and fundamentalists in that they emphasize a personal relationship over adherence to certain doctrines. Evangelicals and fundamentalists, by contrast, "emphasize doctrine over religious experience" (Miller 1997:121). Because of this stance, Miller describes these churches as "doctrinal minimalists." He writes, "New paradigm Christians view doctrine as being of human origin and see it as something that too often

divides the church” (Miller 1997:121).

Documenting a phenomenon he calls the New Apostolic Churches, which has some crossover with Miller’s New Paradigm Churches, Peter Wagner makes a similar observation. Like New Paradigm Churches, New Apostolic Churches do not dwell on heritage. This does not mean they have jettisoned orthodox Christianity. They are, however, “doctrinal minimalists.” Wagner identifies three “generally agreed-upon theological absolutes in new apostolic churches: 1. The Bible is true and normative. It is the absolute authority for faith and practice. 2. Jesus Christ is God and Lord. 3. An individual’s personal relationship with Jesus Christ makes the difference between heaven and hell” Wagner 1999:67). In addition, he suggests three “*moral* nonnegotiables.” They are, “1. Human life begins at conception. 2. Homosexuality is a sin against God. 3. Extramarital heterosexual relationships are also sin” (Wagner 1999:67).

Two primary concerns arise when considering the suitability of Wagner’s doctrinal minimalism for a multicultural setting. First, this stance is highly individualistic. The churches that participated in this project generally had the sense that, while a personal commitment to Jesus is necessary, equally important is the corporate nature of the church, i.e., that Christians were born anew into a family, or a community. The second problem is with the limited number of moral nonnegotiables. Of particular concern for ministry in a multicultural milieu would be the church’s obligation to the poor and the pursuit of social justice.<sup>84</sup> The churches involved in this project are

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<sup>84</sup> Rick Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Community Church in Orange County, California, recently had an awakening to the church’s role in serving the poor and pursuing social justice. Following a trip to Africa, Warren began to read Scripture with “new eyes.” It was a humbling experience. “I found those 2,000 verses on the poor. How did I miss that? I went to Bible college, two seminaries, and I got a doctorate. How did I miss God’s compassion for the poor? I was not seeing all the purposes of God. “The church is the body of Christ. The hands and feet have been amputated and we’re just a big mouth, known more for what we’re against.” Warren found himself praying, “God, would you use me to reattach

committed to ministry to the poor.

To explore the question of doctrine further, I have developed a continuum. The doctrinal minimalist position represents one end of the continuum; at the other end would be the position that is so concerned with doctrine as to become doctrinaire, which is defined as “stubbornly insistent on theory without regard for practicality or suitability.”<sup>85</sup> This position, which could also be termed doctrinal dogmatism,<sup>86</sup> is similar to the stance Miller associates with evangelicals and fundamentalists, who, he says, “emphasize doctrine over religious experience” (1997:121). Stanley Hauerwas sees this over-emphasis as one of the failures of Christian theology in the Modern era, tantamount to an “attempt to make Christianity ‘true’ apart from faithful witness” (2000:44-45). Peter Blum explains why the quest for the correct formulation of doctrine became so crucial in Modernity. “We want what we say not only to be understandable, credible, meaningful. . . . We hanker for patterns of argument which will not be subject to reasonable doubt. . . . To say it another way, the hunger for validation is a hunger for power. We want people to have to believe what we say” (Blum 2000:64). Agreeing to play by modernity’s rules forced Christian theology into a quest for power, whereas “the power of the gospel lies precisely in its being . . . unashamedly noncoercive” (Blum 2000:69).

The pastors I interviewed in the course of this project were neither doctrinal minimalists, nor doctrinal dogmatists. They represent a middle way between the two ends of a continuum (See Figure 7). The *via media* between the doctrinal minimalist position and doctrinal dogmatism, for the purpose of this paper will be termed “doctrinal

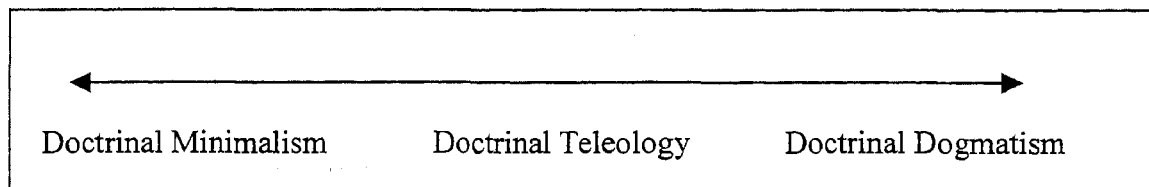
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the hands and the feet to the body of Christ, so that the whole church cares about the whole gospel in a whole new way—through the local church?” (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/010/17.32.html>)

<sup>85</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=doctrinaire> (Lexico Publishing Group 2005).

<sup>86</sup> Dogmatism is defined as an “arrogant, stubborn assertion of opinion or belief” <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=dogmatism> (Lexico Publishing Group 2005).

teleology.” The Greek word *τελος* (*telos*) literally means end, termination or completion. Figuratively, it refers to “the end or final purpose, that to which all the parts tend” (Zodhiates 1993:1376). The related verb, *τελειωω* (*teleiōo*) means “to complete, make perfect by reaching the intended goal” (Zodhiates 1993:1373). Thus, doctrinal teleology refers to a view of doctrine that sees doctrine and preaching as shaping or forming people, as serving a larger purpose; that is, as moving people toward a goal, i.e., the image of Christ.



**Figure 11: Use of Doctrine Continuum**

James Paton, in “Preaching Christian Doctrine in a Post-Christian Society” studied great preachers of previous eras, particularly those who are considered to have had a strong influence on the shaping of doctrine, to discern how they met the unique challenges of their respective times. “Part of the reason for their success,” Paton suggests, “was that for them doctrine was no abstract system of thought but was pastoral in nature and deeply rooted in Christian experience” (Paton 2005:1).

This description of preaching fits well with the idea behind preaching as I observed it and discussed with pastors in these churches. Preaching in the churches studied in this project was intentionally pastoral in their preaching, meaning it was more concerned with shaping people’s lives than about dispensing information. It was more concerned with leading people to an encounter with the living God than presenting abstract truth. It found the *via media* between doctrinal minimalism, and doctrinal dogmatism.

I discussed the term “doctrinal minimalist” as Wagner and Miller use it, with the pastors I interviewed. When I initially encountered the term, I thought it was an unfortunate choice of words, but I wanted to see what they thought of the term and determine how it related to the way they saw themselves using doctrine. Jin Kim of Church of All Nations agreed that the term suggested a certain lack of depth. Kim believes that theological reflection must be “well thought out, but [leave] space for mystery.” At Church of All Nations, they think through their theology deeply, but at the same time take care not to overreach theologically. “Clarifying, making theology more explicit,” Kim believes, “is often human hubris, as if we could explicitly know who God is. The West needs to return to respect the mystery.” But respecting the mystery of God does not mean a default to minimalism. “Our style of teaching is not minimalist. A lot of exploration, study, reflection. Careful, in-depth theology leads us to take off our shoes in God’s presence” (Kim 2005a). The results of that careful theological reflection are woven into the teaching ministry at Church of All Nations. The new members class, for example, is eight sessions covering topics such as Church History, Reformed Theology, and the Sacraments in the Reformed Tradition. Such can hardly be considered minimalism.

Kim sees Church of All Nations as a counter-cultural community, along the lines of the Christian community envisioned by Hauerwas and Willimon in *Resident Aliens*.

Christianity is more than a matter of a new understanding. Christianity is an invitation to be part of an alien people who make a difference because they see something that cannot otherwise be seen without Christ. Right living is more the challenge than right thinking. The challenge is not the intellectual one, but the political one—the creation of a new people who have aligned themselves with the seismic shift that has occurred in the world since Christ. (Hauerwas and Willimon 1989:24)

Kim’s vision of what Church of All Nations is to become also has similarities to

the Countercultural Model of contextual theology as presented by Stephen Bevans. This model, according to Bevans, while sensitive toward the issues of a given context, is also suspicious of the context. “If the gospel is to truly take root within a people’s context, it needs to challenge and purify that context” (Bevans 2002:117). Bevans suggests that the countercultural model may be the most appropriate for Western contexts. It seeks to do more than merely translate the gospel into current language, using current forms; it seeks to embody the good news in a community of faith that stands in stark contrast to negative aspects of culture. The model aims to make the “fact” of Jesus Christ come alive through the embodiment of kingdom values in a radical alternative community.

The central societal ill that needs to be challenged by the gospel within the context of the United States, Kim believes, is racism. He contends that much of the contemporary discussion about how the gospel relates to culture is missing a prophetic element, which he understands to mean “speaking truth to power. The history of violence against Native Americans and African Americans, Kim insists, must be addressed. “The church in America won’t move forward until it confesses everything” (Kim 2005a). At Church of All Nations, they name those sins explicitly. Kim explains: “The good news is truly good news when the bad news is confessed, when we’re honest that we’re in the midst of bad news, that we participate in bad news, that we perpetuate bad news” (Kim 2005a).

The sense of being a counter-cultural community has congealed in the minds of the membership at Church of All Nations. One respondent drew a clear distinction between the “consciousness of the world and . . . the body of Christ.” He explained, “We do live in the world, but we are bound up in the teachings of Christ.” For him, as a

minority—a person of Indian ethnicity from South Africa—life in the United States has been difficult at times. The plausibility structure of the church community is important for him. As he put it, “I try to surround myself with positive people, people of influence in the church and keep contact with [friends] in the church. It’s needed in community, especially minority communities.” He recognizes that forgiveness and reconciliation are possible only in Christ. “Forgiveness is . . . is a gift from Christ. Without Christ, forgiveness is almost impossible.” Embodying forgiveness and reconciliation as part of a counter-cultural community is not a simple task. “I catch myself sometimes when I think things or say things, having to say that’s not Christ-like, that’s not what Christ wants me to do.” Kim’s understanding that reconciliation will not be achieved without confessing the wrongs of the past has trickled down to the congregation. One member noted, “For there to be true reconciliation—true reconciliation, not just reconciliation that smoothes it over—you have to deal with it head on. Its painful, its hurtful, but after its done you can say you dealt with it head on.”

Church of All Nations has taught its membership that forgiveness, although difficult, is important. One respondent traced his journey through bitterness and anger to forgiveness, noting that when the passage was difficult, he was reminded that as a follower of Christ, he is commanded to forgive. By pointing him to resources such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s work *The Cost of Discipleship*, the church enabled him to “think what it is to be the body of Christ and sacrificing to help your neighbor. We live out of step with the world but in step with Christ.”

For Ferdie Llenado, preaching and doctrine are pastoral, that is to say, they are directed toward bringing believers to maturity. He has preached messages on the



importance of being involved in small groups, on how to be in community with other Christians, and on mission and outreach, for example. Similarly, Paul Sheppard explained that the goal of preaching is not to state doctrinal positions clearly, but to equip believers to carry out the mission of the church in the world.

Rock Dillaman identified one of the key difficulties with the doctrinal minimalism position. In highlighting the necessity of individual response to Christ, that position misses the corporate nature of much of the Bible. While Dillaman would not deny the importance of individual commitment, he is aware that Scripture has too often been read through the lens of American individualism. Such a reading must be corrected with sensitivity to the corporate sense of the Scriptures. This sensitivity can be seen in the way he teaches on the phrase, “give us this day our daily bread,” from the Lord’s Prayer. Dillaman emphasizes the corporate nature of the prayer, teaching that “Christian praying has to be concerned about the economics of my brothers and sisters” (Dillaman 2005).

As exemplified here, an important element of Dillaman’s teaching is confronting American individualism. While ACAC does teach that an individual response to God’s offer of grace is necessary, one respondent observed that they equally emphasize, “It’s not just about me and God. It’s about being part of His family and that you were born into a community of faith.” The way salvation is presented seems to lead to more of a holistic approach to ministry. Although the individual is born again, “salvation is about the whole person and the whole community.” Salvation is not simply a matter of an individual being reconciled to God; there is a sense that, concurrent with the human-divine reconciliation, there is a person-to-person reconciliation that takes place as well. The individual is reconciled to God and to the community of faith.

Approaching Scripture with a cross-cultural hermeneutic, Rock Dillaman finds resources to confront the issues of race and cross-cultural relations. While he occasionally preaches on the issue topically, he finds it is more effective to let the values of intentional diversity and reconciliation flow naturally out of Scripture through expository preaching. Dillaman does not shrink back from addressing tough issues related to cross-cultural relations. He has challenged the White membership at ACAC to move beyond where they are comfortable and become involved in cross-cultural relationships. To show that these values are present in Scripture through expository preaching, rather than preaching on them topically, makes them seem less forced. People perceive that he is speaking from the authority of Scripture rather than simply out of personal conviction.

At New Life, respondents talked about the impact of the preaching. One member recalled that during one sermon, he leaned over to his wife and said, “Pastor’s been eavesdropping in our conversations.” Another member remembered the title—David and the Giants in our Lives—and the impact of the first sermon he heard Mark Jobe preach. I asked Pastor Asa App of the Irving Park location about possible reasons people perceive sermons in this way. Being attuned to the needs of the congregation is certainly part of a preacher’s effectiveness, he felt that it is “ultimately the Holy Spirit that takes God’s word and penetrates the heart” (App 2005).

Respondents from Hinshaw felt that Milleson was passionate about the message he was delivering, that he was personally committed to the truth of Scripture. He has used a variety of preaching styles at Hinshaw, but respondents felt that he addressed current events from a biblical perspective, and consistently applied Scripture to “real life situations.” This is seen in his treatment of eschatology, for example.

I think of eschatology as looking forward to better things to come. What is the kingdom of God, what is it going to be like, what is the community going to be like in relationships we share in heaven? And God wants those relationship formations and that kind of intimacy for that formation to begin forming here . . . . It's the . . . images of worship in the Book of Revelation, and people of all tribes gathering together and praising God. We look forward to that. And how these images of how we are going to eat together and share there influence how we eat together and share here, our economic practices as well. . . . It's a realized and a futuristic eschatology. (Milleson 2005)

The message the teaching team at Mosaic reinforces in much of their literature, and in other formats, is the scriptural basis of cross-cultural unity. A few examples follow.

We believe that the prayer of Jesus Christ (John 17) declares unity among believers to be the greatest expression of God's love for the world and the greatest witness to it of the fact that He, Himself, is Messiah.

We believe the pattern of the New Testament local church reflects this unity and that in these churches, people of varying ethnicity and economic means pursued God together as one.

We believe that the kingdom of heaven is not segregated along ethnic and economic lines. We believe that local churches on earth should not be either.<sup>87</sup>

Mosaic looks to the New Testament church in Antioch as their model. They note the importance of Antioch as the launching point of the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys. The church at Antioch, they observe, was a multicultural church, and it was the church where the believers were first called Christians. "It is not coincidental that believers were first called 'Christians' at Antioch (Acts 11:26). For as Jesus himself made clear, He would be recognized via the unity of His children." (DeYmaz n.d.:14)

### Pastoral Vision in the Multicultural Church

The hermeneutic that allows one to see the multicultural church in the New Testament leads to the development of a unique pastoral vision. The importance of vision

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<sup>87</sup> From Mosaic's website: <http://mosaicchurch.net> (n.d.)

has been noted by both secular (e.g., Bennis and Nanus 1985, Kouzes and Posner 2002) and Christian writers (e.g., Barna 1992, Galloway 1999). Vision, according to Dale Galloway is “seeing that which is not yet here—visualizing something before it is. Vision is the clear mental picture that leads people to reach out to the future” (1999:9). The character and example of pastoral leadership, as noted above, is matched with strength of vision. They have firm convictions about the nature of the church, and communicate clearly from those a clear picture of what the church should be.

One respondent at ACAC indicated that the vision of Pastor Rock Dillaman is clearly what is directing the church. When asked what was important to understand about ACAC as a multicultural church, he responded, “First and foremost, I think it’s the vision that Pastor Rock has. It was his vision to have a multicultural church. He is the one who spearheaded that. He’s the one who actually reinforces that.” Dillaman’s vision and leadership were a crucial factor in the church’s transition from a declining church with membership driving in from the suburbs, to a thriving multicultural church with membership drawn from the immediate neighborhood as well as from outlying regions.

The vision of pastoral leadership is seen to be a vital influence in transitioning to multicultural ministry. In discussing the history of The United Methodist Church of Union, current Pastor Ferdie Llenado identified a leader who had been instrumental in the church’s transition from an all White congregation to a multicultural body. In the late 1970s, a pastor from Puerto Rico was appointed to the church. Under his leadership, change gradually took place. Although a few members left, the majority began to appreciate the gifts of diversity. Similarly, the vision and energy for making such a transition comes from Bart Milleson at Hinshaw. Paul Sheppard has been key in the

development and maintenance of the multicultural family at Abundant Life. It is Jin Kim's commitment to the multicultural vision that has turned the English ministry of the Korean Presbyterian Church of Minnesota into a vibrant church with an identity distinct from its parent church.

When asked by Marshall Shelley in an interview with *Leadership Journal* how the church maintained unity, Senior Pastor Mark Jobe responded, "We all share a common vision" (Quoted in Shelley 2005:24). New Life's Vision is discussed in their "Discovering Membership" class.

God has called us to nurture and build a church that models true community in genuine love, spearheads citywide prayer, embraces multi-racial and cross-cultural ministry, is energetic and intentional about making disciples, is a kingdom bridge-builder among churches, serves as a training and launching place for ministry, has a heart for the poor and needy, and spreads throughout Chicagoland through spiritually vibrant small groups. (App n.d.:5)

One respondent from New Life shared the impact the leadership's vision had on him: "Their vision was not just about let's get 20,000 people to fill up churches. It was a vision that they prayed [about it] for a long time and had a purpose. It brings people in here to make them disciples and send them back out into the world that they may glorify God. I could see passion which I was attracted to."

The vision of New Life includes reaching one percent of the population of Chicago. That portion of the vision had been communicated effectively enough that a number of people mentioned it in the interview process, and indicated that they had come to hold that goal personally. One respondent shared that he had come to embrace that goal personally in the membership class. "In the membership class I realized that this was a commitment that I wanted to make and that is when it happened. During the membership class was when I personalized that one percent."

In discussing the role and effect of pastoral vision with respondents, three themes came to the forefront. Pastoral vision must be connected with divine purpose and activity, pastoral vision must put before the membership a significant challenge, and pastoral vision must be continually communicated and reinforced.

#### Connection to Divine Purpose and Activity

The pastoral leadership of the multicultural churches in this study present a vision that is compelling, that requires response. They connect their work of reconciliation with God's active, redemptive work in the world, with God's kingdom. The emphasis on the church's connection to divine purpose and activity was seen at Abundant Life. When Pastor Paul Sheppard arrived at the church in 1986, it was an all African American church of about 36. Within two years, attendance had doubled, and by Sheppard's seventh year, attendance was around 250 with between 20 and 25 percent non-Blacks. Before the year 2000, the church did not emphasize the multicultural aspect of the church. Beginning in that year, they began to teach in the Exploring Membership class that the multicultural nature of the church was something God had brought about. "God is doing this, and we're affirming it, and celebrating it." Abundant Life is the way it is, Sheppard emphasizes, because God made it that way.<sup>88</sup> Mark DeYmaz of Mosaic teaches his congregation that Christians often pray, asking God to answer their prayers, but that there is only one prayer Christians can answer. That is the prayer of Jesus for unity among his followers (John 17:20-23).

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<sup>88</sup> From one perspective, Abundant Life appears to have become a multicultural fellowship unintentionally, i.e., Sheppard did not emphasize early on that being multicultural was part of God's design for the church. From another perspective, it is clear that had the church not made adjustments in terms of worship and preaching style, it would not have become as diverse as it is. Such adjustments were made to reach unchurched people. As it turns out, the church growth strategies the church used were effective in reaching a culturally diverse group of unchurched people. Sheppard recognizes the importance of maintaining unity in a culturally diverse church and addresses that issue in his preaching.

A key practice in connecting vision to divine purpose and activity is retelling the church's story.<sup>89</sup> Of the churches I visited the congregation that makes most effective use of this type of narrative is Church of All Nations. The membership class at Church of All Nations is eight one-hour sessions addressing various topics including,

- What does it mean to be a Christian?
- Church Membership
- Church History
- Reformed Theology
- The Sacraments in the Reformed Tradition
- Presbyterian Church Polity
- The History and Vision of Church of All Nations

Pastor Jin Kim has observed that some people become Christians in the course of the membership class, particularly the first session on what it means to be a Christian. Kim sees the membership class as a form of enculturation, through which people become part of the unique congregational culture of Church of All Nations. As part of that class, the church's narrative is a means to bond people to the community and its values.

The membership process at Mosaic is not as formalized as it is at Church of All Nations. Nevertheless, Pastor Mark DeYmaz sees sharing Mosaic's story as a way of strengthening people's connection to the church, to bond people to the community and to the community's values. Mosaic communicates their story in various ways. The 40-page booklet titled *Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas: Who We Are . . . From Where We've Come* (DeYmaz n.d.), has been used as part of the membership class at Mosaic. The booklet includes a history of Mosaic, their vision and values. Another way Mosaic shares its story is in the form of a CD Rom titled *Mosaic: Breaking Dividing Walls* (Mosaic

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<sup>89</sup> Some of these stories can be found at the following web addresses:

[http://www.acac.net/about\\_history.html](http://www.acac.net/about_history.html)

<http://www.cando.org/discipleship/newmember8.pdf>

<http://newlifechicago.org/home.cfm> (click on "our story")

<http://www.parkavechurch.org/about/aboutPage.html>

2003) that is made available to visitors. The CD allows people to hear Mosaic's story as narrated by Pastor Mark DeYmaz, and includes testimonies from individuals such as Amer, the Saudi Arabian who became the first person to receive Christ through Mosaic's ministry.<sup>90</sup> Both the booklet and the CD refer frequently to God's leading and God's provision throughout Mosaic's history, indicating that the church is not merely another human organization, but that there is divine purpose and power involved.

The membership class at Abundant Life Christian Fellowship During is a two-hour orientation, in which Pastor Paul Sheppard discusses the history, mission, values, beliefs, and ministries of the church. After this talk, participants are invited to join the church. In the membership class, they specifically connect the multicultural nature of the church to the intent and power of God. Abundant Life recognizes that bringing people together across cultural and socio-economic lines is the work of God, and explain that the church is committed to affirming, celebrating and cooperating with the work that God is doing. Sharing the story of Abundant Life's journey from a 34 member African American congregation to a multicultural fellowship of over 3000 captures people's attention, increasing their interest in becoming part of the church.

The "Discovering Membership" class at New Life offers new members, among other things, the opportunity to hear the church's story. The review of the church's history covers the its beginning as an outreach to children on the southeast side of Chicago in the early 1940s, and its transition into Berean Bible Church, but pays particular attention to events since 1986 when Mark Jobe became senior pastor. At that point, the church was reorganized as New Life Community Church of Chicago. The more

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<sup>90</sup> Amer's story may be downloaded at <http://mosaicchurch.net/html/FEATURE/Sermons.asp>. Click on "Story of a Muslim Convert."



recent history covers the growth of the church since 1986, and moves from there into the church's vision for the future. As I sat in on the Discovering Membership class, I had the sense that the repetition of the church's narrative was designed to help prospective members feel connected to a bigger story, the story of what God is doing through New Life Community Church in the Chicago area. Even as one who was only there to observe I found myself thinking New Life was a church I could commit myself to. Their history and vision moved me, even as a visitor and observer.

### Presenting a Challenging Task

Chapter 7 of First Samuel records a battle between Israel and the Philistines. Israel was fearful, but "that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites" (1 Samuel 7:10). Following the battle, "Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer [stone of help], saying, 'Thus far has the LORD helped us'" (1 Samuel 7:12). The Ebenezer monument was to serve as a visual reminder, connecting Israel to their own narrative, reminding them that God had helped them in the past, and standing as a symbol of God's promised faithfulness in the future.

Pramod Aghamkar (2002:72ff.) has noted the importance of narrative in creating a sense of sacred space. According to Aghamkar, "little stories," meaning specific events in the life of a community, explain why certain spaces are sacred. "Big stories" are the larger myths of a culture. Little stories connect particular people and places to big stories.

Retelling the church's narrative serves a purpose similar to that of the Ebenezer monument. The little stories of a particular church connect the community of faith to the big story of God's redemptive work. Connecting vision to divine purpose and activity

assures people that God is involved. That assurance allows leadership to contest the prevailing social construct and to present an alternative perception of reality in which the development of crosscultural relationships is plausible. The church's narrative reminds people of God's faithfulness in the past and assures them of God's continued help in the future. That promise of divine assistance is crucial in the development and maintenance of a multicultural church because it is perceived to be such a difficult task. But the awareness of such assistance in the past enables pastoral leadership to challenge people in the present, with an eye toward a preferable future.

Rock Dillaman has consistently challenged the congregation at ACAC with a vision of the church as a multicultural fellowship. Dillaman does not hesitate to let his congregation know that reconciliation is a difficult, ongoing process, not an event. He has said from the pulpit, "Hugging at a Promise Keepers rally doesn't solve racism." He emphasizes that, although confession and sorrow for the wrongs of the past are important, they are only the beginning of the process. That process must continue through the building of cross-cultural relationships and the pursuit of justice in the church. The challenge to the congregation at ACAC is that the church must model reconciliation.

One respondent, who had been at the church for nearly twenty years, recalled his first visit to ACAC. This was shortly after Dillaman had arrived at the church and it had not yet begun its transition into a multicultural church. He recalled that he experienced two conflicting thoughts. First, was a sense of discouragement because the membership of the church at that time did not reflect the community. The second thought was a sense of hope, because he heard Dillaman share from the pulpit his heart to reach the community. "It hadn't happened, but the new staff members were challenging this church

to be a light and witness to the community. So, we felt that was something we could be a part of.” The vision, though admittedly representing a difficult journey, was compelling and attractive.

The challenge from the leadership at ACAC to embrace an alternative perception of reality has been ongoing. Several respondents commented on a sermon that an associate pastor had recently preached. The focus of the message, titled “Living in Your Community” was on community building. He challenged people to develop deeper relationships, to be intentional about reaching out and including others. The purpose of the message was “to get people thinking outside of their circle, and for us not to assume we’re all friends when we haven’t been to each other’s homes.” This message reinforced the church’s commitment to be a multicultural community of faith.

Jin Kim recognizes that the vision of the church as a multicultural family of believers contests the prevailing perception of reality. Even in worship services, this contestation of perception takes place. Kim describes worship services at Church of All Nations, as “both comforting and challenging to every single person in different ways.” Similarly, a respondent from Mosaic said, “Mosaic is never comfortable.” Another added, “Mosaic continually pushes to think about cultural differences.”

When New Life was developing its Irving Park location, the leadership challenged people from other locations to get involved in the new work. One who responded to that challenge recalled, “I saw that as an opportunity to help another church and not be comfortable where I was at because sometimes you get comfortable where you are at. . . . I knew I had to be put in a position were God could use me and use me to the fullest potential.”

Challenging people to take the next step is a regular event at New Life. They are intentional about connecting with people, challenging even relative newcomers to get involved in a small group, to strengthen their marriages in the couple's ministry, to take it to the next level. "Next Level" is both a catch phrase, and a ministry at New Life. Next Level for men is a venue where men are encouraged and challenged to develop healthier relationships with their wives. One participant said, "The Next Level for Men is to talk about those things that you really don't talk about, to . . . hold yourself accountable. We touch on everything as far as sexual purity goes. It's an up-front, in your face, lets talk real." New Life challenges its membership to "take ownership of the church." The New Life Membership Covenant, which people commit to upon becoming members, states, among other things, "I will protect the unity of my church."

At Mosaic, the theme throughout much of 2005 was "Press on to Maturity." Teaching challenged the church to move beyond the rudiments of the Christian faith and become involved in ways that are more significant. In August 2005, five new ministry teams were launched: a missions team, a kids team, a connection team, a hospitality team, and a worship team. Sign-up tables were prominently placed and the importance of serving was strongly emphasized.

In a consumer-oriented culture such as the United States, the practice of continually challenging people to greater levels of commitment seems counter-intuitive. After all, if people feel uncomfortable in one church, they are free to pick a different place to worship. However, Dean Kelley, in researching his landmark book *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* (1977), found that mainline churches were in decline because they asked too little of their members. He argued that growing

denominations were stricter and expected higher levels of commitment from their members. Sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark concur: “People tend to value religion according to how much it costs—and because ‘reasonable’ and ‘sociable’ religion costs little, it is not valued greatly” (Finke and Stark 1992:250). When the church simply reflects back to society a Christianized version of the American dream, it fails to fulfill what Kelley calls the “Indispensable Function of Religion,” which he sees as “explaining the meaning of life in ultimate terms” (Kelley 1977:37) and thus loses potency. Because pastoral vision in these multicultural churches is grounded in Scripture via their cross-cultural hermeneutic, and because the church’s narrative connects the vision to divine purpose and activity, it is compelling, i.e., it provides Kelley’s “indispensable function of religion” (1977:37). Because they see it as a worthwhile pursuit, the membership of these churches rise to the challenge. One member at Mosaic shared why he and his family had left a larger, seeker-oriented church to attend Mosaic. At the previous church, he said,

We didn’t have to sweep the floors. . . . There was paid staff, maybe a hundred people on the payroll. All you needed was to show up on Sunday. We came here because one of the first sermons we heard was that they aren’t going to pay people to run the functions of the church. The members are here to serve God. In order to be a part of this church, you are obligated to do certain things. They are working on how to organize all these things. When we decided to join, we told the pastor that we love the place and asked what we could do to help. He said, “This is what I need help with. . . .” A lot of places you walk in and walk out, but this place you serve the community and serve the Lord. I never experienced this before. This makes me a better person . . . . We just love it. We have never been challenged like this.

### Reinforcing the Vision

Berger and Luckmann (1967) discuss both the construction and maintenance of reality. As noted above, key individuals serve as definers of reality. One of the important ways that the multicultural church becomes a plausible reality, and remains so, is through

the consistent communication of vision and values.

The sharing of vision was an important part of Mosaic's initial development. The summer of 2001 saw a series of "vision meetings" in which Pastor Mark DeYmaz shared his conviction that the church ought to reflect the diversity of the kingdom. One respondent recalled her family's participation in, and response to, those meetings. "Mark visited us early on, July 2 of 2001—I think the first service may have been July 7 or 8—and shared his vision. What was different about this was the vision that was shared and the fact that we knew that the Lord was in it, for us, we wanted to be obedient to our calling where he wanted us to go." Forty-five people initially responded to that vision and began meeting in borrowed facilities at a church in Little Rock. Over the four and a half years of Mosaic's existence, that vision has been reinforced in various ways.

It has been observed that redundancy of communication is necessary to build and maintain commitment to pastoral vision. Although he is not promoting the multicultural church vision in particular, Rick Warren suggests five ways to reinforce vision: slogans, symbols, Scripture, stories, and specifics, i.e., clear, concrete action steps the church must take (1995:111). Mosaic best exemplifies this redundancy of communication. One of the slogans that has caught on at Mosaic is, "Heaven is not segregated along racial lines; why on earth is the church?" While respondents did not always quote this phrase exactly, a significant number reflected this basic idea during interviews. The visual symbols Mosaic employs are the Mosaic cross, and the "Sevillanas" piece by artist Jason Cohen. Scriptures that have come to shape Mosaic's identity include the prayer of Jesus for unity in John 17, and the church at Antioch in Acts 11 and 13. On the back of the worship folder the following message is printed every week:

Mosaic is a multi-ethnic and economically diverse church established by men and women seeking to know God and to make Him known through the pursuit of unity in accordance with the prayer of Jesus Christ (John 17:20-23) and patterned after the New Testament church at Antioch (Acts 11:20-30).

As for stories, Mosaic makes available in either booklet format, or on CD Rom, the history of the church from its beginning. An easily remembered set of specific action steps in ABC format has been developed to keep the central vision in focus.

ABCs of a Multi-Ethnic Church:

A = Attitude towards worship arts

B = Building intentional relationships

C = Cross-cultural staffing (n.d.)

Rock Dillaman takes a different approach to reinforcing the vision of ACAC as a multicultural church. He agrees that vision and values must be reinforced continually and his primary means of doing that is through expository preaching. Because he is convinced that the vision is biblically based, he sees support for it naturally flowing out of Scripture.

#### Other Levels of Leadership

Thus far, the discussion has focused primarily on the role of the senior pastor in reframing reality so that the church as a multicultural fellowship becomes plausible in thought and realized in practice. A related question is the role played by other levels of leadership. As this question relates to other paid staff, the answer is fairly straightforward. No employees last long in any organization if they do not support the basic purpose for which that organization exists. A person who does not believe that people ought to drive cars will not last long as an employee of a car dealership, for example. In all of the churches except Church of All Nations, I was able to interview other staff members in addition to the senior minister. The data from this set of interviews

indicates that staff members have embraced, and enthusiastically support the vision of multicultural ministry. They are, to use the language of Berger and Luckmann (1967:154); part of the “plausibility structures” whereby an alternative perception and experience of reality is maintained.

An even more crucial question, at least for the churches without a large paid staff, is the role of leadership from within the congregation. This issue was most evident at Hinshaw. As a church that is beginning to come out of a decline of many years, Hinshaw does not have the resources to support a large staff. Pastor Bart Milleson has largely borne the burden of the ministry. He noted the difficulties involved with getting people to embrace a new way of being the church. A couple of leaders from within the congregation who had been working with Milleson on developing the vision for becoming a multicultural church have left the church for other ministries, departures which Milleson called “major losses.” The plausibility structures, the “social bases and social processes” (Berger and Luckmann 1967:154) necessary for the maintenance of reality need to be bolstered in that situation. Milleson is working to develop leaders from within the congregation who will embrace, support and propagate the idea, the vision of the church as a multicultural fellowship.

#### Theological Education and Leadership

The senior pastors of the churches that participated in this study have different levels of theological education. One has a degree from a Bible College, one has a Master of Divinity, three have Doctor of Ministry degrees, and one is in the midst of writing a Doctor of Ministry dissertation. What role does theological education play in developing and maintaining a multicultural church? I believe context is an important consideration in



the degree to which advanced theological education is helpful and even necessary.

Take the case of Hinshaw as an example. Bart Milleson, with a Doctor of Ministry degree from Wesley Theological Seminary, has developed his understanding of the role of the sacraments in multicultural ministry through his doctoral program. This more focused theological reflection has been necessary given Hinshaw's context in the southern part of the nation where segregation was more a social reality than in the north. What was enforced at a societal level was also practiced at an ecclesial level. In that context, the transition from a monocultural church to a multicultural church needed more theological grounding that it might require elsewhere. In conclusion, the context in which pastoral leadership is working determines the degree to which theological education is helpful or necessary. In a context where church membership needs a clearly articulated theological rationale for engaging in multicultural ministry, advanced theological education would be helpful. In a context where church membership can make that transition for other reasons, such as a strong commitment to evangelizing its community regardless of cultural differences, theological education may not be as helpful or necessary.

### Summary and Conclusion

Pastoral leadership in multicultural churches plays an important role in the process of reframing reality. Constructing an alternative reality wherein the idea of multicultural church becomes plausible in thought and realized in practice requires several elements at the level of pastoral leadership including personal example, teaching and communication of vision. There is a dynamic interplay between these three elements. Teaching reinforces and gives scriptural grounds for personal example, and personal

example reinforces teaching. Pastoral vision gives dynamism and shape to Christian Scripture, and Biblical preaching and teaching validate pastoral vision. Personal example demonstrates commitment to pastoral vision, and pastoral vision explains the rationale behind personal example.

Teaching of the Scriptures alone is not enough to create or sustain a movement toward multicultural ministry. Many churches that are committed to the authority of the Bible are not culturally diverse in their memberships. Neither is personal example alone enough. People might applaud efforts to develop cross-cultural relationships as noble, but “not for me” without seeing such actions as grounded in Scripture. Neither is pastoral vision alone enough. If vision is not perceived as scripturally based, it will be resisted. If personal example does not back up pastoral vision, that vision will appear hollow. Thus, all three elements are critical in creating and sustaining movement toward multicultural ministry.

The pastoral role, however, is not the only one to consider. Pastoral leadership cannot be divorced from context. Pastors do not simply create multicultural churches by force of will. The community of faith also plays a role in creating and sustaining movement toward multicultural ministry. That role was considered in the preceding chapter.

## Chapter 6

### Growth in Multicultural Churches

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the question of growth in multicultural churches. The term “growth” is multivocal, making clarification of terminology necessary. For that clarification, we look to McGavran (1990:72) who saw church growth in four categories:

- (1) *Internal growth*: increase in subgroups within existing churches and the continually perfecting Christians, men and women who know the Bible and practice the Christian faith. . . .
- (2) *Expansion growth*: each congregation expands as it converts non-Christians and takes more of them, as well as transfer members, into itself.
- (3) *Extension growth*: each congregation plants daughter churches among its own kind of people in its neighborhood or region.
- (4) *Bridging growth*: congregations and denominations find bridges to other segments of the population and, crossing the bridges of God, multiply companies of the committed on the other side.

While all four categories of growth are important considerations, this project has focused mainly on what McGavran called internal growth and expansion growth. In terms of the theoretical framework, internal growth involves the means at work in multicultural churches whereby the idea of church as a multicultural fellowship congeals for members of those churches. The question of internal growth has been addressed primarily in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The central concern of this chapter is what McGavran calls expansion growth. The question at hand is how the churches that participated in this study experience expansion growth.

### Church Growth Strategies

In many ways, growth in the multicultural churches studied in this project is similar to growth in homogeneous congregations. In the course of interviews, a number of strategies were mentioned. Several authors in recent years (Spader and Mayes 1991; Warren 1995; Schwarz 1996) have suggested church health precedes church growth, and that a healthy, balanced church will be a growing church. Ferdie Llenado of The United Methodist Church of Union takes this approach in his pastoral leadership, working to create a healthy church to promote growth.

One theme that emerged in some churches was that worship itself is a means of drawing people to the church. Worship that is dynamic and inspiring attracts unchurched people (Schwarz 1996:30). Park Avenue UMC in Minneapolis has historically been known for the quality of its music and worship. Pastor Mark Horst sees this as one way Park Avenue continues to attract new people. Other respondents from different churches agreed that the dynamism and quality of worship was an important part of the church's appeal to outsiders.

Some churches used forms of advertising such as the Internet and cable television. Another strategy mentioned in the course of interviews is organizing concerts, dinners, and outdoor worship services for the community. Also mentioned was a strategy along the lines of Steve Sjogren's "Kindness Evangelism" (Sjogren 1993). Some spoke of visitation to jails, nursing homes, hospitals, homeless shelters, juvenile detention facilities, and to the homebound. New Life has used mailing campaigns on occasion. One respondent shared he initially visited the church because of a postcard he had received. As he recalled, the card said New Life was "A great place to make new friends!"

At Abundant Life, they work to create many “doors,” that is, many opportunities to hear and respond to the gospel message, but they view their Sunday worship service as the primary means of attracting potential members. A church with multiple services has a better chance of accommodating people with unusual work schedules. ACAC has recently added a Saturday evening worship service, creating an additional opportunity for people in the community to connect with the church. Their earliest Sunday service has also provided a worship opportunity for people who work on Sundays. In some cases, the location of the church was important; some people prefer to attend a church in their own neighborhood. Location, coupled with reputation, makes a church accessible to people in the community.

The findings from interviews are consistent with church growth literature; a wide variety of programs and strategies can contribute to the overall effectiveness of a church’s outreach. While the Church Growth Movement has delineated a number of strategies for evangelism, a few, according to George Hunter (1987) emerge as “mega-strategies.” Among these primary approaches are “*Identifying* receptive people to reach,” “*Reaching* across social networks to people,” and “*Ministering* to the needs of people” (1987:36, italics in the original).<sup>91</sup> Among the people I interviewed a few individuals found their way to churches because of a flyer or postcard they had received, or because they had seen the church’s website. However, the overwhelming majority of people got connected with the churches through existing social networks, or through a need-meeting

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<sup>91</sup> Hunter also discusses “organizing new recruiting groups and ports of entry,” “indigenizing ministries to fit the culture of the people,” and “planning to achieve the future they intend” as “mega-strategies” (1987:36). To simplify the project I focused on the three mentioned above, and did not include the three listed here, in my theoretical framework.

ministry.<sup>92</sup> In addition, enough evidence emerged in the interpretation of the data to include a section on indigenizing ministries, though that was not part of my theoretical framework.

#### “Indigenizing” the Church’s Ministries

Hunter (1987:151ff.) makes a case for “indigenizing” the ministries, worship, and witness of a local church. This involves “adapt[ing] to the cultural forms of the target population” (1987:158). While this particular church growth strategy was not part of the theoretical framework that guided this research project, it does raise an important question for ministry in a multicultural milieu: What does indigenized ministry look like in a multicultural context? Before attempting to answer that question, it is necessary to explore the nature of the multicultural context.

The multicultural context. Anthropologist Ted Lewellen has noted the “hybridization”<sup>93</sup> of cultures across the globe. He writes, “It needs to be remembered that all cultures are *already* hybrid, so what we are witnessing today is one hybrid culture mixing with another. For example, a Mexican mestizo entering the United States will encounter an Anglo-Saxon culture that has been heavily influenced by numerous waves of migration, mainly from all over Europe” (Lewellen 2002:, italics in the original). This intermingling of cultures can be seen in many facets of society. Americans of different cultural backgrounds interact in places of employment, in schools, in community organizations. In many communities in North America, Americans of European descent

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<sup>92</sup> The most peculiar story I heard was from a member of ACAC who had been invited by a family friend to attend a Presbyterian church that formerly occupied the building behind ACAC’s main facility. He mistakenly went to the worship service at ACAC and liked it so much he ended up staying.

<sup>93</sup> Ted Lewellen (2002:99) uses the term “hybrid” and related forms of the word because it is in popular usage, but he sees this choice of terms as unfortunate because of several negative connotations associated with the word.

eat Mexican food at restaurants owned by Mexican families, and Chinese food at restaurants owned by Chinese families. Similarly, families of a variety of cultural backgrounds can be seen in American fast food restaurants. It can also be seen in other facets of society. While in Chicago doing research for this project I noticed a medical clinic while I was out on my morning walk one day. The name of the clinic was clearly of Scandinavian origin. The names of two other doctors listed on the sign were of Middle Eastern and Hispanic descent. Such is the milieu in which McGavran (1990:261) anticipated that culturally diverse congregations would flourish.

Pastor Mark Jobe of New Life believes a diverse mission field, such as Chicago, should produce a diverse congregation. "We cannot be serious about reaching the city without asking, 'How do we reach the people around us, who are from a lot of different backgrounds?' the answer is 'in a lot of different ways'" (Quoted in Shelley 2005:21). New Life's decision to be a multicultural fellowship is based, at least in part, on the multicultural reality of Chicago. One member of New Life said that the multicultural church is "more a slice of reality" than a homogeneous church. "If it gets too monocultural, you lose touch with things because people are different." Some members of ACAC likewise indicated that they had chosen the church because they wanted a church that reflected the diversity of the neighborhood. Diversity was something they valued and felt that a homogeneous church was irrelevant to large sections of the population.

Furthermore, there is virtually no other entity in society where cultural homogeneity is guarded as closely as it is in many churches. An African American woman from Mosaic with previous experience in a multicultural work environment

questioned why the church should not work to create an atmosphere of cross-cultural cooperation when the corporate world harnesses the power of diversity to create profit. The postmodern world and the business world are ahead of the church. They embrace diversity, expecting something other than a homogeneous organization.

A number of people felt the church should reflect the increasingly diverse population of the United States. A member of Church of All Nations said, “I just think that the way of multi-cultural churches is the wave of the future for the church. I don’t think a church can survive trying to keep its old ways of being exclusive.”

Pastor Ferdie Llenado of the United Methodist Church in Union, New Jersey compared the history of his church with another United Methodist Church nearby. The United Methodist Church of Union decided to embrace the cultural diversity in the neighborhood; the nearby church chose not to. The attendance at The United Methodist Church of Union has steadily increased, while the other church failed to “adjust to the multicultural environment”, has steadily declined, and is at the point of closing its doors.

A member of Hinshaw, accustomed to diversity in other venues, welcomed the cultural diversity at the church. She felt that, because of the diversity in society, a homogeneous church stifles personal growth. Another member of Hinshaw, a first generation African immigrant said that the social reality presupposed in the homogeneous unit principle was perhaps more true years ago, but in a changing neighborhood such as Hinshaw’s, a church needs to be welcoming and open to all.

Indigenized ministry in the multicultural context. Having explored the context somewhat, let us return to the question of indigenized ministry. What does indigenized ministry look like in a multicultural context? In short, indigenized ministry in a



multicultural context allows the intermingling of cultures to take place, for that is what happens in a multicultural community; cultures intermingle with one another. What forms are appropriate to ministry in a multicultural context? The forms that are appropriate for ministry in this context are inclusive; they allow and encourage each culture to contribute something to the mix. This is most clearly seen in the style of worship. The style of worship I observed in various churches was inclusive in one of two ways. Sometimes it was inclusive in that it reflected the different cultures in the church. Other times it was inclusive in that the style of music used in worship appealed to a broad range of people.

The style of music used in worship has often become a point of contention. The church in North America is currently in the midst of a debate over whether worship music should be contemporary or traditional. Debates have at times been so heated that that some (e.g. York 2003) have called them “worship wars.”<sup>94</sup> The question of music goes beyond contemporary versus traditional for the multicultural congregation. DeYoung *et al* have suggested that, “multiracial congregations should develop a hybrid culture—a *mestizaje* culture—that is a unique blend of all the cultures in the congregation” (2003:154). Jin Kim shared how this is being worked out at Church of All Nations. “For us, it’s not just contemporary / traditional because a lot of CCM [contemporary Christian music] is white CCM. It’s just not working for us anymore. Our praise team—I told them, they’ve got to do more black CCM, Asian CCM, Hispanic CCM. For us, our traditional needs to be multicultural and our contemporary needs to be multicultural” (2005a).

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<sup>94</sup> At least four other recent titles have used similar terminology: *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship* (Long 2001), *The Future of Protestant Worship: Beyond the Worship Wars* (Byars 2002), *How Shall We Worship? Biblical Guidelines for the Worship Wars* (Dawn 2003), and *Putting an End to Worship Wars* (Townes 1997).

At The Sanctuary Covenant Church of Minneapolis, the music used in worship is a mix of urban, Black gospel, and hip-hop. Since the average age of the church's culturally diverse congregation is under 30, this style of music is indigenous to the North Minneapolis location in which The Sanctuary ministers; it appeals to the younger generation of different cultural backgrounds.

At Mosaic, worship has undergone a number of changes over the years. In the past, the church has had a number of different worship leaders who led worship on a rotating schedule. This arrangement allowed the church to use different styles of music from week to week. Recently, the church hired an African American worship leader who leads worship every week so the style is more consistent from one week to the next than it has been in the past. Still, though, Mosaic strives to feature different styles of music appropriate to the different cultural backgrounds represented in the congregation.

At Abundant Life, the music could be described as contemporary worship with a Black gospel edge. They also sing traditional hymns and occasionally feature a gospel choir. At New Life Community Church of Chicago, the worship I observed could be characterized as contemporary with a Latino edge.<sup>95</sup> Rick Warren has said that "contemporary pop/rock" is "a universal musical style that can be heard in every country of the world" (1995:285). While Warren may be overstating the case, the basic idea is worth noting. Contemporary pop or rock music does appeal to a broad constituency, and it is adaptable. The adaptability of that particular musical style enables churches to indigenize their worship music appropriately to their context.

Pastor David Anderson of Bridgeway Community Church compares the music used in worship services to meals served to guests: "You hope to deliver a dish to the

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<sup>95</sup> The style of worship one would observe varies from one New Life location to another.

table that will be, if not delectable, at least palatable” (2004:109). Anderson continues, advising that each multicultural church must find its own “mainstream dish.” Musicians at Bridgeway have written over 130 worship songs that define the church’s central style. Anderson adds that different types of side dishes can add different nuances and flavors to the mainstream dish (2004:159). Anderson describes one such side dish that was served in the context of Sunday morning worship:

J. P., a young Korean man with a streak of blond hair, glided onto center stage with Dante, a teenage African American male with braided hair. They began to dance. The congregation, gripped by the sight of two youths from different, sometimes warring cultures using their creative talents in a unified manner to praise God, broke out in applause. . . .

[T]he sight of these two dancing together was electrifying. Add the rhythm of the drums, guitars, keyboards, and saxophone and we were having a Jesus party. When J.P. suddenly broke out into a rap solo in Korean, echoed by Dante in English . . . whoosh!

This was an unprecedented event even in our church. We witnessed our core value of reconciliation preached more powerfully than any sermon. Two young people from opposite sides of the world came together to worship God, and they could do so because they had the freedom to dance.” (2004:147)

The scene described by Anderson is a powerful example of indigenized ministry. It represents the cultural diversity of the community. It is inclusive. It communicates the message of reconciliation in a relevant, creative way.

A further consideration under the rubric of indigenization is the “inculturation” of the liturgy. While not all churches follow a formalized liturgy, the discussion here is also applicable to non-liturgical worship. According to Filipino theologian Anscar Chupungco, Pope John Paul II introduced the term inculturation in addressing the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1979. Chupungco explains, “Through the process of inculturation, catechesis, which is a form of proclaiming the gospel, acquires cultural expression” (1992:26). Thus, inculturation is another way of talking about indigenization.

Aylward Shorter (1988:11) defines inculturation as “the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures” (Shorter 1988:11).

At this point, since Shorter’s definition has called attention to the question of cultural context, a brief discussion of that context is helpful. A construct developed by Charles Kraft helps us further process this implication. Charles Kraft has identified six different levels of culture ranging from “personal culture” to “multinational culture” (1996:40):

1. Personal Culture
2. Family Culture (or Subculture)
3. Community Culture (or Subculture)
4. Regional Culture (or Subculture)
5. National Culture (or Subculture)
6. Multinational Culture (e.g., Western Culture)

This construct suggests that every person participates in different levels of culture. Participation in a broader level of culture does not negate or deny narrower levels of culture. Understanding each of these levels as constructed and contingent, we can see that one’s personal culture is not obliterated by participating in family culture. Rather these two levels of culture shape and influence each other. Family culture is not erased when participating in community culture. Rather, individual and family culture shape and influence one another.

Kraft’s construct enables us to think more clearly about the multicultural context for ministry, and about the level at which inculturation of the liturgy is most necessary. Since a church does not generally exist to serve the spiritual needs of an individual or a single family, Kraft’s first two levels are probably not the level at which indigenization of ministries, or inculturation of worship forms is most appropriate. Since a single local congregation does not serve the spiritual needs of people at a multinational or national

level, Kraft's last two levels are not the appropriate levels for indigenization or inculturation either. Levels three and four, community and region, seem to be the best options to consider, if region is understood as a cluster of communities such as Chicago, rather than a broader region such as the Midwest.

Shorter makes an important observation about inculturation. "It is the stage when a human culture is enlivened by the Gospel from within" (1998:12). Multicultural churches are uniquely positioned to enliven the mixed culture communities in which they minister. One way, perhaps the most significant way, that multicultural churches are enlivening their communities is by reframing the meaning of diversity. They are helping their members see that diversity is God's design, and that in God's design, there can be unity in the midst of diversity, and that unity does not necessarily mean uniformity.

One of the best examples of liturgical inculturation that emerged in the course of research is the use of the sacraments. As noted in Chapter 5, some multicultural churches have already discovered the value of the sacraments in developing crosscultural unity. Calling attention to the way communion unites people is a way of inculturating worship forms for a culturally diverse community. Gathering for a shared meal that allows the intermingling of cultures is another example of inculturation. The crosscultural hermeneutic addressed in Chapter 5 is an indigenized ministry as it speaks to the needs and concerns of the mixed culture community. A culturally diverse team of greeters, each dressed in the style of their own culture is an indigenized ministry.

One of the most creative expressions of an indigenized ministry comes out of The Sanctuary Community Church's Community Development Corporation. Their "Hip Hop Academy" is a 14-week program that teaches youth about the positive origins of the hip

hop movement. The music, art, and dance associated with the movement are “focused on drawing people into discussion and action for community change” (Skjegstad, 2005:2). This particular program is an excellent example of indigenizing the church’s ministries. A more focused study of multicultural churches using this strategy as part of an interpretive grid to understand their ministries would likely yield a host of other examples.

### Reaching Across Social Networks

This principle, the earliest discovery of the Church Growth movement, proposes, “the Christian faith spreads across the social networks of active credible Christians, especially new Christians” (Hunter 1987:92, cf. Arn and Arn 1982). An associate pastor at ACAC who interacts on a regular basis with people who are new to the church estimated that between 75 and 80 percent of those who visit the church do so at the invitation of a friend, a neighbor, or a family member. Most of the time it was someone who went to the church, but a number of times he has heard something like, “So and so referred me to your church. They don’t go there; they just heard it was a good church.”

The findings were similar at Mosaic. Whether people at Mosaic were believers who appreciated the multicultural vision of Mark DeYmaz or unchurched people, the bulk of Mosaic’s people have found their way to the church through existing social networks: family members, co-workers, friends, acquaintances from a former church, business customers. Pastor César Ortega of Mosaic believes that reaching out across existing social networks is the most effective means of reaching the Latino community.

New Life leverages social networks, particularly at baptismal services. Candidates for baptism are provided with invitations and encouraged to invite family, relatives,

neighbors, and friends. Pastor Asa App of New Life's Irving Park location says, "We've seen people come, and within time those people stay at the church and get baptized. It's relational. They see a genuine transformation in a person's life and say, 'Wow, this must be real', because they know the people from before, how they were, and see them now taking that step of obedience." He concludes, "The main way . . . New Life has grown is not in programs, but in relationships" (App 2005).

Abundant Life Christian Fellowship tracks the reasons people give for visiting the church. Although some people heard about the church through Pastor Paul Sheppard's radio ministry, the yellow pages or the Internet, the most frequent reason unchurched people give is that they were referred or invited by someone they knew. While they do not track whether the social networks that lead people to the church are homogeneous or heterogeneous, Pastor Sheppard believes that they are most likely homogeneous networks. However, over time, people do develop heterogeneous social networks as they attend Abundant Life.

Other pastors I interviewed, including Jin Kim of Church of All Nations, Ferdie Llenado of the United Methodist Church of Union, New Jersey, and Mark Horst of Park Avenue UMC in Minneapolis also indicated that existing social networks played a role in unchurched people getting connected to the churches.

### Ministering to the Needs of People

Need-meeting ministries were a vital part of the overall ministry of the churches I studied. In some instances, it is as simple as an individual giving someone a lift to church, or providing free childcare one or two days a week, but the churches were also intentional about developing ministries around community needs. At Mosaic, need-meeting ministry

has been especially important in reaching the growing Latino population in Little Rock. The church purchased a trailer in a local mobile home park to serve as a base of outreach into a largely Latino community. Service to that community has included a food bank, a clothing ministry, and other meeting other needs are people are in transition. Mosaic's plans include purchasing land to build a community center that will offer English classes, computer classes and medical services.

While the Latino community appreciates this aspect of Mosaic's ministry, meeting physical needs is only part of the picture. In general, Latino cultures are much more relational than Western culture. As Pastor Ortega put it, "You can start with physical needs, but the relationship is very important" (Ortega 2005). The building of relationships is as important as meeting the physical need.

Faithful service at CAN takes on many forms as the church reaches out to the Twin Cities. An outreach project to Hmong immigrants in the Twin Cities resulted in the donation of 43 welcome baskets worth 16,000 dollars, plus an additional 7,000 dollars in cash. The goal of CAN's immigrant ministry is "to ensure that the Church of All Nations is making available to them the church's physical, spiritual, economic and human resources. By opening up its resources to immigrant peoples the church hopes to hasten their acceptance and integration into the community and improve their lives" (Church of All Nations 2004). Kim noted that while the Hmong families who received the baskets did not become part of the church, their "standing in the Hmong community significantly improved" and since that project, three Hmong individuals have become members of the church (Kim 2006).

Anthropological research has shown that developing networks outside of one's



cultural group is important in immigrants' adjustment to a new context. Robert Kemper (2002) traced the movement of Mexican villagers from Tzintzuntzan to urban areas. Migrants with family and village connections fared better as they had existing contacts for securing housing and employment (2002:196). Those whose "reference group" expanded beyond fellow migrants and villagers adjusted even more readily to urban life (Kemper 2002:197). A concerned Christian community could serve as an expanded reference group for recently arrived immigrants, increasing the likelihood of successful transition to urban life. The goal of the immigrant ministry at Church of All Nations is just this. They aim to use the church's resources "to assist individuals, families and groups of peoples who have recently arrived here, and to incorporate them into our family of faith" (Church of All Nations 2004).

Church of All Nation's vision and service extends beyond the Twin Cities area. Collaborating with organizations such as Feed My Starving Children of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, the church has opportunity to make a difference in other parts of the world. Short-term mission trips give members a chance to impact other parts of the world in a more direct way. Pastor Kim affirms that a church which intends to do multicultural ministry must have a strong commitment to the poor. He explains, "That must be a defining mark, or else it just devolves into an aesthetic experience. . . as opposed to an ethical imperative that's part of ushering in the kingdom of God" (Kim 2005a).

Ministries targeting specific needs in the community are crucial to ACAC's outreach into the North Side of Pittsburgh. There is a broad range of ministries at ACAC including Christian recovery ministry, general counseling ministry, marriage counseling, a singles ministry, and a car ministry that repairs and donates about seventy cars a year. A

large proportion of ACAC's need-meeting ministries centers around the needs of children and parents on the North Side. For children, ACAC has an after school program, mid-week kids clubs, summer camps, youth ministry, sports programs, etc. One member of the church who grew up on the North Side, and has now been at the church for 19 years, recalls that when he was a junior in high school, a few individuals started investing in him. They affirmed and encouraged him: "You have some worth. You're created in God's image. What are you going to do after school?" That personal investment was a critical turning point in his life. He had not previously thought of college, but those mentor figures inspired him to believe that he could do it.

That personal investment often took very practical forms. One year, just before Christmas, this young man's grandmother had been in the hospital. In all the details of caring for her, the family did not have time to prepare for Christmas. They decided not to have Christmas that year, but as he recounts the story, "The church brought Christmas to our home. They brought us a tree and they brought us gifts and they really just ministered love to us at a time when we weren't feeling that traditional Christmas spirit."

For parents, the church offers "Parent to Parent," a course that teaches basic parenting skills. With roughly seventy percent of the children in the neighborhood being raised in single parent homes, there is a great need for programs addressing the challenges that come with being a single parent. There are single parent family resources, including vacation opportunities, which many single parents would rarely be able to afford. ACAC has an adoptive families ministry, focusing on the unique challenges associated with adoption. P.A.C.S.—Parents and Caregivers of Children with Special needs—is a support group offered by ACAC. Another support group targets the wives of

men who struggle with sexual addiction. Yet another offers support for parents who have lost their kids through murder. There are marriage counseling ministries and divorce care ministries. Other community-based ministries include a homeless outreach, in partnership with Light of Life Ministries, a social work team to help people navigate the system.

Whatever the needs people bring to the church, every effort is made to get them connected to the appropriate resources, whether those resources are internal or external to the church. Meeting physical needs gives the church a chance to touch people spiritually as well. Most of the time, when a person comes to the church with a need, someone prays with them in addition to directing them to needed resources. One of the staff persons says that prayer makes a big difference.

Once they come in and have that warm felt feeling from you, they come back. They continue to come back because that's really what they wanted when they came in the door. . . . They may say, "I need shoes," but really they want love, they want to know somebody cares about them because they're not getting that where they live. I think it's effective in many ways.

One effective way churches are meeting needs is through partnerships with other ministries and organizations, including 501c3 not-for-profit organizations. Curtiss DeYoung explained that these organizations are important particularly in an urban context for social justice reasons. Partnerships with other ministries enable churches to extend their influence in their communities. At The United Methodist Church of Union, they develop partnerships with groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and Gamblers Anonymous and others. Although these groups rent space from the church, the fee is so low that it does not become burdensome.

ACAC works with the Light of Life Rescue Mission, the North Side Christian Health Center, and the Urban Impact Foundation, a 501c3 organization housed in ACAC's facilities. Urban Impact offers one-on-one mentoring programs, academic

coaching, after school programs, summer camps, and sports clinics with players from the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Pittsburgh Steelers. Light of Life has a family assistance program, a 12-month transitional housing program for homeless, single women with children, and affected by substance abuse. Programs at Light of Life includes parenting skills training, life skills training, co-dependency classes, twelve-step groups, GED classes, computer training, job training, relapse prevention, bible studies, and specialized support groups.

What is now the Irving Park location of New Life was originally a Bible study group composed of people affiliated with Lydia Home, a Christian social service agency focused on the needs of children and families. The leadership of that group had heard of New Life and contacted Mark Jobe to talk about affiliating with them. Asa App was eventually appointed as pastor at the Irving Park location and New Life is working to strengthen their relationship with the Lydia Home, in an effort to transition the people Lydia serves into the congregation. New Life has also recently developed a 501c3 called New Life Centers of Chicagoland. The church envisions this not-for-profit entity offering tutoring programs, health services, and English as a Second Language classes.

Park Avenue United Methodist Church and the Sanctuary Covenant Church, both in Minneapolis have started not-for-profit corporations. The Park Avenue Foundation sponsors a broad range of summer camp experiences, academic enrichment programs, computer skills classes, family services, arts programs, and reading skills tutoring. The Sanctuary Community Development Corporation (CDC) seeks to mobilize congregations “to use their resources and talents to address the issues, barriers, and challenges of North Minneapolis” (Smith 2005). The Sanctuary CDC envisions “a community where a

diversity of people can live, work and shop, are physically and spiritually healthy, are educated and ready to work, create and sustain wealth” (Skjegstad 2005:1).

Church of All Nations has recently hired a director of immigrant ministries. Pastor Jin Kim believes that partnership with a non-profit corporation is a strategic way to meet needs in the community and hopes that eventually their immigrant outreach ministry will be incorporated as a distinct non-profit entity.

Although Abundant Life has not established a 501c3 entity to carry out its need-meeting ministries, the church is intentional about promoting and partnering with other need-meeting ministries in the area. For example, they do not operate their own ministry to the homeless, but they support a homeless ministry financially and with volunteers. Volunteers from Abundant Life serve in jails, juvenile hall, convalescent homes, and in various other need-meeting ministries. Mosaic has similar partnerships with need-meeting ministries such as the “Encourager Program” in the local school district. Encouragers spend an hour each week in a public school, 30 minutes with two different children, going over materials selected by teachers.

As discussed above, the churches in this study have generally seen new membership as a result of their need-meeting programs. To be more specific, the people who benefit most directly from those programs become active participants in the churches. A secondary effect of need-meeting ministries is the attraction of a need-meeting church for those who are not necessarily in need. Mark Horst of Park Avenue UMC said, “I would say it’s more that people know about us a church that meets needs, and therefore they come” (Horst 2005).

### The Principle of Receptivity

A third key principle the Church Growth Movement has formulated is the principle of receptivity. “Using common sense,” Hunter writes, “we may observe that some people are more receptive to the gospel than others, and that a given person is more receptive now than last year” (Hunter 1987:64; cf. McGavran 1990:179 ff.). According to current understanding within the Church Growth Movement, a number of factors play into receptivity, including social networks, awareness of needs, level of indigeneity of the presenting group, growth or decline of any religion in a region, major cultural change, socio-economic level, degree of similarity with existing members of the church, personal dissatisfaction, and life transitions (Hunter 1987:77-84).

The idea of receptivity is closely tied to need-meeting ministries, i.e., people are often more receptive to the gospel when they perceive specific needs in their lives. During major life transitions people are aware of certain needs, and tend to be more receptive. An associate pastor at ACAC who works closely with newer members observed, “There are obviously a lot of hurting people out there and a lot of events in life refocus their spiritual or religious interest.” ACAC is finding that people in the midst of life changing events are coming to the church. Sometimes the perceived need that draws people to the church is broken relationships, divorce, challenges associated with single parenting, etc. The life-changing event, in addition to broken relationships, that drew a Latino to New Life was identity theft. That event brought financial ruin and devastated all his plans for the future. At New Life, he found loving relationships, and for the first time in his life came to see that God is love. Those new relationships met a need in his

life that his pursuit of material gain had never met.

For Mark Horst of Park Avenue UMC, preaching has to be sensitive to transitions and needs that make people more receptive. He works to connect with people's needs, their pain, and the difficult circumstances of life. "When I am preaching I am picturing someone, oftentimes, who is struggling to make it, who's having a hard time emotionally . . . physically, financially. . . . I think a lot of people like that come by Park Avenue. I think that's a point at which people are really open to the gospel" (Horst 2005).

At Mosaic, they are finding the Latino immigrants are more responsive to the church's message when they first arrive in the area. Pastor César Ortega has observed that receptivity declines the longer they have been in the United States. "When the people are more comfortable, maybe here 1-3 years, have their car, good job, it is more difficult. When everybody needs something, they need God, they are more open for God" (Ortega 2005).

The United Methodist Church of Union understands the strategic importance that times of transition represent in terms of people's openness. A local newspaper publishes the names of the people that are new to the community. Union takes that opportunity to write a letter of welcome to the community, including an invitation to the church.

In a significant number of instances, people indicated they had chosen a multicultural church because it reflected the social reality more than a homogeneous church. A member of New Life believed that a multicultural church would help her children to expand their perspective and enable them to operate in a multicultural milieu. Some respondents indicated that they had grown up in diverse neighborhoods and were comfortable interacting with people across cultural lines. A Latino from New Life said,

The reason I think New Life prospers it because almost every person has been surrounded by multicultural people. I think people are used to cultural diversity in our case. I don't know how a single culture church would see outside their environment. That creates boundaries and limitations. We're serving the creator God of every race and creed. He says make believers of all nations.

Many respondents shared that they had worked previously, or were currently working in a multicultural environment, and questioned why the church should be less diverse than the workplace. An African American woman from Mosaic put it this way: "I worked in corporate America. That was certainly a mixed culture, but there was one goal. If I can work in a secular world with one goal, why is it that I cannot work in a world that is more important than that, and that is the work of the Lord?" A number of respondents had the sense that the corporate world was out ahead of the church in terms of embracing and affirming diversity. Similarly, Ferdie Llenado of The United Methodist Church of Union has found that some new members are receptive to the multicultural church in particular because they do not desire cultural isolation.

They are more open to going through that adventure of joining a multicultural church; they don't really want to isolate themselves into joining an all Filipino, or all Sri Lankan, or all Indian fellowship. But they wanted to be open; they wanted to reach out. They wanted to know. They wanted to see. They wanted to hold hands with people that are not members of their culture.

Another reason people are receptive to a multicultural church is the nature of their families. Inter-racial families feel more at home in a diverse congregation than in a homogeneous congregation. Park Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis has long been perceived as a haven for inter-racial couples. New Life has also been effective in reaching and keeping interracial couples. An African American woman from Hinshaw shared, "We wanted to be in a church that mirrored our family and our make-up. My husband is Caucasian and I am Black and we have biracial children so we didn't want to be in a church where we stood out as not being the norm." At Mosaic, two families found the



church to be a good fit for them as they had both recently adopted children cross-racially.

A few respondents, who indicated that they had had previous cross-cultural experience, either overseas, or in the workplace, or in other churches, now view a more homogeneous church as exclusive. Their worldview had changed because of their experiences and felt a desire for a more diverse experience in their practice of Christianity. Some respondents felt that their view of God was expanded by contact with other cultures. A homogeneous church, they indicated, had a limited perspective on God. One respondent said, "I have become a better follower of Christ, [and] student of the Word as a result of those [cross-cultural] interactions."

#### Phenomena Specific to Multicultural Churches

Sometimes the dissatisfaction that led people to transfer to the churches in the study was related to ethnocentrism, and even racism. An African American member from ACAC transferred from a Black church, where he felt the preaching had become too ethnocentric. A White member from ACAC had previously attended a predominantly Black church. He felt pressure from some Blacks in that congregation to favor relationships with Blacks over relationships with White Christians. He shared, "I don't think that's the basis of religion; I think the basis of religion is loving your brother and when it starts to become biased based on race, that's the reverse prejudice from my White eyes."

One African American member of ACAC shared that many African Americans chose the church because it does not have some of the "hang-ups" of the traditional African American church. He believes that sometimes such churches exacerbate racial division. "I know some African Americans who have chosen this because they feel they were raised in a racist kind of home or racist situation and they don't want that for their children."

In Little Rock, people are finding Mosaic's openness to people of different cultural backgrounds to be refreshing in contrast to societal norms. One member of Mosaic shared that her brother-in-law was pastoring a church elsewhere in Arkansas when two of his deacons approached him, trying to recruit him into the Ku Klux Klan. While, hopefully, such an example is an anomaly, it does demonstrate that racial tensions still exist. This member works with many internationals and had invited a number of her co-workers to her former church. Most of her international co-workers are Chinese. She recalls that "the people of the church were not able to interact with them on a regular basis. They couldn't see past them being communist. . . . They just couldn't see that these were people who needed Jesus." The vision of Mosaic for reconciliation across racial, cultural and even socio-economic lines stood in contrast to churches she had previously attended.

Individual with crosscultural appeal. One phenomenon that emerged at several churches was the presence of an individual with cross-cultural appeal. At the Irving Park location of New Life, one of the men in the bible study group associated with Lydia Home initiated a cross-cultural visitation program in the neighborhood. He is Anglo-American, but was effective in ministering to the Latinos in his neighborhood. When asked to indicate how they had gotten connected, nearly half of the participants in a new member orientation (June 26, 2005) indicated this particular man and his wife had been influential in their connection to New Life. On a survey sheet they completed at the end of the orientation, two of ten identified him as the one who had invited them. So, at least twenty percent of the new members in that particular new member orientation were directly invited by one individual. Others indicated family members and friends.

A similar dynamic was observed at Hinshaw. An African American woman from Hinshaw recalled that Pastor Milleson had visited her family after her stepson had been attending the church for a while. “Just the warmth and everything he represented as the pastor of this church made me feel led to visit the church myself.” Several respondents from Hinshaw indicated similar experiences. When one or more individuals or families are reached by this type of cross-cultural contact, that potentially opens up a new and different social network to the church.

At Abundant Life, the preaching style of Pastor Paul Sheppard appeals to people across cultures. In particular, people see Sheppard’s use of humor as being very effective and attractive across cultures. In addition, Sheppard was intentional about adjusting his preaching style. The traditional African American preaching style is known as “whooping” or “hooping.” Sheppard explained to me, “I’m not a hooper.” Yet Sheppard’s style is “Black” enough that it appeals to African Americans, but not so “Black” that it represents a barrier to people who have not been exposed to the African American worship tradition.

Related to Sheppard’s cross-cultural appeal as a preacher is the choice of the church’s name. The church was originally known as East Palo Alto First Church of God. Although the church is affiliated with the Church of God based in Anderson, Indiana, Sheppard was concerned that people might mistakenly assume it was a congregation of the Church of God in Christ, a Black Pentecostal denomination known for its demonstrative style of worship. To avoid confusion, and to increase the church’s appeal to a broader range of people, the name Abundant Life Christian Fellowship was chosen.

The team approach. A second approach to tapping into culturally different social networks is by building a culturally diverse team. Mark DeYmaz of Mosaic recalls that on May 17, 2001 he and his wife “responded in prayer to a very specific call of God on [their] lives,” the call to establish a multicultural and socio-economically diverse congregation in Little Rock. That same afternoon, DeYmaz telephoned Harold Nash, an African American with whom he had previously discussed the idea of a multicultural church. In the fall of 2002, Chinese American Harry Li was added to the staff, and in 2003, César Ortega joined the staff. The team approach exemplified by Mosaic potentially gives the church access to a range of culturally dissimilar social networks. Mark Jobe of New Life also favors this approach.

Don't try to be something you're not. You'll never learn Spanish, especially at 45, to a degree that will really allow you to minister well. It's better to get someone Hispanic on your team, or find a young person with a passion to reach other young people. Get someone who is already part of the culture, and they will be able to say the right things in the right way and you will automatically start connecting with the community you want to reach. (Quoted in Shelley 2005:24)

Jobe's counsel here does not preclude the demonstration of genuine interest in, and concern for those other cultures.

#### Transfer Growth or Conversion Growth?

McGavran (1990:72) included within his category of expansion growth both transfer growth and conversion growth. Conversion growth is defined as growth “in which those outside the church come to rest their faith intelligently on Jesus Christ and are baptized and added to the Lord in his church” (McGavran 1990:72). Conversion growth stands in contrast to transfer growth, which means “the increase of certain congregations at the expense of others” (McGavran 1990:72).

An important question in seeking to understand church growth in multicultural

churches is that of transfer growth versus conversion growth. In choosing the churches to participate in this project, I sought churches that were growing, at least in part through conversion growth. All churches in the study have experienced growth over the past several years. What remains to be clarified is how much of that growth is transfer growth and how much is conversion growth.

It is difficult to generalize about this question because statistics varied widely between the primary test cases. Allegheny Center Alliance Church estimates that 15 to 20 percent of their growth is conversion growth (Merryman 2006). The Irving Park location of New Life estimates that the majority of their new members (90 percent) represent new professions of faith (App 2006). The reason for the higher conversion rate at New Life may be that they have been effective in making connections within an extended network in the Latino community.

During Mosaic's first four years, the church maintained a list of people who had come to faith through their ministry. Their records for that period indicate that new converts comprised 20 percent of the congregation, which for Mosaic's year-end 2005 active membership of 584 means roughly 116 conversions. Another category that Mosaic believes is significant is what may be called "disenfranchised" church attendees, those who have made a profession of faith at some point in the past, but because they were wounded by, or disillusioned with a church in some way, no longer attend. While this category is more difficult to track, they believe that this category makes up 15 to 20 percent of their congregation, or 87 members (Li 2006).

Church of All Nations has seen growth in the same categories as Mosaic. Out of their congregation of 203 (2005 statistics), 25, or 12.3 percent were new converts, and

roughly 20, or 9.8 percent were disenfranchised believers who had come to Church of All Nations after a period of time in which they had not been involved in a church (Kim 2006). In the year 2005, Hinshaw received 29 new members, 10 (34 percent) of which were received by profession of faith (Milleson 2006).

### How Conversion Growth Happens

The primary means of conversion growth have been discussed above, but a brief word of summary is appropriate here. Most of the conversion growth in the churches in this study occurred through existing social networks. A church member invests in a friend and shares the gospel, or invites that friend to a church where they hear and respond to the gospel message. Secondly, conversion growth comes about because someone was the recipient of a need-meeting ministry. The love of the church, expressed in practical ways, draws people to the church where they hear and respond to the gospel message. Undoubtedly not everyone who is served by need-meeting ministries attends a worship service or makes a profession of faith. Still, churches are committed to these ministries because they believe such ministries are scripturally mandated, and that the church is called to serve the poor and the needy of society.

Some unchurched people are drawn specifically to multicultural churches because they reflect the cultural makeup of society. At Abundant Life, Pastor Paul Shepherd interviews people in the new members class. Over the years, he has heard previously unchurched people say they would never consider coming to a church that was not like Abundant Life, i.e., a multicultural church. “They would never darken the door of a church where everybody looked like them,” Sheppard says. The sentiment seems to be, “Why would I do that? I don’t do that at work” (2005b).

### The Rationale for Transfer

In addition to clarifying the percentages of transfer growth versus conversion growth, it is instructive to understand why some people choose to transfer to a multicultural church. Among the Christians who had transferred from other churches, there was a strong sense of conviction that the multicultural church is “right.” That sense of conviction was expressed in various ways. For some, it was a scripturally and theologically based conviction. For others, the sense of conviction was based on multicultural reality of society. For still others, there was a sense that God had directed them personally to the church.

Theological conviction. In the churches included in this study, there was a strong sense that God intended the church to be multicultural. The church at Antioch, with its “mixed cartel of leaders, with an astonishing variety of background” (Green 2004:154) serves as the model for Mosaic; it is a central source of their conviction that the church should be multicultural. Discussing the church at Antioch, a member of Mosaic said,

We see in the very first verse where the body, this group of people, these leaders and teachers and prophets were multiethnic. We see where the first missionaries were sent out, and as I said earlier, I think the first time that the word Christian is used – isn’t that amazing, Chad. Now we could probably really write on that. Why at that time were they first called Christians?

The answer implied in her question was that the character of Christ was evident in the congregation at Antioch in the way they loved one another across cultural boundaries. Pastor Harry Li of Mosaic bases his convictions about the multicultural church in part on John’s vision in the book of Revelation.

This is the heart of God because we know that in Revelations it talks about what we are going to be doing in Heaven for all eternity. There is going to be some from every tongue, tribe, and nation worshipping the Lord. I think people fail to understand what Christ meant when he prayed “Thy will be done, thy Kingdom Come, on earth as it is in Heaven.” What is the Kingdom in Heaven going to look

like? When we have people who are committed to seeing what the Church looks like here on earth, I think God smiles on that. He just pours out his blessing (Li 2005).

A number of people in various churches connected their preference for the multicultural church to the eschatological fulfillment of God's Kingdom. An African American woman from ACAC used to tell her daughter when she was younger that "in heaven it's going to be large and mixed." An African American man from ACAC expressed a similar view. Some of his African American friends from a former church had asked him why he was attending ACAC: "Are you trying to be White?" His reply to his friends indicates his conviction: "No, I'm not trying to be White; I'm trying to do the right thing." As he reflected further on why he chose a multicultural church as over against a homogeneous church, he said, "Is there a Black heaven? Is there a White heaven? Is there a Chinese or Asian [heaven] or whatever? I think it's going to be one and we're all going to be together. So, in essence, that's one reason we've stayed here."

As we discussed the homogeneous unit principle, a respondent from ACAC phrased his theological conviction in the form of a question: "Why are we trying to grow the church in a way that's contrary to the way that heaven will be?" A member of Church of All Nations said the church is "putting forth the effort to reflect what the kingdom of Christ will be like." Mark DeYmaz puts it this way: "At Mosaic, it remains our firm conviction that the Kingdom of Heaven is not segregated along ethnic or economic lines. At Mosaic, we will continue to ask and to respond to the question, 'So why on earth is the church?'" (n.d.:8)

Curtiss DeYoung, one of the authors of *United By Faith*, is a long-time member of Park Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. When I asked why people chose to attend Park Avenue United Methodist Church rather than a homogeneous



church, he said, “Because they believe it is God’s intention.” He explained further that people “want a place where we can not ignore, but move beyond race [and] class distinctions. (DeYoung 2005)“ DeYoung is also a friend of Pastor Efrem Smith of the Sanctuary Covenant Church in Minneapolis. I had visited the Sanctuary and noticed a number of Whites in their 50s and 60s in the midst of a mostly twenty-something crowd. Knowing that the up-tempo, hip-hop worship style was likely not their preferred style of worship, I asked DeYoung about that. He said the older Whites at the Sanctuary were there because they agree with Efrem Smith’s vision to reconcile the people of the city to God and to one another. They were willing to put aside personal preferences to participate in something they believed was God’s intention (DeYoung 2005).

At New Life as well, there was the sense that the multicultural church is God’s intention. One member of New Life looked to the experience of the early church. Although it was God’s intention to extend the Gospel to Gentiles, it was a difficult thing for many of the first Christians who were Jewish. She saw that same challenge as applying to the church today. “I think there’s a great deal of that same thinking, that these people, the customs and culture are so different [but] God has called us to embrace all cultures.” Another respondent explained his stance:

In my life experiences, I’ve found that homogeneity brings forth ignorance, fear and ill treatment of others. The kingdom of heaven will not be all alike; neither should our church here on earth. I like to see people that are similar to me but in the same token I know that we are all Christ’s children that therefore we must extend the love that Christ has shown us to others as well, irrespective of who they are.

For some of the Christians who transferred from other churches, their own theological convictions were echoed in the pastor’s vision for the church. One associate at ACAC who had been a member for 19 years before joining the pastoral staff initially

started attending with his wife because they felt God leading them to live on the North Side of the city. Pastor Dillaman's vision resonated with their own. "You could tell they had a heart to reach this community. And that's really what we were looking for, someone that wanted to have a ministry here to this community."

One couple at ACAC began attending the church while it was still a predominantly White congregation. They sensed, however that Pastor Rock Dillaman had a vision to reach the North Side community. "And that's really what we were looking for, someone that wanted to have a ministry here to this community. So, [we] decided to start attending here."

Sense of personal leading. For some, the sense of conviction was very personal. An African American woman from ACAC shared that she felt God leading her to the church. It was early in Pastor Dillaman's ministry there and the church was much less culturally diverse than it currently is. She was hesitant at first, wondering whether she might be the only Black person there. She stood across the street from the church, and prayed, "God, if I see one Black person go in, I'll go." Eventually an older Black woman went in and she followed.

An African American woman from Mosaic shared a similar experience. "My husband and I, we knew that the Lord was moving us from our present location. We did not want to get ahead of him, so we had just been praying about where we were to go. And, so we started out with Mosaic." Once they heard Pastor Mark DeYmaz share his vision for a multicultural church, they felt strongly that God's hand was in it, and they committed to be a part of Mosaic from the beginning, knowing that obedience to God's direction might well take them into unfamiliar and uncomfortable places. Another

member of Mosaic shared a similar experience. Although she was comfortable in the church she had been attending, after attending the vision meetings with DeYmaz, she sensed God leading her to be a part of Mosaic.

Some who were already believers when they first started attending New Life felt a similar leading. They wanted to be part of a church that was impacting the community. One person in the new member class shared, “God placed it on my heart that this is a place He wants me to be.” Others in that same class indicated feeling God’s leading in their decision to join New Life.

One of the key reasons cited for transferring from other churches to the multicultural churches I studied was a desire for something more in their Christian experience. An associate at ACAC who works with newer members, getting them connected, found people transferring from other churches because of “a need to change or grow or experience something or be involved in a different level.” A member of Mosaic concurred, saying “We were looking for a church that offered a challenge.”

Some of the members I interviewed in churches became involved because those churches afforded them opportunity to exercise their gifts in ministry. An African American man recounted that when he first began attending ACAC, he was working at liquor store. He questioned whether he should quit. He chose to use his job as a place where he could interact with people in the neighborhood. He estimates that ten or twelve former customers of that store, some of them “confirmed winos,” are now involved at the church because of his choice. His personal ministry in the community fit in with what the church was doing in the community.

A similar dynamic was at work with Mosaic. One respondent from Mosaic works

in an environment with some 2000 internationals. She had a vision to reach out to them, but sensed she needed the support of a church. She found that Mosaic was supportive of her outreach efforts. One issue she struggle to explain to her co-workers that of Christian denominations. “I found myself over and over and over drawing flow charts on our chalkboard, of Jesus, the church, Catholicism, Protestant Reformation.” She found it easier to say to her co-workers, “This is just Mosaic church, we’re not a denomination.” And the diversity of the congregation reinforces the idea that Mosaic is not an exclusive group.

A number of people who transferred from other churches were looking for a challenge, for an environment where they could exercise their gifts in ministry. A visually impaired man from Mosaic recalled that it was a “long journey” looking for a church where they could fit in, and serve and minister to others.

Other reasons for transferring. The United Methodist Church of Union rents their facilities to three other church groups: a Sri Lankan group, a Filipino group, and an Indian group. These three fellowships are essentially homogeneous units, but Pastor Ferdie Llenado has observed an interesting dynamic at work. Some members of the tenant churches are joining The United Methodist Church of Union. Llenado said, “Some of my Filipino members that have decided to join our church were previous members of an all Filipino congregation; they told me that being an all Filipino congregation creates problems. There’s a lot of politics that has been carried from where they came from.” Those who are leaving homogeneous congregations to join The United Methodist Church of Union find a more peaceful atmosphere. Some of the Sri Lankans have joined The United Methodist Church of Union as well.

One respondent from Mosaic spent a number of years in the Philippines. Upon returning to the United States after time overseas, she noticed for the first time the segregation in American society. She sensed that the situation was not right, but felt powerless to take action.

Two respondents from Church of All Nations recalled that they had visited many churches in the Twin Cities area before finding Church of All Nations. As South Africans of Indian ethnicity, they felt at home among the diverse congregation, even though there were no other South Africans of Indian ethnicity in the church. The presence of many different cultures and ethnicities in the congregation indicated to them that they were welcome.

In some cases, people transferred from other churches out of dissatisfaction with those churches. One member at ACAC cited his previous church's preoccupation with political causes, specifically the Republican agenda, as the reason for changing churches. Others mentioned theological concerns. A Latino from New Life left his previous church out of doctrinal concerns: "people commanding God to give them Cadillacs and things." He recalled, "I prayed for six or seven months for God to lead me somewhere else where people were passionate for Christ and pure in spirit, not materialistic." He found New Life through his brother, who had been attending for about a year.

A member of Mosaic chose the church because of doctrinal differences with a previous church. He and his wife had been raised in different Christian traditions. She had been baptized as an infant, and the church they were attending at the time required that she be re-baptized in order to join the church. After attending a few services at Mosaic they talked with pastor Mark DeYmaz. He indicated that Mosaic respected both baptismal traditions and

they found Mosaic a welcoming place where they both felt they could belong.

The effect of transfer growth. Many pastors and church leaders know that not all church growth is good growth. This is particularly true when people transfer from one church to another due to discontent with the previous church. However, when people transfer from one church to another for the right reasons, the results can be beneficial to the receiving church. Donald McGavran believed that if homogeneous churches were disciplined properly, the merging of two different groups into a diverse fellowship would be possible (1990:177). Even though none of the churches in this study have come about as a result of mergers, what McGavran envisioned seems to be the dynamic at work in the churches I visited. While there was transfer growth from other churches, those who transferred were generally mature, disciplined Christians who transferred, not out of discontent, but out of a sense of leading and conviction. An associate at ACAC observed that such transfers bring an element of stability.

Members of Mosaic's original core group members were likewise from other congregations. When they heard Mark DeYmaz's vision to develop a multicultural church, they felt led to join, based either on a sense of personal leading, or upon theological conviction. The mature Christians who came together to form Mosaic's core group ensured a strong foundation of prayer and biblical knowledge. Furthermore, the Christians who transfer into multicultural churches are largely mission-minded people who choose those churches to collaborate with them in reaching their communities. Thus, while there is a good deal of transfer growth, that growth strengthens the churches' ministries in their communities.

### Multicultural Churches and the Seeker Model

In attempting to understand multicultural ministry, it is helpful to compare it to other known phenomena, in this case the seeker sensitive model. Pastor Harry Li said Mosaic stresses that what is comfortable is not necessarily right. Comfort may at times be a side effect of living in obedience to Scripture, but it is not the goal. “We let people know that we are not here to make their life easy. We are here because we want to fulfill the prayer of Christ, for the Lord’s will to be done on earth as it will be in Heaven” (2005).

This raises an interesting point about the churches I visited in the course of this study; it has to do with the idea of being “seeker-friendly.” The term describes a “winsome and approachable method of presenting the gospel and teaching the Bible” (Powderly 2002:404). However, Powderly observes,

The term *seeker-friendly*, like the word *Fundamentalist*, has begun to take on some negative connotations as time goes by. Many ministries that desire growth have tried with varying degrees of success to imitate what they perceive to be the “Calvary Chapel” or “Willow Creek” method of contemporary music and winsome teaching style as if it was the method that made the success rather than a work of God’s Spirit. When the focus falls off of the work of God and our being yielded to him in the ministry, there comes a tendency to try and artificially culture-craft our teaching and worship styles to whatever currently makes people feel comfortable. While we want people to be comfortable enough in our churches that they can learn and grow, it is possible to make them too comfortable. (Powderly 2002:405, italics in the original)

Powderly is not suggesting, and neither am I, that churches with a seeker-friendly approach have by definition fallen into compromise. The term is raised as a point of discussion, for the purpose of comparison.

Sally Morgenthaler (1995) recounts the experience of a growing church in the Baltimore area. In 1988, the church made the decision to switch to a Willow Creek style seeker service for one of their weekend services. After a few years, the church discovered

that a significant number of the unchurched that visited the church preferred the worship experience to the seeker event. The worship leader explained:

The seeker service was too presentational for many of our newcomers. We spent a lot of our energy being seeker friendly, and in doing so we stripped out a lot of what they were coming to see. I think quite a few of the unchurched newcomers wanted to examine not only Christianity, but Christians—our integrity, our authenticity, and our interaction with God in worship (Cited in Morgenthaler 1995:243)

Rick Warren believes that while, technically speaking, unbelievers cannot worship, they can watch believers in worship. “They can notice how worship encourages, strengthens, and changes us. It is even possible for them to sense when God is supernaturally moving in a service, although they won’t be able to explain it” (1995:241)

The churches I visited generally felt strongly that cross-cultural unity functioned in much the same way that Warren sees worship functioning.

The multicultural churches that participated in this study shared the conviction that unity itself is a witness. As Pastor Mark Jobe of New Life put it,

It is Christ’s will that we be one with believers different from ourselves so that the world would know God’s love and believe. As a by-product, society will be affected and the church restored to a place of prominence in the minds and hearts of those outside its walls. This is the power of unity; this is the Gospel of Christ. . . . It’s beautiful seeing people who are so different from one another all connected by the same church, sharing the same vision. (Quoted in Shelley 2005:15, 20)

One respondent said that when the church is willing to cross cultural boundaries, “People will see the love and be attracted to that love.”

Mosaic’s commitment to unity is based on the prayer of Jesus in John 17. In that prayer, Jesus connects the unity and love between the disciples with the effectiveness of their witness. He prayed that the disciples might all be one “so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21). Teaching Pastor Harry Li comments, “When you see that many people who are so different, worshipping one God, there is a powerful



spiritual effect. It causes every person, regardless of who they are to understand that they are compared to an awesome God.” Li sees that Mosaic is attracting people who feel rejected by other churches. “The people come here and the Holy Spirit is so present here, they cannot help but be changed over time” (2005). Respondents from ACAC expressed a similar conviction about the effect of unity in that church. One, for example, noted,

There’s something really different happening here. I think that’s something people notice right away. I think the fact that the church represents the community is a real testimony. Jesus said, ‘They’ll know you’re my disciples because of the love you have for one another.’ When people walk in and see all kinds of people, that do love one another, I think that’s an attractive thing. They recognize the Lord in that.

Although The United Methodist Church of Union is not nearly as large as ACAC, the number of nationalities in the church is much higher. Even with people from fifteen different nationalities gathering to worship, there is a powerful sense of unity. Pastor Ferdie Llenado affirms, “It’s an attraction to people seeing a 15 nationality congregation in such harmony and fellowship. I guess it’s a testimony or an attractive witness to them that this church must really be a good church because they are in harmony with each other. They love each other” (2005).<sup>96</sup>

Marva Dawn, among others, contends that the church, in an attempt to present a God that “sells” to the masses, has short-circuited the disciple-making process. “Congregations are not asking about the long term consequences for the development of Christ’s disciples; they are asking about what will appeal to people and therefore make an immediate profit in the congregational numbers and finances” (1999:75).

ACAC, like Mosaic, while pursuing excellence in worship services and creating a hospitable atmosphere, is not focused on making people comfortable. Pastor Dillaman

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<sup>96</sup> Walker (2005) noted that the effect might not be as pronounced with only two or three nationalities represented.

has consistently taught on racial reconciliation, challenging affluent Whites to expand their circle of relationships to include persons of color. One member at ACAC said of Dillaman's preaching, "He's not afraid to confront issues, individually or corporately."

As noted above, the seeker-friendly model does not, by definition, entail the downplaying of the Gospel. However, according to Morgenthaler, this model too often does. Morgenthaler sees the seeker model as too often focusing on presentation rather than participation (1996:50), or as an approach that "[denies] the Gospel to seekers because we think they are offended by it" (Morgenthaler 1996:108). Inasmuch as the seeker model is thus described, this model is not an apt description of what I observed, or of what respondents indicated to be their experience in the churches I visited. The churches I visited were bold about the centrality of Jesus, and intentional about being a community of disciples gathered around Jesus. Furthermore, the horizontal dimension of reconciliation is emphasized as a vital part of the good news they seek to share.

#### Welcoming and Retaining Visitors

Reaching out to receptive people in the surrounding community through existing social networks, or through need-meeting ministries is one step in a process of discipleship. When the people who have been touched through social networks or by ministries of the church attend a worship service, other aspects of the discipleship process come into play. This section, then discusses the question of how visitors are incorporated into active fellowship and membership so that in time they may come to "rest their faith intelligently on Jesus Christ and [be] baptized and added to the Lord in his church," which is McGavran's definition of conversion growth (McGavran 1990:72). The way conversion takes place in multicultural churches is addressed elsewhere. The current

discussion explores how multicultural churches attract and minister to potential members so that those who have not made a profession of faith may hear the gospel over time, and make an informed decision to follow Jesus Christ.

### The Importance of Hospitality

The old Wal-Mart building that serves as a meeting space for Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas was abuzz with the normal Sunday morning activity. People entering the doors were greeted by members of the greeting team, which reflects the diversity of the congregation. An African American woman and her daughter—first time visitors—walked through the doors. Visibly upset and crying, they were shown to a table, where one of the greeters talked with them. Senior pastor Mark DeYmaz saw the situation unfolding and pulled another member of the hospitality team aside, instructing her to find an African American woman who could counsel the mother and daughter. While the greeting team reflects the diversity of the congregation, in sensitive situations such as this, where a person may indeed need the comfort of “our kind of people,” that need is met with appropriate response.

According to proverbial wisdom, “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” The way a person initially experiences a church will be a decisive factor in the decision to return or not return. It has been estimated that visitors make the decision not to return within the first eleven minutes (Houts 1996:5). This highlights the importance of hospitality for a church.

In terms of the theoretical and interpretive framework for this project, hospitality plays an important role in constructing a different perception of reality. Berger and Luckmann spoke of the processes by which a sense of reality “congeals for the man in the

street” (1967:3). The manner in which multicultural churches show hospitality to visitors and incorporate them into the community of faith is part of the process by which the multicultural community of faith becomes plausible in thought and practice.

Because of cultural differences and the possibility of racial tensions, the issue of hospitality may be even more crucial in a multicultural church than in a homogeneous church. In all the churches that participated in this project, people recalled a strong sense of being welcomed and accepted from their first visit. The following quotes are typical of the comments I heard when I asked about how people perceived their first visit.

Everyone is friendly, genuine (White male, Mosaic).

They open their doors to everyone (White male, Mosaic).

This is home (White female after first visit to ACAC).

Here they genuinely care and love you (African American female, Hinshaw).

The church, it just opens up to you, to come in (African American male, ACAC).

Open hearts, open minds, open doors is a reality at Hinshaw (African American female).

I visited the church with my family and I was immediately just warmly embraced (African American female, Hinshaw)

That is one of the things that attracted me to New Life, the sense of love. Love is real and genuine (Hispanic male, New Life).

They don't condemn you as a church like some churches depending on how you dress, your earrings or your hair (Latino, New Life)

There were certain families that went out of their way to make me, and the rest of us that started coming at the same time, feel welcome (African American female, ACAC).

When I came here there was so much peace, so much joy, so much giving of themselves. These people give me all these things . . . without even knowing me, not knowing what I have or don't have. All those basic needs, to be loved, to have a purpose, to have security, were being met (Latino, New Life).

I was a 17 year old kid and I needed some people to love me and these folks were loving. I had no idea why they were so loving and I had no idea why I was so attracted to it, because it was really strange to me; but it was strange and I wanted more. So, I kept coming back (African American male, ACAC).

Creating an environment that is attractive to people of different cultural backgrounds requires intentional hospitality. People at Mosaic spoke of feeling welcomed, included, and accepted on their first visit.

Wagner argued that outsiders had to perceive a church as being composed of “our kind of people” to feel welcomed and accepted (1979:163). In my research I found that a church did not need to be homogeneous for outsiders to perceive that “our kind of people” were part of it. One respondent from Mosaic shared that he and his wife were hesitant about visiting Mosaic at first. They had heard that it was a multicultural church and when they first entered the building, they wondered whether they were the only Whites there. They soon saw other Whites in the crowd and no longer felt out of place. They did not need the whole congregation to be White in order to feel that their kind of people were welcome there. Multicultural churches do not deny cultural differences, but neither do they allow cultural differences to become barriers. As one Mosaic member put it, “We’re all different, but we all feel like we fit in” Multicultural churches do not deny that an African American visitor, for example, might be more comfortable and feel more at home when greeted by another African American. The opening vignette for this section from Mosaic illustrates this idea. While the greeting team is intentionally diverse, sensitivity to the needs of particular individuals is also evident.

César Ortega, the associate pastor at Mosaic who is the church’s primary link to the Hispanic community believes that Hispanics in the community are drawn to Mosaic because of the people. Mosaic is intentional about hospitality toward the Hispanic

community. “I think that church tries to make this place very comfortable for everybody. For the Latin people. Everything is translated in Spanish and English.” Part of Mosaic’s intentional effort to show hospitality to the Hispanic community is seen in their preaching schedule. Ortega preaches weekly in the Spanish language service on Sunday evenings, and once every six weeks he preaches in the Sunday morning service, in Spanish, with translation into English for the English-speaking worshippers.

Senior pastor Bart Milleson has been intentional about developing an accepting atmosphere at Hinshaw. “We realized hospitality and holiness are the Christian way of life” (Quoted in Colvin 2004:32). Hinshaw follows the traditional United Methodist liturgy, which contains elements that are unfamiliar to outsiders, but it does not present a barrier for visitors because of the attitudes of the members. One newer member recalled her experience:

I didn’t feel ignorant for not knowing the traditions, not knowing when to stand, not knowing what a Doxology was. I felt completely comfortable asking anyone in the church those things. There was never a quizzical look or “You don’t know what that is?” They would explain and it has been an education since day one and every day I learn something new. Now, I can explain to new members what the church gives me everyday.

Hospitality was described by one respondent as creating a non-threatening atmosphere. The purpose is then to draw people into deeper relationships, into fellowship and accountability. A number of respondents noted the importance of leadership in the area of hospitality. They felt it was important for the pastor of the church to model hospitality. Several respondents from Hinshaw commented on Pastor Bart Milleson’s intentionality about learning people’s names, and following up with visitors as a way of creating hospitable space.

At the *Nueva Vida Norte* location of New Life, hospitality takes on a distinctly Latino flavor. One respondent from New Life commented:

One of the things you would see when you walked in the door is that the people in our location greet each other with a hug and a kiss. That's not your normal thing. We have a young lady who is doing a project on cross-cultural ministry. She was surprised because she's been in Hispanic countries and she was surprised to see here in our location people embracing and kissing as we do.

The atmosphere at ACAC on Sundays was described as very casual and relaxed. "There are greeters, and then depending on your exposure to activities within the church people are big huggers. Very receptive, very friendly. The greeters make people feel welcome."

The way hospitality is extended in a visitor's first encounter with a church is an important first step in a church's relationship with potential new members. In a multicultural church, intentional diversity among the greeters is an important practice in the process of reframing reality. An initial, positive cross-cultural encounter in a church is one such process by which the multicultural church becomes plausible in thought and practice.

### The Role of Fellowship

As important as hospitality is in initial contact with visitors, it is only one step in a process. The initial connection made in a worship service setting must be nurtured and maintained. One way multicultural churches work to keep people connected is through intentional relationship building.

An associate at ACAC who works in the area of "ministry connections" affirms the importance of intentional relationship building. He has observed that when people see intentionality in building relationships, will be more likely to become involved. This is particularly important in a multicultural church, he believes. Because the multicultural

church is an anomaly in people's experience, they wonder, "What's this all about? Is this really reality here? Is this really true? I don't really believe what I see here." If being multicultural is merely a veneer, people will see through it eventually, but if the relationships go beyond Sunday morning, people will recognize that it is genuine.

Fellowship becomes crucial for people particularly in the midst of difficult life circumstances. One respondent spoke of the support she received from her church family in the midst of a painful divorce. "I had some close friends here that were there for me when my marriage broke up. . . . I don't know if I had been at another church if I would have had people so supportive. . . . But the people I was close to here, regardless of race, were very important because I have no relatives here."

There is not necessarily a clear distinction between hospitality as initial contact and drawing people into fellowship. There is a sense of flowing from the hospitality of initial welcome into fellowship. Some of the churches created space for the beginnings of fellowship within the context of worship services. Both Park Ave UMC and New Life sometimes have people hold hands as a gesture of unity at the close of worship services. Other churches have a time for greeting. At New Life's *Nueva Vida Norte* location, this can become an extended exercise. Normally at some point in the worship service, everyone stands. People move about the room greeting one another with hugs and kisses. It can become very chaotic, according to one respondent. An Anglo, who normally attends another location of New Life, visited *Nueva Vida Norte* and admitted that the cultural difference required some adjustments on her part, but came to appreciate the warmth and affection in that congregation. Another way they work to foster a sense of belonging at *Nueva Vida Norte* is to acknowledge birthdays and anniversaries from the platform.



Even Christians who encounter a multicultural church for the first time want to know if the commitment goes deeper than surface appearances. One member from Mosaic began attending with a healthy sense of skepticism. She recalls her first few months at the church:

I looked around to see, “Is this table all Black, and is this table all White?” It’s something you want to know. Are we doing this? Because if we’re doing that within the church, it’s not working; this is false. I really believe it never ever happens at Mosaic. I really believe there is never a group anywhere breaking bread together that’s not diverse ethnically and socio-economically. I see people at Mosaic intentionally going at those times and intentionally sitting with people who are different from them.

Fellowship and food. In all the multicultural churches I visited, intentionality was mentioned frequently. One thing that requires intentionality is fellowship, meaning venues where the purpose is simply to allow time for people to interact with one another, as compared to settings where the focus is worship or discipleship. It is within the context of fellowship that cross-cultural relationships are nurtured. Multicultural churches in this study sought to enable fellowship in varying ways. Mosaic reserves the third Sunday of every month, following the worship service for a fellowship meal that is open to everyone. Generally, the meal is prepared by a ministry team, but occasionally it is potluck style. This event has become very popular. Mosaic has found that people who initially were not staying for the meal are now committed to that time. The sense of fellowship and connection at the third Sunday meal is enhanced by the observance of baptism. Following the meal, people gather around a horse trough that serves as Mosaic’s baptismal to celebrated the baptism of new believers.

Most of the churches emphasized the importance of eating together. At Mosaic, they have a monthly fellowship meal / baptism service. At Hinshaw, The United Methodist Church of Union, and New Life they have potluck dinners. Of all the churches,

Mosaic seems to emphasize the importance of eating together the most. One respondent explained the rationale behind this emphasis: “Breaking bread together, having a meal, is something that’s common to all cultures. . . . I’m learning that in Chinese cultures that’s what they do. If they want to fellowship, they eat together. That’s it. I think it’s really important to eat together.”

In his study of the Love Feast and Holy Communion, Robert Danielson affirms the role of shared meals in strengthening the bonds of community. He sees the sharing of food as particularly important in multicultural churches (2005:192-193). My research also indicates that sharing a meal together has great potential for building community.

Fellowship in small groups. Small groups have come to be an important part of developing cross-cultural relationships in multicultural churches. Mosaic also promotes fellowship in home groups called “Acts 2 Fellowships.” These intentionally diverse groups are rarely agenda driven; the purpose is simply to meet in homes, eat together, and develop relationships. The focus is simply to share life, to share stories and testimonies, and to pray for one another. One of the regulars in the young adult ministry (YAM) shared that the Acts 2 Fellowship group in particular was instrumental in getting her connected at Mosaic. She described the group as “a comfortable environment, accepting, where I can bring people who aren’t Christians.” She has had a good deal of cross-cultural interaction in the workplace and feels comfortable inviting her co-workers to the group. The non-structured environment of the Acts 2 Fellowships allows for building friendships across cultures. “You cannot develop friendships without taking the time to understand. Understanding people from other cultures is a slow process that needs a lot of

time.” People who participate in Acts 2 Fellowships find them to be edifying, and they feel closer to God as they fellowship with one another.

At Mosaic, most notably, the small group experience is very relaxed. Although discussion is still an important element, the focus is on building relationships, not on instruction. Mosaic sees unstructured time together as vital for bonding across cultures. One respondent from Mosaic explained: “Because they’re Christian people who are walking with God, when you’re in fellowship it’s going to be edifying. So it’s a comfortable place where other people can come and build relationships.” The atmosphere was comfortable enough she felt free to invite an unchurched Chinese friend from work. The friend became a regular part of the church because of the initial experience in the small group.

The same respondent recalled that, although she has come to value the small group experience at Mosaic, she struggled initially because there was no agenda. “There’s not going to be a Bible study to push along the conversation. You’re just hanging out with these people who are very, very different from you and it forces you to just move past that and interact.” The small group experience has become a time for her to learn about the cultures of other group members.

Some churches have a more structured small group experience with a planned lesson, prayer, and perhaps an element of accountability. At New Life, the discussion and accountability can at times focus on the issue of sexual purity. Discussion is important in these groups. Pastor Asa App of New Life explained that discussion in a small group setting allows people a chance to open up to one another, to be vulnerable with one another. When people begin to share their struggles, it gives other group members a chance to surround them with support. Ministering to someone in need, sharing their

pain, and praying about their situation is a bonding experience.

At New Life, some of the small groups are designed for couples, for the specific purpose of developing healthy marriages. One respondent from New Life describe the experience in that type of group.

We talk about everything, no holds barred there. We talk about having an argument, what's going on in our marriages, those types of things. We can open up. We don't feel like we're alone. They can talk about what ever is bothering them. We see ourselves as a family, sharing our problems, just not following one lesson and staying on that. We see a brother or sister struggling or they want to talk, we give them their time to pour themselves out. We can pinpoint this is what we can pray about, this is what we can talk about, what we can help them with.

For many respondents involvement in a small group was key to developing a sense of belonging. An African immigrant from Hinshaw explained that being involved in a small group gave her the opportunity to discuss issues of faith with other Christian, and to understand other people's points of view. She views it as vital to her growth as a Christian.

Another member of Hinshaw recalled a small group experience from several years prior. The group was composed of six or seven members, including two Blacks. The White respondent said, "I wouldn't take anything for the sharing that went on amongst our small group. It helped me tremendously."

Unique to Hinshaw is a program called Fellowship Friends. A newer member of the church is paired with an older member. When possible, the pairing is cross-cultural. The longer-term member provides support and pastoral care for the newer member. Several respondents from Hinshaw spoke of the importance of this program for them in terms of developing cross-cultural friendships.

One respondent, during the process of the interview, came to the realization that her family had never hosted friends from a different cultural background at their home.

“We see them and we hug them and talk with them and have a peripheral relationship. But it’s been a question on my mind. We speak of reconciliation in worship. Where does that extend beyond the four walls of that building?” Reflecting further, she verbalized the need to engage in more cross-cultural relationship building beyond Sunday morning. Speaking of fellowship in a home, she said, “That’s when reconciliation happens.”

### A Place to Minister

A third element of environment or atmosphere, beyond creating hospitable space on Sunday mornings and creating space for fellowship outside of worship services, the churches in this study tended to be intentional about creating space for service, and about challenging people to find a place of ministry. Intentional hospitality conveys to people that they are welcome. Intentional fellowship conveys to people that they belong. The challenge to find a place of service conveys to people that they are needed. One Mosaic member said that the atmosphere of welcome and the challenge for everyone to get involved and serve were equally important for him and his wife when they were considering Mosaic as a church home. Another Mosaic interviewee conveyed a similar experience of feeling welcome, included, and accepted, and that Mosaic was a place to grow and to minister. An African American woman from ACAC recalled that she had been at the church only a relatively short time when former pastor Bruce Jackson asked her to teach Sunday School. Finding her place of service enabled her to build more cross-cultural relationships, particularly with the families of the children she taught. An African American man from ACAC indicated that his sense of connection to the church was strengthened and reaffirmed when he was asked on one occasion to be a deacon and on another to participate in the “Couple to Couple” marriage counseling ministry, and when

he became involved in the music ministry.

One of New Life's values is "raising young leaders" (New Life Community Church 2003). One young Latino "lay-leader" shared that one of the pastors saw him as a dedicated worker and began to invest in him early on in his involvement in the church. Another Latino who moved to New Life from another church felt a need to be part of a church where he could minister and be ministered to.

A respondent from ACAC shared that, although he had been involved in Bible studies and other activities, it was not until he was asked to be involved in a service project that he truly felt like he belonged. Recognizing that he was not only a recipient of ministry, but a contributor as well was a key moment in strengthening his tie to the church. Involvement in a service project of a ministry program of some kind gives people the feeling of being a part of something that is larger than themselves, something that is important. When they realize that the project is larger than any one person is, it puts relationships in a different perspective; it puts people of different cultural backgrounds on equal footing.

Loren Mead (1991) has discussed at length the "paradigm shifts" he sees as necessary for the church to engage effectively in mission in the midst of a changing culture. In one particularly helpful section, he presents a series of tensions or polarities within which the church must operate. One such tension is Servanthood vs. Conversion. An emphasis on conversion, at its best brings outsiders into the experience of new life in Christ, and into a caring community. At its worst, an emphasis on conversion can devolve into coercive and manipulative religious imperialism. An emphasis on servanthood, at its best, results in an increased quality of life for many people in areas such as education and

healthcare. The temptation of servanthood, Mead explains is “to lose its depth and grounding. It can degenerate into mere activism and ‘do-good-ism’ when it loses its intimate link to the story and example of Jesus” (Mead 1991:47).

Because ministry in a multicultural milieu often requires a strong emphasis on servanthood, I asked Jin Kim of Church of All Nations what they do to keep service from devolving into “mere activism,” as Mead terms it. Kim responded with a powerful example. Currently, the primary beneficiaries of the church’s “Good Samaritan” fund are recent African immigrants. Kim has encouraged them that, although they may not be able to contribute to the church financially at this time, there are other ways they can contribute.

This group recently came together in a service project for an elderly gentleman who lives near the church. Kim has told this group, “Whatever you need, the church is going to do its best to provide for those needs, but you also are equal members of the church. You also are to tithe.” Kim explains, “So, they’re not only receiving things from the church; they have to contribute. . . . That way we try to make sure that everyone is shown dignity in the church; everyone retains their dignity even if they receive from the church” (2005a). At Church of All Nations an African choir has recently been formed. Pastor Jin Kim explains that the choir is another way the recent immigrants can contribute to the church. Being able to give something back to the church, even if it is not a financial contribution, indicates to the congregation that they are equal members with everyone else.

Other respondents spoke of the importance of being in service with others. A member of Hinshaw explained, “You get to know people a whole lot better working with

them.” A member of Mosaic recalled a short-term mission trip overseas as a time when relationships with others in the church were strengthened.

Service toward other members of the church gives people a sense of ownership, reaffirming their connection to the congregation. Whether it is involvement in music ministry, lay pastoral care, teaching or service of another type, people bond with one another when they are working side by side. And when there is intentional effort to make ministries diverse, the resultant bonds are cross-cultural.

### Summary

These things keep a multicultural church going. Initial outreach into the church’s community by way of need-meeting ministry is often a church’s first contact with potential members. The love people experience through those ministries draws them to public worship services. Others visit a worship service for the first time at the invitation of a friend, neighbor, or family member. In either case, churches must be intentional about creating a warm and hospitable atmosphere. An initial positive experience at a worship service opens up the possibility of further contact.

Keeping people connected to the church over time requires incorporation into fellowship. Participation in small groups and eating together seem to particularly effective ways of developing connections. A step beyond fellowship is service. People’s commitment to the community is solidified when they feel they have a place of service, when they feel they have a contribution to make.



## Chapter 7

### Intercultural Sensitivity in Multicultural Churches

Thus far, we have considered the practices and theological commitments of multicultural churches, the role of pastors, and growth in those churches. The discussion now moves in a slightly different direction. Think of it as switching to a different pair of glasses. In previous chapters, we used the theory of social construction and church growth theory to understand multicultural ministry. The set of lenses in the current chapter comes from the field of Intercultural Studies, particularly Milton Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), and the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), which is based on the developmental model. This allows us to examine some of the practices that have been discussed previously, and some that have not, in a different way, much the same way that a CAT scan provides information about the body that is different from the information that provided by an MRI scan.

#### The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Given the choice, most people prefer to be with people who are culturally similar to themselves. Patterns of speech, as well as non-verbal cues, are familiar within one's own cultural group. Interacting with persons of different cultural backgrounds, therefore, entails operating within the context of unfamiliar patterns. Ministry in a multicultural must be based on the understanding that the Scriptures call believers to cross boundaries of culture such as unfamiliar patterns of communication. While the ability to operate in unfamiliar cultural contexts is not natural, it can be learned. Interculturalist Milton Bennett (1993) calls this ability "intercultural sensitivity."

The DMIS outlines a progression of stages from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Bennett defines ethnocentrism as “assuming that the worldview of one’s own culture is central to all reality” (1993:30). Ethnorelativism refers to the development of greater recognition and acceptance of cultural differences (1993:22).

As noted earlier in this dissertation, movement from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism takes place in a series of stages (Bennett 1993: 29 ff.): Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration.<sup>97</sup> The first three of these stages are related to ethnocentrism; the second group is related to ethnorelativism. For each of these six stages Bennett suggests a number of developmental strategies.

### Denial

This stage is, as the name suggests, a denial of differences. Denial of cultural difference may be a simple lack of awareness, or it may involve conscious separation, i.e., the intentional erection of barriers—physical and/or social (Bennett 1993:29ff.). The developmental strategies for this stage include what Bennett calls “cultural awareness” activities. “These generally take the form of International Night, Multicultural Week, or similar functions, where music, dance, food, and costumes are exhibited. . . . For more sophisticated (but not more sensitive) audiences, history lectures, discussion of political topics, or other such presentations may serve the same purpose” (1993:34).

### Defense

In the Defense stage (Bennett 1993:34ff.) there is awareness of diversity, which causes an individual or group to feel threatened. Defense can take the form of denigration—the demeaning of the other through negative stereotyping, or it may

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<sup>97</sup> Robert J. Schreier (1997:95) suggests a similar progression in the development of a multicultural society. He sees three important stages: 1) recognition “as an act of acknowledging awareness and legitimacy,” 2) “respect for difference,” and 3) “cooperation and communication.”

manifest itself in superiority—highlighting what is best about one’s own culture. Defense may also manifest as reversal, i.e., rejecting one’s own culture and embracing the other, known in common parlance as “going native.” Developmental strategies for this stage emphasize “the commonality of all cultures, particular in terms of what is generally good in all cultures. While this seems antithetical to the cultural relativity called for in successful intercultural communication, it is a necessary stage of development that must precede a subsequent emphasis on difference (Bennett 1993:40-41).

### Minimization

In this stage (Bennett 1993:41 ff.), similarities are emphasized while differences are downplayed. The attitude that “once you get below the surface, all religions are really the same” illustrates minimization. In this stage, people tend to focus on physical similarities such as eating and procreation, and/or on “transcendent” similarities—the near universal belief in a supreme being, or the practice of some form of spirituality for example.

The first developmental strategy at this stage is developing an awareness of one’s own culture. The reason for this, Bennett explains, is that “For many people in minimization, lack of awareness of their own culture underlies the assumption of cultural similarity. When they can place more of their own behavior in a cultural context, they are less inclined to assume that the behavior is universal” (Bennett 1993:45). A second strategy, building on the first, involves “simulations, reports of personal experience, and other methods of illustrating substantial cultural differences in the interpretation of behavior” (Bennett 1993:45).

### Acceptance

In this first stage of ethnorelativism (Bennett 1993:47ff.), one comes to acknowledge and respect differences, both physical differences such as language, communication styles including important nonverbal cues, and value differences. The main developmental strategy at this stage is “emphasizing the practical application of ethnorelative acceptance to intercultural communication” (Bennett 1993:51). In other words, the task is to show in concrete ways how ethnorelativism improves relationships in social and work-related settings.

### Adaptation

This stage involves the development of new skills appropriate for functioning within a new worldview. Bennett is careful to distinguish adaptation from assimilation, “wherein one’s identity is absorbed by a new culture” (1993:51, citing Prosser 1978). Bennett notes that adaptation is an “additive” process. “Maintenance of one’s original worldview is encouraged, so the adaptations necessary for effective communication in other cultures extend, rather than replace, one’s native skills” (1993:52).

The development strategies for moving through the adaptation stage and into integration might include “dyads with other-culture partners, facilitated multicultural group discussions, or outside assignments involving interviewing of people from other cultures. Training in the practice of empathy is also appropriate. As much as possible, activities should be related to real-life communication situations” (Bennett 1993:58).

### Integration

According to Peter Adler (1977:25), “A new type of person whose orientation and view of the world profoundly transcends his indigenous culture is developing from the

complex of social, political, economic, and educational interactions of our time.” In integration, one becomes a truly “multicultural person,” evaluating actions or behavior on the basis of context, feeling at home in multiple cultural settings, yet not fully at home in any. This tension is similar to that which Andrew Walls (1982) has identified between what he calls the “indigenising” principle and the “pilgrim” principle. Bennett’s integration stage involves “contextual evaluation,” which is “a development beyond adaptation where one attains the ability to analyze and evaluate situations from one or more chosen cultural perspectives” (1993:60-61).

### Constructive Marginality

Bennett describes marginality as a sort of tension. The one in constructive marginality is a participant in multiple cultures or frames of reference, but not completely at home in any of them. “In other words there is no natural cultural identity for a marginal person. There are no unquestioned assumptions, no intrinsically absolute right behaviors, nor any necessary reference group” (Bennett 1993:63-64).

According to Bennett, intercultural development takes place on three levels: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

Initial development is cognitive—the generation of relevant categories for cultural difference. The reaction to this development is affective—a feeling of threat to the stability of one’s worldview. The developmental treatment for a threat response is behavioral—joint activity toward a common goal—and the response to this treatment is cognitive—consolidation of differences into universal categories. Subsequent appreciation of cultural difference is affective and is combined with increased cognitive knowledge [sic] of differences. This change is followed by behavioral applications involving the building of intercultural communication skills. Finally, all three dimensions are integrated in the operation of “constructive marginality.” (Bennett 1993:26)

### The Appropriateness of the DMIS

The model Bennett outlines is insightful, offering a helpful understanding of how

one moves from ignorance to appreciation of another culture. Bennett's terminology may be troubling to some. The mention of relativism may arouse suspicion and elicit expressions of concern. It is necessary, therefore, to clarify the meaning and application of Bennett's terminology. "Ethnorelativism," as Bennett presents it is virtually synonymous with cultural relativism. Eugene Nida notes that there is more than one type of cultural relativism. Nida calls attention to Robert Redfield's definition of cultural relativism: "Cultural relativism means that the values expressed in any culture are to be both understood and themselves valued only according to the way the people who carry that culture see things" (Redfield 1953:144). Redfield himself observed that such a view is untenable, and Nida adds that ethical indifference, or "ethical neutralism" is not acceptable. "[W]e must reject emphatically the assumption that in order to be objective about cultural facts one must wholeheartedly adopt the dogma of absolute cultural relativity" (Nida 2001:49). Nida calls for a stance of "relative relativism," which he says is a biblical position. "The relativism of the Bible is relative to three principal factors: (1) the endowment and opportunities of people, (2) the extent of revelation, and (3) the cultural patterns of the society in question" (Nida 2001:50). The clearest expression of biblical relative relativism, Nida says, is found in Paul's first letter to Corinth:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:19-22)

Nida explains, "Biblical relativism is not a matter of inconsistency, but a recognition of the different cultural factors which influence standards and actions"

(2001:52). Darrell Whiteman (1981) outlines a similar understanding.

From a Biblical perspective the principle of cultural relativism calls us to be all things to all men. For Christians, this perspective is on the cultural level, what personal acceptance or the Golden Rule is on the individual level. It recommends that instead of making *a priori* judgments about a culture (or an individual), we should accept the validity of that culture (or individual) regardless of whether our own values predispose us to approve of the culture (or individual). This position of affirming the validity of another culture assumes that it has its own strengths and weaknesses, different from ours, but it does not predispose us to becoming ethical relativists. (1981:228-229)

Charles Kraft adds, “A belief in the validity of other cultures does not obligate one to approve of such customs as cannibalism, widow burning, infanticide, premarital sex, polygamy and the like. But it does insist that *one take such customs seriously within the cultural context in which they occur* and attempt to appreciate the importance of their function within that context” (Kraft 1979:50). Charles Van Engen makes the important observation that faithful Christians can be “culturally pluralist” while remaining “faith-particularist” (1996:183-184). With those qualifications in mind, Bennett’s model may be employed as a theoretical construct through which multicultural churches can be studied.

#### Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity

The IDI is an empirical measure of the theoretical concepts defined by the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. The inventory is based on the DMIS and research carried out by Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph.D. There are several points at which the IDI differs from the DMIS. The research behind the IDI indicates that Denial and Defense cannot be measured separately. Neither can Acceptance and Adaptation be measured separately. Minimization is measured as a separate factor (Hammer and Bennett 2001:26ff.)

The IDI provides a measure of Perceived Intercultural Sensitivity and the Developmental Intercultural Sensitivity of the group. The Perceived Intercultural

Sensitivity measurement may be taken not only as an indication of where the group sees itself as being, but also as an indication of where the group would like to be. The Developmental Intercultural Sensitivity measures where the group actually is. There is generally a gap between the perceived and the developmental.

The use of the DMIS and the IDI is intended to answer two questions: 1. What level of intercultural sensitivity is necessary to sustain a multicultural fellowship? 2. What developmental strategies do multicultural churches use to develop intercultural sensitivity among their membership?

#### Results of the Intercultural Development Inventory

The composite Perceived Intercultural Sensitivity for all participants who took the inventory—pastors and members—was well into the acceptance / adaptation stage. In this stage, Bennett explains, “cultural difference is both acknowledged and respected. Rather than being evaluated negatively or positively as part of a defensive strategy, the existence of difference is accepted as a necessary and preferable human condition” (1993:27-28). So, in general, those who took the inventory saw themselves as accepting of other cultures, and as beginning to develop adaptive strategies for relating to persons of other cultural backgrounds.

The Developmental Intercultural Sensitivity of the group, as indicated by the inventory, was mid-way through the minimization stage, which “represents a development beyond defense because, at this stage, cultural difference is overtly acknowledged and is not negatively evaluated, either explicitly as in the denigration form of defense or implicitly as in the superiority form. Rather, cultural difference is trivialized” (Bennett 1993:21). So, according to the group profile from the IDI,



respondents neither deny cultural difference, nor do they feel threatened in the presence of cultural difference. They do, however, tend to minimize differences. The strength of this position is the acknowledgement of cultural difference. Respondents are well beyond the type of mindset that would devalue one cultural group, or elevate one cultural group over another. There is genuine love and respect for one another across racial / cultural lines. In addition, the Perceived Intercultural Sensitivity scale indicates a desire to accept and adapt to culturally related differences in behavior and values.

In addition to the Perceived and Developmental Intercultural Sensitivity measures, the inventory uses five scales (See Appendix D for IDI Group Profile.):

1. DD Scale: this measures the theoretical constructs of Denial and Defense
2. R Scale: this measures the Reversal form of Defense
3. M Scale: this measures Minimization
4. AA Scale: this measures the stages of Acceptance and Adaptation
5. EM Scale: this measures Encapsulated Marginality, a form of Integration

These five scales indicate whether the issues associated with a given stage are unresolved, in transition, or resolved. The group profile for all respondents indicates that the DD stage is resolved, i.e., people recognize cultural differences without feeling defensive, and without polarizing into an “us and them” sort of mentality. The R stage is also resolved, meaning that, again, there is no “us and them” sort of polarization, particularly the sort where “them” is superior to “us.” The M Scale for respondents in this study indicates a worldview that highlights commonality and universal issues, while minimizing differences. The AA Scale for respondents in this study indicates transition, i.e., the churches are learning to value and adapt to cultural difference.

In terms of cultural difference, Acceptance is the opposite of Defense. In Defense, the recognition of difference is associated with threat: “They are different, and therefore they are threatening.” In Acceptance, a renewed recognition of difference accompanies the move from Minimization, but here it is associated

with curiosity: “They are different, and therefore they are interesting.” (Hammer and Bennett 2001:41)

In summary, the chief issue in terms of developing intercultural sensitivity in these multicultural churches is minimization. It is crucial that unity in Christ be emphasized, which clearly is happening at these churches. However, unity should not be presented in such a way that it glosses over, or denies cultural differences.

What the inventory shows is that people need to understand each other’s culture and history at deeper levels. There is clearly intentionality and desire to build cross-cultural bridges in all churches. Interview data from some churches indicated that what might be lacking is opportunity to develop cross-cultural relationships.

Another possible reason the profile shows the test group in minimization is the evangelical commitment to the authority and universality of Scripture, and the understanding that the gospel is good news for all people. According to the DMIS, one form of minimization is “Transcendent Universalism.” An example of this is “any religions which holds that all people are creations of a particular supernatural entity or force” (Bennett 1993:43). According to Bennett, “A more pernicious manifestation of ethnocentrism based on transcendent universalism is derived from any of a variety of aggressive conversion activities” (1993:44). Thus, the DMIS is somewhat biased against evangelical Christianity, which has among its purposes evangelization and conversion. It will be helpful, therefore, to examine data from interviews for evidence of minimization and acceptance / adaptation.

#### Evidence for Minimization

In the interview data, there was evidence of minimization. Some statements from respondents such as the following emphasize similarities and / or downplay differences.

Statements such as these are indicators of minimization.

“[We] try to approach people as people.”

“We’re the same, just different colors.”

“[The] shared meal is important [it helps me see] these people are just like I am.”

“Life happens to everybody.”

“[We’re] all children of God.”

Such statements indicate an orientation to cultural difference that emphasizes similarities, while downplaying the significance of differences.

#### Evidence for Acceptance and Adaptation

While the IDI results for the churches in this study indicated their general orientation to cultural difference as minimization, evidence emerged during the interview that shows these churches are moving toward acceptance and adaptation. As discussed above, Bennett’s DMIS views attempts at religious conversion as an indicator of ethnocentrism (1993: 44). Given the evangelical commitment of the churches that participated in this research project, the question to be explored, therefore, is how evangelical commitment and intercultural sensitivity work together.

Intercultural sensitivity in worship style. One of the biggest issues in multicultural church ministry is the question of worship style or pattern. Mark Jobe of New Life recalls the church encountering this question in the early days of his tenure. “We knew reaching the neighborhood would be difficult, and we weren’t big enough, smart enough, or wealthy enough, but we were willing to change” (Quoted in Shelley 2005:20). Jobe knew the first barrier to overcome was music. The church’s organ and hymnbooks would never

fit the neighborhood's growing Mexican population. They adapted their musical style to accommodate the population they were attempting to reach.

Churches in transition from a homogeneous congregation to a more heterogeneous congregation are addressing this challenge. Bart Milleson of Hinshaw indicated that the worship planners in the church were "working to be more reflective of the diversity in the congregation, incorporating elements from different traditions" (2005). The other churches in the study are sensitive to the various cultures present in worship, seeking to value the music and traditions of each group.

At ACAC, a typical worship service includes more than one style of music. People find the mix liberating. As one respondent put it, "I think you've got music that allows Black people the freedom to stand up and dance in the aisle and then you see White people doing it too."

This sensitivity also extends to preaching style. As noted above, Paul Sheppard consciously changed his preaching style from a more traditional African American style of preaching to a teaching style. Sheppard explained that the Black preaching style assumes most people already agree with what is being said from the pulpit; the goal is more to inspire than to instruct. Sheppard's goal was to teach Christian Scripture to both the church and the unchurched. A strategy to reach the unchurched turned out to be a strategy for reaching a broader range of people. Says Sheppard, "Had I been a hooper, a lot of people wouldn't have bothered to stop by" (2005b).

Intercultural sensitivity in the multicultural church often involves somewhat of a balancing act. At Park Avenue UMC, for example, they constantly work to maintain a balance between elements of African American church tradition and broader American

culture. African American worship services have traditionally lengthier than services in White congregations. Park Avenue wants to be sensitive to the flow of the service and to the leading of the Holy Spirit, but such concerns must find balance with the concern for time constraints, as the church has multiple worship services on Sunday mornings.

Another way churches work for a balance relates to issues of language barriers. At some New Life locations, services are held in both English and Spanish. The same is true at Mosaic. Normally the Sunday morning worship service is conducted in English, with a Spanish language service in the evening accommodating the schedules of the church's Latino population. The inclusion of César Ortega in Mosaic's Sunday morning teaching rotation is evidence that the church is developing adaptive strategies.

Intercultural sensitivity in leadership selection. Another area where evidence emerged for an acceptance / adaptation orientation to cultural difference was in staffing. When hiring associates, senior pastors at times must pass over competent candidates of one cultural background to find a candidate that fits the congregation's needs culturally. The cultural makeup of the community can also become a factor in staffing decisions. The Melrose Park location of New Life is located in a neighborhood that has historically been an Italian enclave, but in recent years has seen an influx of Latinos. Senior pastor Mark Jobe was faced with a question: "*Who would do well in this half-Italian, half-Hispanic area?*" Jobe recalls, "The leader I thought of, John Palmieri, had been at our church for a while. His father was Italian, but he had a lot of ministry experience in Hispanic neighborhoods. He has done a terrific job in Melrose bridging the older Italian people with the younger Hispanic families" (Quoted in Shelley 2005:24).

Accepting and valuing other cultures. Much has been written about the failure of missions to distinguish between the gospel and Western culture, and the subsequent imposition of Western culture on indigenous cultures (Woodley 2001:77ff., e.g.). One of the most important issues proponents of the homogeneous unit principle raise is that integrated churches of the past have similarly tended to devalue the culture of non-dominant groups. The churches included in this study have been intentional about valuing the distinctives brought to the community by various cultures. Part of appreciating what different cultures contribute is learning to distinguish between what is biblical and what is cultural.

Paul Sheppard of Abundant Life speaks to this issue out of the book of Romans. “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters” (Romans 14:1). The Apostle Paul goes on to discuss issues in the church at Rome such as dietary regulations, and observances of sacred days. Sheppard teaches that Paul is distinguishing between non-negotiable elements of the gospel and negotiable elements of Christian practice. He calls his congregation to “major on the majors” (2005a). So, clothing is not an issue at Abundant Life. African Americans, for example, are free to dress in a style that reflects and celebrates their heritage, and feel comfortable doing so.

Ferdie Llenado of The United Methodist Church of Union is working to build acceptance and appreciation of other cultures by developing multicultural greeting teams. Team members are encouraged to dress in their native clothing. Another way of expressing appreciation for other cultures is to display the flags of the nations represented among the membership. The United Methodist Church of Union currently has 15 flags in the church. On occasion, a song may be sung in another language, another way Union

expresses acceptance and appreciation for different cultures. Llenado hopes that eventually the church can have an area in the church building where artifacts from various cultures can be displayed.

Church of All Nations shows appreciation for different cultures in other ways. The church recently formed an African choir. Their first time out was Pentecost Sunday, 2005. Anyone is welcome to join the African choir, as long as they are willing to learn the songs in Swahili. Pastor Jin Kim explains that the choir gives the Africans a way to contribute to the congregation.

Rock Dillaman of ACAC is conscientious about helping White members in particular appreciate the contribution of their African American brothers and sisters.

Here's the example I use. All my life growing up in church I heard that Christian mantra, the old mantra, that adversity with God produces character. If you're walking through the valley if you're hanging onto God and listening, that's where you really take the big leaps of growth. That's a Christian mantra that nobody challenges. That being the case, who has suffered more adversity in the US, the Anglo community or the Black community? The Black community has had to deal with slavery, what, three generations ago, segregation two generations ago. They've dealt with glass ceilings, subtle racism, profiling. . . . So, if they've had the greater amount of adversity, who probably has learned more from God through the crucible of trial? African Americans! So rather than us going to them because they need us, we should be going to them to teach us, if we really adversity produces character. When I share from that perspective. . . . I can watch the lights come on. (Dillaman 2005)

Another way intercultural sensitivity is evidenced at ACAC is the observance of Black History Month and Martin Luther Junior King Jr. Sunday. A chapel in the newest building at ACAC is named after one of the early leaders of the Alliance movement in Pittsburgh who was African American. His story is posted outside the chapel. Such visual displays are important in developing cross-cultural acceptance and appreciation.

It is interesting to contrast the stance of Abundant Life Christian Fellowship on this issue with that of ACAC. Abundant Life has consciously chosen not to highlight

observances such as the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Upon initial consideration, it would seem necessary to conclude that one of these churches was modeling intercultural sensitivity in this area and one was not. It is necessary, however, to take the respective histories of the church into consideration.

Twenty years ago, Abundant Life was an African American congregation that embraced diversity by welcoming Whites into their fellowship. Twenty years ago, ACAC was a White church that embraced diversity by welcoming Blacks into their fellowship. Both cases show evidence for acceptance and adaptation. Abundant Life's African American members adapted to the Whites who wanted to join the church by refusing to enforce observance of an African American holiday. ACAC's White members adapted to the cultural distinctives of incoming Black membership by learning about Martin Luther King Jr. and by celebrating the holiday commemorating him.

#### Developing Intercultural Sensitivity through Dialogue

Although it is not easy, and can become uncomfortable, some of the churches studied in the course of this project offer venues where people can discuss racism openly. While such discussions may bring out defensive reactions, many people, although they may not understand the other person's perspective, are willing to learn, to hear the other side, and to build empathy as they hear stories from the other side. One example of such dialogues comes from ACACA. In September 2005, the church offered a venue where people could view the video *Unchained Memories*, a video about the realities of slavery and its continuing effects on the African American community. The video was followed by a time of discussion.

Pastor David Anderson of Bridgeway Community Church near Washington, D.C.



took a similar approach with “reconciliation groups.” In a series of meetings in small groups participants discussed questions such as “What grievances do you perceive whites may have with blacks regarding the issue of race?” and “What grievances do you perceive blacks may have with whites regarding the issue of race?” The discussion was at times quite frank, but eventuated in greater levels of understanding and appreciation cross-culturally. Anderson comments, “It was wonderful to see people getting to know others from a different background. By the end of the six weeks we were together, the participants bonded to such a degree that they didn’t want the group to end” (Anderson 2004:92-93).

Rock Dillaman has observed that building intercultural sensitivity requires being alert to teaching opportunities. As an example, if a children’s worker encounters a situation where kids are throwing racial epithets at one another, they take it as a teaching opportunity.

Key to the development of positive cross-cultural relationships is the example of the leader. Dillaman, for instance, lives in a diverse community, has close Black friends, and takes vacations with African American friends. As Dillaman puts it, “I have to model it as well as teach it” (2005).

In several of the churches I visited, the issue of expressiveness in worship was raised. Pastoral leadership has been intentional about allowing for diversity of worship postures. People whose cultural background predisposes them toward a more expressive style of worship are free to be expressive; those who are not culturally conditioned toward expressive worship are free to worship in a less expressive manner. One respondent noted that intercultural sensitivity in the area of worship must begin with the

pastor. “It’s important that the pastors know their people and are not offended by cultural distinctives.” Pastors must lead the way in intercultural sensitivity, welcoming diversity and teaching others to do so. A respondent from New Life observed that a number of the pastors have previous cross-cultural experience.

I think when the leadership has the ability to cross cultures with ease, then people who are coming in can feel comfortable with that, can feel welcomed. I think that’s a big key. They set the tone. In service, Pastor Asa will sometimes make reference to things that he has learned growing up in Mexico, or laugh at the macho culture. Someone who has experienced that kind of culture can hear that a lot better than if it was coming from someone on the outside looking in. He’s able to use illustrations and Spanish words.

Appreciating cultural distinctives continues beyond the Sunday morning worship experience. Mosaic is intentionally diverse in their Acts 2 Fellowships. The young adult group exemplifies the way cultural distinctives are valued within a small group setting. At one point in the group’s history, they would take turns providing food for the group meeting. Those responsible for the meal on a given week would prepare a dish unique to their culture. One respondent recounted that the young adult ministry once celebrated Chinese New Year. One Chinese American member of the group shared about the holiday, and administered a quiz. The one with the lowest score had the dubious privilege of eating preserved plums, a treat, perhaps, for the Chinese palate, but less tasty for Westerners.

To build understanding and appreciation of other cultures Hinshaw has organized events where members are encouraged to dress in their culturally distinctive styles, and to bring food from their cultures to share. Such events fall in the category of what Bennett calls “cultural awareness” activities, which “generally take the form of International Night, Multicultural Week, or similar functions, where music, dance, food, and costumes are exhibited. In terms of this model, the purpose served by these activities is to create

more differentiation among general categories of cultural difference” (Bennett 1993:34).

The initial encounter can remove some of the unknowns of cultural otherness, and allay corresponding fears. Eric Law (2000) describes such encounters as a “grace margin,” a safe, non-threatening place where cultural difference can be explored and discussed. Initial encounters with cultural difference at events such as those described by Bennett lay a foundation for further development in intercultural sensitivity. Intentional diversity in the area of fellowship, such as modeled by Mosaic, builds on initial encounters. Interest leads to understanding, which leads to appreciating and valuing other cultures. One respondent from Mosaic explained the rationale underlying fellowship groups. “You cannot develop friendship without taking the time to understand. Understanding people from other cultures is a slow process that needs a lot of time. So, our church has a lot of activities where you just hang out, you just spend time.” It is important to note that cross-cultural encounter does not automatically lead to the development of positive relationships. It may lead to prejudice. It is necessary to prepare people for cross-cultural encounters by explaining basic issues of cultural difference. Those who experience cross-cultural contact expecting to experience significant cultural differences will be more likely to develop positive relationships.

Spending time with someone of a different culture builds understanding and friendship, explains Pastor Harry Li. “Then we become culturally competent” (2005). A powerful example of Mosaic’s intercultural sensitivity and competence involves their ministry to the hearing impaired. The leadership of Mosaic invited their hearing impaired membership to talk about their unique needs, exploring questions such as “What can we do to make worship here more meaningful? How is the worship here?”

One member clarified the challenges that deaf people face generally, and in a worship setting specifically. She explained that most deaf people have only a third or fourth grade reading level because American Sign Language is conceptual. So literally reading the English words is like operating in a second language. Although a church may have an interpreter for the hearing impaired, the interpreter conceptualizes the meaning, but the song moves faster than the interpreter can conceptualize, making worship difficult. In response to their needs, the worship planning team arranged to have a video played before church as a call to worship for the hearing impaired. Although they cannot hear the music, the hearing impaired members have found this to be an effective means of enhancing their worship experience. Mosaic recognizes that this is simply a first step in accommodating the hearing impaired and they continue to invest time and resources.

Cross-cultural interaction in fellowship groups at Mosaic has led to people to discover that, despite cultural differences, they have a common bond in their commitment to Jesus Christ. They are also developing an appreciation for different cultures. People are learning that every culture contributes something to enrich the community of faith, and that they can trust leaders of different cultural backgrounds. They trust those leaders because of their common commitment to Christ, and appreciate the different perspectives the various cultures bring to the community.

The pastoral staff at Mosaic affirms this. Trusting and appreciating cultural difference means adopting a different leadership style. Senior Pastor Mark DeYmaz explained that leading staff in multicultural church is different from leading staff in a homogeneous church. DeYmaz felt that the expectation in a homogeneous setting is that the pastor has, or should have, all the answers. In a multicultural church intercultural

sensitivity requires the pastor to solicit input from multiple angles. The attitude of the pastor leading a multicultural church must be, “I don’t understand your perspective, but I trust you” (2005).

Intercultural sensitivity versus assimilationism. Multicultural churches perform the delicate balancing act of being inclusive without being assimilationist. A respondent from Mosaic shared here experience: “There is no pressure to conform here. . . This is the only church that I have felt free to bring a drug addict or a drunk into.” As a recovering alcoholic, she felt unwelcome at times in other churches, but at Mosaic, that has not been an issue. “We meet people where we are. . . It doesn’t matter how much faith you have or how little faith you have. . . . If you are seeking, we will put somebody in your life to help you meet your needs where you are.”

As discussed earlier in this paper, the homogeneous unit principle forces a false dichotomy: bad integration or no integration. Jin Kim of Church of All Nations sees a third option, a way out of that false dichotomy. He terms it “integration with integrity” (Kim 2005a). What he and other pastors of multicultural churches envision is a community of faith where people of diverse backgrounds meet together, where the gifts each culture brings are valued and appreciated, where people can attend without giving up their cultural distinctives, African clothing or worship styles, for example.

One respondent from New Life explained the way he sees the church operating within the context of diversity. “I don’t want to try to convert you to be like me. My goal is to convert you to be more like Christ and he didn’t have any boundaries, he wasn’t culturally driven. He ministered to all.” The same respondent talked about the importance of understanding other cultures as it relates to the advance of the gospel. “As Paul also

says, you don't want to cause someone to stumble, if it causes a weaker brother to stumble, then I won't do it. It's about dying to yourself and understanding that it's not about you, without losing who you are though at the same time. I think that our grip on culture shouldn't be so tight."

Abundant Life has a number of core values that guide their teaching and practice. The one they consider primary is "Accommodating the Unchurched." They are committed to presenting the gospel in such a way that it makes sense to unchurched people. A close second to that value is "Unity Rather than Uniformity." This value is expressed in the way they have worked to change the "dress code" of the church. As Pastor Paul Sheppard explained it in one congregational meeting: "If we're going to reach unchurched people, we need to realize they probably don't have church clothes" (2005a). They started implementing an informal dress code even before they began to experience a significant influx of visitors.

The difficulty of intercultural sensitivity. Building and maintaining intercultural sensitivity is not a simple undertaking. As discussed above, diversity in leadership, both staff and lay leadership, is a key element of the process. In a larger church tough staffing decisions still must be made, but there is a sense of momentum. In the transitional stages in a smaller church, maintaining this diversity is difficult. Bart Milleson of Hinshaw shared that with a smaller number of people to draw from it can be difficult to find qualified lay leaders to model diversity for the congregation. Milleson recounted a particularly difficult time when two key lay leaders, one African American woman and a lay leader from Ghana both left the church for other ministries. It was a "major loss," Milleson recalls (2005).

Another difficulty in the multicultural church is the issue of political persuasion. Some evangelical Christians find it difficult to imagine that someone could be a committed Christian and a Democrat. As Matthew Paul Turner jokingly put it, “Most Christians assume *all* Christians are right-winged lovers of George W. Bush. I’ve heard several arguments break out after one of the faithful few came out of the closet as a liberal-minded Clinton fan” (2004:71). On the other side are those who wonder how committed Christians can be so blind to issues of social justice and racial equality by casting their vote for Republican candidates.

In only one church was there an indication of how such issues were handled from the pulpit. One respondent from ACAC observed that Pastor Rock Dillaman is careful not to express his own political persuasion. Rather, he seeks to understand, and help the congregation understand, political issues in a broader context.

Intercultural sensitivity and Christian Scripture. In considering the question of intercultural sensitivity as it relates the use of Christian Scripture, two issues come into view. First, immersion in the multicultural context changes one’s reading of Scripture. Second, the changed reading of Scripture changes people’s perception of reality, ultimately resulting in different action responses to the message of Scripture.

The first of the above issues may give the reader pause. Conservative theologians raise cautions at the prospect of anything that smacks of situational hermeneutics. Lutheran theologian Robert Warneck warns that a situational hermeneutic is “beyond the boundaries of interpretation guided by sound Lutheran confessional principles” (2002:360). Warneck is suspicious of any hermeneutic that suggests “a designated situation itself should have a major role in determining how Scripture is to be understood

when applied to pastoral and ecclesial practice, “ and asks, “What happens to the authority of Scripture and to both the sufficiency and the clarity of Scripture when situational hermeneutics are engaged?” (2002:360).

To suggest that the multicultural context shapes one’s reading of Scripture is not to advocate moving beyond the bounds of orthodox Christianity. Rather, it is simply an acknowledgement that all theology is contextual theology, that “we all approach the biblical text from our specific social location” (De La Torre 2002). As Stephen Bevans puts it, “There is no such thing as ‘theology’; there is only *contextual* theology: *feminist* theology, *black* theology, *liberation* theology, *Filipino* theology, *Asian-American* theology, *African* theology, and so forth” (2002:3, italics in the original). Thus, “The Message,” i.e., the Good News about what God has done in Jesus Christ, must always be communicated as “a message” for particular people in particular places, particular times, and particular life situations. To Bevans’ list, one might well add *Multicultural* Theology.

The hermeneutic at work in multicultural churches is similar to the hermeneutical circle of liberation theology, in which there is a dynamic interaction between text and context. The experience of reality leads one to question the ruling ideology, which in turn shapes the way one understands Scripture. The new understanding of Scripture enables one to view reality in a different light. More specifically, it leads to the exegetical suspicion that the prevailing interpretation has not taken important pieces of data into account. Ultimately the interplay between text and context leads to the development of a new hermeneutic, a new way of interpreting Scripture.

While liberation theology raises concerns for some, it offers critiques of power that deserve acknowledgement. Furthermore, liberation theology demonstrates how



biblical interpretation has been used to justify the abuse of power. Miguel De La Torre argues, “the Bible has been used throughout U.S. history to justify the oppression of ‘people of color’ for the benefit of Euroamericans” (2002:5). De La Torre continues: “The genocide of Native Americans, the slavery of Africans, and the pauperization of Latinos / as are but a few examples of how biblical interpretation has condoned oppression by the dominant culture” (2002:5, cf. Sugirtharajah 1998:54-84).

William Dyrness, less forcefully, contends that “the middle-class subculture has existed in such a close relationship with Christianity that it sometimes is difficult to distinguish what is American from what is Christian” (Dyrness 1989:12-13). Dyrness identifies three clusters of values that have shaped American biblical interpretation: “Americans’ materialist bias, their temperamental optimism, and their individualism” (1989:19). Whether it is admitted or not, mainstream values of American culture have shaped American Christians’ reading of Scripture. As desirable as an objective reading of Scripture may seem to be, and as much as conservative theologians such as Robert Warneck might believe themselves capable of an objective reading of Scripture, such a reading remains as elusive as the lost city of Atlantis. Thus, to observe that the multicultural context shapes one’s reading of Scripture is not so problematic as it initially seemed. It is merely the honest admission that what one sees depends upon where one stands.

Jin Kim, pastor of Church of All Nations is firmly committed to orthodox Christianity, in particular the Reformed understanding of orthodox Christianity. However, even with such a commitment, Kim advocates for a concept he calls “contextual orthodoxy.” Kim explains, “It means that we still put a high value on orthodoxy, but understand that all theology is contextual, and that orthodoxy can come

from different perspectives. So it's not relativism, which is anything goes" (2005a).

Rock Dillaman explained that his own immersion in a multicultural context changed the way he read Scripture.

As I began to spend time with and form friendships with African Americans, and again, intentionally read and form relationships, that's when my lights started coming on. Then, I started seeking out Christian writing that addressed these things. . . . All of that sort of coalesced into this growing awareness. Then, when I sat down to exegete Scripture. . . . I began to grapple with two things: economic justice issues and race issues. When I began to grapple with those two things, I began to read passages in Scripture and say, "How did I miss this all these years, and how come none of the teaching and preaching I heard growing up touched on this?" Yet here it is, right here in black and white.<sup>98</sup>

Once a pastoral leader has developed this sort of multicultural hermeneutic, it will begin to affect the congregation through preaching. Dillaman sees Scripture as the primary means by which people's thinking and subsequent behavior are transformed. "If people have been trained to think one way, then they need what Paul would describe as the renewing process of their minds, and only when their minds are being renewed does the transformation of their lifestyle, their values, and their perspectives take place."

Intercultural sensitivity in curriculum and programming. The crosscultural hermeneutic discussed above carries over into curriculum and programming. This hermeneutic develops a level of intercultural sensitivity that forces the rethinking of curriculum and programming. A particularly poignant example of this comes from ACAC. The church was using material published by Pioneer Clubs in their midweek kids clubs. One of the assignments for the boys instructed them to go home and ask their fathers to help them build a little golf course in the back yard. There were only three problems with that: 1. Many of the boys did not have fathers in the home. 2. Most of the boys lived in apartments, and thus did not have back yards. 3. This was well before Tiger

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<sup>98</sup> Rick Warren recently made a similar admission. See footnote 82.

Woods came to prominence, and golf was not a sport to which African American boys would have been drawn. As a result, Karen Dillaman spent five years developing a children's curriculum that was more appropriate for use in a multicultural context.

Ministry in a multicultural milieu prompts not only the reworking of content, but a rethinking of approach as well. One difference multicultural churches have discovered in the way different cultures approach education involves the interplay of information and relationship. In a more homogeneous White context, content is generally more important and the relationship between teacher and students is of secondary importance. In a multicultural teaching environment, the relationship is of primary importance.

#### Conclusions About Intercultural Sensitivity

The development of intercultural sensitivity in an organization involves cognitive, affective and behavioral elements. Any given developmental activity will likely include more than one of these elements, and the development of intercultural sensitivity does not necessarily progress in linear fashion from one dimension to another; cognitive, affective and behavioral development are intertwined. All three of these elements are found in the churches I studied. However, if there were an imbalance between these elements, it would be an over-weighting of the cognitive in some of the cases.

## Chapter 8

### Summary of Findings

When I was in pastoral ministry, I would often return home on Friday afternoons after working all day on my sermon. My wife would usually ask, “Did you get your sermon finished?” My standard reply was, “All but the conclusion.” Conclusions have always been difficult for me. A good conclusion should serve two functions. On the one hand, it should tie all the thoughts previously discussed together. On the other, it should feel not like the end of the road as much as it should feel like a doorway into something else.

In this concluding chapter, I attempt to do both. In the section that immediately follows, I attempt to bring together what has been discussed throughout this work in a format that enables the reader to grasp the major findings in a short amount of space. In subsequent sections, I point ahead, showing possible doorways to related areas of research.

#### Contribution to the Field: Conclusions about Multicultural Ministry

William Dyrness has characterized American culture as “philosophically pragmatist” (1989:30). This orientation longs for sure formulas for success, in this case, something like “three easy steps to an effective multicultural church.” But multicultural ministry is not a pragmatic pursuit. Although some churches<sup>99</sup> experience a certain sense of momentum after a time, it remains a difficult type of ministry. There is no “magic formula,” no “secret to success,” no “silver bullet” that makes the multicultural church “work.” Rather, what has become evident in the course of this project is that multicultural ministry involves a complex web of factors, including but not limited to:

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<sup>99</sup> Among the churches I visited, Allegheny Center Alliance Church and Abundant Life Christian Fellowship most strongly exhibit this sense of momentum.

- Theology of Jesus as the Center
- Intentional Diversity
- Practical Theology of the Holy Spirit
- Cross-cultural Hermeneutic
- Pastoral Vision
- Range of Outreach Ministries
- Dynamic Practice of Prayer
- Fellowship (often in the context of a shared meal)
- Effective use of Symbol and Ceremony

These findings represent the chief contribution of this research project and dissertation to the field of missiology and its understanding of ministry and mission in a multicultural milieu. A brief discussion of each of these elements follows.

#### Theology of Jesus as the Center

This theme was not addressed in Chapter 4 for two reasons. First, the theme of Jesus as the Center was not as strongly articulated in the interview data or elsewhere as some of the other themes. That may have been because I realized early in the process of interviews that pressing to find common theological themes was a somewhat misdirected venture. Second, as was noted in Chapter 5, doctrine and theology in the primary test cases are viewed in a pastoral and teleological sense. That is, the purpose of doctrine and theology is to move people toward the goal of Christ-likeness rather than merely clarifying doctrinal positions *vis a vis* other churches or denominations. Thus, although it was not explicitly articulated as strongly as some other themes, a theology of Jesus as the Center is strong by implication.

While few respondents directly articulated this theological theme, the few that did expressed it notably. Curtiss DeYoung (2005), speaking of Park Avenue UMC, observed that there is a strong sense of Jesus-centeredness in the church. It is a diverse group of people gathered around Jesus. He is the model and example. Jin Kim said, “The scandal

of the gospel is that it's a cult of personality. You're not obeying laws propagated by Jesus, you're obeying Jesus" (2005a). He added at another point in our discussion, the need to "recover Jesus as the creator, who brings something out of nothing, who creates community out of beings in the midst of the modern anxiety of annihilation or nothingness" (2005a). One respondent from another church, when asked what the church did to maintain unity, responded simply, "Focus on Christ." Similarly, a respondent from ACAC answered, "I think most importantly that Christ is in the middle of it."

In addition to statements such as these that explicitly refer to the theme of Jesus as the Center, there is the focus on the sacraments, seen most strongly in the theological reflections of Bart Milleson of Hinshaw UMC. All the meanings of communion identified by Danielson (2005:50), emphasize the centrality of Jesus in the life of the church. Baptism as well points toward Jesus and the believer's inclusion in the community of Jesus' disciples. The practice of footwashing is observed in response to the example of Jesus.

To reiterate what was stated earlier, while the theme of Jesus the Center did not emerge strongly in the interview data, it is strongly implied in, or is the impetus behind, the major elements that did emerge. Thus, the core identity of the multicultural church is that of a body, a family of believers, a community of faith centered around Jesus.

It is appropriate, at this point in the discussion, to address the question of terminology. I might well have chosen to identify this element as a "Theology of Christ as the Center" rather than a "Theology of Jesus as the Center." The choice of Jesus was intentional. My attention was initially directed to the relevance of this difference in terminology, and its theological implications, by Peter Wagner. He observed that part of

the reason for the racial split that divided Circle Church in Chicago was that the Blacks “preferred their ‘funky Jesus’ to the ‘honky Christ’” (Wagner 1979:61).

Anabaptist scholar J. Denny Weaver sheds light on this issue. “The theological tradition of classic orthodoxy, and specifically Nicene-Chalcedonian Christology and Anselmian atonement, is a particular tradition that reflects a particular understanding of the relationship of the church to the social order” (Weaver 2000:252). Weaver draws out the implications, stating, “theology produced by and for people in authority (whether a dominant class, a government, or a hierarchy) may differ significantly from theology produced by and for people who are outside of and/or oppressed by the people in authority” (2000:252). Thus, it may be assumed that the Black membership of Circle Church, in their theologizing, focused on the earthly ministry of Jesus to the poor and the marginalized, whereas the White membership, in their theologizing, spoke more of the ascended Christ.

The difference Weaver (2000:252) mentions is seen in the juxtaposition of the Nicene Creed and Anabaptist confessions of faith. The Nicene Creed mentions the birth, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and session, and future return of Jesus. While the Nicene Creed was formulated in such a way as to be easily remembered, noticeably absent is the earthly ministry of Jesus. What is left out of the Nicene Creed, is highlighted by a contemporary Mennonite confession of faith.

We accept Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. In his ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing, he proclaimed forgiveness of sins and peace to those near at hand and those far off. In calling disciples to follow him, he began the new community of faith. In his suffering, he loved his enemies and did not resist them with violence, thus giving us an example to follow. In the shedding of his blood on the cross, Jesus offered up his life to the Father, bore the sins of all, and reconciled us to God. God then raised him from the dead, thereby conquering death and disarming the powers of sin and evil. . . .

We recognize Jesus Christ as the head of the church, his body. As members of his body, we are in Christ, and Christ dwells in us. Empowered by this intimate relationship with Christ, the church continues his ministry of mercy, justice, and peace in a broken world. (<http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/about/cof/art.2.htm>)<sup>100</sup>

While the Nicene Creed highlights important themes, the Mennonite confession highlights equally important themes. The Mennonite confession connects the church's present-day pursuit of mercy, justice, and peace to the earthly ministry of Jesus. Thus, to speak of Jesus as the Center is to highlight his earthly ministry. In that earthly ministry we see such things as an inclusive table fellowship, which is related to the value and practice of intentional diversity, and to the practice of fellowship around a shared meal. In Jesus' life, we see a posture of prayerful dependence, which is related to the practical theology of the Holy Spirit and to the dynamic practice of prayer observed in multicultural churches. In Jesus life we see compassionate outreach to the marginalized, which is related to the range of need-meeting ministries found in multicultural churches.

#### Intentional Diversity

The value and practice of intentional diversity may well be the single element emerging from this study that distinguishes the multicultural church from the monocultural church. In some ways, what a church believes about the ability of people from different cultural backgrounds to worship and fellowship together in one congregation becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Paul Watzlawick defines this as "an assumption or prediction, that purely as a result of having been made, causes the expected or predicted event to occur and thus confirms its own 'accuracy'"

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<sup>100</sup> This quote is a portion of Article 2 highlighting the earthly ministry of Jesus. A contemporary creed authored by Brian McLaren, spokesperson for the Emerging Church Movement, bears remarkable similarities to this Mennonite creed (See <http://www.anewkindofchristian.com/archives/000231.html>).



(1994:360). A well-known example of this is the “severe gasoline shortage” predicted by California newspapers in 1979. In a desperate effort to fill their tanks before the shortage, motorists rushed to gas stations and waited in line for hours. The increased demand drained California’s sizeable reserves of fuel and “brought about the predicted shortage practically overnight” (Watzlawick 1994:360).

According to theory, this is how the self-fulfilling prophecy would function in regard to the question of diversity: If people sincerely believes, as Wagner (1979) predicted, that a multicultural church is impossible to achieve, it is highly unlikely that they will attempt it. In addition, if people are committed to the ministry of evangelism and they believe, as Wagner (1979) asserted, that multicultural churches are evangelistically ineffective, the likelihood that they will consider the multicultural fellowship a viable option decreases even further.

If, on the other hand, people are committed to intentional diversity as a value and as a practice, that commitment strengthens them to do what has been described as impossible. In addition, if people believe that Jesus meant his followers to be united across cultural boundaries, and that the love demonstrated in such unity is attractive, they will be strengthened in their commitment and they will find means to achieve the heretofore-elusive synthesis between Christian unity and effective Christian witness.

What the theory of self-fulfilling prophecy suggests would happen, is happening in the churches that participated in this project. Perhaps a more Christian terminology to describe this phenomenon would be faith. These churches believe that the multicultural fellowship is not only possible, but that such a church can be effective in witness. Armed

with that belief they have reached out to people of diverse cultural background to become inclusive, attractive communities of faith.

### Practical Theology of the Holy Spirit

... I have designated this theme as a “practical theology” because what emerged in my study relative to the Holy Spirit involved both elements of practice, and elements of theology. That is to say, that in the churches I studied, they not only believe that the Holy Spirit is present and active to sanctify, to empower, to heal, and to guide, they act on the basis of that belief. Belief in the Holy Spirit is certainly not unique to multicultural churches, but the way that belief leads to action is worth exploring. Jin Kim talked about trusting the Holy Spirit by taking risks. In some of the churches, a strong belief in prayer was mentioned. They fast and pray, trusting the Holy Spirit for healing and other miraculous answers to prayer. Perhaps most importantly for multicultural churches, they believe that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity, and they trust the Holy Spirit by reaching out to develop crosscultural friendships.

Another way to describe the orientation of these churches toward the Holy Spirit is “experiential.” They are open to, and expect the presence, the leading, and the power of the Spirit to be evident in their lives and in their churches.

### Crosscultural Hermeneutic

There are two dimensions to the crosscultural hermeneutic I observed. First is the assumption of heterogeneity in the early church. This changes the way Scripture is read and understood. Assuming homogeneity in Rome, for example, one would understand the admonitions in Romans 14-15 to have application to relationships in general. Assuming

heterogeneity in that same context, one would understand Paul as instructing his audience to avoid letting cultural differences disrupt their fellowship.

The second element of this crosscultural hermeneutic is sensitivity to present context. The request for daily bread in the Lord's Prayer means little to the affluent. It is a heart-felt plea for divine assistance among the poor. An effective crosscultural hermeneutic enables the interpreter of Scripture to view familiar passages in the light of another person's experience.

### Pastoral Vision

Pastoral leadership and vision are vital in any church, not just multicultural churches. The unique aspect of vision in the multicultural churches I studied was that it was informed by the crosscultural hermeneutic discussed above, and by an awareness of the multicultural context in which they were ministering. In some of the primary test cases, theological reflection resulting in certain scripturally based convictions was the principal impetus for the vision to be a multicultural community of faith. In other cases, awareness of diversity in their context was the greatest influence informing that vision. With some of the churches, it was difficult to determine which was primary. Regardless of which element had the greater influence, all the churches were firmly committed to that vision.

A second unique quality of pastoral vision was the absence of a discernable "target group." The idea of targeting was reintroduced in the mid 1990s with Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Church* (1995:155ff). Warren's book, and the concept of targeting did surface in conversations with pastors in the course of research. Paul Sheppard said that although he has found many of the concepts in *The Purpose Driven*

*Church* to be helpful, he also noted that he had learned to disagree with his heroes (2005b).

In a rather interesting twist of the targeting concept, First Baptist Church of Leesburg, Florida has chosen as its target group, “all the people we can find that no other church seems to want” (Hunter 2003:150). That is casting the net rather broadly. Multicultural churches have much the same mindset. Their doors are open to all.

#### Range of Outreach Ministries

Even in the smaller churches in this study, there was considerable ministry in the surrounding communities. Sometimes it was as simple as crosscultural pastoral visitation. In the case of ACAC, their presence in the North Side neighborhood of Pittsburgh involves an extensive network involving other ministries and a 501c3 foundation. Generally, outreach is holistic in character, ministering to physical, social, and spiritual needs. Interview data indicated that this type of ministry is necessary in a multicultural context. Recent immigrants in particular have pressing physical needs that represent strategic opportunities for churches. It is not only the recent immigrants, however, that have such needs. As Emerson and Smith (2000:54) have observed, in the “racialized” context of American society, opportunities are not equally accessible to persons of all races or cultures. Ministering in a culturally diverse context, therefore, necessitates ministries that offer opportunities and resources to the disadvantaged whether they are recent arrivals or life-long citizens.

#### Dynamic Prayer Life

Senior minister of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, Jim Cymbala, awakened the church the power of prayer in his popular book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* (Cymbala and

Merrill 1997). There is a connection between a vibrant prayer life and the maintenance of a multicultural church. This connection works in a couple ways. First, some of the churches in this project have found that persons of different cultural backgrounds have modeled a fervency in prayer that challenges them to a more committed practice of prayer. Diversity has enriched their corporate prayer life. The second way prayer and the maintenance of a multicultural church are connected is this: prayer is a practice that is common to Christians of all cultures. As such it becomes an opportunity to express, and indeed to discover anew, the unity that exists between believers of different cultures.

#### Fellowship Around the Table

The question of fellowship was briefly mentioned in this chapter under “Intentional Diversity.” More needs to be said about the practice of fellowship in multicultural churches. The word fellowship carries a variety of meanings. It can mean sharing burdens and praying with one another; it can refer to casual times of interaction before or after worship services; to some it means a hug and a handshake. Fellowship, as it emerged from the interview data, and as I am using it here, refers to times that are set aside for the specific purpose of developing and deepening relationships. Such times may or may not proceed according to an agenda.

One thing that emerged as important in a number of churches was intentionally diverse fellowship around the table. Churches have found that eating together facilitates the development and strengthening of relationships. This is true even across cultural boundaries. Sharing a meal provides a context for developing crosscultural friendships.

### Effective use of Symbol and Ceremony

While I did not encounter as many visual symbols as I had anticipated, I did find that other kinds of symbols, as well as ceremonies, play an important role in multicultural churches. The sacraments in particular are powerful symbols that help people to perceive and experience a different reality. Communion, if it presented in such a way that meanings in addition to remembrance are highlighted, seems to impact some people at a level other than cognition in powerful ways.

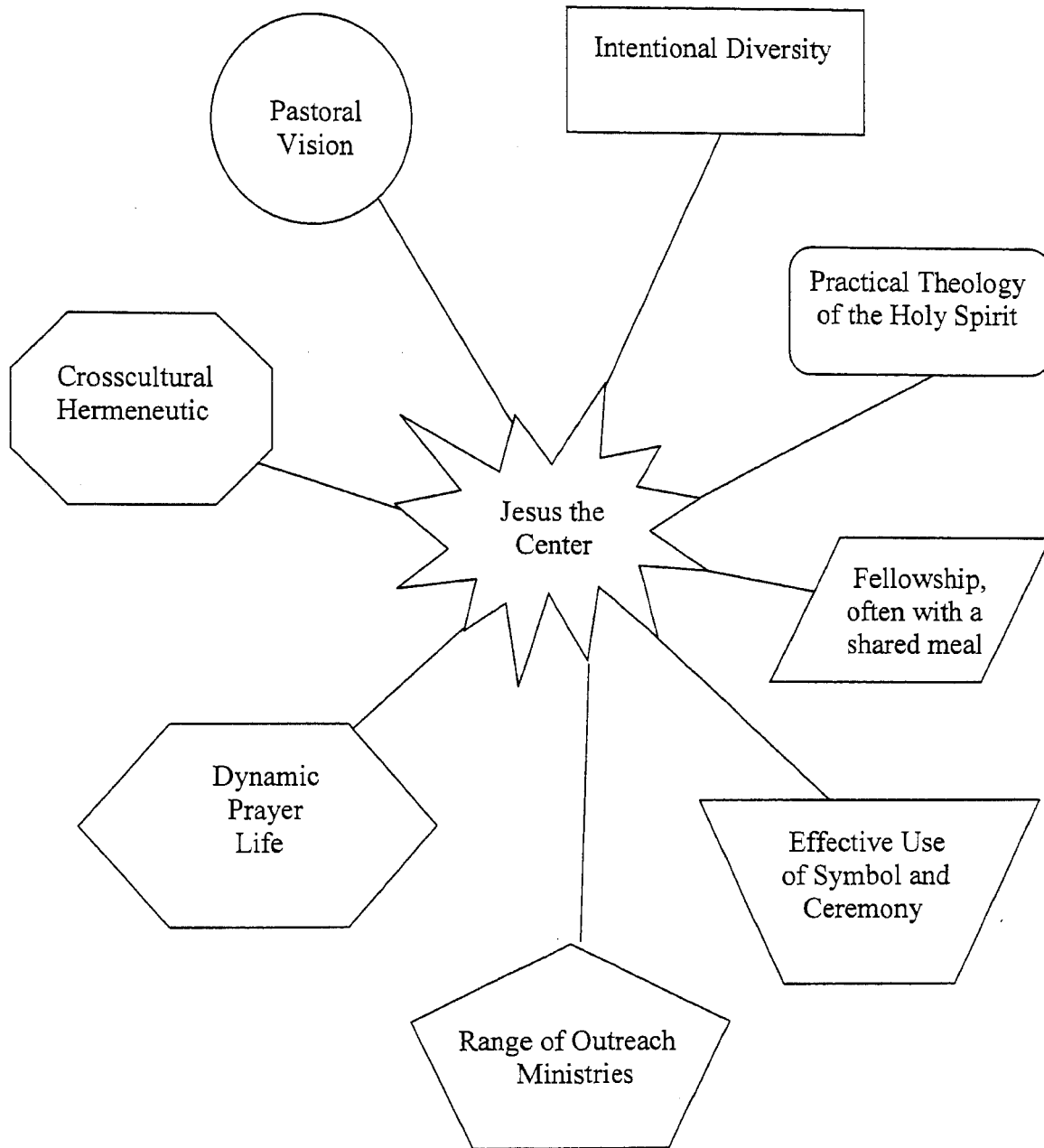
Footwashing can radically alter the way one views persons of different cultures. Baptism, with appropriate, scripturally based liturgies, reinforces the character of the church as a multicultural fellowship. Ceremonies that include a component of liminality have great potential for bonding people to the multicultural community of faith. In the liminal context, participants become more open to new ideas. Churches have found that such openness extends to the development of crosscultural friendships.

### Frequency of the Elements

Not all elements were present in all churches, nor in any one church did all the elements emerge as strongly present.<sup>101</sup> Each church has a different combination of elements. Whether a given church does or does not have particular elements may be attributed in part to differences in leadership style, denominational affiliation, and other factors. Figure 12 graphically represents a church with all of the above elements in place.

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<sup>101</sup> The phraseology here is intentional. Just because a certain element did not “emerge” in the context of interviews does not mean it was not present, only that I did not see it.



**Figure 12: Elements Present in Primary Test Cases**

### Missiological Implications

I would be remiss if, in coming to the close of this dissertation, I did not explicitly state the implications of this study as they relate to the understanding and practice of Christian mission. Thus, I offer two primary missiological implications. The first relates to the discipline of missiology, the second to the way Christian mission is carried out, particularly in the North American context.

#### The Other Half of a Domestic Missiology

In the early 1990s, George Hunsberger identified what he saw as “The Newbigin Gauntlet,” that is, the challenge present in the writings of Lesslie Newbigin to develop a “domestic missiology for North America” (Hunsberger 1991:390). Hunsberger argued that then current missiological reflection for the North American context was inadequate: that it was not so much a domestic missiology as it was a domesticated missiology, and that it lacked theological depth (1991:392-393). In response to Newbigin’s challenge the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) was formed. A series of books has emerged from that network.<sup>102</sup> The central concern of the GOCN has been to formulate and articulate a missional response appropriate to the postmodern, post-Christendom context of North America. Likewise, the Emergent Church Movement is seeking answers to the unique challenges to mission represented by Postmodernity. While the questions that Postmodernity poses for the practice of Christian mission are worth pursuing, to see the greatest challenge to mission in North America strictly in terms of Postmodernity, is to

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<sup>102</sup> *The Church Between Gospel and Culture*, (Hunsberger and Van Gelder, eds. 1996), *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, (Guder ed. 1998), *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality*, (Hunsberger 1998), *Confident Witness, Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America* (Van Gelder ed. 1999), *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Guder 2000), *StormFront: The Good News of God* (Brownson, et al. 2003), and *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, (Barrett, et al. 2004).



miss an equally significant challenge—that of cultural diversity. North America is not only increasingly postmodern; it is also increasingly multicultural. Furthermore, the two phenomena are related.

Walter Truett Anderson explains that Postmodernity is “the age of over-exposure to otherness—because in traveling, you put yourself into a different reality; because as a result of immigration, a different reality comes to you; because with no physical movement at all, only the relentless and ever-increasing flow of information, cultures interpenetrate” (Anderson 1995a:6). As different realities have made, and continue to make, their mark upon the North American social landscape, the way Americans think about what is true and what is real is changing. This change in epistemology is one of the most worrisome aspects of Postmodernity for the proclamation of the gospel, which we as a church believe is truth for all humankind.

The question that missiology as a discipline must consider then, is the way Postmodernity and cultural diversity might be related. The question that follows closely is whether multicultural churches, because of their diversity, have developed a different epistemological stance, a way of apprehending and communicating truth that resonates with postmodern Americans. Walsh and Keesmaat explore the question of epistemology in a postmodern context. They explain,

We want to encourage a reading of Scripture that unabashedly abandons such objectivism [the objectivism of Enlightenment definitions of truth] for a more holistic understanding of knowing. . . .

In stark contrast to an objectivist epistemology that esteem distance, detachment, universality and abstractness, we discern in the biblical literature an understanding of truth that affirms intimacy, connectedness, particularity, and concreteness. At root, in the Hebrew Scriptures truth is a matter of fidelity. (Walsh and Keesmaat 2004)

The epistemology Walsh and Keesmaat seek to develop is consistent with the use

of doctrine observed in the primary test cases. Doctrine is not seen as an end in itself. The goal is not to state doctrinal positions *vis a vis* other churches or denominations with increasing clarity and precision. Rather the goal of doctrine is pastoral. It is teleological. It pushes toward the goal of becoming like Jesus. It seeks to develop a community of faith that embodies, that demonstrates, that makes public, the reconciliation Jesus brought about through his death.

We have already seen that multicultural churches are using symbols and ceremonies to communicate truth at levels other than cognition. Multicultural churches communicate the truth of the Gospel beyond the cognitive level in other ways. By inviting people to see, and to experience, and to participate in a community of reconciled people—to belong even before they believe—the fact of the Gospel becomes public, as it did in first-century Antioch (Stark 1996:161). For the Gospel is not merely the good news that Jesus died for the sins of individuals that they might be reconciled to God; the Gospel is also the good news that the death of Jesus has broken down the walls of hostility, bringing people on both sides together into one new humanity.

Missiology as a discipline has not brought the wealth of its resources to bear on the question of cultural diversity. Theologians (e.g., Padilla 1985) have argued that homogeneity in the church is contrary to the gospel. Sociologists (e.g., Emerson and Smith 2000) have called attention to the problem of racial division in the church. Theologians and Sociologists together (DeYoung, et al. 2003) have argued that the church ought to stand in contrast to, not mirror, a racially divided society.

The implication of this study for the discipline of missiology, then, is the need to use the tools of missiology—which include but are not limited to theology and

sociology—to find further answers to the questions raised by cultural diversity. The present work is one such contribution, but those with expertise in the various specialties within the discipline need to explore these questions as well. Those with expertise in world religions, for example, could explore the question of ministry and mission to people of other faiths, specifically within the context of the United States.

#### Implications for the Practice of Mission

An understanding of Christian mission based on homogeneity forces the church into a false dichotomy, that is, it forces a choice between racist / assimilationist integration and developing monocultural churches and makes it difficult to envision a multicultural congregation that would not be assimilationist in nature. This widens the perceived gap between Christian unity and Christian witness. The result is that the church perceives its only choices to be multicultural congregations that are assimilationist in character and evangelistically ineffective, or monocultural congregations that are effective in evangelism.

Business authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras (2002:43-44) counsel their readers to reject the “tyranny of the OR” and embrace the “genius of the AND.” The churches that participated in this study have done just that. They have found a way to include persons of different cultural backgrounds while remaining effective in evangelism.

What few could envision a quarter century ago has now emerged on the American ecclesial landscape. The churches that participated in this study have found a way out of a false dichotomy that has kept the church in the United States from realizing a biblical mandate. They have joined Christian unity with Christian witness. The synthesis that Stott (1996:65) woefully characterized as elusive has been found.

### The Downside of Multicultural Ministry

Many positive things about multicultural churches have been discussed in the course of this paper. A brief discussion about some of the negative issues associated with multicultural ministry is warranted. Although respondents who participated in this project had little to say that was negative, a few items merit mention.

First, multicultural ministry is difficult. This is not to say that church ministry in a monocultural church is easy, but some pastors who have ministered in both settings have found multicultural ministry to be the more taxing of the two. Jin Kim, occasionally speaks about multicultural ministry at denominational gatherings of pastors. While he often finds his audience receptive to the ideas he presents, he is concerned that people are looking for an easy formula or set of simple steps to follow. He counsels interested pastors that it will involve a good deal of trial and error, and cautions that failure may erase initial openness among church membership. He advises that those considering this type of ministry should engage in serious theological reflection over a period of several years. A church that is considering this type of ministry must ask itself, "Do we really want to be on this journey and are we willing to pay the price?" (Kim 2005a)

The second negative is related to the first. This type of ministry is particularly wearying for pastors, at least for those in transitional stages. In the larger churches, there seems to be a sense of momentum, but for a church in the process of transition, there is often a struggle to overcome the inertia of tradition and traditionalism, and negative attitudes surrounding cultural difference. Pastoral leadership largely bears the burden of change until key leaders come to see multicultural ministry as biblical and plausible.

There are surely other difficulties associated with multicultural ministry that I was

not able to perceive given the love respondents generally felt for their churches, and my limited time at each church. Extended participant observation on location at a single church would likely lead to further observations about the negatives of this type of ministry.

### Missiological Counsel to Multicultural Churches

I have been encouraged in the writing of this dissertation, to offer a word of critique and / or counsel to the churches that participated in this research project. I feel somewhat hesitant about this venture as I have never been completely comfortable with those who critique from the distant vantage point of academia those who are immersed in ministry. Furthermore, the churches that participated in this research project all exhibited great hospitality, and accommodated me in many ways. To critique those who have helped me has the feel of biting the hand that has fed me. Therefore, I prefer to frame my comments as counsel, rather than critique. The churches may then hear the counsel, determine whether they need improvement in a particular area, and formulate their own critique based on that counsel. I offer my thoughts in four main areas.

### Theological Reflection

One of the hallmarks of evangelical Christianity is a firm commitment to the truth of Scripture. Evangelicals look to the Bible as the authoritative guide for the practice of their faith. This is a good commitment to have. My counsel is to take the task of theological reflection based on the Scriptures seriously. Develop and articulate a thorough theology of multicultural ministry. Such a theology could include statements about the nature of the church, the relationship of the church to the Kingdom of God, the connection between unity and witness, the nature of Christian mission, and the unique

ethical considerations that arise in multicultural ministry. To engage in this sort of serious theological work is a step in the direction of developing an indigenized or contextual theology that will aid those who follow the path of multicultural ministry. That leads me to my second main area of counsel.

#### Develop Indigenized Ministries

In many of the great renewal movements throughout Christian history, indigenized ministries have developed. Martin Luther set his theology to drinking songs. John and Charles Wesley framed their theology in a musical style that appealed to coal miners and other working class people. I have already made some suggestions about what indigenized ministries might look like in a multicultural context. In short, they must reflect the cultural diversity of the community. They must show an appreciation for the good that each culture brings to the table. Take the fruit of your theological reflection and develop music that captures the biblical vision for reconciliation and for the unity of the church. (I am addressing whole churches here, not just pastors, who may or may not have the musical skills to do this.) The process of indigenization can and should be evident in other areas as well: preaching and teaching styles, fellowship and small group structures, outreach into the community, leadership development. In all these areas and more, the church should reflect the diversity of the community, and minister inclusively.

#### Hold Evangelism and Social Justice Together

Much has been written about the rift between evangelism and social justice as the church embraced modernity, and how to recover from it (e.g., Kirk 1983). My observation of multicultural ministry in the course of this project led me to believe that the rift between these two important biblical themes is being healed. Continue to pursue

evangelism and ministries of compassion and justice together. It may well be that multicultural churches will lead the way in restoring a holistic expression of Christian mission.

#### Strive for Conversion Growth

Earlier sections of this dissertation dealt with the question of transfer growth as compared to conversion growth. For various reasons I was unable to get a clear understanding of the kind of growth that is happening in multicultural churches. It appears that as a church is building momentum for this type of ministry, or forming a core group, growth comes largely by transfer. The challenge here is to mobilize the transfers, who by most indications are strong, committed believers, to do the work of evangelism. The challenge is to become more “apostolic” as defined by George Hunter. Apostolic churches, as Hunter defines them, understand themselves to be “‘called’ and ‘sent’ by God to reach an unchurched pre-Christian population” (1996:28).

#### Missiological Counsel for Other Contexts

The concern under this heading is the question of applicability in other contexts. The United States and India, for example, are significantly different from one another as mission fields. Would a church that is diverse thrive in a context such as India with its rigid caste system? The answer to that question lies, in part, with Yamamori’s understanding of “ethnic consciousness” (1993:91). Yamamori advises that where there is a high degree of ethnic consciousness, which he measures by a number of factors, a church that strives to reach a diverse group of people will likely not succeed. In such a context, an approach that focuses on reaching one segment of society will likely be more effective. Even in such a context, my theological convictions tell me that the

homogeneous church is a penultimate form of the church that will ultimately give way to a church composed of a body of believers that welcome and embrace all of God's redeemed.

### Suggestions for Further Research

Any research project is likely to accomplish two things at the same time. First, the project may answer some questions about the phenomenon under consideration. Second, it will uncover more questions related to the phenomenon. I know that the latter has happened and I hope the former has as well. What follows is several suggestions that may prove fruitful areas for more in-depth research. These topics were addressed here as part of a bigger picture, but some elements of that picture merit further study. Others emerged in the course of research, but are not addressed here at all.

### Growth in Multicultural Churches

The central concern of this project was to understand the social construction of reality in multicultural churches. That is, this project has sought to shed light on the question of how an alternative experience or perception of reality is constructed, a perception of reality wherein the multicultural fellowship becomes plausible in thought, and realized in practice. A secondary and related concern has been to explore how multicultural churches grow. It is related to the central concern in that church growth, if it is to be enduring church growth, requires a process of enculturation whereby new members internalize the values, beliefs and practices of the church. To look at it another way, church growth has to do with the extension of an alternative perception and experience of reality to those outside the fellowship.

Research in this project resulted in a tentative understanding of multicultural



church growth. Initial growth seems to be largely transfer growth. This stage of growth is crucial, as it is necessary to form a core of committed believers with a strong sense of identity as a multicultural fellowship. Mosaic, for example, began with a core group of 45 believers committed to the multicultural vision. Since its inception, Mosaic's growth has been the result of both transfers and conversions. Similarly, Church of All Nations, which began as the English ministry of the Korean Presbyterian Church of Minnesota, was initially composed of believers who embraced Pastor Kim's vision of a multicultural church, but has since seen growth by conversion as well as transfer.

Evangelism in multicultural churches. What is needed is research that focuses more exclusively on the way multicultural churches engage in the ministry of evangelism. I identified a broad range of need-meeting ministries present in the churches that participated in this project, but clarity is needed as to the role such ministries play in evangelism, and in the growth of the churches. It would be valuable to conduct a series of interviews exclusively with recent converts who came to faith through the ministry of multicultural churches. Such a focus would shed light on the question of evangelism and growth in multicultural churches. My study was not able to clarify this issue as my central goal was to discern how multicultural churches are constructing an alternative perception and experience of reality. Because of this focus, I sought respondents primarily on the basis of their commitment to the vision of the church as a multicultural fellowship, not on recentness of their conversion.

Monocultural church compared to multicultural church growth. Related to the question of evangelism is growth of multicultural churches compared to monocultural churches. According to Stott, in one of the early debates on the homogeneous unit

principle by the Lausanne Theology and Education Group in 1977, participants on both sides of the debate agreed that homogeneous churches generally grow faster than heterogeneous congregations (Stott 1996:64). Stott did not indicate whether any empirical evidence had been presented in support of that claim. Neither did Wagner offer empirical evidence that monocultural congregations grew faster than multicultural congregations did. He did, however, speculate: "If the option of maintaining a homogeneous congregation is chosen, the direct benefit of close intercultural relationships will be sacrificed, but in all *probability* the evangelistic potential of the [homogeneous] congregation will be higher" and "a higher rate of conversion growth can be *predicted* for the homogeneous unit church" (Wagner 1979:33 emphasis added). While he does offer some anecdotal evidence for the evangelistic ineffectiveness of multicultural churches, Wagner does not cite any studies comparing the growth of monocultural churches to multicultural churches.

Sociologist George Yancey affirms that the social milieu McGavran (1990:261) envisioned as fertile ground for culturally integrated congregations described is more of a reality than ever before, and that within this context, multicultural churches not only have the potential for growth, but actually are growing, and more rapidly than monocultural churches.<sup>103</sup>

Given the discrepancy between Wagner's position and that of Yancey, it would be helpful to have further research carried out on this question. It would be appropriate in

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<sup>103</sup> Yancey's research was carried out as part of the "Multiracial Congregations Project," a three-year research effort funded by the Lily Endowment. The project studied both multiracial and monoracial congregations. It involved over 2,500 telephone interviews, a written survey completed by approximately 500 Christian congregations, and on site visits to four metropolitan areas for firsthand observation. Yancey discovered "multiracial churches are more likely to have grown over the past year than monoracial churches (66.1 percent [of] multiracial churches have grown versus 57.1 percent of monoracial churches have grown). So for the first time it can clearly be said that there is no evidence that monoracial churches grow faster than multiracial churches." (2003:35)

such a study to distinguish between transfer growth and conversion growth. It would also be appropriate to research the degree to which multicultural churches reflect the cultural diversity present in their communities.

### Learning From Failure

A recent book by Tom Nebel and Gary Rohrmayer titled *Church Planting Landmines* (2005) looked at the top ten mistakes church planters make in the post-launch phase (Nebel and Rohrmayer 2005). Issues such as ignoring personal health, lack of leadership development, poor staff hiring choices, underestimating spiritual warfare, and others can cripple, or destroy a church plant. It would be helpful to have data similar to that presented by Nebel and Rohrmayer, except with a focus on multicultural ministry rather than new church starts. In this project, I have identified some of the factors that help multicultural ministry continue. Further research, focused on churches that attempted multicultural ministry and failed, would likely yield a number of things that hinder it, i.e., the “landmines” that cripple or kill the multicultural church.

### Multicultural Church Leadership

A good deal of discussion in this paper addressed the role of pastoral leadership in the multicultural churches that participated in this project. The role of leadership was explored in terms of social construction. Leadership theory was not a part of the theoretical framework that informed this study. It would be fruitful to study the understanding and practice of leadership in multicultural churches.

Referencing the work of James McGregor Burns (1978), Peter Northouse discusses two types of leadership: transactional and transformational (2004:170). According to Northouse, most leadership models are transactional models, which he says,

“focus on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers,” for example, “Politicians who win votes by promising no new taxes . . . managers who offer promotions to employees who surpass their goals (2004:170).

The transformational model stands in contrast to the transactional model.

[The transformational model] refers to the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential. Burns points to Mohandas Gandhi as a classic example of transformational leadership. Gandhi raised the hopes and demands of millions of his people and in the process was changed himself (Northouse 2004:170).

More specific information is needed on the nature of leadership in a multicultural church environment. It would be instructive to look for patterns of leadership among pastors of multicultural congregations. Northouse includes in his book the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), an instrument that assesses transformational leadership. Using the MLQ would provide a clearer understanding of how pastors actually exercise leadership in a multicultural church. Such information could be used in assessing whether potential church planters are suited for ministry in a multicultural context. It could also be used to determine whether a pastor had a style of leadership appropriate for transitioning a homogeneous congregation to a multicultural fellowship.

### Women in Leadership

An appropriate question at this juncture is whether women relate and lead in ways that are significantly different from the way men relate and lead. Robert McBride Damon notes that while there are no definitive answers to that question, “some interesting observations have been made” (Damon 2004:81). Among those observations, Damon includes several that are of particular interest. “There seem to be gender differences in the way girls and boys play games and negotiate” (2004:81); “Women typically take a

cooperative stance while working together on projects. . .” (2004:82); “Females of all ages are more verbal than males, talking on a more personal level than males” (2004:82).

What Damon suggests based on observation—that men and women relate and lead differently from one another—has been confirmed by research. As Freeman and Bourque observe, “The exercise of leadership involves power, a concept where research has suggested gender variation” (2001:4). Furthermore, according to Freeman and Bourque, “men and women are perceived differently as leaders; they are evaluated on a different scale and according to different criteria” (2001:4).

Early studies on men and women in the exercise of power suggested significant differences. Freeman and Bourque, quoting Miller and Cummins (1992:416) observe early studies found that “resistance, conflict, force, domination, and control are recurrent themes in patriarchal constructions of the meaning of power, which always include a ‘win-lose’ and ‘power-over’ conceptual basis” (2001:10). By way of contrast, “Feminist discussions of power have focused on ‘power-to,’ ‘empowerment’ to achieve one’s goals, or ‘shared power;’ to enhance another’s feelings of competence” (Freeman and Bourque 2001:10). Freeman and Bourque believe such findings are stereotypical and call attention to a more recent study by Winter and Barenbaum. This study found “power motivation predicted many of the same actions in women and men: becoming ‘visible’ to others, getting positions of formal social power and pursuing power-related careers, and acquiring possessions that reflect prestige” (Winter and Barenbaum 1985:337).

Even with similarities between men and women in their conception of power, Freeman and Bourque note that “women are exercising leadership today in new and significant ways” (2001:14). Patricia Reid-Merritt (D. S. W.) concurs: “Phenomenal

women are in the process of creating a new leadership model that several distinguishing characteristics, including an unusual perception of power, decision making through consensus building, hard work, tenacious drive, and a willingness to break the rules” (1996:189, cf. McKenzie 1996:69).

There is enough consensus in the literature that men and women exercise leadership differently to warrant further study on this issue. A number of resources are available on women in leadership within a local church, including, for example, *Leadership for Women in the Church* (Hunt and Hutcheson 1991), *Not Without a Struggle: Leadership Development for African American Women in Ministry* (McKenzie 1996), and *The Web of Women's Leadership: Recasting Congregational Ministry* (Willhauck and Thorpe 2001). In addition, a number of titles that address, more or less directly, leadership in a multicultural church are available, including, for example *One Body, One Spirit* (Yancey 2003), *Multicultural Ministry* (Anderson 2004), and *Building Unity in the Church of the New Millennium* (Perry 2002). While both kinds of resources are valuable, a third type of resource focusing on the conjunction between the two seems to be absent from the literature. Thus, study on women in leadership within multicultural churches is necessary.

### Gender Equality

Related to the question of women in leadership is that of gender equality. The central focus of this dissertation, as noted above, is on cultural diversity, not gender diversity. The type of data sought in the course of research, therefore, did not shed significant light on the question of gender equality. My aim in carrying out research in multicultural churches was to shed light on the theology and practices of these churches

that contribute to the construction of an alternative perception and experience of reality wherein the idea of the multicultural fellowship becomes plausible in thought and realized in practice. This is not to say that gender equality is unimportant. Rather, it is merely to say that the theoretical framework I used to guide my research and interpret my data did not facilitate an exploration into the question of gender equality.

Because gender equality is an important issue, and because gender equality is related to the issue of cultural diversity, it is deserving of, and necessitates further research. This would require focused study on the roles women, *vis a vis* men, carry out within multicultural churches. The question of gender diversity would entail exploring questions such as whether women are allowed in the pulpit, whether women are allowed to exercise leadership, and in what ways. These and related questions would undoubtedly prove to be fruitful areas of exploration.

#### Multicultural Churches and Life Cycle Theory

The churches studied in the course of this project have been in existence for varying amounts of time. It could prove valuable to study multicultural churches from the standpoint of life cycle theory. Martin Saarinen (1990) has done extensive research into the life cycle of churches. He sees four factors at work in the life cycle: energy, program, administration, and inclusion.

Energy refers to things such as “vision and hope, excitement and enthusiasm, and a sense of potency and potentiality,” (Saarinen 1990:2) and according to Saarinen’s model, is present from a church’s inception through the growth phase. Decline begins with the loss of energy, continues with the loss of programs and a sense of inclusiveness. At the end point of a church’s existence, what remains is administration (1990:16).

Saarinen says that “growth may be aborted at any stage” and “decline may be arrested at any stage” (1990:5). One way of arresting growth is by “discovering a new sense of mission in a changed context” (1990:6).

Hinshaw, Allegheny Center Alliance Church and Abundant Life have all gone part way through the decline phase of church existence, and experienced renewal as they found a new sense of purpose and mission. It might well be an instructive exercise to study churches that have made this sort of transition through Saarinen’s model. Coupled with the above suggestions on leadership assessment, this could provide valuable insight into the question of what is needed for redevelopment work in a changing context, particularly in a context that is becoming more diverse.

#### Illegal Immigrants

If the churches that participated in this study had any illegal immigrants as active members, they did not indicate that reality to me. The possibility, however, does warrant missiological study. A few questions are suggested to guide such study. How is ministry to illegal immigrants different from ministry to legal immigrants? How can churches show hospitality to illegal immigrants? What is the church’s role in pursuing social justice for illegal immigrants? What role, if any, should churches play in shaping national policy on illegal immigrants?

There are undoubtedly many more questions that could be identified in relation to this question, but these initial thoughts call attention to some of the issues to be addressed in a missional response to illegal immigration.

#### Christology in Multicultural Churches

A final suggestion for further research is theological in its focus. I identified a



“Theology of Jesus as the Center” as one of the elements that contribute to the social construction of reality in multicultural churches. It would be helpful to do a more focused study on the Christology of multicultural churches, addressing issues such as the aspects of his life and ministry they emphasize in their teaching, the way they understand his work of redemption, and how they see those aspects informing and shaping their own practice of ministry.

### Closing Thoughts

The song, “He Reigns,” made popular by the Christian band the Newsboys, captures the spirit of John’s eschatological vision in (Revelation 7:9-12). It pictures Christians all around the globe comprising a worldwide choir offering praise to God.

It's the song of the redeemed rising from the African plain  
 It's the song of the forgiven drowning out the Amazon rain  
 The song of Asian believers filled with God's holy fire  
 It's every tribe, every tongue, every nation, a love song born of a grateful choir

(chorus)

It's all God's children singing glory, glory, hallelujah, He reigns, He reigns  
 It's all God's children singing glory, glory, hallelujah, He reigns (Newsboys 2003)

Whenever believers gather for worship in a multicultural church, that vision is realized in some provisional and anticipatory, yet very tangible sense. The year is 2006, the places, Chicago, Little Rock, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Greensboro, North Carolina, Mountain View, California and a host of other cities. The occasion is Sunday morning worship, Sunday school classes, mid-week home fellowship, groups, and kid’s clubs. The prayer of Jesus for the unity of his followers, and for effective witness through that unity is being answered. Preachers and teachers and small group leaders look out on worship centers and class rooms and living rooms full of people—Black and White, Latino and Asian. There is no wall or rope dividing them one from another. They sing together, pray

together, serve in ministry together, share meals together, partake of the Lord's Supper together. They call each other brother and sister, and that is what they are for Christ himself is their peace. He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, creating a new humanity from people that were formerly alienated from one another. This is the vision and promise of the multicultural church.

## Appendix A: Interview Schedule for Pastoral Staff

### Grand Tour Questions

1. If I were a first-time visitor to your church on a typical Sunday morning, what would I see? What would happen? Take me through the morning from the time I walk through the door until I leave again.
2. Tell me about this past Sunday morning from your perspective. What happened from the time you arrived at the church building until you went home?
3. What about other events? Do you have small groups or fellowship activities?
4. What happens in a typical small group meeting? What do fellowship events look like?
5. I noticed in your worship center certain symbols (banners, artwork etc.). What do these symbols mean for you? How do these others come to understand these symbols in the same way you do?

### Questions related to Subproblem #1

6. There are a lot of churches in this area. What is it about this church in particular that attracts and keeps people? Why attend this church rather than the church down the block?
7. Sociologists have observed that people tend to gravitate toward social groups made up of people that are similar to them in terms of race, socio-economic level and so on. Your congregation, on the other hand, is very diverse. What is it about this church that makes people want to come here rather than attend a church where people are more similar to themselves?
8. Tell me about your preaching. How do you choose your texts or topics? Are there certain themes you hit on a regular basis? When you preach about the cross, about atonement, what do you highlight? In other words, what did Jesus' death on the cross accomplish? Justification? Reconciliation? Did it satisfy the wrath of God and divert the punishment for our sins onto Jesus?
9. Do you have any kind of new members' class? What happens in that class? What is taught in that class?
10. Do you have any kind of public ceremony for accepting people into membership?
11. When you take in previously unchurched members do you do public baptisms? Is there a period of instruction and preparation before baptisms? What happens during a baptism?

Questions related to Subproblem #2

12. Tell me about the growth of this church in recent years. Would you say that most of your new members are previously unchurched people, or people transferring from other churches?
13. Tell me about evangelism in this church. How do you recruit new members? Do you find that new members come to the church because of someone in their social network? Do you encourage current members to invite people in their social networks to church? Do you find social networks are more diverse or more racially similar?
14. Do you have any kind of need-meeting ministries such as recovery ministries, or a food shelf? What kinds of need-meeting ministries do you offer? Have any of these ministries been particularly effective in drawing new people into membership? Have any of these ministries been particularly ineffective in drawing people into membership?
15. It has been observed that people are more receptive to the gospel at certain points in their lives than they are at others. A lot of factors play into that. In your outreach ministries do you try to identify people who are receptive? If so, how do you identify people who might be more receptive? Do you have ministries specifically targeted toward people who might be more receptive?

## Appendix B: Interview Schedule for Members

### Grand Tour Questions

1. Tell me about Sundays in this church. What would I see if I were visiting for the first time? Can you walk me through a typical Sunday service?
2. Do you attend a small group meeting too? Who is in the small group with you? What happens there? Tell me what happened last week at your small group.

### Questions related to Subproblem #1

3. There are a lot of churches in this area. What is it about this church in particular that keeps you here? Why attend this church rather than the church down the block?
4. Some people believe that a person would rather attend a church where everyone is like himself or herself. Your church, on the other hand, has many people who are very different from you. What is it about this church that makes you want to come here rather than attend a church where people are more like you?
5. Thinking about the sermons you have heard at this church, is there a particular sermon or maybe a particular series that really stuck with you?
6. The cross is obviously a very important symbol for Christians. When you think of the cross, what do you think about? What does the cross mean to you?
7. When you became a member of this church did you attend a new members' class? What happened in that class? What did you learn in that class?
8. When you became a member was there a public ceremony where you were accepted into membership? Did you attend a membership before becoming a member?
9. Were you baptized in this church? Did you receive any kind of instruction beforehand? What happened at your baptism?

### Questions related to Subproblem #2

10. How long have you been a member here? Did you transfer from another church or did you come to faith in this church? After being away from the church for so long, what made you decide to give church a try? (If previously unchurched)
11. Who initially invited you to come to the church? Is that person related to you? How did you know that person?
12. Was there a particular ministry that drew you to the church? Was there a particular need in your life that led you to seek help from the church?

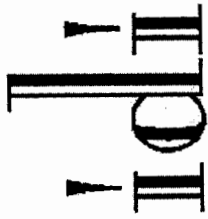
Appendix C: Measure of Ethnic Consciousness

(Lower)		(Higher)
High cultural adaptability	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Low cultural adaptability
The establishment mentality ("I am here to stay")	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	The sojourner mentality ("I plan to go home")
Weak native religious identity	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Strong native religious identity
High aspiration to assimilate	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Low aspiration to assimilate
Loss of contact with the community of one's own kind	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Contact with the community of one's own kind
Nonexistence of culturally bounded social organizations (clubs, community centers, associations)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Existence of culturally bounded social organizations
Nonexistence of culturally Bounded mass media (ethnic language newspapers, radio TV)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Existence of culturally bounded mass media
Lesser social distance (attitude)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Greater social distance (attitude)
Disappearance of racial Discrimination (behavioral)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Persistence of racial - discrimination (behavioral)
Lack of pride in national heritage	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Pride in national heritage
Area with high degree of race mixing	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Area with low degree of race mixing
Exogamous marriages common	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Endogamous marriages common
The second, fourth or later generation	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	The immigrant generation or the third generation
Frequent change of last name	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Pride in one's name
Upward social mobility	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Minimal upward social mobility
Dispersion of the people in the region	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Concentration of the people in the region
Absence of "power movements"	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Presence of "power movements"
Low consciousness in one's national lineage	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	High consciousness in one's national lineage
Residence in a community of under 15% ethnic	1-2-3-4-5-6-7	Residence in a community over 50% ethnic

Responses toward the left side indicate a low level of ethnic consciousness warranting an assimilationist approach. Responses on the right indicate a higher level of ethnic consciousness, calling for an identificational approach (Yamamori 1993:91).

Appendix D: IDI Profile for Primary Test Cases

# The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Group Profile



*Prepared for*

Dissertation Project

*Prepared by*

Chad Short

intercultural  
development  
inventory

In conjunction with  
Milton J. Bennett, Ph.D. and Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph. D.

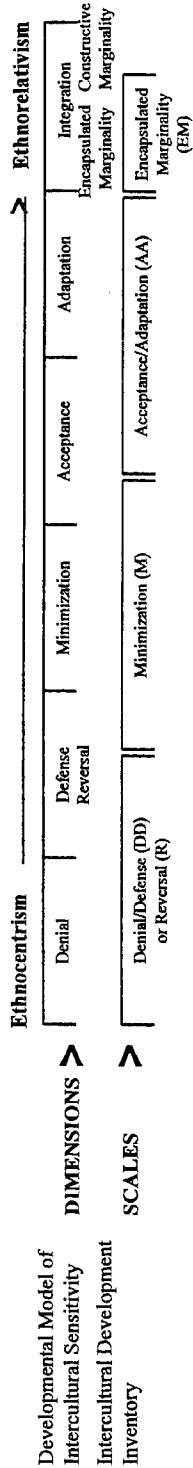
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE  
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6/23/2006

IDI PROFILE for Dissertation Project

INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY



Your Overall Perceived Intercultural Sensitivity PROFILE (PS)

Your Overall Developmental Intercultural Sensitivity PROFILE (DS)

WORLDVIEW PROFILE

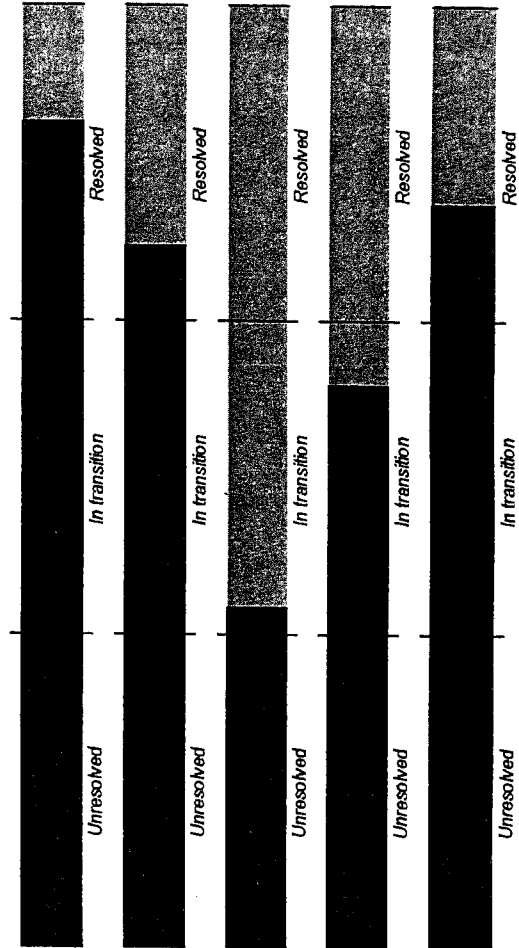
**DD SCALE:** Indicates a worldview that simplifies and/or polarizes cultural difference.

**R SCALE:** Indicates a worldview that reverses "us" and "them" polarization, where "them" is superior.

**M SCALE:** Indicates a worldview that highlights cultural commonality and universal issues.

**AA SCALE:** Indicates a worldview that can comprehend and accommodate to complex cultural differences.

**EM SCALE:** Indicates a worldview that incorporates a multicultural identity with confused cultural perspectives.





IDI PROFILE for Dissertation Project

DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

**DD SCALE:** Indicates a worldview that simplifies and/or polarizes cultural difference.

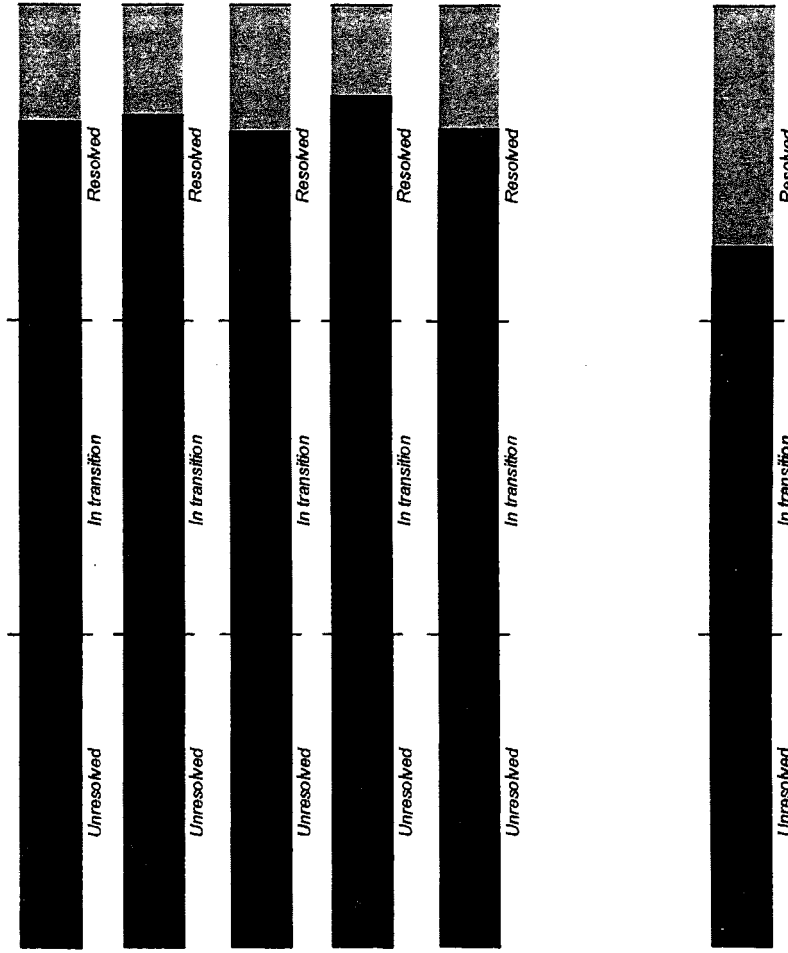
**DENIAL CLUSTER:** tendency to withdraw from cultural difference.

\* Disinterest in cultural difference.

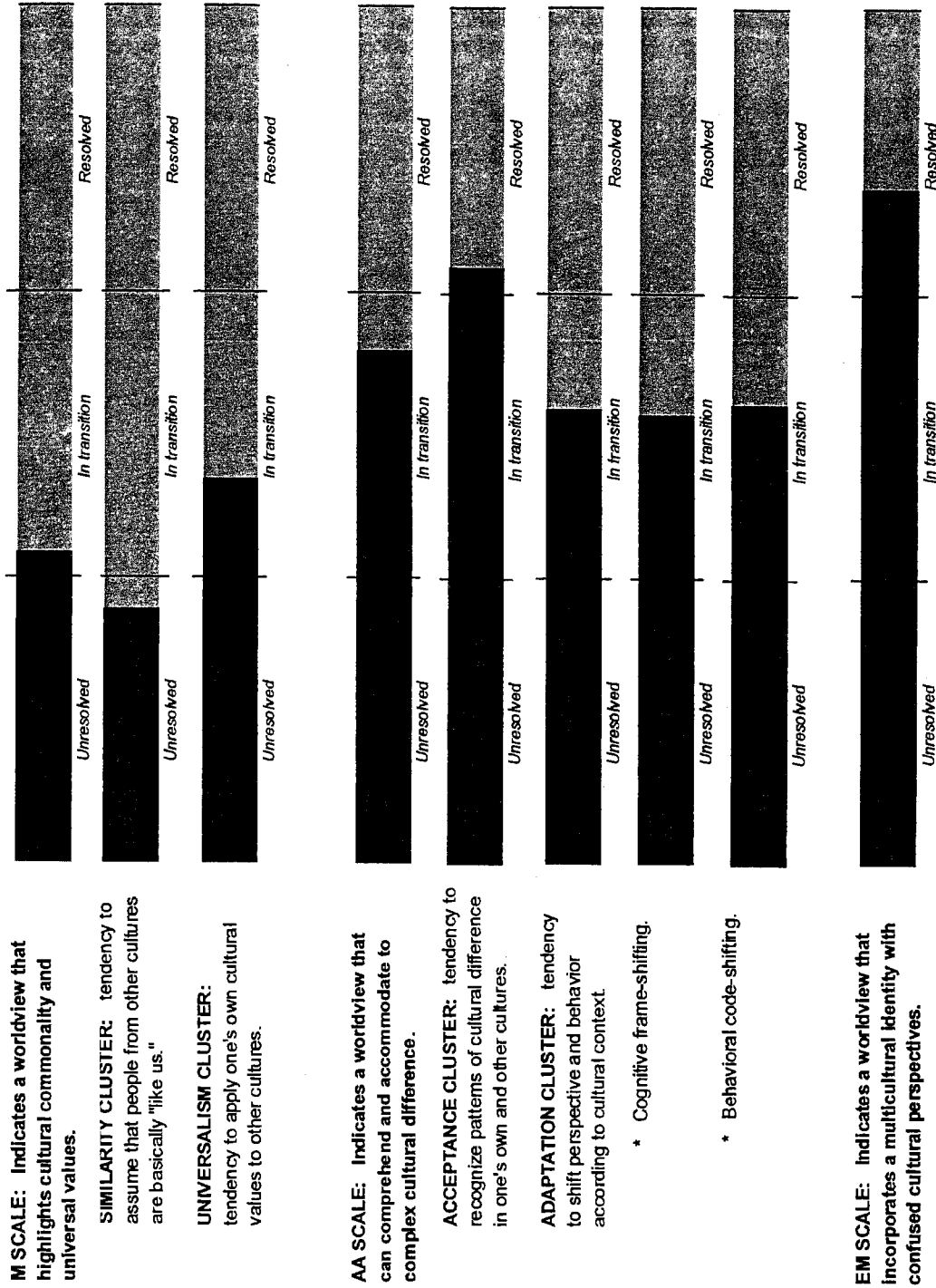
\* Avoidance of interaction with cultural difference.

**DEFENSE CLUSTER:** tendency to view the world in terms of "us and them," where "us" is superior.

**R SCALE:** Indicates a worldview that reverses "us" and "them" polarization, where "them" is superior.



**IDI PROFILE** *for Dissertation Project*



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