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Dissertations and Theses Notices

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Compiled by Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Each issue of the *Great Commission Research Journal* features recent dissertations and theses of interest to our readers. Particular attention is given to publications that present research on evangelism, church growth, church planting and multiplication, missional church, emerging/emergent church, communication theory, leadership theory, and other topics related to effective fulfillment of the Great Commission. Directors of doctoral programs, as well as graduating students, are encouraged to send notice of recent dissertations to Dr. Gary L. McIntosh, Dissertation Editor, at gary.mcintosh@biola.edu. Due to space limitations, and the large number of dissertations published each year, only a few dissertations are featured.

This issue of the *Great Commission Research Journal* features recent dissertations that focus on some aspect of multicultural and multiethnic ministry.

"A guide for developing an Intercultural Ministry." Author: Joseph Enriques, D.Min. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1998. 160 pages.

abstract:

"A Guide for Developing an Intercultural Ministry" attempts to provide a church with a resource that describes three critical aspects of intercultural ministry: (1) an overview of basic issues and concerns of multiethnic fellowship, (2) a discussion of potential models for a church desiring to become involved in intercultural ministry, and (3) organizational specifics for one model, namely, a multiethnic/international fellowship within a mono-ethnic church.

"The healthy multiethnic church: The presence of three essential factors which describe healthy multiethnic congregations in Virginia Beach, Virginia." Author: Gabriel Maithya Ngulutu D.Min. dissertation, Regent University, 2009. 201 pages.

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abstract:

The purpose of this dissertation was to answer the question: What are the primary factors that should be present and operational for a multiethnic church to be considered healthy? In spite of multiethnic congregations rapidly emerging in the city of Virginia Beach, there has not been a study to investigate factors that contribute to their health or lack thereof. To answer the previous question, the author did a case study on three City of Virginia Beach multiethnic congregations: Azalea Garden Church of God, Light of Life Christian Center, and New Life Providence Church. To establish the presence and efficacy of the assumed factors, the author surveyed selected church members from each church. Each cluster of participants consisted of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

This dissertation asserts that the primary factors are mirrored in Scripture and include constructive interethnic relationships, edifying/creative involvement, and dynamic equal empowerment. The integrity of survey results was achieved by using a three-part Likert Scale testing instrument, with each part containing twenty survey scenarios/statements. This survey instrument was utilized in all three congregations to establish each respondent's level of satisfaction to the three factors. A careful evaluation of responses from participants confirmed this

project's assertion that—for a multiethnic church to be healthy—constructive interethnic relations, edifying/creative involvement, and dynamic equal empowerment must not only be present but also operational. In addition, a more pertinent and timely aspect of this project was achieved by reviewing relevant literature and interviews.

"Living in the intersections: An ethnographic study of an urban Lutheran congregation."

Author: Joyce Arleen Caldwell, Ph.D. dissertation, Fielding Graduate University, 2009. 208 pages.

abstract:

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This ethnographic study examines the cultural and institutional life of an urban Lutheran congregation that stands in the intersection of its predominantly northern European membership and its majority African American neighborhood. As a mainline Protestant congregation, this particular church shares the larger mission direction of its denominational church body to be engaged in outreach to its neighborhood with a vision to become a multicultural church. The stated vision stands in tension with the lived reality of the complex intersections of race and class, of congregation and neighborhood.

The research study was conducted to add to the multiracial congregation literature by exploring factors that foster or inhibit growth toward becoming an authentically integrated multiracial congregation as those factors are exhibited by a congregation that is living in the midst of the process. Current studies of multiracial congregations focus on those congregations that have already achieved some degree of racial diversity in membership. As a scholar/practitioner, my purpose in this study was to examine the challenges that confront a congregation that is living in the midst of change and verbally expresses a desire to be inclusive across race, class, and sexual orientation. Findings support the importance of addressing characteristics of organizational culture, race of leadership, and degree of social interaction across races addressed by DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey, and Chai Kim (2003), but also the need to understand the structural model of the congregation that can result in particular tensions and challenges for a family model congregation, as defined by Becker (1999). A congregation that avoids conflict may face particular challenges for entering critical discussions that may lead to change.

The methodology was participant/observation with interviews used later in the study to confirm or disconfirm the data. Four hundred eight pages of field notes were gathered over a period of nine and one-half months in the congregation. In keeping with the methodology of ethnography, congregational worship, meetings, events, and weekday interactions along with observations of the outreach ministries and several neighborhood events were described, analyzed, and interpreted throughout the process. Insights from observations helped to guide and direct further observations as analysis of data pointed to new interpretations along the way. In order to more fully understand the data, fifteen interviews were conducted with representatives from key constituent groups in the congregation and the neighborhood outreach ministries.

Future studies could include participatory action studies that would actively engage a congregation in a transformative learning process that could lead toward the transformation that DeYoung et al. (2003) stated is necessary for a multiracial congregation to be authentically integrated.

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"Evangelism in the postmodern context: Multicultural revitalization in the Presbyterian Church at Franklin Lakes." *Author: Yung Sun Kim, D.Min. dissertation, Drew University, 2008. 155 pages.*

abstract:

The purpose of this project is to find evangelistic activities that are biblically sound and culturally relevant in the postmodern culture. The underlying goal is to revitalize the Presbyterian Church at Franklin Lakes as a healthy, growing, multicultural church and ultimately inspire and transform other liberal mainline churches that may be struggling with similar situations. From January through June 2006, this project was implemented and evaluated in our congregation, which was primarily composed of Caucasians and a small number of Koreans. The development of the post project is also included.

Diana Butler Bass researched mainline Protestant churches which had been experiencing new vibrancy through a reappropriation of historic Christian practices relevant to the postmodern context. Similarly, I researched the evangelistic practices which once made our church flourish in the past but now found that they are not working any more in this postmodern context. I also found that Korean evangelistic practices do not work in this postmodern, predominantly

Anglo church, either. Thus, a retraditioning of historic evangelical practices in the postmodern context was found in this project.

"Pastoral leadership in transitioning communities: Congregational praxis as interpretive leadership." Author: Quentin P. Kinnison, Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2008. 291 pages.

abstract:

168 While numerous authors have described the need for intercultural church life and others have described the role of leadership within multicultural congregations, relatively few, if any, have addressed how to help homogenous churches move toward intercultural church life. How can pastors lead homogeneous congregations to embrace intercultural life in the midst of a multicultural community? Why do pastors seem to be unable to successfully lead cultural change in congregations? Investigating expert systems and cultural influences on the church in the southwestern U.S., specifically focusing on Southern Baptist churches, this dissertation develops a practical, theological approach to pastoral leadership that embraces communal leadership. This approach utilizes conflict as an opportunity for engaging positive change through communal praxis informed by active reflection and conscientization (Friere), Appreciative Inquiry, and missional exploration of God's reign.

To arrive at these conclusions, the dissertation follows Thomas Groome's five movements: naming present praxis, critical reflection on present action, accessing Christian story/vision, appropriating Christian story/vision, and decision/response for lived Christian faith. Specifically, the biblical metaphor of shepherd and the theological consideration of relational Trinitarian constructs help reshape pastoral leadership as leadership from within the flock. Hence as a fellow sheep and co-participant within God's people, pastoral leaders reshape power by means of asking questions, which leads the congregation to consider the Holy Spirit's leading and promptings (Pneumacracy—not democracy—leads the church).

By asking the church to consider God's positive and life-giving activity throughout its heritage, it becomes possible for a people to recognize the resources for change already in its grasp. The pastoral leaders then balance the need to increase pressure and decrease pressure within the congregation to promote an atmosphere suitable for change. This occurs best when the pastor avoids becoming the focal point of frustration and resistance, while also avoiding becoming "an

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anxious presence.” For churches historically steeped in ethnocentrism and racism,
being able to honestly critique their histories and to acknowledge the ways in
which God’s Spirit has been preparing them for intercultural life are powerful
motivators toward the kind of change that reflects the eschatological realities of
Revelation 7:9.

“Growing healthy multicultural congregations: A case study analysis of New Life Providence Church (Virginia).” Author: Melvin T. Harris, Sr., D.Min. dissertation, Regent University, 2007. 161 pages.

abstract:

This ministry project addresses the question: “What does it take to develop a growing, healthy multicultural church?” Much has been written previously regarding what it takes to develop growth (in general) in a local church, especially during the church growth era. However, very little has been written about what is required to grow a healthy multicultural church.

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The purpose of this project is to perform a case study of a growing, healthy multicultural church: New Life Providence Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Through case study analysis, several key principles were identified and analyzed, while key leadership principles were derived which are applicable to other leaders with similar applied interests.

This ministry project was chosen based on the need to understand what key principles are necessary for a local church to reach across cultural boundaries. These principles will provide insight to other local churches and their leaders as to why multicultural ministry is important. These principles will also help other local churches and their leaders in their process to move towards multicultural ministry.

“Meeting the challenge of diversity: Ministry and mission in a multicultural milieu.” Author: Chadwick L. Short, Ph.D., dissertation, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2006. 363 pages.

abstract:

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

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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.

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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.

"Community congruence in a multicultural environment: A case study of leadership strategies at Anaheim First Christian Church (California)." Author: Tamsen Murray, Ph.D., Regent University, 2002. 131 pages.

abstract:

Immigration is changing the face of American religious expression, especially in communities experiencing demographic shifts. Anaheim, California, is one of those communities; Anaheim First Christian Church has committed itself to being a multicultural and multigenerational church that more nearly reflects the demographic composition of the community in which it is located. Four language groups share facilities—English, Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese. Using David Britt's Community-Church Congruence Model of Church Growth as the theoretical framework, this case study examines efforts by leaders of Anaheim First Christian Church to create greater congruence between the congregation and its surrounding community. Particular attention is given to efforts focused on relationships. The evidence cited confirms the model by showing the importance of relationships within the congregation as a mark of congruence.

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"Ethnic minority churches: The case of the Canadian Chinese Christian churches in Ottawa (Ontario)." Author: Qiang Li, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa (Canada), 2000. 333 pages.

abstract:

This dissertation investigates the social and cultural conditions which have contributed to the rise of the Chinese Christian community in Canada, more specifically the capital region, and the kind of religious life that evolved within that community. The author draws on extensive fieldwork and offers insights into the beliefs and practices of this little-documented section of the Canadian Chinese community. A sociological survey of the nine Chinese Christian churches in Ottawa shows that this community has been deeply influenced by Canadian social policies and Chinese immigration patterns. Cultural variables such as dialect, place of origin, and social class have also shaped the formation and the growth of Canadian Chinese Christianity. Contemporary Canadian Chinese Christian

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churches primarily meet the interests and needs of middle-class Chinese immigrants, and have become the most cohesive and active ethnic community organizations within the Canadian Chinese community. On the one hand, Canadian Chinese Christianity could be seen as a tool for cultural adaptation. It provides the Chinese members with a set of values and Christian beliefs which they see as similar to the basic beliefs of the host culture; the institution and operation of the churches allow their Chinese members to become accustomed to the administration and political patterns of the host society, and to prepare for entering mainstream society. On the other hand, Canadian Chinese Christianity could be presented as an “ethnic community” which helps the members preserve their Chinese identity defined in cultural terms, that is, language, cultural heritage, and community (“family”). The Chinese churches feature a conservative Confucian Christian theology, where the Christian values are seen as compatible with Chinese values. Both perspectives are useful in demonstrating that, in the case of the Chinese Christian churches, within the Canadian multicultural society, ethnic identity can be selectively reconstructed, and actively and pragmatically pursued, neither as assimilation, nor as preservation, but as accommodation.

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“The Issue of Ethnicity in the Korean-American Church: a study of an English-Speaking Congregation (Baptist).” Author: James Andrew Lee, D.Min. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary 1999. 139 pages.

abstract:

Asian-American churches in general, and Korean-American churches in particular, are in debate over their ethnic futures. In order to better understand the issues involved and examine the people’s perception of ethnic ministry in an increasingly multiethnic society, a study of Korean-American churchgoers was conducted. The working theory that “most of English-speaking, adult Korean-American Christians first look at ethnicity when selecting a church” was tested. To test this, a 250-member, English-speaking, Korean-American congregation in the metropolitan D.C. area was selected and surveyed. The survey content and wording were based on the results of two focus groups of church attendees convened to identify a variety of thoughts, feelings, and positions at work in the issue of ethnicity. Upon approval by the faculty advisors, Drs. Geddes Hanson and Sang Hyun Lee, the survey was administered to the whole congregation. One finding which quickly became a focal point was the discrepancy between the

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respondents' stated main reasons for choosing a church and their perception of others' reasons for the choice. The largest number of respondents believed that most English-speaking, Korean-Americans look at ethnicity first in church selection while most of the respondents themselves claimed reasons other than ethnicity. However, a careful analysis of the results of the entire survey seems to indicate that the respondents also look at ethnicity first. There seems to be a suppression or at least self-misconception of one's own desire for ethnic comfort zone. Evidence for differences of opinions between male and female, single and married, Korean and non-Korean, and bilingual and monolingual members was carefully analyzed and studied. A more thorough study of the apparent Korean-American denial of the need for a personal ethnic comfort zone is in order. A competent understanding of the "mind" of the English-speaking, Korean-Americans in the area of ethnicity and an appropriate ministerial response will contribute to determining the spiritual and numerical growth of the Korean-American, English-language churches.