



Beyond the color line: Models of racial integration 80

enrichment

Enriching and equipping Spirit-filled ministers

Summer 2007



EMBRACING DIVERSITY

Kingdom ministry
in a multiethnic world

The Intentionality of Church Diversity

Churches desire to impact their communities through the power of the Holy Spirit. A significant element of impacting our communities is developing unity in racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Jesus Prayed for Unity

Jesus, realizing the diversity among believers, prayed to His Father for the unity of early believers and asked “that they may be one as we are one” (John 17:11).

Diversity Is Not New to Pentecostals

The Pentecostal revival of the early 20th century was birthed in racial diversity. The revival flourished in congregations containing Anglo, Hispanic, African-American, Polish, German, and Irish believers. The Spirit of God was poured out on men and women of many races and cultures. They were hungry for more of God.

The Risks of Diversity

Diversity entails more than racial and ethnic differences. Today, more than ever, the church faces philosophical diversity that often piggybacks on the issues of race and ethnic inclusiveness. The church, while rightly building unity, must guard against allowing secular philosophies concerning diversity to weaken the principles of biblical unity.

Defining Our Words

Diversity can have a variety of implications depending on the cultural and philosophical context in which it is used. The philosophy of postmodernism often places different meanings on words we commonly use. We must be careful that while embracing diversity in our churches we do not also embrace philosophies that work against our biblical values. Doug Clay, superintendent of the Ohio District, shared a message in which he cautioned our use of secular/postmodern words that work against our Christian values:

- **Individualism:** I live for myself. The Christian serves Christ and loves others.
- **Secularism:** God is unnecessary. The Christian believes God is essential.
- **Relativism:** No absolutes transcend culture and time. The Christian believes that God’s Word is absolute.

- **Pragmatism:** Truth is whatever works for you. The Christian believes Jesus is the embodiment of truth.
 - **Compartmentalization:** Everyone decides on his or her own what is right or wrong. The Christian believes God’s Word is the rule of life.
 - **Tolerance:** Every idea is equally right and must be politically correct. The Christian believes God’s ways are above man’s ways.
- Clay added that the solution to these philosophical differences is the church because the church provides an environment that fosters an:
1. **unmistakable encounter with the person of Jesus Christ.**
 2. **understanding of the reality of the promises of God.**
 3. **unending connection with the power of God through the baptism in the Holy Spirit as both an event and a process.**¹

Missional Focus

Unity in racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity emerges from the missional purpose of the Great Commission — our going into all the world. Before the church can fully embrace diversity, it must be missionally focused. Unity is often the supernatural result of diverse people doing the will of the Father.

We Can Do Better

The Anglo and Hispanic Pentecostal churches have partnered with significant success. Hispanics comprise 11 percent of the general U.S. population and 22 percent of the AG. This representation is good, but we have not done as well with other ethnic groups. We must commit to do better.

The Local Church Must Take the Lead

Too often the church allows the community to set the church’s agenda and culture. The church must impact its community and make a difference in its moral and spiritual well-being.

I believe Assemblies of God ministers want to reach every person in their communities. Perhaps insecurity and unfamiliarity with other racial groups hinders creative ministry. I hope this issue of *Enrichment* journal will provide you with the tools you need to better reach *all* the people in your community. 🙏

NOTE

1. Doug Clay, “Philosophies That Work Against Our Values” (sermon delivered at Ohio Family Camp, 2005).

Today, more than ever, the church faces philosophical diversity that often piggybacks on the issues of race and ethnic inclusiveness.



GARY R. ALLEN, D.Min., is executive editor of *Enrichment* journal and director of the Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.

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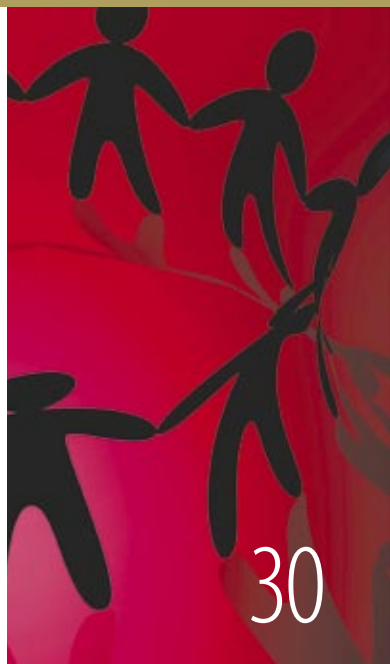
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GROWING TOGETHER

Maximizing the Power of Team Ministry

Team ministry is more than assembling a paid or volunteer staff and calling them a team. Many pastors have done that and have discovered that calling a group of people staff did not change staff relationships or the church. Team ministry is more than preventing staff infection. Staff pastors who get along with each other may still not be effective. Real team ministry begins when the senior pastor becomes the leader he needs to be. He then leads his team into authentic relationships — helping them grow personally and vocationally so they can impact their church and community.

Read effective team-leadership strategies from Mike Bonem, Tony Cooke, J. Don George, Gary L. McIntosh, Bruce McNichol, Roger Patterson, Dan Reiland, Samuel Rima, Mark Rutland, and others.

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Diversity Definitions

ADAPTABILITY: the ability to change, adapt, or make suitable; to make fit by changing or adjusting.

ALIEN: a stranger, one belonging to another country or people, a foreigner.

BIGOTRY: the attitude or beliefs of someone who holds blind and intolerant opinions.

CATHEDRAL MODEL: the gathering into one main official church versus the scattering and spreading type of congregations.

CONTEXTUALIZATION: the role of culture in shaping the Christian message to the needs of a people in a concrete place.

CULTURE: the distinctive characteristics of a people's way of life; the conceptual design by which people order their lives, interpret their experience, and evaluate the behavior of others.

CRITICAL MASS: the minimum amount of anything that changes the character, property, or condition.

CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY: any ministry in which one interacts with people who have grown up learning values and lifestyle patterns that are different from one's own.

ETHNIC: any of the basic groups or nations distinguished by their customs, characteristics, language, or common history.

ETHNOCENTRIC: a disposition of focusing on one's distinguishing attitudes, habits, or beliefs.

ENCULTURATION: the process of lifelong learning by which an individual acquires the cultural heritage of a larger community.

INTENTIONALITY: acting or doing something with purpose and intention.

MOSAIC: a picture or design made by inlaying small pieces of stone, glass, or tile.

continued on page 7

"O Lord, my Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth." The Pleiades and Orion sing Your praise. You are the God of creation; all people are Your offspring. You are the God of history; the periods and boundaries of the nations are in Your hands.

"O precious Son of the living God, the whole earth sings the glory of Your name. You are the God of revelation, for through You the Father has uniquely and decisively made himself known. You are, O Lord, the God of redemption, our peace who has broken down the wall of hostility that divides people from one another.

"May Your kingdom come. Thy will be done.

"Gracious Holy Spirit, Your coming at Pentecost fulfilled the promise of the Father and the prayer of His Son, Jesus Christ. You continue to gather a people to God in divine lordship and fellowship. You are the Spirit of truth sent to complete the revelation of Scripture and illumine Your people.

"O Holy Spirit of life, ours is a world of disunity, alienation, and strife. I pray for community, for reconciliation, and for peace. Many people are hurting today. I want to stand with them in their suffering. But how can I? Much of my life seems to revolve around my own interests and welfare. In my frailty, I enjoy the comfort of the familiar, and I fear that which seems strange to me. I find it easy to shut out those who differ from myself. Please forgive me, I pray.

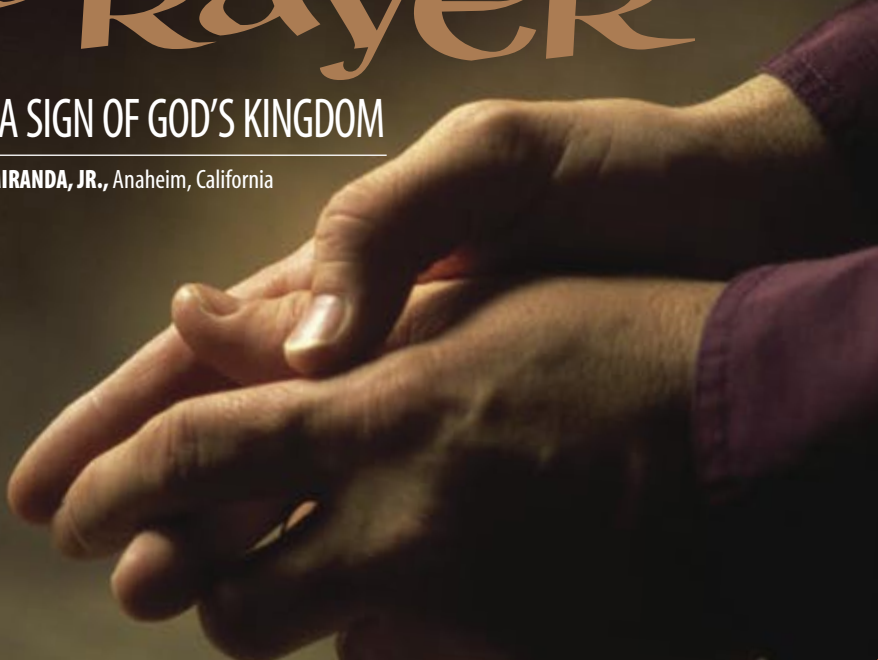
"Let me be, I humbly ask, a sign of Your kingdom where I:

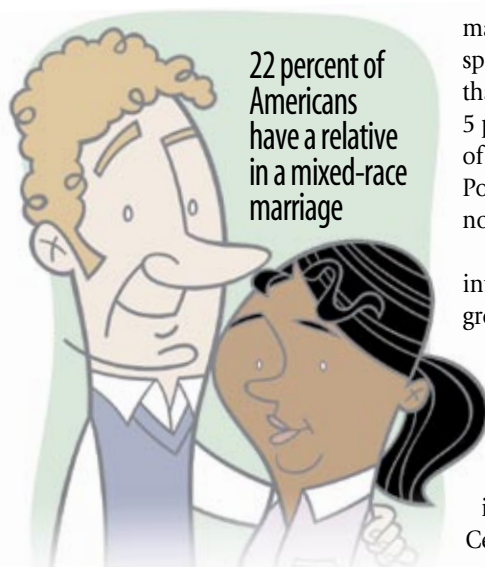
- **recognize and respect** the unity You have created.
- **celebrate** the colorful mosaic of other cultures, whose beauty will be brought into the glory of the New Jerusalem.
- **seek to preserve** the riches of every culture, Your people, and renounce cultural imperialism.
- **appreciate** cultural achievement; and, at the same time, **resist** the idolatry that lies at the heart of many cultures.
- **proclaim** that the god they worship as unknown has made himself known in Jesus Christ.
- **join** the nucleus of the new society of Jesus, in which men and women of all social, racial, and cultural origins are reconciled to each other.
- **longingly anticipate** the glory of the new community in Christ — a model of harmony and the sign of Your kingdom. **"amen."**

a Prayer

FOR A SIGN OF GOD'S KINGDOM

JESSE MIRANDA, JR., Anaheim, California





22 percent of Americans have a relative in a mixed-race marriage

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

More than one-fifth of all American adults (22 percent) say that they have a close relative who is married to someone of a different race, according to a new

Pew Research Center survey.

That degree of familiarity with — and proximity to — interracial marriage is the latest milestone in what has been a sweeping change in behaviors and attitudes concerning interracial relationships over the past several decades.

Until 1967, when a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Loving versus Virginia* struck down the last of the antiscegenation laws in this country, interracial marriage had been illegal in 16 states and was widely considered a social taboo.

Since then interracial marriage in this country has evolved from nearly nonexistent to merely atypical. In 1970, fewer than 1 percent of all

married couples were made up of spouses of a different race; by 2000 that figure had grown to just over 5 percent, according to an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data by the Population Reference Bureau, a nonpartisan research organization.¹

At the same time, attitudes toward interracial relationships have also grown more tolerant. In 2003, more than three-quarters of all adults (77 percent) said it is “all right for blacks and whites to date each other,” up from 48 percent who felt this way in 1987, according to Pew Research Center surveys.

Acceptance of interracial dating is greatest among the young. In surveys conducted in 2002 and 2003, fully 91 percent of Gen Y respondents born after 1976 said that interracial dating is acceptable compared with 50 percent of the oldest generation (those reaching adulthood during World War II) who expressed this view.

Also, blacks (91 percent) and Hispanics (90 percent) are more accepting of interracial dating than are non-Hispanic whites (71 percent).

According to Census data, the most common type of interracial couple in 2000 was a white husband married to an Asian wife; this pairing comprised 14 percent of all interracial couples. Black husbands and white wives accounted for 8 percent of all interracial couples. The Census data also show that, in 2000, in 73 percent of all black-white married couples the husband is black, while in 75 percent of all Asian-white couples, the husband is white. 🍷

NOTE

1. Sharon M. Lee and Barry Edmonston, *New Marriages, New Families: U.S. Racial and Hispanic Intermarriage*, Population Bulletin 60, no. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau, 2005).

SOURCE: The survey is conducted by the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan “fact tank” that provides information on the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world. For the full report go to <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/304/guess-whos-coming-to-dinner>

Diversity Definitions continued from page 6

MULTIRACIAL: having or consisting of more than two racial groups.

HETEROGENEOUS: consisting of different races or ethnic groups.

HOMOGENEOUS: consisting of the same structure, culture, similar or identical qualities or culture.

INTERCULTURAL: between or among people of different cultures.

INTERRACIAL: between, among, or involving members of different races.

INTEGRATION: bringing different racial and ethnic groups together to form a free and equal association.

MARGINALIZATION: the state of racial and ethnic people limited to the fringes or borders of society; outsiders looking in.

MELTING POT: a metaphor or figure of speech for a country or place in which immigrants of various nationalities and races are assimilated.

MULTICULTURAL CONGREGATIONS: those congregations seeking to embody some form of equity in the power relations of the various cultural groups in the congregation.



Worshippers at International Christian Center, Staten Island, New York.

MULTIETHNIC: having or consisting of more than two ethnic groups.

PATERNALISM: the principle of governing or controlling a group or members in a manner suggesting a father's relationship with his children, creating a dependency.

RECONCILIATION: to bring together over a friendly attitude, to settle matters and bring into harmony.

200000000

From 200 Million to 300 Million:

The Numbers Behind Population Growth




The U.S. population reached 300 million in October 2006. This analysis by race/ethnicity and nativity represents the 100 million people who were added to the population since 1966-67. In addition, this analysis breaks down the U.S. population, again by race/ethnicity and nativity, when it was 200 million and at the 300 million mark.

The U.S. population reached 200 million in the mid to late 1960s. At that time, the U.S. population was 84 percent white, 11 percent black, 4 percent Hispanic and 1 percent Asian and Pacific Islander.¹

Between 1966 and 2006, the U.S. population grew by 100 million,² the net effect of births and deaths, immigration and emigration. A number of diverse factors determined the rate of growth, ranging from changes in U.S. immigration law in 1965, 1986 and 1990 to steady improvements in life expectancy and to decreasing fertility levels.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center's population estimates and projections, the Hispanic population increased from 8.5 million in 1966-67 to 44.7 million today. Latinos accounted for 36 percent of the 100 million added to the population in the last four decades, the most of any racial or ethnic group. Immigration from Latin America and relatively high fertility rates among Latinos were major factors in this increase. The white population grew from 167.2 million in 1966-67 to 201.0 million today. That represented 34 percent of the 100 million added since 1966-67.

The black population increased from 22.3 million to 38.7 million and accounted for about 16 percent of the population growth, according to the estimates. The Asian and Pacific Islander population increased from 1.5 million to about 14.3 million, representing about 13 percent of the increase. 

NOTES

1. Race groups are for persons not of Hispanic origin.
2. Assumption is made that the population reached 200 million in October, 1966.

SOURCE: The Pew Hispanic Center is a project of the Pew Research Center.

LIVING TOGETHER:

A New Look at Racial and Ethnic Integration in Metropolitan Neighborhoods

An analysis of the changing racial and ethnic profile of neighborhoods in America's 10 largest metropolitan areas between 1990 and 2000 reveals that:

- **The number of predominantly white neighborhoods fell** by 30 percent during the 1990s. Neighborhoods with a mixed white and Hispanic or Asian population replaced predominantly white communities as the most common neighborhood type by 2000.
- **Nine of the 10 metro areas saw an increase in mixed-race neighborhoods.** In Boston, Chicago, and Detroit, neighborhoods with a mix of whites and Hispanics or Asians fueled this increase. In Dallas, Houston, New York, and Washington, D.C., neighborhoods with a mix of blacks and Hispanics or Asians multiplied most rapidly.
- **Over the decade, whites and blacks became less likely, and Hispanics and Asians became more likely, to live in neighborhoods in which their group predominated.** In 2000, about equal proportions of whites, blacks, and Hispanics (41–42 percent) lived in predominantly white, black, and other race communities, respectively.
- **Fewer than half of the country's multiethnic and mixed white-and-black**

- **Predominantly white: –11%**

1990 35%

2000 24%

- **Predominantly black: no change**

1990 11%

2000 11%

- **Predominantly other-race: + 4%**

1990 9%

2000 13%

- **Mixed white-and-other: + 2%**

1990 22%

2000 24%

- **Mixed white-and-black: – 2%**

1990 6%

2000 4%

- **Mixed black-and-other: + 6%**

1990 11%

2000 17%

- **Mixed multiethnic: + 1%**

1990 6%

2000 7%

NEIGHBORHOOD TYPES, 10 LARGEST METROPOLITAN AREAS 1990-2000



neighborhoods retained the same racial/ethnic mix in 2000 that they had in 1990. By contrast, neighborhoods in which Hispanics and/or Asians predominated, and neighborhoods in which those groups mixed with blacks, maintained their character over the decade.

- **Neighborhoods that changed from homogeneous**

to mixed-race were often suburban, but patterns varied widely among metro areas. In Washington, neighborhoods with a mix of blacks and Hispanics/Asians grew rapidly in once predominantly black suburbs. In Chicago, formerly white communities in the central city and older suburbs attracted significant numbers of nonblack minorities. 

FINDINGS from David Fasenfest, Jason Booza, and Kurt Metzger, "Living Together: A New Look at Racial and Ethnic Integration in Metropolitan Neighborhoods, 1990–2000," *The Living Cities Census Series* (Washington, D.C.: the Brookings Institution, April 2004), 5. See www.brookings.edu/urban/pubs/20040428_fasenfest.pdf

Hispanics—A Faith Profile

- **One-third of Hispanic adults** (32 percent) **are classified as born again Christians**, compared with 59 percent of black adults and 48 percent of whites (2006).
- **Only one in four Hispanic adults** (27 percent) **claims to be “absolutely committed”** to the Christian faith, which is significantly below the 65 percent of blacks and 58 percent of whites that reported likewise (2006).
- Hispanics are no different from adults nationwide when it comes to the importance their faith plays in their daily lives. **Hispanics** (89 percent) **say that their faith is an important part of their lives** compared with 85 percent of adults nationwide (2006).
- **Hispanics** (62 percent) **believe the Bible is totally accurate** in all of its teachings, compared with 68 percent adults nationwide (2006).
- Like adults nationwide, **37 percent of Hispanics believe they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs** with other people (2006).
- **Hispanics** (43 percent) **believe that when He lived on earth, Jesus Christ was human and committed sins** like other people, which is statistically identical to 41 percent of adults nationwide (2006).
- **Sixty-nine percent describe God as the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator** of the universe who still rules the world today (2006).
- **Hispanics** (64 percent) **believe Satan is just a symbol of evil** and not a real living being (a belief held by 55 percent of adults nationwide) (2006).
- **Hispanics are more likely than the average adult to believe a person can earn his way to heaven**, with 65 percent of Hispanics believing that if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their life, he will earn a place in heaven, compared with 54 percent of adults nationwide (2006).
- **Three percent of Hispanics are evangelical Christians** (2006). e



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A Neighborhood Integration Typology

Homogeneous



PREDOMINANTLY WHITE

— at least 80 percent white, and no minority group represents more than 10 percent of the population.



PREDOMINANTLY BLACK

— at least 50 percent black, and no other minority group represents more than 10 percent of the population.



PREDOMINANTLY OTHER-RACE

— at least 50 percent non-black minority, and no more than 10 percent black.

Mixed-race



MIXED WHITE-AND-OTHER

— between 10 percent and 50 percent of the population classified as other, and less than 10 percent black.



MIXED WHITE-AND-BLACK

— between 10 percent and 50 percent of the population black, and less than 10 percent classified as other.



MIXED BLACK-AND-OTHER

— at least 10 percent black, at least 10 percent classified as other, and no more than 40 percent white.



MIXED MULTIETHNIC

— at least 10 percent black, at least 10 percent classified as other, and at least 40 percent white.

FINDINGS from David Fasenfest, Jason Booza, and Kurt Metzger, “Living Together: A New Look at Racial and Ethnic Integration in Metropolitan Neighborhoods, 1990–2000,” *The Living Cities Census Series* (Washington, D.C.: the Brookings Institution, April 2004), 5. See www.brookings.edu/urban/pubs/20040428_fasenfest.pdf

Perspectives of Race Within the AG: Attendance, Conversions, and Baptisms

SOURCE: Sherri L. Doty, statistician, Office of the General Secretary

RACE*	CHURCHES	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE	CONVERSIONS	WATER BAPTISMS	HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISMS
ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	473	92	6,029	2,971	3,142
BLACK	287	135	22,970	3,292	2,932
HISPANIC	2,140	119	58,738	21,350	15,084
NATIVE AMERICAN	189	49	2,556	787	562
WHITE	8,646	148	308,738	80,351	59,547
OTHER/ANY RACE	563	218	54,389	10,087	8,251
TOTALS	12,298	—	453,420	118,838	90,238

*Among the Asian and Pacific Islander race, the Korean ethnic group has the most churches; among the Native Americans, the American Indians have the most.



Ethnic Groups Bring Growth, Diversity to AG Churches

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Hispanics has grown at nearly four times the national population rate

in the past 2 years, solidifying its mark as the most populous minority group in the nation. There are now 38.8 million Hispanics who live in the United States.

Asians also are among the fastest-growing minority groups, accounting for 27 percent of the U.S. foreign-born population.

What's more, the population boom of Hispanics and Asians in the United States has translated into growth in Assemblies of God churches. From 1995-2005, Hispanic growth accounted for 26 percent of total growth in the United States A/G, and the number of Asian and Pacific Island churches has grown by 36 percent since 1995.

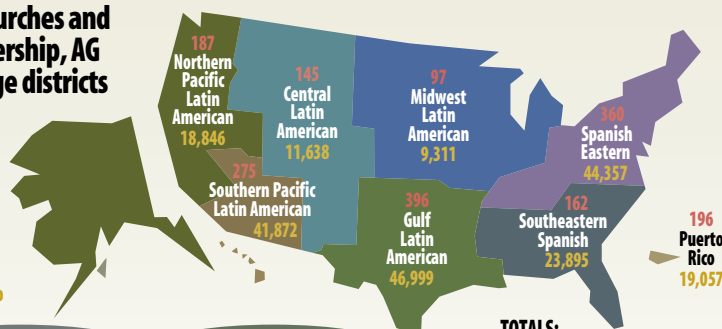
SHERRI L. DOTY, statistician, Office of the General Secretary

2005 churches and membership, AG language districts

KEY:

RED = total churches

ORANGE = total membership



TOTALS:

Language — Spanish	1,818	215,975
Language — Other	240	31,444
Language Districts	2,058	247,419

SOURCE: Sherri L. Doty, statistician, Office of the General Secretary

Races of AG churches by region, 2005

ETHNICITY	Asian & Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	Native American	White	Other/Any Race	Total Churches
Great Lakes	12	31	11	2	1,252	43	1,351
Gulf	5	35	8	4	1,315	17	1,384
Language — Other	166		5		14	55	240
Language — Spanish			1,806	1	1	10	1,818
North Central	12	16	9	24	731	13	805
Northeast	40	103	29	2	1,160	129	1,463
Northwest	34	4	8	50	685	18	799
South Central	9	15	93	36	1,430	65	1,648
Southeast	8	71	47	19	1,257	54	1,456
Southwest	187	12	124	51	801	159	1,334
National Totals	473	287	2,140	189	8,646	563	12,298
Percent of Total	3.8%	2.3%	17.4%	1.5%	70.3%	4.6%	

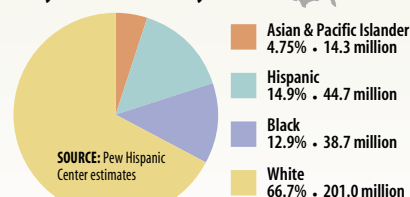
SOURCE: Sherri L. Doty, statistician, Office of the General Secretary

Ethnicity of AG churches — change over a 10-year period

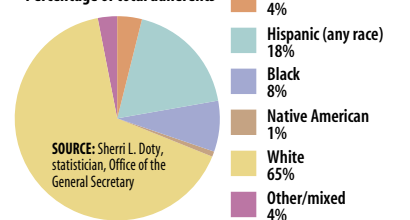
ETHNICITY	1995	2005	% change
Asian/Pacific Islander	349	473	36%
Black	163	287	76%
Hispanic	1,693	2,140	26%
Native American/Alaska Native	179	189	6%
White	9,106	8,646	-5%
Others/Any Race	333	563	69%
Includes No Single Majority	271	421	55%
TOTAL:	12,094	12,719	5%

SOURCE: Sherri L. Doty, statistician, Office of the General Secretary

U.S. population in 2006, by race and ethnicity



AG adherents in 2005 by race and ethnicity



States with the largest number of foreign-born residents

RANK & STATE	Number of foreign born**	Percent of all U.S. foreign born
1. California	8,864,255	28.5 %
2. New York	3,868,133	12.4 %
3. Texas	2,899,642	9.3 %
4. Florida	2,670,828	8.6 %
5. Illinois	1,529,058	4.9 %
6. New Jersey	1,476,327	4.7 %
7. Massachusetts	772,983	2.5 %
8. Arizona	656,183	2.1 %
9. Washington	614,457	2.0 %
10. Georgia	577,273	1.9 %
TOTALS:	31,107,889	76.9 %

* Total number of foreign born residents, 2000.

SOURCE: The Brookings Institution. Based on data from the Office for Refugee Resettlement and Census 2000.

Largest refugee sending countries, 1983-2004

RANK & COUNTRY	Total refugees 1983-2004
1. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*	362,563
2. Vietnam	387,741
3. Yugoslavia**	168,644
4. Laos	113,504
5. Cambodia	71,433
6. Iran	61,349
7. Cuba	51,787
8. Somalia	47,753
9. Iraq	35,252
10. Ethiopia	35,144
11. Romania	34,665
12. Afghanistan	31,180
13. Poland	28,809
14. Sudan	22,647
15. Liberia	20,925

* Includes all the newly formed countries of the former Soviet Union after 1992.

** Includes all the newly formed countries of the former Yugoslavia after 1992.

SOURCE: The Brookings Institution. Based on Office for Refugee Resettlement data.

Top metropolitan areas of refugee resettlement, 1983-2004* with foreign-born population rank, 2000

Refugee rank	Foreign-born rank	METROPOLITAN AREA	Refugees resettled
1	2	New York	186,522
2	1	Los Angeles	114,606
3	3	Chicago	63,322
4	6	Orange County	50,714
5	23	Seattle	48,573
6	12	San Jose	42,565
7	7	Washington	41,795
8	30	Minneapolis - St. Paul	41,239
9	16	Atlanta	40,149
10	29	Sacramento	37,436
11	14	Boston	36,232
12	31	Portland	34,292
13	13	San Diego	33,976
14	20	Philadelphia	32,981
15	15	Houston	32,869

* Fiscal years except 2004, for which data ends in June.

SOURCE: The Brookings Institution. Based on data from the Office for Refugee Resettlement and Census 2000.

The New Americans



More Americans Foreign-Born, Multilingual, and Going West

More Americans are foreign-born and multilingual, according to census data now available for the nation's 331 metro areas. About 5 percent of residents in the average metro area are people who entered the country within the previous 10 years. The accumulated effect of a constant stream of immigrants entering the country over the last three decades is becoming noticeable, with the percentage of Americans born outside the United States in the average metropolis increasing from 9.5 percent to 13 percent over the last decade. One result is that almost one quarter of Americans speaks a language other than English at home, rising from 15.7 percent in 1990 to 21 percent in 2000. These include immigrants as well as many of their children and even their grandchildren born in the United States.

Increased bilingualism is evident throughout the country, but most pronounced in the West where almost

one-third of the population speaks a language other than English at home, rising from 24.9 percent in 1990 to 31.5 percent in 2000. This trend is only beginning to reach the Midwest where only a tenth of the population is bilingual, increasing from 8.1 percent in 1990 to 11 percent in 2000.

New York City is the top destination for new immigrants with 1.3 million arriving in the last decade. Los Angeles-Long Beach is now the No. 2 destination for new immigrants, with 1.2 million residents arriving in the country during the 1990s (12.4 percent of the population). This number, however, is down from the 1.5 million who had arrived in the 1980s. Chicago is the third most attractive destination, with more than 600,000 recent immigrants, double the 300,000 who arrived in the 1980s.

Some of the largest increases in immigration were seen in the West. The percentage of foreign-born residents increased in San Jose from 23.1 percent in 1990 to 34.1 percent in 2000 and in Oakland from 16.2 percent to 24.0 percent. The foreign-born population in Las Vegas and Phoenix doubled over the last decade. Dallas also saw a huge jump in new arrivals with more than 330,000 recent immigrants, up from 130,000 in 1990. Atlanta is a new destination; it received four times as many new immigrants in the 1990s than it had in the 1980s. 🌐

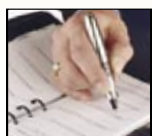
SOURCE: Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, Albany, New York. See <http://www.albany.edu/mumford/>



Los Angeles, California.

MANAGING YOUR MINISTRY

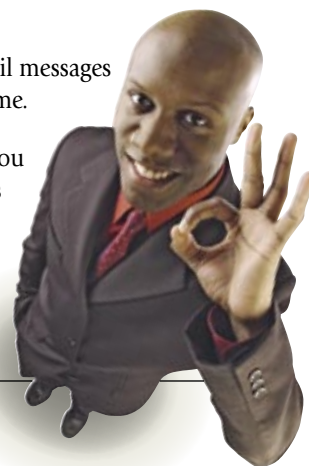
Make Recognizing Employees Part of Your Daily Routine



Good managers remember to recognize and motivate employees. Great managers do it every day. Here are some proven methods for making sure that praising employees becomes part of your daily routine:

- ✓ **Make employees a part of your weekly to-do list.** Add the names of the people who report to you to your list of goals to accomplish. Then cross off names as you praise them.
- ✓ **Use voice mail.** Rather than using it only to assign tasks, leave employees voice mail messages praising them for a job well done. Do it from your cellular phone on the way home.
- ✓ **Write notes at the end of the day.** Keep a stack of note cards on your desk, where you cannot ignore them. At the end of the day take a minute to write thank-you notes to any employee who made a difference that day.
- ✓ **At the beginning of the day put five coins in your pocket.** Then, during the day, each time you praise an employee, transfer a coin to your other pocket. It may sound corny, but once you get in the habit, you will start relying on tricks like this one.

SOURCE: *Motivational Manager* who adopted it from *Inc.* magazine.



REAL ISSUES, REAL SOLUTIONS

A Monumental Project

PROBLEM: Birds were eating cherries from the Capital Mall and depositing their droppings at the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials each evening, staining the marble. Washing the marble each day was speeding up its deterioration.

Finally, someone asked, "Why are the birds gathering at the memorials each evening?"

Investigation revealed the birds were attracted to the monuments each evening to feed on spiders that were there to feed on gnat-like flies called midges that were attracted there at dusk each day because of the lights at the memorials.¹

SOLUTION: By delaying the lighting of the monuments for about 30 minutes after dusk the flies did not arrive, thus the spiders diminished, and the birds went elsewhere. The result was the marble no longer needed to be washed each day, and the deterioration was minimized.

QUESTION: Are you addressing the real issues and attempting to solve the real problems? 🌀

NOTE

1. Karen Spilman, Conservation Lab Tackles a Monumental Project, <http://www.upenn.edu/pennnews/features/1994/110394/monuments.html> accessed April 26, 2006.

GARY R. ALLEN, director, Ministerial Enrichment, Springfield, Missouri.

10 WAYS TO MAKE IT A GREAT DAY



Every day has the potential to be a good and, in some cases, a great day. Few people get up in the morning thinking they want to have a bad day. Yet, in many cases, the day turns out that way because of a person, an event, or because we worry about something in the future.

Every day people or events can prevent us from having a good day if we let them. The key is not letting them steal your day.

In many situations, we cannot control what happens to us, but we can control how we react. Lao Tzu, a Chinese philosopher, said: "He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty."

Below are some ideas to help you stay positive and focused on making your day great.

1. **Smile, laugh, and encourage others.**
2. **Meet each day with enthusiasm and determination.**
3. **Be honest with yourself and others.**
4. **Set goals and take action on your dreams.**
5. **Manage your time.**
6. **When in doubt, listen and learn.**
7. **View change as an opportunity for growth.**
8. **Eliminate excuses.**
9. **Do not find fault — find a solution.**
10. **Count your blessings.** 🌀

SOURCE: John Bishop at <http://www.TeachingMoments.com>

The Joy of Diversity in the Body of Christ



“
The Assemblies of God is still an ethnically and racially diverse movement, and it is becoming more so.
”

Having an ethnically diverse Fellowship is a vision Thomas E. Trask has for the Assemblies of God. He and other top leaders have taken steps to ensure this vision takes place. In his quarterly interview with *Enrichment journal*, Trask discusses the significance of ethnic and racial diversity within the Assemblies of God.

In what ways is the Assemblies of God an ethnically and racially diverse movement?

TRASK: The Assemblies of God has been diverse from its inception, which also includes the Azusa Street Revival. Our history of diversity may not be readily remembered because some of who we are as a Movement is lost from time to time. But this is not intentional; it is only because personalities move off the scene.

The Assemblies of God is still an ethnically and racially diverse movement, and it is becoming more so. As I look back over the last 10 years, I can see that diversity has been increasing, not only in church leadership but also in the local church. We have more men and women of ethnic and racial backgrounds serving on our church boards and church staffs today. This trend is healthy, and I trust and pray that it continues. Diversity in the church gives us a glimpse of what heaven will be like.

How has the Hispanic segment of the church contributed to the growth of the Assemblies of God?

TRASK: The Hispanic church is the largest ethnic segment and it continues to grow because many Hispanics are coming to America. Our partnership with the Hispanics has helped strengthen them and has become a win-win for all involved. Anglo districts have a great deal to offer — longevity, strength, and resources — that many newer districts do not have. Partnering also provides for interchange that is healthy for everyone.

Many Hispanics realize that the younger generation wants to speak both Spanish and English. This is understandable. Their children are being taught in schools where English is spoken. The Hispanic church and the English church are addressing this need. The English

church is recognizing an opportunity to minister to Hispanics, whether it is teaching them English and embracing them into their church, or allowing them to use church facilities so they can have their own congregation. Churches that meet these needs are growing.

What are some other ethnic groups in the Assemblies of God?

TRASK: The Assemblies of God in the United States now has two Korean districts; a Brazilian district; an African Assemblies of God Fellowship; an Arabic Fellowship; a National Black Fellowship; a National Chinese Fellowship; a National Fijian Fellowship; a Filipino-American Fellowship; a Haitian-American Fellowship; a Hmong National Fellowship; a National Indonesian Fellowship; a Native American Fellowship; a Romanian Fellowship; a Samoan Fellowship; a National Slavic Fellowship; a United States Tongan Fellowship; a Vietnamese Fellowship, and a National Deaf Culture Fellowship. Perhaps the most recent group is the Slavic-Russian Fellowship. They have more than 500 churches in America.

AG Financial has made more than \$22 million in loans to the Slavic-Russian Fellowship. These ethnic congregations need facilities and are buying beautiful buildings for a fraction of the cost. AG Financial has made their criteria for loans less rigid and the churches have proven that they will meet their responsibilities. The Assemblies of God and these churches benefit from our partnering together and helping them reach their communities. It is a God thing. It is right. It is timely. It is Kingdom mindedness.

These different groups reflect what is happening in America. America is a melting pot. People want to come to America because of the opportunities and freedoms God has given us. These people bring needs. This is a day of opportunity for the Assemblies of God. The church is able to interchange with people of different races and ethnicities and minister to them in new cultural settings.

How racially and ethnically diverse is the leadership in the Assemblies of God?

TRASK: A few years ago, the Assemblies of God took deliberate steps to further represent our ethnic and racial membership. I felt strongly that the Executive Presbytery needed to be more diverse. We added Jesse Miranda, Jr., a Hispanic member; Nam Soo Kim, a Korean member; and Zollie L. Smith, Jr., representing the African-American Fellowship. As these groups continue to enlarge, it is essential they have representation not only on the Executive Presbytery, but also on the General Presbytery, on the district level, and in our ethnic fellowships. The Assemblies of God is privileged to be a part of what God is doing for them and with them.

The 2007 General Council will emphasize unity in diversity. What will we do at this Council that will draw attention to ethnicity?

TRASK: The 2007 General Council Leadership Seminar will be held August 7–8, prior to the opening of the biennial General Council. Throughout this seminar we will address how the church can better serve ethnic groups within the Assemblies of God. Herbert Cooper, senior pastor of People's Church, a multiracial church in Oklahoma City, and Nino Gonzales, senior pastor, Iglesia El Calvario AG, Orlando, Florida are two of the opening plenary session speakers at General Council. (Pictured at right.)

Being a resource to our ethnic groups cannot be a one-time event. Ministry to diverse groups must be deliberate and ongoing. We must be careful that our motivation for this ministry comes from a genuine love for one another. People know and sense when people are just acting, or when their love is real. When the church's love is real, it will embrace others, and they will sense a genuine love.

Jesse Miranda says that the church must be what it wants the community to become. What can a church do to better reflect and change its community?

TRASK: A church must move outside its four walls and go where the people are and get to know

them. When a church gets to know the various ethnic and racial groups in its city, it will appreciate them for their diversity. In turn, the church can minister effectively to them.

Hurricane Katrina serves as an example. The part of our nation affected by Katrina has a diverse culture. When the church moved into Louisiana and Mississippi and began to minister to people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, suddenly who they were culturally was not as important as what they represented — an opportunity for the church to embrace them, love them, and care for them. What happens then? People open their heart to the gospel. They ask, "Why do you want to help us?" Then we can answer that it is because of the love of Christ, not a governmental program. We know this is how Jesus would respond.

How does a church stay focused on its missional purpose — the Great Commission — and yet be intentional about culture?

TRASK: Our mission needs to drive us. We cannot substitute the mission God gave the Church when He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15, KJV). When we are missional, we will touch people of all cultures. Reaching other cultures will be a normal part of congregational life.

The greatest unity comes to the body of Christ when it is culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse. As a pastor, this was my experience. While I was pastoring in the metropolitan Detroit area, I witnessed what happens when a church becomes missional — people of other cultures and ethnicities begin to attend.

When our congregation began to embrace people of various ethnic and racial groups, we had Asians, people from the islands, and people from different nations who were living in the Detroit area begin coming to church. This diversity was beautiful.

While we welcomed people from other cultures, we did not cater to any group at the expense of the whole body because a church cannot do that. Rather, we opened our arms to people of every race, and they could see the

2007 General Council Opening Plenary Session Speakers



Herbert Cooper



Nino Gonzalez



Dary Northrop

“
*Once you have found
the richness of
diversity in the body
of Christ, you will
discover that your
congregation will
take on a new
life and excitement
as people bring their
culture into your
church.*”

genuine love and appreciation we had for them and for one another. People know when they are loved and included; they sense it and respond. The love of Christ makes the difference.

Color and other distinctions do not need to be an issue. People from different cultures felt comfortable coming because they knew they were welcome, and they knew they were not looked on as separate from the rest of the church. They participated in the planning of various church activities.

Nothing is more fulfilling than seeing people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds praying together, singing together, worshipping the Lord, caring for each other, and reaching out to each other. The church has no greater joy than this. The greatest unity will come when the church is diverse.

What can pastors do to effectively reach the different ethnic and racial groups in their communities?

TRASK: A pastor and church must desire to reach and embrace different ethnic and racial groups in their community. This is a spiritual matter. If we are reaching out to other groups only because we are asked to, or because it is the socially proper thing to do, that is a façade and is hypocritical.

One critical issue in the church when considering reaching out to other ethnic and racial groups is our methods and motives, so we do not send a message of tokenism, accommodation, condescension, or something we are doing to maintain appearances.

If church leadership has a desire to reach people of various ethnic groups, the church will find ways to reach out, touch people, and make them feel welcome. This effort may come from a desire to meet needs brought about by a disaster or a ministry program to feed the hungry.

One of the great joys I experience in the Assemblies of God is the ministry of Convoy of Hope. This ministry provides the church with an avenue to take the gospel to where the people are by providing them with food,

clothing, dental and medical service, haircuts, and then presenting the gospel. Convoy of Hope has given people opportunity to get out of the church and into the community where they can invest in the lives of people by getting to know them, appreciate them, love them, and demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to them.

What do you project the Assemblies of God will look like a decade from now?

TRASK: The ethnic and racial segment of this Fellowship is currently at 34 percent. I believe in the near future the Assemblies of God will be at least 50 percent racial and ethnic in its representation. That is healthy. Having an increase in ethnic groups does not diminish our mission; it only intensifies our mission. Many ethnic groups are passionate about winning their people. The Assemblies of God must remain passionate for the lost.

Diversity adds value to the church. The diversity of culture, race, and ethnicity brings richness to the body of Christ that is beautiful.

Any concluding thoughts on diversity?

TRASK: I want to encourage our pastors. If you have not discovered the joy that comes from diversity in the body of Christ, you need to transition your church as quickly as possible. Until you do, you do not know what you are missing. Once you have found the richness of diversity in the body of Christ, you will discover that your congregation will take on new life and excitement as people bring their culture into your church.

As I travel, I find that churches with diversity in their congregations are a part of what God is doing. Churches that are open to diversity as a God-given mandate are growing and being blessed by the Lord. Their services have freshness and a quickening of the Spirit of God. There is nothing better than to stand alongside and worship with people of different races, to pray with them at the altar and embrace them. ☺

2

Defining Truths of the Assemblies of God: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit



"The Baptism in the Holy Spirit"
by Ron DiCianni

*The purpose of
the Baptism
is to empower
Christians to live out
the Christian life.*

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is what sets Pentecostals apart from other Evangelical churches. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is essential. Jesus told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem "until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49, KJV). There are two major blessings and reasons why people need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

First, Acts 1:8 says: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Someone might say, "I thought I received the Holy Spirit when I was saved."

When a person is saved, he receives the Person of the Holy Spirit. But the *Baptism* is a subsequent experience, as it was in the New Testament church in Acts. The Lord knew that people throughout church history needed to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Second, Acts 1:8 gives the reason Christians need empowerment: "and *ye shall be witnesses*" (italics added, KJV). The purpose of the Baptism is to empower Christians to live out the Christian life. Why would anyone want to deprive Christians of that glorious experience — a prayer life that accompanies the gift of the Spirit, praying in tongues, and the empowerment that comes with this blessed Holy Spirit experience?

A pastor might say, "Brother Trask, I am afraid that if I give opportunity for people to be filled with the Spirit, nobody will come forward. How do I pray with people to receive?"

As pastor, you are not the Baptizer; neither am I. The Lord is the giver of this gift. But a pastor can allow people to see their need for the Baptism by preaching and teaching on their need for a Spirit-filled life. When they receive the Baptism, they will speak in other tongues. This is what we call the *initial physical evidence*.

When people speak with other tongues, they will be conscious that they are speaking in a new language — one they have not learned. The pastor does not need to teach this new language to them; neither does he need to coax people into speaking in tongues. When people come forward, help them yield themselves in worship, prayer, and adoration to the Lord. The overflow of His presence in their lives will result

in their being baptized in the Spirit, and they will speak with new tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance.

When I pastored, a Methodist woman worshiped with us. She enjoyed the services, but she was skeptical of the Baptism. One Sunday night she got blessed at the altar. After praying, she came to me, and said, "Pastor, I received the Baptism this evening."

I said, "Wonderful. Let me ask you a question. Did you speak in other tongues?"

She said, "No."

I said, "Then you didn't receive the Baptism."

She said, "Oh, yes. ..."

I said, "No, when you receive the Baptism, you will speak with other tongues."

She became upset with me. "I did. I got blessed," she said.

She did get blessed, but there is a difference between receiving a blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. I had upset her, and she was going to prove me wrong. For the next two Sunday nights she prayed and sought the Lord. I encouraged her by saying: "Just love Jesus. Continue to wait upon the Lord. Say, 'Lord, I want the fullness of Your Spirit.'" The third Sunday night the Holy Spirit came upon her, and she began to speak with other tongues.

When she got up from the altar, having been filled with the Spirit, she came running to me. "Pastor," she said, "I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit." Before the whole phrase was out, she began speaking in tongues.

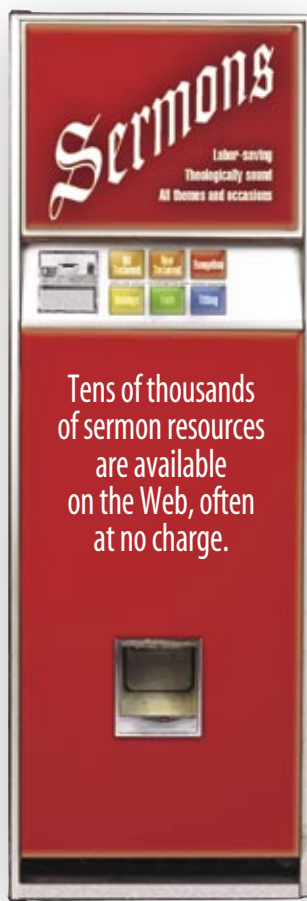
I share this because if I had allowed her to believe she had been filled with the Spirit, this would have ended her experience. She would not have received the infilling of the Spirit, the enduement of power that accompanies the infilling, or the prayer language the Baptism brings. I would have done her a disservice.

Pastors, help your people know the blessing God has for them in the fullness of the Spirit. Teach them, pray with them, encourage them, and allow them time to seek God. I assure you, they will be blessed and empowered. It will make a difference in their lives and in your church. ☺



Paying for a Sermon: Help or Hindrance?

Once rare, the practice has become increasingly acceptable. Is it ethical? Is it wise?



The growing number of Web sites hawking sermon transcripts or story illustrations can be both a blessing and a curse

to today's time-strapped pastor. Sites such as creativepastors.com, desperatepreacher.com, pastors.com, sermoncentral.com, and powerpointsermon.com offer helps on just about every imaginable sermon subject for clergy of various theological persuasions. Some are more traditional on basic biblical themes; others are edgier, covering culturally relevant material in downloadable PowerPoint or DVD formats. The abundance of sites means the materials are priced competitively; some are even free.

Although some ministry leaders question the ethics of a local pastor buying his Sunday morning message from a Web site, many ministers find it an appealing aid, given the time demands of hospital visitation, counseling, budget oversight, and staff supervision.

The debate is tinged with irony.

Ghostwriting books is common, even among big-name evangelical preachers. Yet authors, journalists, and composers caught appropriating the works of others are often fired, or possibly sued. Some pastors have been forced to resign after boards brought accusations of plagiarism.

Many believe disclosure is key. Most observers do not have a problem with a pastor finding an anecdote on the Internet and repeating it from the pulpit, even if credit about its origins is somewhat ambiguous. It is the borrowed delivery of another's sermon practically verbatim — without mentioning the source — that experts find irksome.

Still, some have no problem with that if the pastor paid for it. Indeed, sermon sales can be big business. The Wall Street Journal reported that creativepastors.com posted revenue of \$1.7 million in less than 3 years after its 2004 start-up. At creativepastors.com, Ed Young sells sermons by topics

such as money, relationships, or evangelism. There also are several four-part contemporary series from which to choose.

But profit is not the motivation for some, where a plethora of ministry helps are dispensed at no charge. Sermoncentral.com offers "80,000 free sermons, illustrations, and dramas" from contributors ranging from Max Lucado to James O. Davis. Topics featured include blended family relationships, Narnia, and workplace issues. There are many quotes, statistics, and movie lines that a pastor can use to bring a sermon point home.

Some sites, such as sermonspice.com and visuals scripture.com, are designed specifically to inject some multimedia interaction into the sermon.

Whatever one's view of the budding technology, the sites are likelier to become more popular as local pastors try to keep up with the slick presentations of nationally known megachurch leaders. ☺

Finding Young Pastors Across-the-board Problem

Several recent studies have indicated a dwindling number of ministers under age 35 across the Christian spectrum. Likewise, a declining interest among seminary students to enter the ministry could mean a serious clergy shortage in a few years.

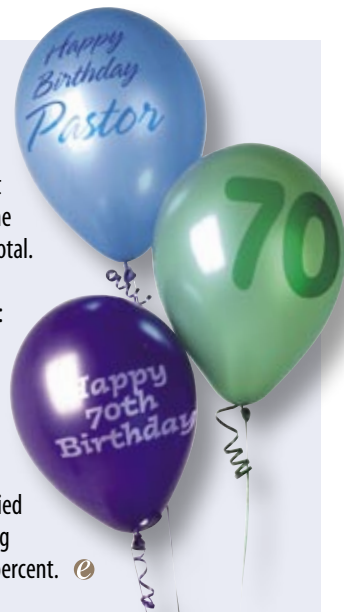
According to an Atlanta nonprofit organization, the Fund for Theological Education, only about half of students currently enrolled in seminary plan to be ordained — and fewer still expect to serve a local congregation.

A recent survey by Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., found that ministers under 35 comprised an average of only 7 percent of all ministers among seven faith groups: American Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Nazarenes, and Presbyterian Church USA.

The Assemblies of God fares better. According to Statistician Sherri Doty, 5,265 out of 33,553 AG ministers were under age 35 at the beginning of last year, or 15.7 percent of the total.

But the median age of AG ministers has been creeping upward during the past decade: 51 at the start of 2006 compared with 47 a decade earlier. The median age for ordained AG ministers was 56 at the beginning of last year.

The Wesleyan survey found that 41 percent of ministers for the seven denominations studied were 55 and older. Doty says the corresponding figure for AG pastors is nearly the same, 41.6 percent. ☺



With burnout becoming an increasing hazard of ministry, more churches are opting to give their pastor an occasional break.

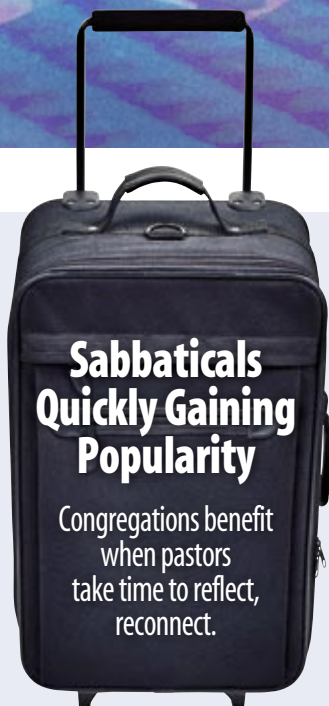
Ed White, a consultant with the Alban Institute in Washington, D.C., says, "At the turn of the century pastors rarely took sabbaticals. Now about half do."

"The acceptance of the value of sabbaticals is growing," says White, a retired Presbyterian minister. "At its best, a sabbatical is not just a perk for the pastor; it can be profoundly rejuvenating for the congregation."

The longer a minister has been behind a particular church pulpit, the greater the need for a break, according to White. Every 5 years is a healthy interval to take such a paid break.

When the pastor is away — usually between 3 and 4 months — laypeople in the small- or medium-sized congregation learn to fill some of the overworked pastor's roles. If the church has no other pastors on staff, lay leaders sometimes take turns preaching.

Eric Earhart, who planted Upper Room Assembly of God in Gatesville, North Carolina, 5 years ago, agreed to take a 5-week getaway last summer at the insistence of his leadership team. Earhart had found



Sabbaticals Quickly Gaining Popularity

Congregations benefit when pastors take time to reflect, reconnect.

himself stressed out trying to manage the 120 regular attendees.

"The sabbatical put the church problems in perspective and reminded me of how big God is," Earhart says. "The Lord taught me to trust my staff, elders, and department leaders to do things."

Typically, a sabbatical is not just an extra vacation. Nor is it wise for the minister to use every waking moment for academic study. White suggests a blend of fruitful reading, relaxation, and perhaps a plunge into an overseas missions trip.

Craig Dykstra of the Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program in Indianapolis says time

off the job allows pastors to reconnect with family and to reflect on why they entered the ministry in the first place.

"Pastors and congregations both benefit from a period of renewal," Dykstra says. "The renewal of a pastor's heart and spirituality is part of his or her 'job description' and is essential to the spiritual quality of a congregation's life."

A Pastors Institute study last year noted that 1,600 ministers leave the profession monthly. 🌀

Evangelism Important, but Few Have Time for Community Outreach

An overwhelming number of American churches continue to see sharing the gospel as a primary calling, with 97 percent of congregations employing some form of evangelistic effort to reach non-Christians last year.

But the methods used varied widely by denomination and congregational composition, according to the study released by Ellison Research in January 2007. Some lean on activities that have been carried out for generations, such as Vacation Bible School, tract distribution, door-to-door visitation, and revivals. Others are engaged in relatively new techniques, including block parties, online blogging, and car repair clinics.

Overall, VBS is the most common form of evangelism, done by 7 out



of 10 churches, although just 47 percent of Pentecostal churches participate. Pentecostals are more likely than other faith groups to sponsor musical events or concerts (64 percent), revivals or crusades (64 percent), "invite a friend to church" days (54 percent), and

prison ministry (37 percent).

Fewer than 1 in 10 Protestant churches offer any kind of free or low-cost day care services, pregnancy counseling, domestic violence programs, English-language classes, job skills training, or adult literacy classes.

When it comes to community outreach, Pentecostal pastors are more likely than other faith groups to list excuses why they are not involved: not enough volunteers (69 percent); a short supply of funds (66 percent); lack of sufficient staff (63 percent); too few lay leaders (57 percent); and inadequate facilities (46 percent).

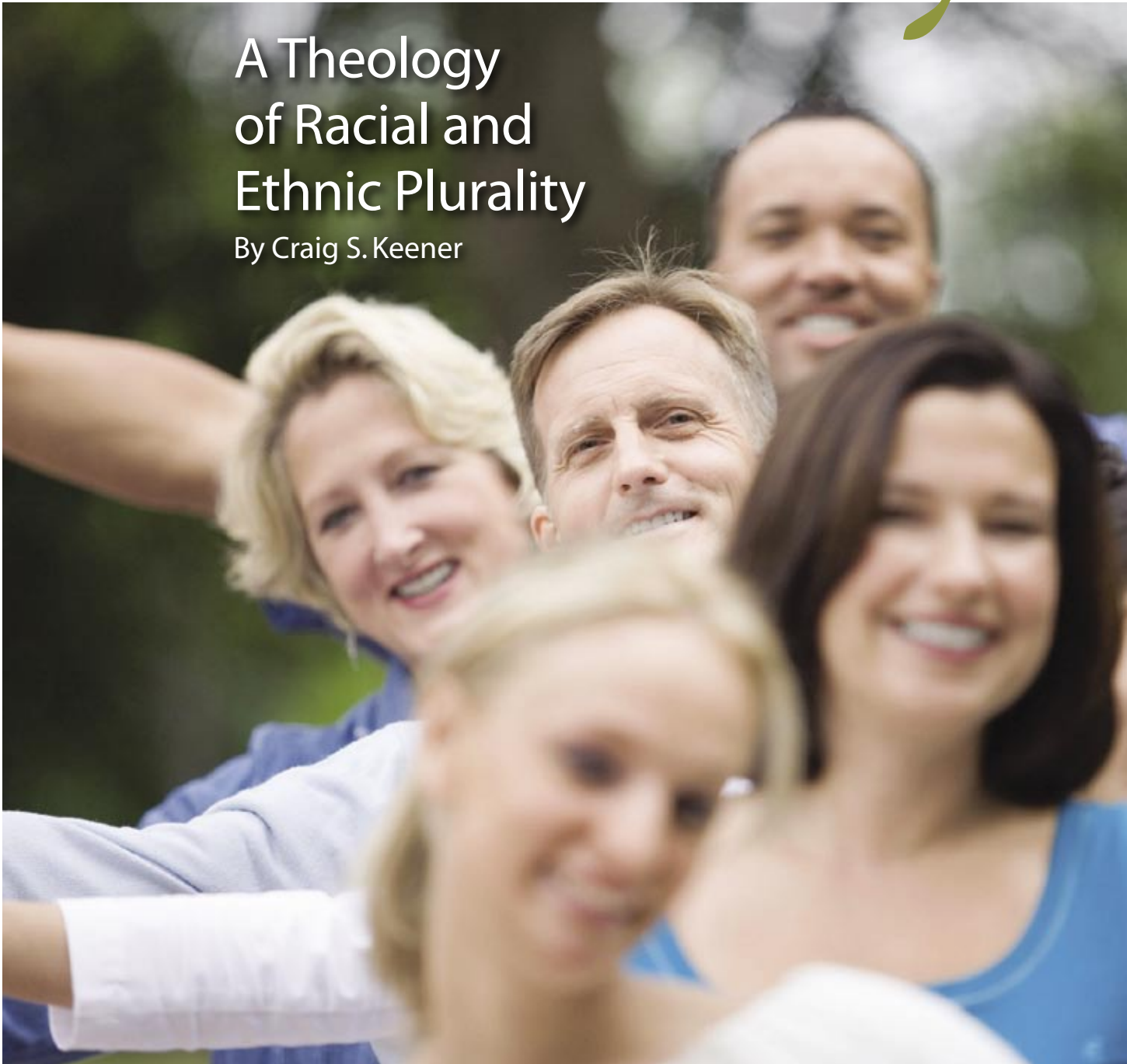
With so many nonchurchgoers in need, Ellison Research President Ron Sellers says it is ironic that few pastors see reaching their communities as essential.

"This lack of priority takes many forms — the congregation is not interested, the community does not want our help, we want to focus on our own people," Sellers says. "Yet if churches are not consistently reaching outside their own walls, how are they going to grow?" 🌀

Embracing God's Passion for Diversity:

A Theology
of Racial and
Ethnic Plurality

By Craig S. Keener





We regularly pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. What does that will look like?

For one thing, it looks like multiethnic unity in diversity. For all the ages of eternity, God's people from every nation will worship together around the throne (Revelation 5:9; 7:9). God can use His church, as heirs of the Kingdom, to foreshadow what that future world will be like. Multiethnic worship is part of our foretaste of heaven.

In 2006, Pentecostals and charismatics commemorated the centennial of the Azusa Street Revival. Led by African-American Pastor William J. Seymour, one characteristic of this revival from the beginning was

its interracial character. The multiethnic birth of the modern Pentecostal movement should not surprise us, given the same message on the first Pentecost.

Babel Reversed at Pentecost

On the church's first Pentecost, God began fulfilling His end-time promise of inspiring His people to speak for Him (Acts 2:17,18), but initially they did so in other people's languages (Acts 2:4-6). On this occasion, Jewish people from many nations recognized many of the local languages being spoken (Acts 2:9-11).

Many scholars note that the locations from which these Jewish people came look much like the list of nations in Genesis 10 (except described in first-century language). In Genesis 11, God scattered these peoples at the tower of Babel by confusing their tongues. On Pentecost, by contrast, God again supplies a diversity of languages, but not to divide humanity. This time, through the new gift of tongues, God brings together a church united among many cultures, foreshadowing the rest of His plans in Acts.

For all the ages of eternity, God's people from every nation will **worship together** around the throne (Revelation 5:9; 7:9).

How central is the issue of multiethnic unity to understanding Pentecost? Remember Jesus' promise: The Spirit will empower us to be witnesses to the ends of the earth, that is, becoming cross-cultural witnesses (Acts 1:8). So central is cross-cultural witness to this empowerment of the Spirit that God chose to confirm it with the specific sign of His servants worshipping in the languages of other peoples. It is thus not surprising that from Azusa Street until now, missions has been a hallmark of Pentecostalism. As a result, much of the Christian world today looks to Pentecostals as a model for effective missions.

A Few Visionaries and Many Slow Learners

Simply because the Spirit has empowered us to bridge all cultures, races, and ethnic groups with the gospel, however, does not mean that we will automatically understand and make use of the power He has given us. Much of the Jerusalem church was slow to catch on to God's plan.

Those who caught the vision first were the Hellenist Jewish Christians, a cultural minority within the Jerusalem church. Because they were already familiar with more than one culture, they had some sensitivity to the dynamics of cross-cultural ministry. One of the Hellenist preachers, Philip, pioneered the church's mission in Samaria (Acts 8:5–13). Once Jerusalem apostles arrived and saw that the work was from the Lord, they joined in it themselves (Acts 8:25). But Philip had broken the new ground.

After the revival in Samaria, God sent Philip to meet an important court official from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26–39). This official, who as a eunuch could not become fully Jewish, became the first Gentile Christian. His conversion stirred no controversy. Because he returned to his homeland, the Jerusalem church apparently did not know about him; in any case, he did not live in their country and would not set any uncomfortable precedents.

Embracing uncircumcised Gentiles, however, was bound to cause controversy. God soon sent Peter to

of the Spirit on his household, Peter and his companions recognized that God had accepted these Gentiles (Acts 10:44–48). Only after Peter recounted the multiple confirmations of God's plan did the Jerusalem church acknowledge that God was also welcoming Gentiles (Acts 11:18).

The Tragic Backlash

God's acceptance of a handful of Gentile converts caused the Jerusalem church little consternation as long as they remained a handful — that is, as long as they could be viewed as *exceptions*. Reports of large numbers of uncircumcised converts, however, raised the stakes.

Jewish teaching insisted that Gentile converts to Judaism be circumcised. It made Jesus' followers in Jerusalem look bad to their cultural peers if they failed to insist on the same requirement. Facing continuing oppression from Gentiles, a mad emperor who tried to defile the temple, and the brief reign of a Jewish king who stirred nationalistic fervor, Jerusalem grew more conservative in the 40s, 50s, and 60s of the first century. The church in most cultures mirrors its society both positively and negatively, and the Jerusalem church was no exception. Some began insisting on circumcising Gentile converts (Acts 15:1,5; compare Galatians 5:11; 6:12). Even in recent history, churches sending missionaries often confuse their own culture with the gospel and insist that foreign converts conform to the sending church's culture.

Thus, the church debated again whether to fully welcome Gentiles as Gentiles without requiring them to give up their own culture. Paul and Barnabas recounted God's confirmation of their ministry with signs; Peter reminded the church of his earlier episode with Cornelius, and James closed with an argument from Scripture (Acts 15:7–21), saving again the church's unity.



Cornelius, an officer in the Roman army that occupied Judea. Despite Jesus' instructions about being witnesses to the ends of the earth, Peter needed a dramatic vision to transform his perspective about Gentiles (Acts 10:28,29). After learning of Cornelius' parallel vision and witnessing the outpouring

Yet, nationalism continued to increase in Jerusalem and escalated the tension between the Jerusalem church and the younger churches outside the Holy Land. Paul intended his last visit to Jerusalem to be an errand of peace, and brought representatives of

about Jesus. Those who truly embrace the gospel become part of God's church, and true members of God's church must welcome other members of God's church. So Paul talked about his call to reach the Gentiles (Acts 22:21) and instantly infuriated

have been helpful. But the situation was different in cosmopolitan Antioch. There Jews, Greeks, Syrians, and other groups constituted minorities, and there the scattered Hellenist Christians caught the Spirit's vision for evangelizing Gentiles (Acts 11:19–21).

As the Antioch church became multiethnic, it established a diverse leadership team that could be sensitive to the needs of all the groups represented in the church. Saul was born in Tarsus but grew up in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). His education and connections reveal that he came from a family of status, though his inherited Roman citizenship probably came from ancestors who were freed slaves. Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus; Manaen had been brought up with Herod Antipas; Lucius was from Cyrene, a cosmopolitan North African city roughly divided among Greeks, Jews, and North Africans. Simon was nicknamed "Niger," a common Roman name but a name which, when used as a nickname, meant "black." Many scholars suggest that he, like Lucius, was from North Africa, perhaps descended from African converts to Judaism (Acts 13:1).

The church in Antioch had a vision for building a multiethnic church not only in Antioch, but also throughout the world. The task was so enormous that only Spirit-inspired faith would have dared imagine it — reaching a known world of at least 100 million people with only a handful of non-Jews among them who even believed in the one God. But the church in Antioch was a truly Spirit-filled church. As the Spirit announced a diverse church on Pentecost; told Philip to talk with the African official and Peter to talk with Cornelius (Acts 8:29; 10:19); and confirmed God's welcome to Samaritans and Gentiles



The church in Antioch had a vision for building a multicultural church, not only in Antioch, but also throughout the world.

the mixed Jewish-Gentile churches of the diaspora, along with an offering for the impoverished Christians of Jerusalem. He soon learned that some believers had accepted false rumors about him. Some inferred that if Paul respected the Gentiles' culture he must reject Jewish culture (Acts 21:21). Paul agreed to demonstrate his identification with his own Jewish culture as a way to dispel these false rumors (Acts 21:23–26).

In the midst of Paul's errand of reconciliation, however, some who opposed his mission to the Gentiles attacked him (Acts 21:27–29). In this hostile setting, Paul offered one final attempt to explain his mission. The crowd in the temple listened as he proclaimed Jesus. One might have hoped for a large salvation response such as Peter had in the temple a generation earlier. Given Paul's calling, however, he could not stop talking

his audience and reignited the riot (Acts 22:22).

What Paul's audience did not know was that his speech was possibly their last chance for national deliverance. A united church of Jews and Gentiles was difficult to achieve, but the alternative course of angry nationalism would lead to Jerusalem's destruction only a few years later. Commendably, the Jerusalem megachurch was effectively reaching its own culture (Acts 21:20); but their suspicion of the Gentile mission was shortsighted. In God's plan, the struggling new churches of the diaspora were the seed of the future.

A Different Model

Jerusalem was almost exclusively Jewish, so we cannot expect its churches to have become multiethnic — though more appreciation for other churches that were multiethnic would

by giving them the Spirit (Acts 8:14–17; 10:44–46), so here the Spirit sent forth Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2,4). They evangelized Cyprus and southern Asia Minor. On his next journey, when Paul left Troas for Philippi, Greeks and Romans viewed him as bringing an Asian message into Europe. But more important, from a biblical perspective, God was continuing to bring His universal message to all nations.

Led by the Spirit, Paul was ready to adapt his culture to reach all people with the one transcultural message of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). Like his rejected message in the Jerusalem temple (Acts 22:21,22), his letters offer a clear sense of how important multiethnic unity is to the heart of his gospel. The dominant ethnic division in the church of his day remained the division between Jews and Gentiles — a division God himself had once

established in history. Observing how Paul's gospel surmounts a division once established by God himself invites us to apply that same gospel to other divisions established by human pride and selfishness.

Ethnic Unity and the Heart of Paul's Gospel

If we are tempted to wonder whether the gospel has implications for ethnic and racial unity in Christ's church, we do not have far to look. Paul's letter to the saints in Rome addressed an ethnically divided church. Some years earlier, the emperor Claudius had expelled Jewish people from Rome. Jewish Christians such as Aquila and Priscilla had settled elsewhere (Acts 18:2). Because of this expulsion, the church in Rome probably consisted largely of Gentiles for a number of years before Claudius died and the Jewish Christians returned. Jewish and

Gentile congregations with different practices and values now had to coexist, but their differences created cultural conflict.

Paul reminded them that their unity in the gospel should transcend their differences (Romans 1:16; 10:12,13). He established that Gentiles are lost (Romans 1:18–27), but so are Jewish people (Romans 2:12–29). All peoples are sinners under God's judgment (Romans 2:9; 3:9). But if all of us are equally lost, then all of us must be saved only on the same terms — through faith in Christ.

Jewish people often believed they were saved because they were Abraham's children. They were part of the saved people because they had the covenant of circumcision. Yet, Paul reminded believers in Rome that spiritual circumcision and spiritual descent from Abraham are not what count with regard to salvation

► IDEALS PROPOSED for becoming intercultural

Being intercultural coincides with the mission of the church to reach every ethnic group with the gospel (Matthew 28:18–20). Knowing God has placed persons from other nations within the proximity of a local church invites a missional response from that church. "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26,27).

Being intercultural corresponds to the nature of the gospel to reconcile the world in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:14–21; Galatians 3:28). Without partiality, the local church reaches out as ministers of reconciliation to those around them.

Being intercultural concurs with the nature of the Church to be a redemptive community reflecting the new humanity in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:11–22). The local church, with persons from various ethnicities and backgrounds, has the privilege of demonstrating how Christ's work within them has removed the dividing walls of animosity and hatred.

Being intercultural conveys a picture of multicultural worship because every nation, tribe, people, and language will worship together before the throne of God (Revelation 7:9–12). The local church has opportunity to demonstrate aspects of the unified worship of the future heavenly community.



DAVID WELLS, superintendent, British Columbia/Yukon District, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

(Romans 2:25–29; 4:9–12); they must believe like Abraham did (Romans 4:11,12,16). Further, in case anyone still wished to appeal to descent from Abraham for salvation, Paul reminded them that all are descended from Adam (Romans 5:12–21). Jewish people looked to their possession of the Law as a mark of superiority over Gentiles, but Paul pointed out that even though the Law could teach right from wrong, it had no power to make anyone righteous (Romans 7:7–12).

The Jewish people had special privileges (Romans 9:4,5), but these did not guarantee salvation. Neither Ishmael nor Esau received the promise; mere genetic descent from Abraham did not guarantee saving participation in God's covenant (Romans 9:6–13). Jewish people emphasized their chosenness in Abraham; yet, regarding salvation, God could choose without regard to ethnicity (Romans 9:19–29), based instead on faith in Christ (Romans 9:30–10:15). Each of us must be saved the same way. Therefore, the gospel that reconciles us to God also reconciles us to one another.

The problem in Rome, however, was not just Jewish believers looking down on Gentiles. Paul admonishes Gentile Christians not to despise Jewish people or their heritage (Romans 11:17–24). Gentiles in Rome looked down on Jewish people partly because of their strange food customs and holy days, which differed from Roman practices. Paul emphasized that we should not look down on one another for such differences; we can remain culturally distinct, yet be united in Christ (Romans 14:1–23). Unity does not mean uniformity, which often involves assimilating into the dominant culture. Instead, we should appreciate the gifts brought by each culture, tied together in unity

not by some megaculture but by our common faith and the Spirit.

Toward the end of the letter, Paul mentioned Jesus (Romans 15:8,9) and himself (Romans 15:16,25) as examples of serving all peoples. His final exhortation in Romans includes the warning to beware of those who cause division (Romans 16:17). In practice, this means no segregated lunch counters (compare Galatians 2:11–14); we must labor, live, and love together. In Romans, Paul summons

Paul emphasized that we should not look down on one another for such differences; we can remain culturally distinct, yet be united in Christ.

believers to surmount a barrier that God himself established in history, the barrier between Jews and Gentiles. If this is the case, how much more does he summon us to surmount barriers established merely by human sin and intolerance?

A New Temple

Paul's conflict in the Jerusalem temple started when some Jewish people from Ephesus mistakenly accused Paul of having brought an Ephesian Gentile into their sacred temple (Acts 21:28,29). Because both Paul's accusers and his Gentile companion were from Ephesus, the church in Ephesus must have learned how Paul ended up in Roman custody.

When Paul wrote Ephesians, the church knew that he was accused

of having taken a Gentile past the partition into an inner court of the temple where only Jews were allowed. This partition did not exist in the Old Testament, but was built in Herod's temple to accommodate the priests' understanding of purity requirements. For Paul, and for his audience in Ephesus, there could be no greater symbol of the dividing barrier between Jew and Gentile than this wall. That is why Paul's message to them is so striking. In the context of speaking of a new temple, Paul declared that the dividing wall of partition has been shattered by the cross of Christ (Ephesians 2:14,19–22)

Paul was not the first to challenge this division in the temple. A generation earlier, Jesus overturned tables in the temple and cried out that the temple was intended as "a house of prayer for all the nations," but its current overseers had "made it a den of robbers" (Mark 11:17). In this statement Jesus blended two passages. The first declared God's plan to welcome Gentiles (Isaiah 56:3–7); the second declared judgment on those who thought the temple provided them a refuge from judgment without repentance (Jeremiah 7:4–14). In part, Jesus was announcing judgment on a segregated religious institution. Forty years later, the earthly temple stood in ruins.

When a Samaritan woman recognized that Jesus was a prophet, she realized that the Jews must be right about religion. After all, Samaritans did not believe in prophets between Moses and the Messiah. Unfortunately, that recognition left her out in the cold because Samaritans were not welcome in Jerusalem's temple. So Jesus told her of a new temple that was neither in Jerusalem (where Jews worshiped) nor on Mount Gerizim (where Samaritans had worshiped), but "in Spirit and in

truth" (John 4:20–24). This dwelling of the Spirit was the new temple that Paul said welcomed Jews and Gentiles alike (Ephesians 2:14–22).

Before the Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch

Although God's plan for a multicultural people seemed new to the Early Church, it was part of

God's plan from the start. From the beginning God chose Abram so that through him all the families of the world would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).

God had separated ancient Israel from the nations for Israel's own good, but he had always made exceptions. Early Christians quickly began to recognize many of those exceptions.

Charged with denying the centrality of the temple, Stephen reminded his accusers that God spoke to Abram in Mesopotamia, exalted Joseph in Egypt, and revealed himself to Moses in the Midianite desert. Had Stephen wished, he could have appealed to Jonah; to God's servants in exile, such as Daniel and Esther or even to the many foreigners welcomed in David's

► Profile: Just different shades of brown

Del Aire Assembly of God in greater Los Angeles isn't really in Del Aire any more. After highway construction, the church now has a Hawthorne address. The region is being transformed in other ways as well.

"We're transitioning from a beach community to an inner-city community," explains Pastor Albert Wise. "That could also be translated as from an overwhelmingly Caucasian community to an overwhelmingly other-than-Caucasian community."

While other churches have abandoned the area, Del Aire has determined to remain and serve local families.

"They made the decision to stay before I came 15 years ago," Wise says.

At the time, the congregation was mostly white and numbered less than 200. Today, youth services alone are pushing 200 attendees

in a church of more than 500. A new sanctuary is under construction across the street from the existing facility.

Del Aire now includes people from 36 nations.

"It looks very much like the United Nations," says Wise. "We advertise, 'If you come to our church, you will find somebody who looks just like you.'"

Del Aire emphasizes diversity in its mission statement on its Web site and in all of its promotional materials. The current brochure has only one photograph with a Caucasian.

At every opportunity, Wise has transformed theory into flesh and bone.

"The first person I hired on staff was an African-American youth pastor," he says. Wise has also promoted diversity on the church board and among participants in the worship

services. Wise says when people look at the leadership of his church, he wants them to feel welcome because their ethnic groups are represented at the highest levels.

Increasing diversity in the community allows Del Aire Assembly to live out its commitment to world missions every day.

"The world has come to us," Wise says. "We don't have to go to Korea to reach Koreans. We don't have to go to Somalia to reach Somalis. We have them right here."

Families have responded in different ways to Del Aire's emphasis on ethnicity. Wise admits he has lost some people from the church over racial issues.

"Some have said, 'You're doing a good job of reaching your community. It's just not our community anymore,'" Wise says.

On the other hand, Wise can point to many Caucasian families that live in outlying cities in all-white communities who attend Del Aire.

"They want their children raised with diversity," Wise says, "so they purposely bring their children here because it helps them integrate in their children's mindset what their future and careers will be about. This is a multicultural world."

For Wise, the emphasis on multiethnic outreach has brought about a personal transformation.

"People are just people," Wise says. "I don't even think about color anymore when I'm looking at my people, because they're all colored. We're all just different shades of brown."



Pastor Albert Wise



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reign (for example, 2 Samuel 6:10,11; 15:18–22; 1 Kings 1:44).

Matthew, too, recognized Old Testament exceptions. Although most ancient genealogies omitted women, the genealogy that opens Matthew's Gospel mentions four. These were not, as we might expect, the most famous matriarchs like Sarah and Rebekah. Instead, they were Tamar, from Canaan (Matthew 1:3); Rahab, from Jericho (1:5); Ruth, from Moab (1:5); and the widow of Uriah the Hittite (1:6). Three ancestors of King David and the mother of King Solomon were Gentiles or, in the case of Uriah's wife, had Gentile connections.

Matthew's examples are prudent. In Joshua (against those who think the book opposes all Gentiles), Rahab contrasts with the Israelite Achan. By hiding the spies on her roof, Rahab betrayed her people and saved her family; by hiding the loot under his floor, Achan betrayed his people and destroyed his family. Likewise, the Book of Ruth focuses on a Moabite becoming part of God's long-range purpose in history.

This genealogy is an extraordinary way for Matthew to begin his Gospel and send a strong message to his fellow Jewish Christians. Ancient Jewish genealogies normally emphasized the purity of one's Israelite lineage; Matthew deliberately highlighted the interracial nature of Jesus' legal ancestry through David's line. (The Bible also mentioned other divinely purposed interethnic unions, such as those between Joseph and Asenath (Genesis 41:45); Moses and Zipporah (Exodus 2:21); or Esther and Xerxes (Esther 2:17).)

This emphasis on welcoming Gentiles continued during the earthly life of Jesus. Although Magi were Daniel's enemies, Matthew reports Persian Magi who came to worship

the King of the Jews. By contrast, the Judean king Herod acted like Gentile Pharaoh of old by killing male children (Matthew 2:1–18). Herod's brutality forced Jesus' family to become refugees in Africa, in Egypt, just as Moses once fled to Midian to escape Pharaoh (Matthew 2:13–15).

Matthew's Gospel provides other clues about God's commitment to all peoples. Jesus settled in an area once

Believing in diversity on paper may be a step forward, but living it out requires more effort.

associated with Gentiles (Matthew 4:15). He healed a centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5–13), and also announced that God would include in His people many from the east — like the Magi — and the west — like a believing Roman (Matthew 8:11).

Jesus delivered demoniacs in Gentile territory (Matthew 8:28–34; note the pigs in 8:30), and in a notoriously pagan area elicited Peter's confession of faith (Matthew 16:13–20). Later, the Gentile execution squad are the first to recognize Jesus' identity at the cross (Matthew 27:54). Matthew's Gospel climaxes with Jesus' commission to make disciples of all

nations (Matthew 28:19,20), sharing in fulfilling the promise that all nations would hear (Matthew 24:14).

By clarifying God's heart already present in the Old Testament, Jesus prepared the way for the Gentile mission in Acts, which in turn points toward the goal of Christ's diverse church from all peoples.

Living Out the Commitment

Believing in diversity on paper may be a step forward, but living it out requires more effort. As Christians, we must put our resources where our mouth is, and recognize that where our resources are, that is where our heart is also. After Pentecost, the Early Church learned not only to share resources with their immediate neighbors (Acts 2:44,45), but also with the needy in other parts of the world (Acts 11:28–30). Part of the purpose for Paul's final journey to Jerusalem was to bring offerings for the poor from the Gentile churches (1 Corinthians 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8:1–9:15), as a symbol of the unity of the Jewish and Gentile churches

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"Your sermons generate a lot of energy, just like those big windmills."

(Romans 15:26,27). While churches must be self-supporting, famines and theological education are different issues. Today there are regions where our resources can serve God's kingdom most effectively. Such partnership can also underline the unity of Christ's church, as each part of the church shares the gifts God has given it for the benefit of others.

Cross-cultural concern, however, is not about money alone, but about where our hearts are. Christians in the United States were rightly horrified when jihadists killed 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001. But jihadists started slaughtering Christians in northern Nigeria a few days earlier, with a death toll ultimately much higher. Likewise, by some estimates, 10 times that number of people, mostly children, die *every day* from malnutrition or preventable diseases.

Many of those who die or weep over their dying children are our brothers and sisters. While we are right to care about our homeland, are we moved more by what happens to our cultural fellow citizens or by what happens to our fellow citizens of the Kingdom, regardless of nationality, race, or ethnicity? With which kingdom do we first identify? Are we more like the Jerusalem church or the church in Antioch?

Nor does the principle apply only to those far away. If some minority Christians here face job discrimination, struggle to adjust to a new culture, or cannot send their children to safe schools, are we willing to listen and partner with them to work for solutions? Ethnic and racial unity must transcend lofty ideals; it demands following Jesus' sacrificial example of loving as He has loved us (John 13:14,15,34,35). Yet, with the sacrifice comes blessing, for in other parts of

Christ's body He has placed gifts and resources that they may share with us (for example: how to suffer joyfully; how to restore the broken; or how to give sacrificially).

Nothing will soften our hearts toward brothers and sisters of other cultures as getting to know them and rediscovering our common unity in Christ. Negotiating differences, especially at close-range in the same

Nothing will soften our hearts toward brothers and sisters of other cultures as getting to know them and rediscovering our common unity in Christ.

congregation, is more challenging. Yet, if we believe the gospel, we believe that we can find grace to surmount those difficulties.

Although I learned about cross-cultural ministry at seminary, I began to better understand many of the issues surveyed in this article when, as a white Pentecostal, I joined a largely African-American church. There I listened to the stories of my brothers and sisters, many involving overt racism I had never noticed because it had not happened to me. I learned more when I lived for several years in an African-American community integrated only by my presence, while also teaching in a mostly African-American seminary. Ministry in Africa, an interracial marriage, and international friendships have taught me more.

Reading an article may stir our interest, but putting cross-cultural ministry into practice, with all the attendant sacrifices, misunderstandings, and blessings along the way, takes us deeper. When we begin to listen and learn

from believers from other cultures, ethnicities, and races, we will begin to live in cross-cultural unity.

Conclusion

We opened this survey of biblical foundations for racial and ethnic diversity by referring to John's vision of multicultural unity in heaven. When teaching at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Morris

Williams, former African field director for Assemblies of God World Missions, would point to this vision of heaven to emphasize that God created different cultures for an enduring purpose. In God's purpose, it was important that these cultures remain a testimony to His glorious design throughout the ages of eternity — yet be brought together in unity to serve the one living God.

Babel has been reversed. In the gift of tongues, God has given us, among other blessings, the languages of many nations as a sign of His purpose: a united church from every kindred, tribe, people, and nation. This is our calling; this is our destiny. May His will be done now on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen. 🙏



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Living With the *Other*

By Miroslav Volf

Although I seek to be faithful to the broad Christian tradition; and, as I consider living with *the other*, I cannot speak authoritatively for all Christians. Nobody can because ecclesiastically Christians are not a monolithic group. Even within a single church there is often disagreement and spirited debate.

In an attempt to present what Christian tradition says about living with *the other*, I will try to answer three questions: (1) Who is *the other*? (2) Who are we? and, (3) How should we relate to each other? I will then conclude with a brief reflection on the relationship between the universal reach of Christian love (any and every person) and particular obligations toward those with whom we

have special relations (such as family, ethnic, or religious groups).

Who Is the Other?

Some people think of *others* as people from distant lands with a variety of cultures. We read about them in books written by explorers and anthropologists; we travel to see them in their natural habitats as



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they fascinate us and repel us at the same time; then, we return from our imaginative or real excursions into their world to the familiarity and tranquility of our own homes. This is the *exotic* other.

In our global culture the exotic other is increasingly becoming a rarity. We travel with ease over vast expanses. Mass media has placed vivid reports from even the most hidden and impenetrable regions of the globe at our disposal. It would seem that we have come to understand others much better, but this is generally not the

A real understanding of others requires a deeper knowledge than can be obtained through written reports, films, or short visits.

case. A real understanding of others requires a deeper knowledge than can be obtained through written reports, films, or short visits. The ease of access to others has only stripped them of the aura of the exotic. They have become more ordinary — but still misunderstood.

The same communication networks that make

it easy for us to meet and learn about distant others have also brought multiple others to live in our immediate proximity. This is the *neighborly* other. These others live next to us, at the boundaries of our communities, and within our nations. Put differently, we increasingly live in culturally and religiously *pluralistic* social spaces. For Western countries, this means that the pluralism of civil associations existing under the larger framework of liberal democracy has become more complex. Formerly Christian countries have become religiously diverse nations.¹ But this is not a diversity of anything goes. For the most part, we do not think that all religions and all values are either relative or that there is parity between them.

To say that our societies are culturally and religiously pluralistic is not so much to prescribe how each culture should be evaluated and how cultures should relate, but to note that a plurality of cultures is a social reality. We live near or with people whose

values and overarching interpretations of life differ from ours. They also have sufficient social power to make their voices heard in the public square. In

We often define ourselves by what differentiates us from others.

terms of living with *the other*, the main challenge today is rubbing shoulders with diverse people in an increasingly pluralistic world.

The history of relations with *the other* has often been fraught with violence. Holocaust survivor Primo Levi writes, "Many people — many nations — can find themselves holding, more or less wittingly, that 'every stranger is an enemy.'"²

Religious, cultural, and racial differences are a major source of conflicts around the world. We believe ourselves better because of the color of our skin, and put down others whose color is different from ours. We often oppress them economically and

marginalize them politically.

Whites are known for their sense of racial superiority, but racism is not a monopoly of whites. A student friend from Ethiopia who was a target of many racial slurs in the former Yugoslavia told me an Ethiopian story of creation:

"When God was creating man, God formed him out of

the dust. God put him in the oven to bake him, but He turned up the heat too high. When He pulled the man out, he was a bit too burned. This is

how black people were created.

"God tried again. This time He set

the oven too low and out came the whites, whom He could not do much with because they were underbaked. On the third attempt, the beautifully browned Ethiopians came out.

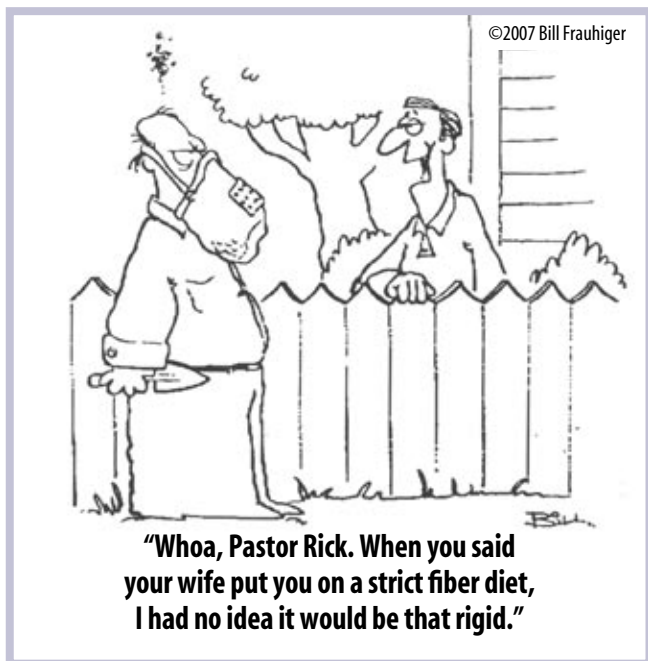
"Ethiopians have no better opinion of the whites," my student suggested, "than the whites have of Ethiopians."

In recent years, cultural and ethnic clashes have left behind scorched land, rivers of blood, and mountains of corpses in the Third World (Rwanda); in the former Second World (Chechnya or Bosnia); and in the First World (the Los Angeles riots). Today, as in the past, conflicts rage around religious differences. Muslims and Christians, Christians and Jews, Jews and Muslims, Muslims and Hindus, and Hindus and Buddhists are finding it difficult to share the same social space without conflicts, some of which have been extremely violent.

Who are *the others*? They are people of different races, religions, and cultures who live in our proximity and with whom we are often in tension and sometimes in deadly conflict. But who are we?

Who Are We?

It is not possible to speak of *the other* without speaking of *the self*, and to speak of *otherness* without speaking of *identity*. For *the others* are always *others* to someone else. Just like someone else, they are to themselves simply *us* as distinct from *them*. How should we





Cities

Immigration—20 largest cities in the U.S.

Percent change in foreign-born population, cities, 1990-2000

Rank	City	City foreign-born population (1990)	City foreign-born population (2000)	Percent change in foreign-born population, cities, 1990-2000
1	Charlotte, N.C.	15,119	59,849	295.90%
2	Plano, Texas	9,648	37,923	293.10%
3	Greensboro, N.C.	4,839	18,146	275.00%
4	Aurora, Colo.	12,519	44,692	257.00%
5	Las Vegas, Nev.	26,494	90,656	242.20%
6	Nashville-Davidson, Tenn.	12,171	38,936	219.90%
7	Mesa, Ariz.	14,014	44,546	217.90%
8	Memphis, Tenn.	8,298	26,075	214.20%
9	Glendale, Ariz.	8,878	27,797	213.10%
10	Raleigh, N.C.	10,434	32,410	210.60%
11	Phoenix, Ariz.	84,672	257,325	203.90%
12	Grand Rapids, Mich.	7,456	20,814	179.20%
13	Denver, Colo.	34,715	96,601	178.30%
14	Austin, Texas	39,626	109,006	175.10%
15	Omaha, Neb.	9,402	25,687	173.20%
16	Garland, Texas	15,970	43,588	172.90%
17	Fort Wayne, Ind.	3,829	10,187	166.00%
18	Irving, Texas	19,560	50,696	159.20%
19	Des Moines, Iowa	6,076	15,713	158.60%
20	Indianapolis, Ind.	13,963	36,067	158.30%

SOURCE: The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program.

<http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/issues/demographics/demographics.htm>. Used with permission.

think of ourselves? What does it mean to be a bearer of identity?

We often define ourselves by what differentiates us from others. The ways in which we differ from others are properly and exclusively our own; and, we sometimes think it is what is exclusively our own in which our identity resides. If we operate with such an *exclusive* notion of identity, we carefully watch to make sure no

culture matters to us, we want our language and customs to be pure, cleansed of foreign words and foreign ways. This is the *logic of purity*. This logic attends the notion of identity that rests on differences from *the other*. The consequences of the logic of purity in a pluralistic world are often deadly. Some people keep *the other* at bay to avoid contamination — even by means of extreme violence.

become one flesh. Distinct-and-bound creatures necessarily have complex identities because they are what they are not only in and of themselves but also in relation to others.

Nine years ago I became a father. I have a wonderful little boy named Nathanael. After I became a father, I remained the same person in the sense of having permanence and continuity over a period of time. But I did not remain the same person in the sense that my personality remained unchanged.³ Nathanael has integrated himself into my personality. He has changed not only how I see myself and how I act (my private person), but also how others see and act toward me (my public person).

In addition to everything else that I was (Dragutin and Mira's son or Professor Volf), I am now Nathanael's father. When I pick him up at his school, a parent of another child might say, "Ah, so you are Nathanael's father." And I wonder whether this is good or bad. I am not simply other than Nathanael; Nathanael is also part of who I am. My identity is inclusive, not exclusive.

The same holds true of our other identities. To be a white American is to be in relation to African-Americans, including the history of slavery and discrimination. It is no different with gender identity. What it means to be male may change over time and differ from place to place, but it will always be correlated with what it means to be female.⁴ As Paul Ricoeur puts it in *Oneself as Another*, the "selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other, that instead one passes into the other."⁵

For such inclusive identity, two things are critically important, and they both concern boundaries.

Instead of considering others as my own diminishment, I need to imagine them as potentially enriching.

external elements that might disturb the purity of our identity enter our proper space. In situations of economic and political uncertainty and conflict, we insist on pure identity. If race matters to us, we want our blood to be pure, untainted by the blood of strangers. If land matters to us, we want our soil to be pure, without the presence of others. If

An alternative way to construe identity is to always include *the other*. This is an *inclusive* understanding of identity. As persons or cultural groups, we define ourselves not only by what distinguishes us from others and by what we need to keep pure from others. Instead, though, we need to define ourselves by what distinguishes us from others and by what we have

in common with them. This notion of identity is consistent with the Old Testament account of creation.

In Genesis, God created by separating things (the light from the darkness) and binding them together. When God created a human pair, God separated Eve from Adam and then brought her to him so they could

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"I want your honest opinion, Pastor. Is it wrong to be as nice and humble as I am, all the time?"

First, to have an identity you must have boundaries. Imagine a world without boundaries. You cannot. For without boundaries you would not have a world. Everything would be jumbled up and nothing distinct would exist. To have anything other than infinite chaos, you must have boundaries. Hence, when God creates, God separates.

If boundaries are good, then some kind of boundary maintenance must be good, too. Hence, when boundaries are threatened (as they often are

in a variety of ways), they must be maintained. Second, if to have identity one must have boundaries then, to have inclusive identity one must have permeable and flexible boundaries. With impermeable and inflexible boundaries, a person or a group will ultimately remain alone, without *the other*. For *the other* to come in and change the self or a group, *the other* must be let in — and, likely after a while also politely let out.

Our homes provide good examples of complex and dynamic identities

circumscribed by permeable and flexible boundaries. When I go to a foreign land, I like to buy a work of art. I bring it home and place it in our living room or my office.

A space that is ours contains some foreign objects. They are windows into worlds that have become part of me — Cambridge, Madras, Prague, St. Petersburg, and Zagreb. As such, they are also symbols of an identity that is not self-enclosed, but marked by *porous* boundaries and, therefore, shaped by *the other*.

From 'There to Here': Refugee Resettlement in Metropolitan America

Findings

Although refugees only comprise approximately 10 percent of annual immigration to the United States, they are a distinct part of the foreign-born population in many metropolitan areas. Using data from the Office of Refugee Resettlement on the location of initial settlement of refugees arriving between 1983 and 2004, this paper finds that:

- **More than 2 million refugees — driven from their homelands by war, political change, and social, religious, and ethnic oppression — have arrived in the United States since the Refugee Act of 1980 was established.** These flows were marked first by refugees primarily from Southeast Asia and the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s during the *Cold War* period, followed by Europe in the 1990s during the *Balkans period*, and now a growing number from Africa in the 2000s during the *civil conflict period*.
- **Refugees have overwhelmingly been resettled in metropolitan areas with large foreign-born populations.** Between 1983 and 2004, refugees have been resettled across many metropolitan areas in the United States, with 30 areas receiving 72 percent of the total. The largest resettlement areas have been in established immigrant gateways in California (Los Angeles, Orange County, San Jose, Sacramento), the Mid-Atlantic region (New York), and the Midwest (Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul), as well as newer gateways including Washington, D.C.; Seattle, Washington; and Atlanta, Georgia.
- **In medium-sized and smaller metropolitan areas, refugees can have considerable impact on the local population, especially if the total foreign-born population is small.** Refugees dominate the overall foreign-born population in smaller places such as Utica, New York; Fargo, North Dakota; Erie, Pennsylvania; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Binghamton, New York, helping to stem overall population decline or stagnation. Medium-sized metropolitan areas such as Fresno, California; Des Moines, Iowa; Springfield, Missouri; and Spokane, Washington, also have a strong refugee presence.
- **The leading refugee destination metro areas have shifted away from traditional immigrant gateways over the past two decades, while newer gateways are resettling proportionally more refugees.** While New York, Los Angeles, and

Occasionally I move a work of art to a different room to make space for another. Sometimes it may even end up in the basement. Something analogous happens with our identity. As we enter new relationships they shape us; certain things recede into the background and others receive new importance. We live as ourselves, and things that make up our identity multiply, shift, and change. Our boundaries are flexible and our identity dynamic.

Some identity change happens to

us. Others with whom we are in close contact change, and consequently we change too. When Nathanael came into our family, I changed — whether I wanted to change or not. Moreover, I changed in ways I could not fully control.

Relationships are by definition made up of more than one actor. People can react to the presence and action of others, but they cannot fully control what they will react to or the conditions under which they will react.

Chance and unpredictability come with having permeable and flexible boundaries. At the same time, we can refuse to move our identity in certain directions, and we can initiate movements in other directions. In encounters with others, we are not a rudderless boat on high seas. We can significantly craft our identity, and in the process we can even help shape the identities of others.

Who are we? We are people with inclusive and changing identities; multiple others are part of who we are. We can try to eject them

from our lives to craft for ourselves an exclusive identity, but we will then do violence not only to others but also to ourselves. Who is *the other*? Earlier I argued that others are our neighbors who differ from us by culture and whose otherness is often a factor in our conflicts with them. Now, after discussing inclusive identity, we can say that *the others* are not *just* others. They too have complex and dynamic identities of which we are a part if we are their neighbors.

Just as we are inhabited by others and have a history with them, others are also inhabited by us. If persons and groups are attuned to such complex and dynamic identities, they will not relate to each other according to simple binary schemata, such as “I am I and you are you” (in case of persons) or “you are either in or out” (in case of groups). Their relations will be correspondingly complex. How do such complex relations look?

How Should We Relate To Each Other?

The relationships of persons with inclusive and dynamic identities fall under four headings: (1) The will to embrace *the other*; (2) inverting perspectives; (3) engagement with *the other*; and, (4) embracing *the other*. These four headings follow an order of priority, but they are not sequential in that when you complete one step you go to the next. Since each aspect is significantly involved with each other, they are best done by emphasizing one or the other while simultaneously not disregarding the others.

The will to embrace *the other*

In a sense, the commitment to live with others is the simplest aspect of our relationship with them. Yet, this is often the most difficult one. Instead

Chicago still accommodated large numbers of refugees in the 1990s, other metropolitan areas such as Seattle, Atlanta, and Portland have taken in increasing numbers. Furthermore, different groups of refugees have become associated with different metropolitan areas: Nearly half of Iranian refugees were resettled in metropolitan Los Angeles, one in five Iraqi refugees arrived in Detroit, and nearly one-third of refugees from the former Soviet Union were resettled in New York.

Unlike other immigrants, refugees have access to considerable federal, state, and local support to help them succeed economically and socially. Affordable housing, health care access, job training and placement, and language learning dominate the local service needs that need to be built and maintained. Ultimately though, metropolitan areas are the critical context for refugees as they settle into communities and become active members of their neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces.

These findings are from the September 2006 “The Living Cities Census Series” report by Audrey Singer and Jill H. Wilson sponsored by the Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. See, www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060925_singer.htm. Used with permission.

of considering others as my own diminishment, I need to imagine them as potentially enriching. Instead of thinking that they disfigure my social landscape, I need to think of them as potentially contributing to its aesthetic improvement. Instead of thinking of them as suspecting enemies, I need to see them as potential friends.

live. Go back to your own place; there you may live as you please. Here we will live as I please."

Earlier I mentioned that globalization brings others into our proximity. The consequence is often the feeling of *Überfremdung*. Smaller cultures, like the Croatian, are threatened by the huge wave of global

the *innocent self* and of the *demonic other*.

Third, *old enmities* make us hesitant to live with *the other*. Old wounds can lead to new injuries. History repeats itself. Even when our safety is reasonably assured — either because we have become more powerful or because both parties have been inserted into a larger network of relations that guarantees our safety — we may still be hesitant to live with *the other* on moral grounds because positive relations with *the other* would amount to betrayal of our ancestors who suffered at *the others'* hands.

Would we not betray ourselves if we reconciled with our former enemy?

Finally, the brute fact of enmity pushes against the commitment to consociation. Just like sin, enmity has power. Once established, it is a force beyond the individual wills of actors, and it perpetuates itself by holding enemies captive.

If our sense of identity, fear for safety, and old enmities all militate against our will to embrace the other, why would we want to embrace *the other*? First, it may be in our interest to do so. The alternatives — building a wall of separation or perpetuating enmity — are often much worse. As proximate others, we are intertwined by bonds of economy, culture, and family. Severing these bonds can be worse than trying to live together, as the war in Bosnia shows.

Second, and more important, living with *the other* in peace is an expression of our God-given humanity. We are created not to isolate ourselves from others but to engage them and contribute to their flourishing as we nurture our own identity and attend to our own well-being.

Finally, for Christians, the most important reason for being willing to live with others and positively

Living with *the other* in peace is an expression of our God-given humanity.

We have reasons for wanting to keep others at bay. First, we fear for our *identity*. We fear being overwhelmed by others and their ways. The German word for this fear is *Überfremdung*. This word describes a guest in your home who brings in her own furniture while rearranging or removing yours; cooks foods and plays music you do not like; and bangs around working when you would like to be sleeping. You might politely say to your guest, "This is *my* home, and this is not how I want to

monoculture washing over them. They are attracted to many of its features, but they fear their rich, centuries-old traditions that give them a sense of identity will be replaced by a foreign and shallow culture. Prosperous Western democracies worry that the processes of globalization that bring people to their lands in search of better living will undermine the very culture that made possible the freedoms and prosperity they enjoy.

Second, we fear for our *safety*.

The myth of an *innocent other* is just that — a myth. Relationships between people are always sites of contested power — with a permanent danger of misuse of power, especially between those who are *reciprocally other*. Yet we should guard lest we, in refusing to accept the myth of the innocent other, embrace two other myths at the same time: the myth of





Suburbs

Immigration—20 largest cities in the U.S. Percent change in foreign-born population, suburbs, 1990-2000

Rank	City	Foreign-born population (1990)	Foreign-born population (2000)	Percent change in foreign-born population, suburbs, 1990-2000
1	Greensboro, N.C.	7,465	38,084	410.20%
2	Charlotte, N.C.	8,922	39,911	347.30%
3	Raleigh, N.C.	13,735	53,849	292.10%
4	Des Moines, Iowa	2,219	8,538	284.80%
5	Atlanta, Ga.	103,270	395,753	283.20%
6	Las Vegas, Nev.	47,810	167,838	251.10%
7	Nashville-Davidson, Tenn.	5,841	18,678	219.80%
8	Aurora, Colo.	46,619	136,495	192.80%
9	Denver, Colo.	46,619	136,495	192.80%
10	Garland, Texas	108,660	300,733	176.80%
11	Dallas, Texas	108,660	300,733	176.80%
12	Irving, Texas	108,660	300,733	176.80%
13	Plano, Texas	108,660	300,733	176.80%
14	Lexington-Fayette, Ky.	1,382	3,700	167.70%
15	Austin, Texas	16,528	43,828	165.20%
16	Birmingham, Ala.	5,960	15,751	164.30%
17	Madison, Wisc.	3,089	7,994	158.80%
18	Minneapolis, Minn.	45,576	113,731	149.50%
19	St. Paul, Minn.	45,576	113,731	149.50%
20	Scottsdale, Ariz.	63,144	155,612	146.40%

SOURCE: The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program.
<http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/issues/demographics/demographics.htm>. Used with permission.

embrace them is the character of God's love as displayed in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died for all human beings because He loved them all. Though not divine and incapable of redeeming anyone, human beings, too, should indiscriminately love every human being, including *the other* and their enemy.⁶

We may be persuaded that it is good to embrace others, and we may want to embrace them, but still find ourselves unable to do so. Our fears and enmities may get the best of us. Our previous failures may cause us to lose hope. How do we acquire the will to embrace *the other*? How do we sustain it through difficult times? Let me try to answer these questions with a story.

I was in Zagreb, Croatia, speaking at the promotion of the Croatian translation of my book *Exclusion and Embrace*. As I was explaining the idea of *will to embrace*, which is central to the book's argument, I noticed a person in the audience who was listening intently, but restlessly. After I finished my lecture and the crowd had cleared, he charged toward me and asked, "But where does it come from?"

I replied, "Where does what come from?"

He answered, "Where does the will to embrace come from?" He was agitated. He went on, "Is it inborn? Can one learn to will in such ways?"

We went through different possibilities. "Ultimately," I said, "the will to embrace comes from the divine Spirit of embrace, who can open up our self-enclosed sense of identity, dispel our fears, and break down the hold of enmity over us."

Inverting perspectives

To live out the will to embrace we need to engage in *inverting*

perspectives. Before we discuss inverting perspectives, it is important to note one important feature of otherness: It is a reciprocal relationship. If others are *other* to me, then I am an *other* to them. This is especially important to keep in mind when *otherness* is used not as a neutral term to describe difference but even when otherness acquires derogatory connotations — when to be *other* means someone

what I mean by *inverting perspectives*. There are pragmatic reasons for this endeavor.

Rowan Williams commented on the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in *Writing in the Dust*, "We have to see that we have a life in other people's imagination, quite beyond our control."⁷ Not attending to other people's imaginations of us may be dangerous, but there are also moral

To live out the will to embrace we need to engage in *inverting perspectives*.

is not as good in some regard as I am myself.

For example: When I was a doctoral student in Germany along with many other Croats, as well as Greeks, Italians, and Turks, I felt like a second-class citizen. I was an *Ausländer*.

For many Germans, *Ausländer*s are by definition deficient in some important ways. Once I was given a ride to Croatia by a porter of my dormitory who was driving there for a vacation. After we crossed the border I made a joking comment, "Now you are an *Ausländer*." He did not think this was funny. In his mind, a German was a German and never an *Ausländer*. And yet, that cannot be. If I am an *Ausländer* in his home country, then he is an *Ausländer* in mine; the relationship is reciprocal. The denial of reciprocity is in part what constitutes a prideful and injurious denigration of *the other*.

Once we understand the reciprocity involved in the relationship of otherness, we have more reasons to be interested not only in what we think about ourselves and about others, but also in what others think of themselves and of us. This is

reasons for inverting perspectives. Commitments to truth, justice, and life in peace with others all require it. We cannot live truthful, just, and peaceful lives with others in a complex world if the only perspective we are willing to entertain is our own. To be unwilling to engage in inverting perspectives is to live, as Immanuel Kant put it, as a self-enclosed, one-eyed cyclops in need of another eye that would let him see things from the perspective of other people.

What does inverting perspectives entail? First, we need to see others through their own eyes. It is natural for us to see them through our own eyes, from our own perspective. To see others through their own eyes takes a willingness to entertain the possibility that we may be wrong and others could be right in their own assessment of themselves; a leap of imagination to place ourselves in their position; a temporary bracketing of our own understanding of them; and receptive attention to their own story about who they see themselves to be.

Second, we need to *see ourselves through the eyes of others*. Sometimes we think that if we know anything well,

it is ourselves. But we can fail to see something well not simply because it is too distant, but also because it is too close. Moreover, when it comes to myself, I have a vested interest in seeing myself in a certain way — noticing what is positive but not what is negative; or, letting what is positive overshadow or relativize the negative.

Christians, along with Jews and Muslims, believe that all human beings are creatures of one God. Therefore, the humanity that unites them is more significant than any difference that may divide them.

Because we often fail to see ourselves adequately, we need to learn how others perceive us. Take for example the debate on so-called orientalism (the stereotypes that the Christian West has about the Muslim East) and occidentalism (the stereotypes the Muslim East has for the Christian West). Where the West may see itself as prosperous, the East may see it as decadent; where the West may see itself as freedom loving, the East may see it as oppressive; where the West may see itself as rational, the East may see it as calculating.⁸ It is important for the West to see itself from the perspective of the East, and to seriously question the adequacy of its own self-perception in light of the way it is perceived. The same also holds true for the East.

Inverting perspectives is second nature for the weak. In encounters with the strong, they always need to attend to how they and their actions are being perceived by the strong. Their success and even survival depend on their seeing themselves with the

eyes of the other. The strong are not in the habit of taking into account what the weak thinks of them; they can do without inverting perspective. If the weak do not like what they see, so much the worse for the weak. If the only thing that matters to the strong is power and privilege, they will charge ahead without regard for the

perspective of the weak. But if they want to be truthful and just, they will want the weak to free them from their own false judgments of themselves and from their strained relations with others.

Engagement with the other

To see oneself and *the other* from the perspective of *the other* is not the same as agreeing with *the other*. As I invert perspective, I bracket my own self-understanding and the understanding of *the other*, and I suspend judgment. After I have understood how *the other* wishes to be understood and how *the other* understands me, I must exercise judgment and either agree or disagree, wholly or in part. This is where argumentative engagement comes in.

I could refuse to engage *the other* with arguments. I could insist that I am right, but the result would be an irreconcilable clashing of perspectives. In the absence of arguments, the relative power of the social actors decides the outcome.

True, we cannot argue interminably, for life would then need to stop. We are, in fact, acting even when we are waiting to resolve our own intellectual questions — there is no exit from acting, as William James has argued in *The Will To Believe*.⁹ We will, therefore, be acting even as we are waiting to argue through our differences in perspectives. But we can act in our best light, and then return to argument. In fact, this is what citizens in well-functioning democracies do: they argue, they vote, and then, if some of them do not like the result, they argue and vote again.

Positive engagement with *the other* is more than just a matter of arguments. Even when arguments fail to bring consensus or convergence, we can still cooperate in many ways, unless a dispute concerns acts of grave injustice. The belief that we must agree on all essential values to live in peace is mistaken. It ultimately presupposes that peace can exist only if cultural sameness reigns.

Even if one considered sameness desirable, it is clearly unachievable. Take major world religions as an example. A consensus between them on overarching interpretations of the world is not on the horizon in the near future. Does this mean their adherents must be at war with one another? No. They can live in peace and cooperate, their fundamental disagreements notwithstanding, and they can do so out of their own properly religious resources. Even though the practice of Christians sometimes seems to falsify this claim, everything in the Christian faith itself speaks in favor of it, from the simple and explicit injunction to live in peace with *all* people (Romans 12:18) to the character of God as triune love.¹⁰



Foreign-born

Immigration—20 largest cities in the U.S. Foreign-born population share, 2000

Rank	City	City population (2000)	City foreign-born population (2000)	Foreign-born population share (2000)
1	Hialeah, Fla.	226,411	163,256	72.10%
2	Miami, Fla.	362,563	245,739	59.50%
3	Glendale, Calif.	195,047	106,119	54.40%
4	Santa Ana, Calif.	337,512	179,933	53.30%
5	Los Angeles, Calif.	3,694,834	1,512,720	40.90%
6	Anaheim, Calif.	327,357	123,976	37.90%
7	Fremont, Calif.	203,413	75,494	37.10%
8	San Jose, Calif.	893,889	329,757	36.90%
9	San Francisco, Calif.	776,733	285,541	36.80%
10	New York, N.Y.	8,008,278	2,871,032	35.90%
11	Jersey City, N.J.	240,055	81,554	34.00%
12	Long Beach, Calif.	461,381	132,168	28.60%
13	Oakland, Calif.	399,477	106,116	26.60%
14	Irving, Texas	191,611	50,696	26.50%
15	Houston, Texas	1,954,848	516,105	26.40%
16	Yonkers, N.Y.	196,086	51,687	26.40%
17	El Paso, Texas	564,280	147,505	26.10%
18	Boston, Mass.	589,141	151,836	25.80%
19	San Diego, Calif.	1,223,341	314,227	25.70%
20	Honolulu, Hawaii	371,619	93,895	25.30%

SOURCE: The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program.
<http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/issues/demographics/demographics.htm>. Used with permission.



4 Four levels of commitment within churches to serve immigrants

Charles Foster, author of *Leadership in Multicultural Churches: Embracing Diversity*, has observed different levels of commitment within churches to serve immigrants. The first is simply a matter of church survival. Space is rented out to immigrant groups, or services such as day-care are offered with the intention of bringing new families into the church. Foster does not criticize this approach. He sees it as a step above the church moving to an entirely new community to avoid the encroaching growth of immigrant populations. However, most have noted that relations based on pure economics are not generally good ones.

The second level of commitment is a missionary approach that strives to be obedient to the Great Commission by making disciples of all nations. Actions are taken by the church to reach out to their ethnic neighbors. Some churches have been able to bring members of different ethnic groups into their congregations by being obedient to the gospel. However, it is often noted that these churches, while appearing diverse, may feel white. Usually, this is a result of the church not striving to make additional changes to bring people of diverse cultures into the main life of the church by including them in leadership, worship, or church educational programming [Foster, 1997:8–10].

Foster calls the third level of commitment to multicultural ministry the catalyst/hospitality approach. These churches strive to welcome the stranger within their midst and believe the words of Christ: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty

and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. ... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:35,40).

These congregations believe strongly that the strangers who come into their midst often are God’s special envoys to bless or challenge them, like the three strangers who visited Abraham.

Congregations that fit into the category of hospitality/catalyst commitment to multicultural ministry are often impacted by the stranger who enters their midst. Yet similar to churches that are obedient to the Great Commission, they may fail to make institutional changes that will allow for foreigners to be incorporated fully into the different areas of leadership within the church.

The fourth level of commitment to multicultural ministry is one that has a theological vision. Churches in this category are intentionally multicultural and generally their mission statement will reflect this. For example, there are multicultural churches that base their ministry on Revelation 7, in which people of every nation, tribe, and language are worshiping at the feet of the Lamb of God.

KATHRYN ANTIL excerpted from “Multicultural Ministry and Missions in the 21st century,” in *Becoming an Intentionally Intercultural Church: A Manual To Facilitate Transition*, 2d ed. Robert Brynjolfson and Jonathan Lewis, eds. (Ontario: World Evangelical Alliance, 2006), 61,62. Available at: <http://wearesources.org>

Embrace of the other

A willingness to embrace *the other* will not suffice. A further step in embracing them is needed. As we argue with others about issues of truth and justice, we are making sure

having a pure national, cultural, racial, or ethnic identity. Christians, along with Jews and Muslims, believe that all human beings are creatures of one God. Therefore, the humanity that unites them is more significant

longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). Christian identity is taken out of our own hands and placed into the hands of God, and by this it is both radically unsettled and unassailably secured. Because Christ defines our identity in the primary way, Christians can confidently set out on a journey with proximate others and engage without fear in the give-and-take of relationships with others that mark an inclusive identity. What will be the result of this engagement? Like Abraham's, it will be a journey of faith and hope toward a land that one has not yet seen. 🌱

The land Christians are moving toward is God's new world, in which people from all tribes and languages will be gathered.

that embrace, if it takes place, will not be a sham, a denial of truth, and a trampling of justice. As we are engaged in inverting perspectives, we have started embracing others in that we have taken them, even if only in a symbolic form and for a time, into our own selves; we have made their eyes our own. But for embrace to take place, more is needed. We need to make space for others in our own identities and in our social world (though how that space will be made remains open for negotiations). We need to let others reshape our identity so they become a part of who we are without threatening or obliterating us but rather helping to establish the rich texture of our identity. Just as after the birth of my second son, Aaron, I let him be inserted, so to speak, into my identity, we also need to let our proximate others be a part of who we are (adjusted, however, for the differences between family and neighbor relations). To use a local example, this would mean that Croatians would not see themselves as pure Croatians; they would see themselves as Croatians, whose identity consists in part in being neighbors to Serbs.

Such welcome is possible on Christian terms because Christians should not think of themselves as

than any difference that may divide them. Furthermore, an image of the Christian life that looms large in the Bible and in the Christian tradition is that of a *pilgrim*.

A pilgrim is not defined primarily by the land or culture through which he is traveling, but by the place toward which he is going. His primary identity comes from the destination, not from any point along the way. The land Christians are moving toward is God's new world, in which people from all tribes and languages will be gathered. Being a pilgrim does not exclude a whole range of secondary identities, such as being a citizen of Macedonia, ethnic Roma, woman, or mother of three rebellious teenagers. But in Christian understanding, all these identities ought to be subordinated to the primary identity of being a person on the way to God's new world.

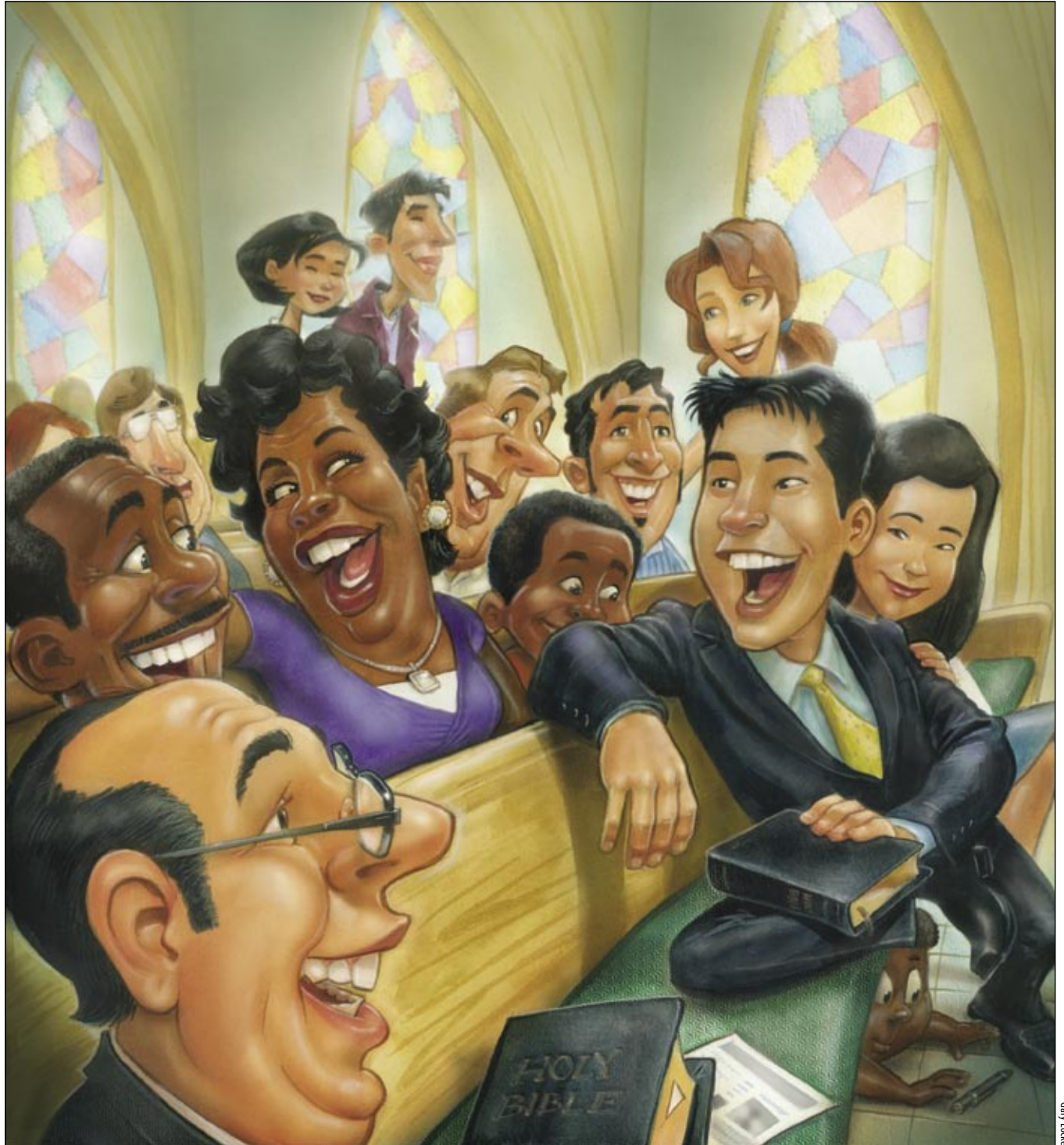
The unsettling of Christians' sense of cultural identity cuts deep. The apostle Paul wrote that Christians are not their own. This is a strange thing to say. Many things are my own, and I guard them carefully. It would seem that what is more my own than anything else is myself. Yet, Paul insisted that we are not our own, but belong to the Lord. As a Christian in Paul's sense, I am so much not myself that "I no



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NOTES

1. See Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001).
2. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 9.
3. See Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 2–4.
4. For this notion of gender identity, see Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 174–176.
5. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 3.
6. In the Christian tradition, the universal scope of love was historically grounded in the common Adamic descent of all human beings and in Christ's death on the cross for all human beings (see Gene Outka, "Universal Love and Impartiality," in *The Love Commandments: Essays in Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy*, ed. Edmund N. Santurri and William Werpehowski (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 9).
7. Rowan Williams, *Writing in the Dust: After September 11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 55.
8. See Avishai Margalit and Ian Buruma, "Occidentalism," *New York Review of Books*, January 2002. Online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/15100>.
9. William James, "The Will To Believe," in *The Will To Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy and Human Immortality* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 1–31.
10. See Miroslav Volf, "Christianity and Violence," (forthcoming).



Gary Locke

The Healthy Church:

A Commitment to Loving
and Caring Relationships

By Pablo Polischuk

Healthy relationships in the body of Christ may be defined as fellowship that experiences goodness on one hand and the absence of evil on the other. A commitment to caring and loving relationships requires a proactive, mutual, unconditional, gracious, and merciful thrust that is intended to connect one another beyond our differences. Living in the here and now poses a challenge to this premise because divisive factors present impediments to such harmony.

The natural barriers to true fellowship are fueled by ever-present demographic variables such as racism, ethnocentrism, social strata, educational level, economic power, and personal achievement based on a narcissistic nature. The sinful pursuits alluded to in Ecclesiastes — wealth, work, wisdom, and wild living — render us bound to earthly strivings while we run a rat race in a cultural maze saturated with a sense of futility and vanity. Such competitive strivings isolate and insulate us from one another. Our narcissistic culture permeates us with egotism and keeps us from decentralizing and focusing on one another with love and care.

The Challenge of Diversity

Research in social psychology has demonstrated that we like those who are like us, as well as those who like us. Thus, homogeneous groups represent the norm. Churches are generally characterized by groups of naturalistic or demographically defined constituencies. Yet, the context in which we live has been infused with cultural and ethnic diversity and has changed the ways in which American stereotypes

have been characterized since the establishment of our country and culture. From a WASP-oriented (White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant) mentality held by individuals who aggregated socially on a functional basis, a multiethnic and multicultural reality has emerged. Metanarratives and absolutes have been replaced with partialized, tribalistic, and ethnocentric renderings of reality, opening up the long-held universe into a postmodern multiverse with no emphasis on true catholicity.

The challenge to engage in loving and caring relationships in

The challenge to engage in loving and caring relationships in a multiethnic and multicultural context is not new.

a multiethnic and multicultural context is not new. Since the Early Church in the Book of Acts, the church has faced such dilemmas. The selection of deacons was in response to the demands posed by intercultural distinctions in the distributions of food among widows of Hebraic and Grecian descent (Acts 6:1–6). The reluctant apprehensiveness of Peter in accepting the challenge to evangelize a Roman centurion is narrated with candid and yet powerful tones that addressed his ethnocentrism (Acts 10:28,29,34,35). The first council held in Jerusalem addressed the dilemma regarding practices and customs posed by merging Jews and Gentiles into the same Body (Acts 15). Twenty-one centuries later we, in our present intercultural status quo, face our own challenges.

Attempts at Developing an Integrated Fellowship

In the thrust to develop and engage in caring and loving relations, several implicit or explicit paradigms of integration have emerged. Intercultural fellowship falls along a continuum between two polarities in its attempts to resolve the tension posed by the challenges of acculturation, assimilation, and equilibration inherent in any process of adaptation with one another. Ethno-blindness (claiming we do not see any racial or ethnic differences) and ethnocentrism

(centering on sameness in exclusive fashion) are the extreme poles.

On one hand, an encompassing ministry that

seeks to absorb and assimilate everyone — regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture — seems to be endowed with cultural and color blindness. Such a stance prefers to believe that negative, divisive factors do not exist. This stance also professes a naive acceptance and validation of one another at either conceptual or practical levels. Often, such stances lead to surface, behavioral, eventful happenings in which the phenomenological renderings of fellowship meet the criteria of unity in diversity. Minorities are welcomed and absorbed into the dominant culture. As a result, minorities acculturate and assimilate the ways and means of the prevalent, existing order. Yet, such behavioral, event-focused integration may fall short of true fellowship at an ontological, substantial, or substructural level.

On the other hand, in an attempt to find a place in the American Christian soil, ethnic and cultural groups tend to congregate around sameness, with unifying and self-centered patterns that structure their fellowship. The *in-group* bands together against *them*, with impermeable or at most, semipermeable boundaries that demarcate its existence and function. Ethnocentrism tends to insulate, isolate, and entrench ethnic groups and divide the church into self-based units. Whether African-American, Hispanic, Asian, or any other constituency, ethnic churches tend to preserve their worship style and relationships through cohesion, structure, and function with their particular flavor, tempo, rhythm, along with their sense of cultural direction. In doing so, ethnocentric pride may contribute to the belief that our group, service, worship, and fellowship are better when compared with theirs.

One extreme ameliorates the problem by attempting to absorb token individuals or families as if they fit the dominant agenda of the traditionally expressed culture. The other extreme fosters tribalistic groups with interpersonal mores and codes that define social reality along a hermeneutic of participation, including an *us* versus *them* mind-set. At times, such diverse populations may merge for special occasions but then retreat back to their original separatist design.

Celebrating Caring and Loving Unity in Diversity

What can we do to truly celebrate unity in diversity? What can we do to foster the unity depicted in Jesus' prayer in John 17? Beside our feelings on the matter, or the current trends in society, our attitudes, values, and practices often depart from what God has defined as reality. This includes the ways in which

we are to connect and interact with, and care for one another. The Bible emphasizes relational encounters with healthy purposes in mind. In the New Testament, the term "one another" occurs 52 times. Scriptural injunctions point to the fact we belong to God's family, from whom we derive our name (Ephesians 3:14,15).

To *derive* our name from God is to be defined by the Creator, Author, and Designer of human existence. To be named after God is to be encompassed in the parameters of His will and purpose — to be and to do what God has envisioned before the foundation of the world. The basis of who we are and what we are supposed to do are given in Scripture and have been attested by the Holy Spirit from Pentecost on.

We all descend from the first man, Adam. But from the second Man, Jesus Christ, we derive a new human-kind. Although God chose Abraham

The Early Church: developing loving and caring relationships

Seven Greeks were chosen to be deacons in the Early Church. It is important to note that an essential part of these deacons' role was to ensure impartiality in the distribution of care to two ethnically distinct groups of widows (Acts 6:1–7).

Philip was supernaturally empowered to bring the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch as the message of Christ moved quickly across national lines (Acts 8:26–40).

A vision from God prepared Peter to recognize that the Gentiles were not impure, and that he should respond to the inquiry by the God-fearing centurion, Cornelius. Peter witnessed the Gentiles receiving the Spirit in a similar manner as the Jewish believers did on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 10).

At the Jerusalem Council the apostles and elders wrestled with what kind of restrictions should be placed on Gentiles as they were responding to the

gospel. In the end, the highest priority expressed by the apostle James was "we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God" (Acts 15:19). A short list of restrictions was placed on the Gentiles, but these restrictions were moderated by the Spirit-prompted dialogue (Acts 15:1–35).

Paul contended with Peter when Peter began to withdraw and separate himself from Gentile believers. Paul ensured that a strong commitment was maintained in the Early Church to the truth that, no matter what an individual's ethnic or spiritual background, all are justified by faith in Christ alone (Galatians 2:11–18).



DAVID WELLS, superintendent, British Columbia/Yukon District, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

The first council convened to address the challenges of intercultural relatedness posed in the body of Christ.

to be the founder of a special nation along with explicit mandates given in the Law (the Old Covenant), the relational God has now set forth a New Covenant with those who believe the gospel. Instead of a new set of mandates, the appeal is to accept the challenge to be imitators of God, and be endowed with the power to walk in love as Christ did, and display loving behaviors characteristic of beloved children (Ephesians 5:1,2). Such terms are implanted into our hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16) and are unilateral, unconditionally proactive, graceful, merciful, forgiving, forgetting of misdeeds, empowering, leading to intimacy, and bringing about constant renewal and transformation of our being.

The effects of being summoned by God and accepting His claims are evident: From now on we regard no one according to the human point of view. That is, we do not establish community or fellowship on the basis of cultural or ethnocentric premises, but on the redefinition of our being in Christ. Paul adds that even if we regarded Christ from such perspective, we regard him no longer as such (2 Corinthians 5:16). Thus, a supracultural stance regulates the acceptance, validation, and enactment of relationships along intercultural lines, having an overarching cover as well as a unifying basis for such connectedness. Our fellowship does not depend on cultural or ethnic

sameness nor on cultural discreteness. It depends on our being grounded in a defining God from whom we derive our names, and our being subject to a

supracultural mandate to accept one another in Christ.

Scriptural Accounts of Ethnocentricity and Remedial Approaches

Ethnocentric forces are powerful, as exemplified by Peter's reluctant demeanor when he was given the privilege to open the door to the Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10). It was necessary for the same vision to be repeated three times, with the invitation to eat a nonkosher meal, because without this vision it would have been difficult for Peter to accept this assignment.

The Gentiles were regarded as undesirable, unclean, and less-than-chosen by the Jews. As such, they were outcasts from the Kingdom. Yet, God had other plans, as expressed in Scripture. The defining God has called all nations and tribes to become part of His people, and whatever God has cleansed should not be called unclean, even by an apostle.

To further exemplify the ethnocentric stance held by those who considered themselves to be *in* with God, Acts 10:14 presents the (oxymoronic) response by Peter, "Surely not, Lord!" (If you say no, He is not Lord; if He is Lord, you cannot say no.) Further excuses bordering on an obnoxious statement are registered on the first encounter between the apostle and Cornelius, a Roman centurion (Acts 10:27–29). In spite of Peter's original stance and demeanor, God graciously interrupted

his sermon by baptizing Cornelius and his household in the Holy Spirit — a vivid and audible display emulating the original Pentecostal experience in Jerusalem among all Jewish disciples (Acts 10:44–46). Later on, a convicted Peter would defend the right of the Gentiles to be part of the promises and benefits of the Kingdom at the first church council in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

The first council convened to address the challenges of intercultural relatedness posed in the body of Christ. The efforts of Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and other companions in missionary endeavors had positive results, and a great number of Gentiles were added to the church.

How to relate to Gentile converts, and what to do with them became the first challenge facing the intercultural and interethnic fellowship. When discrepancies arose, perplexities and tension resulted. The first attempt to resolve such differences was to *make them as us*. Thus, they discussed what should be done to assimilate, accommodate, and equilibrate the diversity that posed such a challenge. Yet, the proposal to squeeze the Gentiles into the Jewish mold was overruled by the Holy Spirit, who, through a word of wisdom, declared that these ethnic believers should be accepted and treated with dignity in the Body, provided they would follow guidelines to avoid behaviors offensive to Jews. These few scriptural examples may set the premises for the course of action that we can follow today (Acts 15:5–21).

Toward a Healthy Church: Concrete Guidelines To Foster an Integrated, Caring, and Loving Fellowship

When confronted with barriers in fellowship — racism, ethnocentrism, classism, snobbishness, or narcissism — we need to be open, honest, and take remedial action. Although this list is not

Let the Holy Spirit redefine in your mind the intercultural reality that has already been defined by God.

conclusive, the ingredients of a healthy fellowship may be outlined as follows:

First, fellowship presupposes open, honest, true acceptance, and validation of one another at the core. Fellowship goes beyond an external display of behavior. Rather, it is a question of attitudes, cognitive, affective, and dispositional-motivational stances and processes. Even more, beyond events and processes, it is a substructural, ontological substantial being with loving, accepting, and validating characteristics.

Second, allow the Holy Spirit to bring awareness and conviction so you can deal with your own ethnocentrism. Become aware of your own racism and prejudice. These usually are latent, tacit, and subagent to cognitive appraisal and self-perception. Allow the Spirit to cleanse such deep-seated beliefs and values, and be transformed by the

renewing of your mind.

Third, account for all transactions with people of diverse cultures and ethnicity. If any transactions seem negative, and you sense the responsibility to make things better, prayerfully consider the following steps:

Regret. Recognize and appraise any wrongdoing or demeaning, abasing, rejecting, isolating, or insulating attitudes or behaviors pertaining to intercultural relationships in the Body.

Remorse. Follow regret with remorse (an emotive corollary to regret), which includes experiencing pain for relational sins committed against the body of Christ.

Repentance. Furthermore, adopt an attitude of repentance (change of mind, a radical turn in direction) and experience a cognitive, affective, and behavioral reformation in your lifestyle.

Reparation.

Repair any damaged relations, taking a proactive, unilateral, and unconditional initiative in an ambiance of grace and mercy, empower others, and provide a sense of acceptance and validation.

Restitution.

Do something practical by blessing those who have been outcasts, marginalized,

dejected, in the past (or present) by the dominant culture.

Renewal. Allow the Holy Spirit to coparticipate in your thoughts, reasoning, perceptions, memories, attributions of meaning, motivations, feelings, and motivations to change. Experience new attributions of meaning to God's defined reality.

Restoration. Be committed to restore relationships according to the original design by God, as seen in the accounts of Acts, and the eschatological projections in Revelation.

Fourth, pay attention to the way God defines reality, especially in regard to His creatures, and even more, to those who are in Christ as inheritors of His eternity. Not only look back for orthodox basis and theology, but also stretch forward by faith. Have an eschatological point of view, in which heaven is filled with a great multitude comprised of every tribe, tongue, and nation praising God, bringing the future into the here and now, practicing today what God has envisioned for eternity (Revelation 7:9,10).

Fifth, renew your mind. Watch for automatic thoughts, perceptions, and feelings embedded in ethnocentrism. Let the Holy Spirit redefine in your mind the intercultural reality that has already been defined by God. Sanctification and growth demands our surrender to God's Spirit, and our participation in a synergistic process in which the Spirit and our flesh interact to produce countercultural and desirable results in fellowship.

Sixth, instead of being reactive toward others of diverse backgrounds in the Body, be proactive in your efforts to show a unilateral, unconditional love. Seek to engage first. Do so not with a patronizing spirit, but with a sincere motivation



► Profile: God saved this ministry

Pastor Russell Hodgins came to International Christian Center in Staten Island, New York, nearly 8



Pastor Russell Hodgins

years ago. He accepted the pastorate of a congregation of about 100. He also accepted the burden of a church facing foreclosure and financial ruin.

ICC had a long and fruitful history in Brooklyn before moving to Staten Island in 1980. But when the founding pastor accepted a new ministry shortly thereafter, the congregation dwindled and accumulated debt grew out of control.

"The interest had grown to \$1,000 a day by the time I came in October 1998," Hodgins says. "The challenges were so beyond any man's capability that it had to be a God thing, an opening of the Red Sea. God saved this ministry."

When people ask Hodgins how a church of 100 with more than \$6 million in red ink can become a church of 2,000 with an annual budget of more

than \$2 million, he does not offer any grandiose outline.

"It sounds too simplistic to many people," he says. "But I determined I was going to preach Jesus and love people. Jesus said, 'If I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself' (John 12:32, HCSB¹). I loved people regardless of their culture or language, and people came from every culture and language. But it wasn't just me. Our staff, across the board, determined we would reach out to anyone and everyone."

God honored ICC's focus. Hodgins believes it was a divine appointment that led a local developer to buy the church's 5-acre property for \$6 million, then sell the church back the parcel of land with its building for \$2.6 million before using the rest of the land for further construction. The developer even cosigned ICC's new loan.

Today, people from around the world attend three English services on Sunday morning and a Spanish service on Sunday evening.

"We work hard at keeping this one church," Hodgins says. "It's not the Spanish congregation or

English congregation. It's just a Spanish or English service. We are all one congregation."

Hodgins believes God saved ICC to impact New York City and the world.

"How many of our people have gone back to Haiti or Jamaica or Bangladesh and touched lives there?" he says. "We're touching those lives indirectly, too."

In recent years Hodgins has ministered internationally himself. He talks about an upcoming pastors and church workers seminar in Bangladesh. It will be his fourth visit. The AG general superintendent from Bangladesh was a recent guest at ICC.

"I believe anointed worship and preaching and loving people across the board will build the church," he says. "I still feel my hair stand up when I tell the story of what God has done for us."



SCOTT HARRUP is associate editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.

NOTE

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and determination to love those whom Christ has loved and adopted into the Body. Pray as the Psalmist did: "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psalm 139:23). Take the initiative to provoke to love and good works, conscious of the overarching jurisdiction of the ultimate Perceiver and Definer of reality, who observes all our interactions in His church.

Conclusion

To experience and actualize loving and caring relationships in a healthy church context, we need

to be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us (Ephesians 5:1,2). In doing so, we develop a true self as defined by God, beyond individualism, narcissism, and ethnocentrism (identity in Christ). Furthermore, we develop a wholesome self shaped by the Holy Spirit (integrity). We are able to share ourselves in love and care, in proper fashion (intimacy), making every effort to accomplish God's designs in meaningful relationships (industriousness). 🌀

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The American Mosaic:

A Design for the Vision and Mission of the Church

By Jesse Miranda, Jr.

The World at Our Doorstep

The ABC-TV announcer for the 1984 Summer Olympics surprised the nation when he commented that every nation represented in the games was also represented among the residents of Los Angeles, California, where the event was being held. For those living in Los Angeles this was not news because we were already seeing and living this racial and ethnic diversity. A quarter of a century later the entire nation is living this reality.

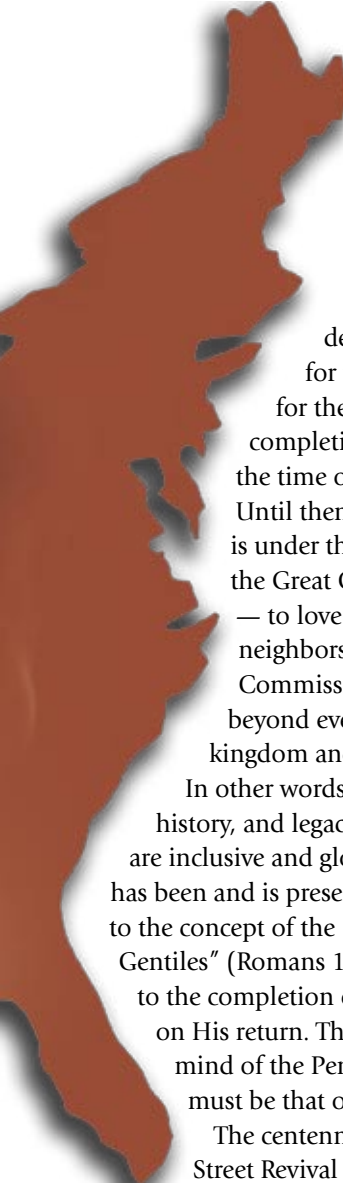
This national reality is turning into a national nightmare for many in America. Recently televised reports focused on millions of immigrants and their supporters as they marched the streets of cities across the nation raising

serious issues and concern. These marches, in which the majority were Hispanics, ignited debates

across the country on issues of immigration, legality, and assimilation. They revived the memories of the 60s, and issues on justice, integration, and inclusion.

America now encompasses the nations of the world. The extent and nature of today's American mosaic is large and complex. Inlaying the many racial, ethnic, and language communities into the mainstream of our nation poses a great challenge for today's society. Old racial issues remain unresolved and at an impasse; while new issues focus on recent and undocumented immigrants. Meanwhile, millions of English, mostly integrated, second- and third-generation racial and ethnic citizens, go unnoticed and unreached by the gospel.

The question is: How does the church respond individually and collectively to the present circumstances in which we live? It can either respond the way society does or in Jesus' way. Many across the nation believe America is complete and cannot assimilate any more



newcomers. Congress will determine this for the nation. As for the church, its completion will occur at the time of Christ's return. Until then, the church is under the mandate of the Great Commandment — to love God and our neighbors — and the Great Commission — to reach beyond every border for His kingdom and its members.

In other words, the nature, history, and legacy of the church are inclusive and global. The church has been and is presently committed to the concept of the "fulness of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25, KJV), and to the completion of Christ's body on His return. The attitude and mind of the Pentecostal church must be that of Jesus.

The centennial of the Azusa Street Revival was held in Los Angeles in April 2006. There were 31,000 registrants and 45,000 participants from many nations and from various racial and ethnic groups in the United States. The racially mixed crowds mingled during the glorious celebration. Recollections that the color line was washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ were constant. There were regrets that during the 100 years after the Azusa Street Revival our worship, thoughts, and gatherings have been along separate racial lines and the ideological divisions of our society. The event concluded with a magnificent finale and prayer that the unity and harmony in the midst of the diversity we were experiencing would be sustained.

I encourage the Assemblies of God to sustain the unity and harmony modeled on the Day of Pentecost.

This unity and harmony are also in keeping with the legacy of the Azusa Street Revival that we as Pentecostals carry. Some racial and ethnic groups are still finding their way as they integrate into the mainstream of the AG. Positive indications are evident in the current growth of the AG and in the 25 percent representation of racial and ethnic fellowships and districts on the General Presbytery. The level of participation and development of these groups is essential to the growth and maturity of the AG. It is essential that we reflect not only on the Pentecostal legacy but also on the end-time vision the apostle John had of the church while on the isle of Patmos.

The river changed course and is now in a different place. The graceful arches of the Choluteca Bridge now stand abandoned — a white concrete sculpture far from shore, linking nothing to nowhere.

In the eyes of many, this bridge illustrates the institutional church in the margins of society created by the fundamental changes in today's world. The combined impact of several forces — the Information Age, postmodernism, globalization, and cultural pluralism — is reshaping our culture. These storm centers are creating social fragmentation and polarization that leaves social scars in vulnerable communities and great

Inlaying the many racial, ethnic, and language communities into the mainstream of our nation poses a great challenge for today's society.

My proposition is: By addressing both culture and gospel, by relating the message of hope, and by being the Pentecostal church God intended it to be, the AG can reach deep within the heart of the American ethnic mosaic and minister to those affected by the historical issues of alienation and spiritual void that racial and ethnic populations bring to American society. Such involvement will yield a larger spiritual harvest in the 21st century as we seek to build the kingdom of God.

A World in Turmoil

USA Today reported how Hurricane Mitch ravaged Honduras in November 1998. In addition to the loss of human life, 150 bridges were damaged or destroyed. The most modern bridge in Honduras, the Choluteca Bridge, survived intact, but suffered perhaps the greatest indignity.

spiritual hunger in society. This has left a church in the margins searching for answers to questions about its identity as the community God intended it to be.¹ In the meantime, disconnection and isolation is the source of much human suffering in American society today.

The consequences of these cultural shifts make the role of the church vital to society. Scripture describes the role of God's people in society as a moral and spiritual conscience that protects the oppressed and helpless (Amos 2:6,7), supplies the physical needs of those who cannot care for themselves (Isaiah 58:7), shows impartiality and accuracy in legal judgments (Deuteronomy 16:18–20), and advocates the punishment and correction of lawbreakers (Romans 13:3,4). Unfortunately, the prevalent attitude in the church regarding social

Identity and community are primary issues in the church today.

ills is desperation and helplessness. This desperate feeling is best described in the Psalmist's idiom: "The bottom's dropped out of the country; good people don't have a chance" (Psalm 11:3, *The MESSAGE*).²

God's people have the chance of a lifetime. The time is ripe for a great harvest and to build community. Because of the power of the gospel, changes in human structures and the transformation of the church can produce authentic, meaningful life. Here all human problems can be sorted out and set right.

Jesus' message to "open your eyes and look at the fields" (John 4:35) is for this time of spiritual vacuum and the instability found in many communities. Jesus delivered His message in the volatile context of ethnic people in Samaria. His message of repentance and acceptance brought deep change to individuals and to the social dynamics of the community.

A Crisis of Identity

Identity and community are primary issues in the church today. The church and its people struggle with three basic and deep issues of life. Rick Warren identifies them in *The Purpose Driven Life*. The first is *identity*: "Who am I?" The second is *importance*: "Do I matter?" The third is *impact*: "What is my place in life?" Warren concludes by saying that the answers to all three questions are found in God's purposes for each human being.³ These universal questions are imbedded in every person and in every culture. When left unanswered, the result is deep pain.

In a Quaker meeting in Philadelphia, one man spoke of the great experience of having met others across language, racial, and religious boundaries, of being able to reach across the barriers and touch another human being, and of turning strangers into friends. Martin Buber, a great Jewish man of God who had encountered and survived much

enmity in his lifetime, stood and said that meeting another person was a great thing, but not the greatest thing. "The greatest thing any person can do for another is to confirm the deepest thing in him/her. To take the time and have the discernment to see what's most deeply there, most fully that person, and then confirm it by recognizing and encouraging it."⁴

Millions viewed the recent immigration marches as purely political, but *Los Angeles Times* reporter Gregory Rodriguez saw something more human and deeper. "Monday's 'Day Without Immigrants' march was impressive not only for its size but also for the almost joyous affirmative tone it conveyed. More than its overt political message, the march's power came from its participants' wholehearted belief that average people, even those without legal status in the United States, have the power to effect change in the world. What is important to this generation of immigrants is not political gain. It is the sharing of family resources, the respect for work, and the faith that God will not abandon you in your darkest hour."⁵

What if this were true? This newfound confidence and energy that Rodriguez says is "American-style can-doism," will then surface in every immigrant ethnic community and join the common assertiveness of the native second- and third-generation racial and ethnic citizens. Together these can translate into a modern people movement that will have a lasting impact in society and in the church.

A Crisis of Community

Scripture records two historic and powerful people movements that harnessed the energy and determination of people — the Tower of Babel and the Day of Pentecost. These people movements had contrasting results. One was a human movement that ended in confusion and dispersion. The other was a move of God when heaven's power came down on people "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). This movement



brought transformational unity and harmony in the midst of diversity. As a result, 3,000 were added to the church.

Today millions of people of color are standing at a crossroad. Which direction will they go? The church in America can significantly influence the direction they choose. For that to happen, Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Seminary, says, "The scope of the

describe what is going on by saying "Things are not what they used to be."

The fact *The Purpose-Driven Life* has sold millions of copies shows that church people are off course and disoriented about this identity and sense of community. On the other hand, the hundreds of churches using the *40 Days of Purpose* program indicate that the church wants to

correct its course and that God is calling the church to be the community of unity and harmony it

to say that America has entered a postdenominational era.

For the people of God, Scripture defines identity and community. Salvation, community, and social order are all related in the sociality of Christ and humanity. Sociality is the trait within individuals to join together in groups and associate with one another. The apostle Paul viewed Christ's role this way: "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create out of two people a new humanity, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Ephesians 2:14–16).

In Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of sociality, the resolution to fragmented and antisocial behavior in human and communal life is the revelation of Christ. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32, KJV). This revelation results in an inherently social event that occurs in a human community. Christ creates a new social form of humanity in which love liberates people from dominating and exploiting others into a freedom of being with and for others. The perverse social forms of individual and corporate power present in society today violate both the interpersonal relations and the corporate operations of human communities and institutions where salvation occurs.⁹

Every individual, group, and institution is defined by their ideas concerning inclusion and exclusion that are basic in forming their identity and community. Boundaries become necessary to establish who people are

When the church follows the lead of societal attitudes and structures, its missional focus becomes unclear and its members are driven off course.

evangelistic activity of the people of God must include the presentation of the fullness of the power of the gospel as it confronts the cosmic presence of sin in the created order."⁶ Because of the sin factor, the boundary markers for racial and ethnic individuals and groups must go beyond race, color, and language to a more deeply spiritual and authentic dimension in human nature — the power and presence in the Upper Room.

Unfortunately, this is not always the case because the church has been all too willing to derive its social theology from sociological assessments. Not being able to overcome present sociological realities, the church has adjusted to them and is making the best of it.⁷

When the church follows the lead of societal attitudes and structures, its missional focus becomes unclear and its members are driven off course. The outlook of church members on cultural issues and ministry — race, ideology, lifestyles, and morality — is ill-based and ill-defined and distracts its members with nongodly perspectives and disunity. The people in the pew

was created to be and to achieve "the communion of the saints" mentioned by the apostle Paul.

Exclusion or Inclusion

The value of being social and civil to one another is what builds or destroys community. Unfortunately, in today's society, religious identity is rivaled (and sometimes surpassed) by national identity as the source for group belongingness and, as a result, a source of intergroup hostility and conflict. Religious identity and national identity are two powerful forms of group identity that are increasingly clashing with each other.⁸

The relationship between nation and religion in America has created two polar visions that continue to be the source of heated debates at the center of culture and religion wars. On one hand is the establishment of religion — one people, one faith. On the other is the dissolution of religious organization — one individual, one faith. While battles rage for one solution or the other, the decline of group belongingness and the rise of individualism are reason enough

and what they are not. The human tendency to draw boundaries as identity markers and community markers extends to personal and group consciousness as well as the perception people have about community and unity. Our human tendency is to draw boundaries and then look down on those who are on the other side of the lines we have drawn. This continues to be a major obstacle in society.

In their book, *Against All Odds*, Christerson, Edwards, and Emerson state that racial and ethnic minorities perceive unity from a different perspective than non-Hispanic, white majority — to use Census Bureau terminology. For example, the non-Hispanic, white majority stresses an individualist ethic. “Unity among believers is defined as good relations between individuals, but these individuals are not seen as parts of a larger social context.” Racial and ethnic groups, on the other hand, focus on the group and collective dynamics in their pursuit of community.¹⁰

Antonio Damasio in his book, *The Feeling of What Happens*, sheds some light on the problem of perception. He defines perception as “consciousness” with two specific concepts and levels. He states “core consciousness focuses on the present”; “extended consciousness focuses also on the past and future.” A minority student’s comment explains these levels of consciousness, “My Anglo friends rarely talk about their ancestors, and when they think about the future, they don’t worry about it. As for me, when I give my name, Juan Garcia, I am asked where I came from (so I think of the past), and then I am asked what I intend to accomplish in America (so I think of the future).”¹¹

This inside/outside awareness is prevalent in minorities, and the dominant culture fails to understand

this awareness. The coexistence of memory and destiny is part and parcel of an extended consciousness. So it is not easy “to get over it” as some request. From these differences in perception boundaries of right and wrong are quickly drawn. Consequently, most dialogues on reconciliation are not about *things* or *specific incidents*, but rather about the varying perspectives of how we view life. This is the reason no constructive conclusions are reached.

In the kingdom of God the identity and community markers are clearly and deeply drawn. An expert of the Law came to Jesus and wanted Him to draw the lines (Matthew 22:34–40). Jesus drew the line His Father had drawn before — the Great Commandment that says we are to love God and love our neighbor (not nation). Later the disciples were given the Great Commission with lines that reach to the ends of the earth. Clearly the chain of command begins with the *loving character* of the messenger, the *eternal message of the gospel*, the *global scope of the mission*, and the *Spirit’s power* behind the mission to bring it *all in unity*.

Speaking particularly about Pentecostals, Philip Jenkins draws a line when he states, “If there is a key area of faith and practice that divides Northern and Southern (hemisphere) Christians, it is the matter of spiritual forces and their effects on the everyday human world.” The mission of those who left the Azusa Street Revival to labor around the world was endued by the power of the Holy Spirit. Today, as was shared at the Azusa Centennial, the developing nations of the world are exploding in Pentecostal revival. These are the nations from which millions of immigrants are coming, many of whom are the racial and

ethnics in the Fellowship today. Is it possible that the Azusa Street Revival is coming full circle?

A Vision for Transformation

In its 2003 General Council, the Assemblies of God adopted The Vision for Transformation in its effort to embrace deep change, rid itself of any destabilizing forces, and reposition itself for a more effective ministry in the 21st century. The spirit of territorialism and protecting interests and turf were the weaknesses most mentioned in the analysis by leaders and members while formulating The Vision for Transformation. To reposition the Fellowship, governance policies and organizational structures at every level have been aligned accordingly. Opportunities for broader inclusiveness and leverage for its racial and ethnic members have also been provided.

As these discussions about race and ethnicity increase so does the mission field for the church. Missions is now in our backyard. Quarterly reports from the General Secretary’s Office indicate the total number of U.S. churches declined during the first quarter of 2006, and did not recover to the 2005 level until the end of the year. Language (racial/ethnic) regions as a whole showed a net growth in churches, and lead in the number of church plants, while the geographic regions as a whole showed a net loss of congregations.

Currently, the membership of the AG is 34 percent ethnic. This includes 11 language districts with more than 250,000 members and 15 ethnic fellowships with thousands of ethnic members within geographic district churches.

One of the ethnic initiatives of The Vision for Transformation was the creation of the Commission on Ethnicity under the office of

the general superintendent. The commission was established to develop the ethnic communities in the Fellowship; to establish initiatives that promote a culture of inclusion throughout the Fellowship; to assist and serve local churches and districts councils with cultural competency (See sidebar on page 62.); to enhance the success of the Fellowship for ethnics at all levels; to study effective racial and ethnic ministries; and resource

the Fellowship by addressing the issues of corporate culture, leadership training, and church development and the implementation of indigenous principles practiced effectively in foreign fields. (See *Commission on Ethnicity and Guidelines for Effective Ethnic Ministry* sidebars below.)

Even though the vision has been spelled out in resolutions and carried out in programs at the highest level of the organization, the initiatives have yet

to be communicated and implemented at the grassroots level. The duplication of ministries, uncoordinated strategies, competitions, rivalries, and divisions still exists. With no real community, no sense of accountability, and no deep, ongoing relationship among all of its members — ethnic and nonethnic alike — the Fellowship as a whole will be weakened. The need for an increased understanding and the embracing of the racial and ethnic diversity within

Commission on Ethnicity

Mission:

To have oversight of a national ethnic agenda for the Assemblies of God for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission in America and leading the church in (1) evangelization of ethnic communities (Mark 16:15–20); (2) worship of God (John 4:23,24); and (3) building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11,16).

Method:

The commission fulfills the threefold mission of the church by: (1) providing a forum for listening and understanding the ethnic issues that relate to the Assemblies of God; (2) giving direction to formulate, establish, and communicate a vision of the ethnic opportunities for ministry; and (3) recommending organizational changes that will facilitate effective ministry to ethnic constituents and enhance the participation of these

within the Assemblies of God (Bylaws, Article XI, Section 5).

“I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35).

Vision for Transformation:

- Renew unity, cooperation, and equality as God’s people and Christ’s church (Acts 2:1,5,46,47).
- Release the vision and passion of the gospel for all people everywhere (Matthew 28:19,20).
- Resource by maximizing time, talent, and treasure for God’s kingdom on earth (Acts 2:42–44).
- Realign human understanding and unity in anticipation of the future Kingdom (Revelation 7:9).

JESSE MIRANDA, JR., Anaheim, California

MISSION	STRATEGY	GOALS
A voice for ethnic districts and fellowships. “Each ... in their own language” (Acts 2:6).	Dialogue Understanding Training Regional Conferences	Communication and Motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of understanding • A spirit of ethnic focus as brethren
A network of ethnic personnel and ministries. “Believers ... together” (Acts 2:44).	Collaborative efforts Formal coalitions Cooperative projects National summits	Trust and Cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of teamwork • A spirit of collaboration as neighbors
A resource on ethnic affairs and ministries. “Everything in common” (Acts 2:44).	Information Consultations Public forums General Council Initiatives on VFT	Stewardship and Empowerment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Kingdom culture • A spirit of divine destiny as joint-heirs

the Fellowship is real and necessary. The Assemblies will move ahead with the interdependence and cooperation of all its members, not by polarization and competition.

A Mission of Faith and Practice

Why is The Vision for Transformation important? The vision focuses on stabilizing the mission of this church. It aligns ministry vision with Scripture, and corporate character with beliefs,

ministry behavior, and morality. It also aligns the corporate culture with Scripture at every level of the church, bringing a greater demonstration of Christ's love in a changing society.

More important, the vision helps us carry forth Jesus' vision and mission for personal and community transformation. Jesus' ministry was the precursor of the vision and mission of the gospel for all generations. Jesus' method was ordained and prescriptive

for all to see and follow.

Jesus' message, "Open your eyes and look at the fields," was delivered in Samaria in volatile context with ethnic people. Samaria was the original laboratory to sample what was to be the *modus operandi* to spread the gospel to the whole world by crossing racial and ethnic barriers. The gospel brought deep change and transformation to people and to the social dynamics of the community.

Guidelines for Effective Ethnic Ministry

Philosophy

Ethnic ministry shall be initiated with the objective in mind to develop Assemblies of God churches by using "the Pauline example" of the indigenous principle in "establishing self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches" in ethnic communities.¹

Recognition

Ethnic/language districts and fellowships are authorized by the Executive Presbytery of the General Council and shall be amenable to the same body.

Equality

"An ethnic/language district shall have the same privileges and responsibilities which are accorded district councils within the framework of the Constitution and Bylaws."²

Cooperative Relationship

"Both the ethnic/language district and the geographical district shall seek to promote a spirit of fellowship and cooperation."³

Sponsorship

The sponsoring of an ethnic/language church shall be done in consultation with the related ethnic/language district in the area.

Affiliation

"When . . . a church reaches as many as 20 adult members, it may then seek affiliation with a district of its choice" and transfer in accordance to the Bylaws.⁴

Fellowships

Fellowships shall be affiliated with the appropriate district and "exist for

the purpose of exchanging information facilitating evangelism, and establishing churches."⁵

Representation

"A presbyter shall be appointed or elected from the ethnic or language fellowship to represent" a specific number of churches determined by and "within a district."⁶

Development

The district shall nurture ethnic members and leadership, enable members to function in their spiritual gifts, and establish solid infrastructure within the assembly.

Autonomy

In accordance with the indigenous principle, the district shall empower the ethnic church for independence by equipping leaders for autonomy, transferring authority, and creating structures for governance and financial independence.



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Endnotes

The following notes are from *Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God*, revised August 5, 2005, Denver, Colorado.

1. Art. 13, Sec. 1.d.
2. Art. 5, Sec. 5.b.
3. Art. 5, Sec. 5.c.
4. Art. 5, Sec. 5.d.
5. Art. 5, Sec. 5.a.
6. Art. 5, Sec. 7

Jesus' message urged His disciples to have His same vision for personal and communal transformation. His disciples missed out on this historical and missiological encounter because they went to buy food. Perhaps the disciples viewed Jesus' visit to Samaria through their sociological and political lenses as many in the church today view racial issues through their sociological and political lenses. In Jesus' day the stigma was such that "Jews ... wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans" (John 4:9, *The MESSAGE*). The disciples had a vision of an earthly kingdom in

mind (Matthew 20:20–28; Acts 1:6). They had gender issues to contend with (John 4:27). Whatever the reason, the disciples missed seeing a model of cross-cultural and global ministry in action.

First, the disciples missed seeing Jesus perform a miracle of personal salvation and communal reconciliation within the foreboding context of diversity and racial impasse in Samaria. Second, they missed experiencing the depth, height, and width of spiritual transformation. Third, they missed strategic statements on the spiritual nature of worship

(John 4:21–24); the scope, insight, and intimate concern of cross-cultural ministry (John 4:17–20); and the existential and religious dimensions of knowledge (John 4:25,26). Last, they missed the grand finale — the personal and communal joy of the harvest (John 4:34–42), the moving confession of a troubled woman saying, "He knew all about the things I did. He knows me inside and out!" (John 4:39, *The MESSAGE*), and they missed the behavioral transformation and warm hospitality of a redeemed community (John 4:40,42).

Creating a Kingdom Culture Through Cultural Competency

Ethnic diversity for the Assemblies of God is not a goal, but a present fact. Globally, the AG is 52.5 million strong and growing in 200 countries.

Assemblies of God membership in the United States and Puerto Rico is 34 percent ethnic. This membership includes 11 language districts with 250,000 members. There are 15 ethnic fellowships with thousands of members in various geographic districts. Thus, ethnic members constitute more than the critical mass needed to have a significant impact on the AG now and in the future.

The key question is: Can we have unity in the midst of this diversity? I believe we can if we develop a cultural competency. Cultural competency means that the church's efforts must be focused on harnessing and developing the human and spiritual potential of our ethnic constituents rather than trying to manage the increasing decline in AG membership in Anglo churches.

To accomplish this, we must first decide if ethnic diversity is a matter of political correctness or a mandate of the second Great Commandment and of the Great Commission. Second, is ethnic diversity a problem to be fixed or a key to the success of this church? Third, is ethnic diversity a potential organizational problem to be avoided or a potential ministry advantage? Finally, is ethnic diversity a public relations emergency to be handled or a resource for the church to grow?

Closer to home, the questions become sharper: What impact are ethnics presently having on the AG? What will their impact be in the future? If minorities are projected to become the majority in this country by 2050, how will these numbers translate in the AG?

In light of these questions, this church needs to identify some goals and initiatives. The Commission on Ethnicity began this process in December 2005 by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats concerning ethnic ministry in the AG. We now need to resolve these and other areas by adopting action steps, strategies, and initiatives.

Ethnic diversity will become a positive numerical and spiritual force in the AG through the cultural competency of our corporate culture. Cultural competency creates the synergy that allows initiatives, methods, and strategies to surface that will enhance communication and community. Converting ethnic diversity into a positive force is the key that unlocks the ethnic communities of society for His church.

We seek kingdom of God initiatives. The best diversity initiatives in the Kingdom focus not on numbers, labels, or demographics, but on creating communication, community, and communion. As in the transnational event in Acts 2, an anointing, harmony, and unity will accompany Kingdom initiatives.

From its inception, the church was meant to be diverse in its membership and global in nature.

The Samaritan model focuses on the spiritual and human, personal and communal that brings wholeness. Historical, cultural, and personal situations blur the reality of Jesus' perfect vision. The Samaritan miracle reinforces the fact the natural man cannot perceive spiritual truths that result in supernatural transformation. The Samaritan principle is that cultural, religious, or legalistic differences do not

excuse lovelessness. Spiritual power, not just historical or sociological expertise, is essential for crossing racial and ethnic borders and delving into the deep recesses of our neighbors. It is in the presence of Jesus and in the context of relationships that maximum human potential is experienced.

In Samaria, Jesus gave *the principles* of the global mission. But on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit provided

(as Jesus promised) *the power* to cross all geographic borders and liberate people bound by human barriers (Acts 1:8).

The church was born on the Day of Pentecost. From its inception, the church was meant to be diverse in its membership and global in nature. The Holy Spirit provided the destination and power to fulfill the Great Commission to reach all flesh. Jesus' love, then and now, knows no borders or boundaries. The commandment to love God and love neighbors is still in force. The call "to whosoever" is still open. This automatically creates incredible human diversity. The Holy Spirit's power is required for such diversity and complexity.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, diversity is the chief reason the church thrives through the centuries and adapts in many parts of the world. The Holy Spirit's reconciling unity — not programs, strategies, or social or political views — will fulfill John's vision (Revelation 5:1–14).

The Pentecostal Design for Transformation

The spirit of Azusa Street is still alive after 100 years. It is a reminder that the inlaying of the *ethne* (ethnic) dimensions of the gospel is still needed to complete the picture of Pentecost today. By all indications, the future will be Pentecostal. A genuine Pentecostal, prophetic, and practical leadership is emerging that will build the Kingdom in this and future generations. There are prospects of a 21st-century church with biblical authority, spiritual vitality, and cultural competency in its changing and complex society. More important, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all flesh is the point of reference and the

Acts 2, in essence, was Kingdom mentality exhibited through table-fellowship. This mentality goes beyond the worldly tactics of blame and shame in which one person is the victim and another is the perpetrator. Instead, these initiatives tap into each ethnic spiritual bank and cultural capital to learn what knowledge can be gleaned for new programs and products to build God's kingdom. We Build People — *all* of the people of the AG — by means of a corporate culture of awareness and inclusiveness. The best initiatives are those that customize the processes and create tools to address not only the felt needs of ethnic groups and individuals but also their instinctive and unique responses.

We must aim for a cultural competency that creates a Kingdom culture throughout the AG; that values ethnic diversity as a personal, human, and ministerial advantage; that implements a culture where every ethnic group can strive to attain its highest potential; and one that ascertains a preferred future with knowledge, creativity, teamwork, and integrity of all members of the body of Christ.

Cultural competency within the Kingdom can be learned and developed. It can lead to unprecedented growth and vastly improve productivity, morale, internal communication, leadership, and a satisfaction in doing God's will. The creation of human dignity — *imago dei* — was God's will. And central to understanding the mission of God — *missio dei* — is the work of the triune God in calling and sending the Church, through the Spirit, into the world to participate fully in the Great Commission. In this theological understanding, the Church is the creation of the Spirit. With the help of the Holy Spirit each of our ministries will develop cultural competence. Our people and staffs will learn and become empowered by a set of new skills, enabling all to relate more positively to the members — all members — of the AG, present and future.



JESSE MIRANDA, JR., Anaheim, California

The spirit of Azusa Street is still alive after 100 years. It is a reminder that the inlaying of the ethne (ethnic) dimensions of the gospel is still needed to complete the picture of Pentecost today.

determining factor that will provide the reconciliatory power that unifies the church to its completion.

The Pentecostal design, like the inlaid work in a mosaic, was displayed on the Day of Pentecost. Following God's reconciling initiative in Christ, the elements of unity, harmony, and diversity were beautifully inlaid. This design for the church includes people from every nation under heaven participating as full-fledged members in the body of Christ. It is a replica of the Samaritan miracle. It brings deep change to individuals who before would not speak to each other, but now engage in positive spiritual and social dynamics in their community. The design identifies, affirms, and embraces ethnic diversity, knowing that the cutting edge of the church is the cultural edge that requires heart-work to bring spiritual wholeness and completion to the body of Christ.

The purpose of Pentecost is to have a

projected continuity of transformation and hope in society until the end of time — in intentional succession of the belief, attitude, and experience that began in the Upper Room.

This succession is to be through the designed visions of the younger generation of sons and daughters — the offspring and carriers of the Spirit — and it is to be a model of Pentecost. It is the successive improvement and development of our Pentecostal legacy lifted to a higher and broader plane from that which was handed down in the dreams of previous generations.

In the tradition of the apostle Paul — who countered the reputed pillars in Jerusalem who struggled with the global pattern of the gospel — this is a Pentecostal generation of bridge builders and globe trekkers. This new generation has a new designation, language, and global vision. These new Samaritans no longer carry the stigma of alienation. They are no longer the

uncircumcised or strangers excluded from Kingdom citizenship. This is a new generation no longer situated in folk religion or cultural tradition but in a new location of the spirit and truth (John 4:23) where Christ is seeking to find them. These are spiritual artisans crafting God's vision of creating "one new man from the two, thus making

peace" (Ephesians 2:15, NKJV)¹³ with unifying Pentecostal power. Among these new Samaritans are those racial and ethnic people who have been bought by the blood of Jesus, having one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, and one hope, and by design brought from every tribe and language and people and nation to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God. 🌍



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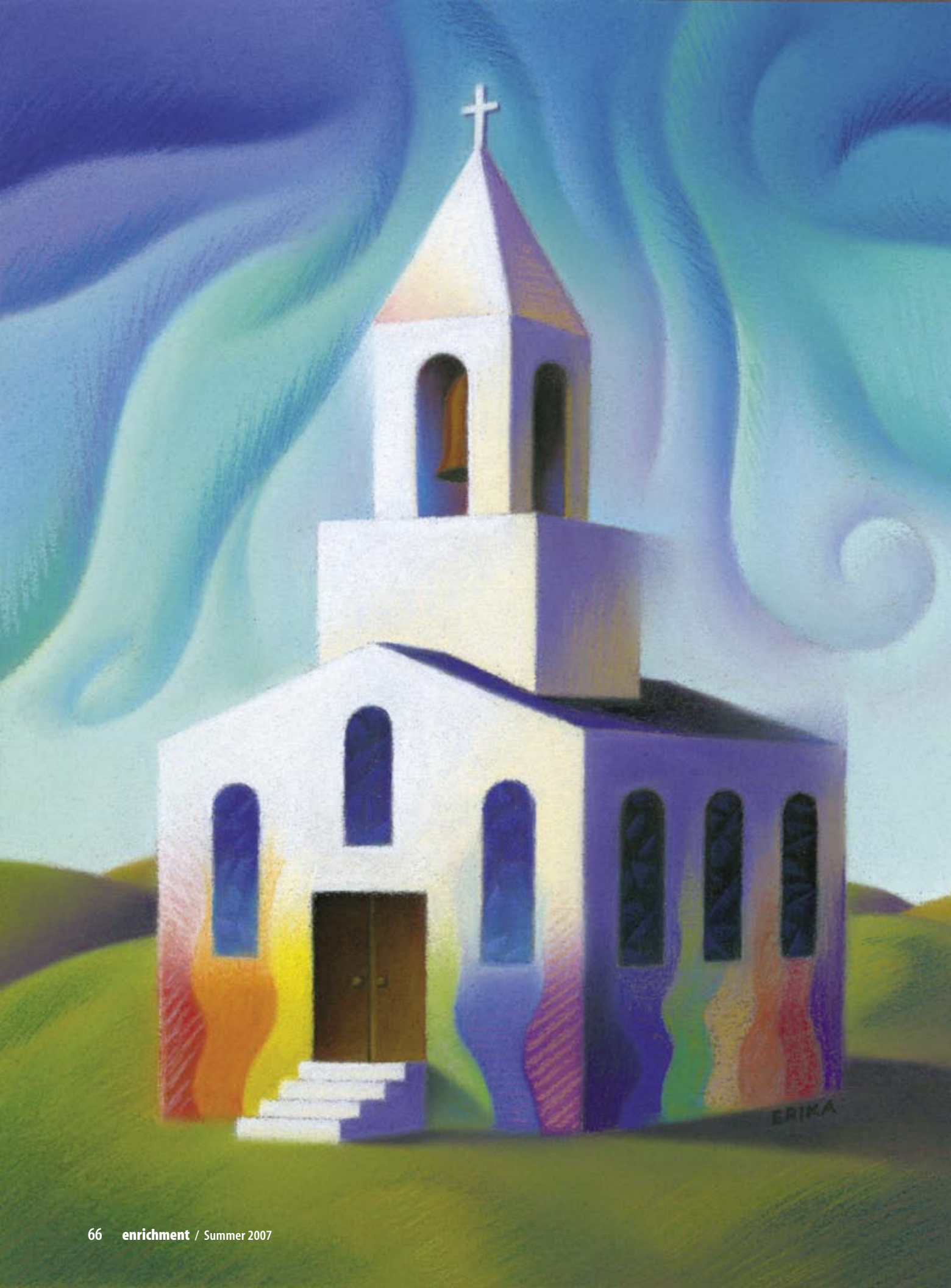
NOTES

1. Robert N. Bellah and others, *The Good Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 304.
2. Scripture taken from The MESSAGE. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.
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11. Antonio Damasio, "Passionate Theory," *USC Trojan Family Magazine*, Summer 2006, 43.
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13. Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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"You better hope you didn't tell him anything you didn't want spread around. That's not a tie hanging down — that's his tongue."



Preparing To Minister in a

Multiracial¹ World

By George Yancey

Our social world is changing rapidly. One of the most important ways it is changing is through the increasing racial diversity we are experiencing. Not only are non-Europeans becoming a larger percentage of the population in the United States, but racial groups are also interacting more openly than in the past. Yet, our churches have generally created ministries designed to reach only certain racial groups. Thus, our congregations have remained quite racially homogeneous and, to our shame, are less racially integrated than our schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

We cannot delude ourselves into thinking that our congregations will remain culturally relevant if we are limited to monoracial² atmospheres. In a society that is becoming more racially diverse, old models of targeting homogeneous racial groups will not be effective. We must learn how to reach new racial groups moving into our formerly homogeneous communities. Many churches will need to transition from being one predominate racial group into a church that includes people of several races. This is a difficult and scary task for many church leaders today.

I have worked with a research team³ to learn more about what it takes to transform a monoracial congregation into a multiracial one. In our research, we defined a multiracial church as a church where no racial group makes up more than 80 percent of church attendees. By this definition, less than 8 percent of all congregations are multiracial. Furthermore, only 5 percent of all Protestant churches are multiracial. In 2005, the Assemblies of God had 421 churches that had no single majority of races. This constituted 3.4 percent of AG churches. This data begs

the question of how are we going to minister to a multiracial society if our churches reflect the racial segregation of our hostile past?

When my wife, Sherelyn, and I moved to Fort Worth, Texas, we were looking for a racially diverse church.

Whereas multiracial leadership signals acceptance of people of different races, diverse worship styles signal acceptance of different racial cultures by the church.

We found a church we liked in other ways, but it was more than 95 percent white. Nevertheless, Sherelyn attended the church's women's Bible study for a time. When we realized that it was not going to work out, she told the women we were leaving. They were hurt to learn that we were concerned about the lack of racial diversity in the church. They stated that they welcomed everyone, but that nonwhites simply did not attend their church. Their reaction is typical. Many Christians welcome people of different races into

their services, but do not know how to create a welcoming atmosphere for them.

It is only in the last decade that Christian scholars and leaders have taken seriously the challenge of racially integrating our churches.

We do not have all of the answers for accomplishing this task but that does not eliminate our responsibility to develop racially integrated congregations. The research my colleagues and I have conducted does not provide comprehensive answers, but it does help illustrate how churches can create a welcoming atmosphere for multiple racial groups. Successful multiracial churches use certain principles to help them attract people from different races to their congregations. If we can learn from

these principles, we can reach out to people of different races and replicate the successes of these multiracial churches. These general principles can be adopted by a pastor or church leader and customized to fit his unique situation.

prepared for making the transition to a multiracial church. If people in the congregation are not ready for the changes that will take place, they can and will sabotage efforts to bring in different racial groups. The congregation has to buy into the idea of reaching people of different races before it can make the changes necessary to transition to a multiracial church. It is imperative that pastors spend a good deal of time teaching and casting a vision for reaching people of different races. They need to preach sermons, read books, and prepare Bible studies to help convince church members of the value of reaching out to people of other races.

Despite the need to prepare the congregation through sermons and lessons, an important caution must be made: Do not make becoming multiracial the primary goal for your church. Successful multiracial churches rarely make becoming multiracial the primary focus of their organization.

The racial fatigue in our society makes it difficult to motivate individuals to work toward a racially diverse church just for the sake of being multiracial. Rather, successful multiracial churches have an overarching goal that is easier to achieve if the congregation becomes racially diverse. For example, if you want to evangelize your multiracial city, you will need a congregational atmosphere that welcomes people of different races. When your primary goal is evangelism, you can utilize the evangelistic desire of your congregation to motivate members to work toward making their place of worship more racially inclusive.

An important tool in reaching your primary goal of evangelism is offering a more racially inclusive ministry. In a similar way, churches that envision their primary ministry as preparing for



Preparing the Congregation

A congregation must be

foreign missions,⁴ providing a place for the marginalized, and serving the community can also use their primary ministry concerns to justify becoming more racially inclusive. It is your responsibility to help your congregation see the value of a multiracial outreach to support these important ministries.

This process will take more than a single sermon or lesson. It is not unusual for a pastor to spend years preparing a congregation to make the necessary commitment to creating a multiracial atmosphere. Only after the laity is convinced of the importance of multiracial outreach will you be in a position to make the further changes necessary to develop that outreach.

Finding Multiracial Leadership

A key way to trigger changes that will lead to more racial diversity is through developing multiracial leadership. Churches that want to become multiracial need to include people of different races into their leadership structure. It would be difficult for a church to maintain a racially integrated laity if the leadership is not multiracial. Some multiracial churches are so committed to developing and maintaining a racially diverse staff that they hold a staff position open for more than a year waiting for a qualified person of a different race to apply. This is not affirmative action, but a realization that only those of a different race can bring certain qualities to the job. Experienced leaders of multiracial congregations realize that having those qualities is

Many Christians welcome people of different races into their services, but do not know how to create a welcoming atmosphere for them.

Issues Clouding Intercultural Transitions

Churches or ministry organizations that are transitioning to become intentionally intercultural face multiple issues that are not typical of their normal experience.

Cultural ignorance: People from multiple cultural backgrounds are thrust together, often resulting in vast differences of preferences and expectations.

Language barriers: When one language (often English) serves as the primary means of communication, persons less fluent in that language struggle to be understood.

Ethnically based stereotypes: The host culture tends to relegate other cultures to their appropriate roles based on preconceptions of that culture.

Passive racism: Judgments that one group has formed concerning other cultural language groups are now tested within the context of a Christian community.

Economic partiality: Many newcomers from other nations find themselves underemployed and therefore not viewed as having the same status as those who are economically well established.

Exclusion of minorities from leadership groups: Due to long established relationships in the host culture or restrictive appointment policies, sizable minority groups may not be represented in the leadership circles of their church even though they are active in church programming.

Distinct differences in worldview and spiritual expectations: Expectations of what is appropriate behavior or what is spiritual will vary between the host culture and other cultures in a church, often leading to judgment and disillusionment.

Social partition: The friendly greeting in the church foyer may not translate into consistent relationships outside of the church building.



DAVID WELLS, superintendent, British Columbia/Yukon District, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Reprinted from Session 1 "The Dynamics of Transition," in *Becoming an Intentionally Intercultural Church*, by Robert Bryjolfson and Jonahan Lewis, editors. Used by permission.

so important that it is better to leave a position unfilled than to fill it with the wrong person.

Multiracial congregations place a high priority on racially diverse leadership for several reasons. First, such leadership signals to members of different racial groups that they are

welcome in the congregation. When a visitor of a different race sees someone from his own race in leadership, it is easier to believe that he has a place in that congregation. Second, multiracial leadership allows the head pastor to hear from different racial and cultural perspectives. A white pastor may learn that tardiness is not disrespectful in some communities of color, or a black pastor may learn that whites do not always communicate their passion with the same volume of voice blacks may use. These cultural variations are not right or wrong, but are merely

Leading the Multiracial/Ethnic Church

Seeing every segment, culture, and language group in your community touched by your local church is most rewarding. Leading a multiracial/ethnic church, however, is hard work and the rewards are earned. It presents many challenges: preparing the congregation, selecting a church model, making decisions regarding church government, understanding the leadership role of an ethnic pastor, making the transition, selecting multi-ethnic staff, and providing leadership to people with different cultural ideas. To succeed, a pastor must be spiritual, flexible, and visible.

Spiritual

A pastor should not attempt to transition to a multiracial/ethnic church without first having a deep, heart-felt mandate from the Lord. Second, he must have a heart for missions. Third, and most important, the pastor must be a person of prayer and the Word. Only a pastor who is steeped in prayer and the Word can lead a multiracial church through the many potential mine fields he will likely encounter.

Flexible

The senior pastor of a multiracial church must have a flexible, relaxed personality. He must die to self and die to personal preferences and styles that might hinder his leading and partnering with a multiracial/ethnic congregation. If he does not, the many challenges may cause him to become frustrated with the project a few months down the road.

A multiracial/ethnic church leader will be stretched. The various people groups he ministers to may all speak English, but their concept of time, orderliness, and organization will be different from mainstream white-Anglo congregational perceptions. He must realize that church can be done in many ways. Our Sunday morning English service approach is not the only one that pleases God. Most racial and ethnic groups are much more relationship-oriented than our Sunday morning time-oriented congregation.

A flexible, relaxed personality will prepare him for the many surprises in weekly ministry that could either drive him crazy or cause him to be uncertain about what to do. He will likely ask himself, Is the problem a biblical or cultural one? When and how should I approach this situation? A tightly wound or fainthearted perfectionist will not succeed in this environment.

Visible

It is important that the senior pastor be visible and involved in the ethnic congregation. He may not speak the language or fully understand the culture, but the ethnic congregation needs to see him in its main service each week sharing the preaching duties (perhaps through an interpreter). This is a must if you want to bond as one church. It takes work and communication for multiple congregations to function as one church with one vision. As the church grows, the senior pastor must hire ethnic staff pastors. It is important that he have a strong relationship with them. In fact, it is best if he can hand pick ethnic staff members.



DOUG BANKS, pastor, Maranatha Chapel, Evergreen Park, Illinois

differences about which we need to learn. Third, multiracial leadership can better train others how to reach different racial communities. We need people from the racial groups we would like to reach to take the lead in showing us how to evangelize members of their community. While cross-racial outreach is definitely

Only after the laity is convinced of the importance of multiracial outreach will you be in a position to make the further changes necessary to develop that outreach.

important, who is better suited to explain the cultural, spiritual, social, and political needs of a racial community than those living in those communities?

To gain multiracial leadership a church often has to suspend some of the cultural norms on which it has relied. Understanding the cultural differences between racial groups is one of the ways pastors from other racial groups aid a church in reaching out to those of a different group. For example, one white pastor I interviewed commented on how he thought the Hispanic pastor was irresponsible because he did not show up for Sunday night worship. In the Hispanic community, however, Sunday night is family time. For him, it was appropriate to spend Sunday night with his family or ministering to other Hispanic families. The Hispanic pastor's spiritual immaturity was not

the problem. He was observing cultural values that would help him reach other Hispanics for the church. Once the white pastor understood this cultural difference, the actions of the Hispanic pastor made sense. It is fortunate that he did not use his early assessment of immaturity in deciding whether to hire this pastor or the church would have lost a valuable minister to an important racial community.

What To Do With Worship?

Along with multiracial leadership, racially integrated congregations also communicate racial acceptance by the type of worship they have. As the church establishes a racially diverse leadership team, it will also be important to deal with the worship style of the church. Multiracial congregations often engage in a diverse style of worship that does not focus on any single racial culture. These congregations may include elements of different cultural music styles in their services, rotate different music styles every week, or create a hybrid music style that combines the

styles of different racial cultures. It is important to decide how you will change the worship style so it not only connects to those of your own culture but also communicates acceptance of those from other racial groups as well.

Those with a more charismatic style of worship have an advantage.

While a wise pastor will be careful not to make changes in the worship and cultural style of the church too capriciously, changes must be made if the church wants to transition to a multiracial congregation.

Research indicates that this worship style seems to appeal to people of different races more easily than less emotional and more traditional styles of worship. It is a mistake, however, to think that because a church has an emotional, charismatic style of worship it has diverse worship. Even among Pentecostals and charismatics certain songs and worship practices are affiliated with certain racial groups. Those with highly charismatic worship

his culture? Does the pastor use a tone of voice tied to his culture? These questions must be addressed. What about the interior decor of the church? Are people of different races represented⁵ in the pictures? Are church signs written in more than one language? Is the culture represented

in the decorations/designs used in the church reflective of many groups or only that of the numerical majority group? Such questions must be asked and answered truthfully. Only after an assessment of musical and nonmusical worship aspects will a congregation be able to make the changes necessary to signal openness to different racial groups.

Fights over music styles and interior decor are often the cause of church splits. When altering the worship style of the church, it is important to maintain some of the previous cultural elements so church members feel less threatened. Remember, many who have been in the church a long time may feel they are losing part of their old church. To some degree, they are correct.

Changes may be necessary, but this does not make them any less painful for those faithful members. If possible, maintain a separate traditional worship service or an element of the tradition service if the church only has a single worship service. Nevertheless, it is important to systematically think about how the music style can be diversified, how pictures and images can be used in the church to promote

styles still must honestly assess how racially inclusive their current worship is.

An assessment of the worship style of a church must include more than just an evaluation of the music played. Worship is also communicated through the pastor's preaching style. Does the pastor give illustrations relevant to only





► **Seven Principles** of Successful Multiracial Churches

This material is based on principles that I developed more completely in my book, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. Below are the principles illustrated in the book with a brief explanation of each principle.

Inclusive Worship

An inclusive worship style is one that includes the cultural elements of more than one racial group. It may be a mixture of several different racial worship styles or a style that is unique from all racial cultures. An inclusive worship style communicates to visitors of different races that they and their cultures are respected.

Diverse Leadership

Racially diverse leadership reflects the racial diversity of the church members in multiracial congregations. Even if the official clergy leadership was not racially diverse, the laity leadership (elders, deacons) tended to be multiracial. Multiracial leadership is especially vital because it attracts African-Americans to a congregation.

An Overarching Goal

Few churches make becoming multiracial a primary focus of their church. Multiracial churches often have a goal that was aided by the fact the church was multiracial. Having a goal separate from racial issues can be important for helping church leaders sell members of the church on the importance of becoming racially integrated.

Personal Skills

Pastors of successful multiracial churches acknowledge the importance of developing personal skills. My research found these personal skills include the ability of church leaders to handle the interpersonal needs and conflicts that arise in their ministries, to empower other members of the church, and to develop patience. These personal skills are important because multiracial churches may produce additional interpersonal problems that require superior personal skills.

Location

European-Americans have left the inner cities in droves to escape the poverty and presence of racial minorities. Predominately white churches often leave such areas, selling their buildings to emerging minority churches. It is uncommon for multiracial congregations to emerge from the suburban churches that were established as people fled the inner city. By staying in a minority or multiracial residential area, a multiracial church communicates acceptance to people of color.

Intentionality

It takes work to create and sustain multiracial churches. The few times the development of multiracial churches was at least partially accidental, members of these churches worked to sustain the integrated nature of their congregations. Intentionality includes some of the previously documented elements, such as altering worship style or developing multiracial leadership, but also includes an attitude that values working toward a multiracial atmosphere in the church.

Adaptability

A monoracial church is concerned with a single racial culture. A multiracial church must adjust and adapt to multiple racial groups and cultures. Sometimes this adaptation is easily predictable. For example, a non-Hispanic congregation wanting to reach a first-generation Hispanic population must adapt to using Spanish. On the other hand, this adaptation is not always easy to predict. For example, interracial romantic relationships often bring out hidden racism within many church members. In both cases, a multiracial church must adapt to the new racial reality within the multiracial congregation.



GEORGE YANCEY, Argyle, Texas

Less than 8 percent of all congregations are multiracial. Furthermore, only 5 percent of all Protestant churches are multiracial.

inclusiveness, how the pastor can use illustrations from other racial cultures, how informal norms from the numerical majority can be questioned in the way the church service is conducted, and other questions about communicating cultural acceptance of different races through worship. While a wise pastor will be careful not to make changes in the worship and cultural style of the church too capriciously, changes must be made if the church wants to transition to a multiracial congregation.

A multiracial congregation needs to adjust to different racial cultures. We often forget that the cultural style we have grown up with is not the only acceptable cultural style. To minister to other races, pastors will need to adjust to different racially based cultural aspects brought into their ministry. Altering our worship style so we can incorporate elements from different racial cultures is one way of doing this. Whereas multiracial leadership signals acceptance of people of different races, diverse worship styles signal acceptance of different racial cultures by the church. It also indicates that the numerical majority in the church will not attempt to force different racial group members to adjust to a foreign culture and the culture of numerical minorities will have value in the congregation.

Multiracial churches do not happen by accident. They happen because plans are put in place making the church a comfortable place for people of different races. Church leaders who want their congregations to reach people of different races realize that plans need to be developed and

implemented. Even if those plans do not result in immediate success, previous failures at attracting people of different races often provide the lessons that lead to future successes. Furthermore, taking intentional steps to create a more racially inclusive culture will allow these leaders to communicate to people of different races that they are welcomed.

What Happens After You Make These Changes?

So you have implemented changes in motivating the laity toward creating a multiracial atmosphere, developed a multiracial leadership, and created a diverse worship experience in your church. Now what?

Churches transitioning to a more multiracial culture often initially lose members of their congregation. This loss, however, can be expected since some members will be unwilling to make the adjustments necessary to help a church become more racially diverse. Some people will leave the church when you start preaching about the need to make the transition. Others will initially desire to make the transition, but when they understand all of the necessary changes, they will leave as well. The group most likely to leave will be white families with dating-age children. It is a sad commentary on the fears that some Christians still have toward interracial romance.⁶ Nevertheless, expect to lose some members when you begin the transition to a more racially accepting environment. These individuals are the ones who may offer the most resistance to making this transition,

and their loss is not entirely negative.

But now the good news. My research indicates that over time multiracial churches are more likely to grow than nonmultiracial churches.

No Single Majority: Church Growth in the Assemblies of God

	1990	1995	2000	2005
Number of Churches	208	270	395	420
Average Attendance	172	185	221	367

Statistician, Office of the General Secretary

The fact such churches can draw members from different racial cultures can help them attract more people. Just as you will lose some people who are not willing to make the transition to a multiracial church, as the church becomes known for being multiracial you will also pick up new members. Beyond the fact the church will have more than a single racial group it can

How are we going to minister to a multiracial society if our churches reflect the racial segregation of our hostile past?

draw from, there are many people who desire to worship in a multiracial context and that number is increasing. The percentage of Americans living a racially diverse lifestyle is growing, and these individuals want to worship in a multiracial setting. Pastors who want to see their churches transition from an environment dominated by a single culture to a congregation of many

Mosaix Global Network

Shaping the Multiethnic Church Movement

The Mosaix Global Network represents a growing movement of pastors/ministry leaders seeking to know God and to make Him known by establishing multiethnic churches throughout America and beyond. Founded in 2004 by George Yancey, coauthor of the book, *United By Faith*, and Mark DeYmaz, pastor of the Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas, MGN exists to catalyze this movement by:

- casting vision.
- connecting people and churches of like mind.
- conferencing for the purpose of discovering and disseminating best practices.
- coaching believers and congregations that have a passion to develop diverse communities of faith in the 21st century.

Like a magnet, the emerging network is attracting the attention of those pursuing or considering the vision of the multiethnic church — those who might otherwise have remained unknown to one another. According to Executive Director Jim Spoonts, “MGN is a synergistic environment through which a growing number of individuals and churches are advancing theological truth, articulating principles, and accelerating applications at a rate far greater than if we were going at it alone.”

Through various points of connection, MGN promotes the biblical mandate for the multiethnic church and defines six core commitments required to bring it about. The one-day MultiEthnic Church Summit is highly recommended for pastors/ministry leaders desiring to infuse their congregations with vision and will help

pastors frame an initial dialogue. Two-day Mosaix Regional Conferences offer ministry professionals a chance to dialogue directly with recognized leaders and practitioners shaping the multiethnic church movement today.

Central to MGN understanding, the coming integration of the local church must not be focused on racial reconciliation. Rather, it must be focused on reconciling men and women to God through faith in Jesus Christ and, consequently, on reconciling local communities of faith to the pattern of the New Testament church.

MGN believes that the New Testament, not changing demographics or global people shifts, should urge the movement forward. The church is to reflect the kingdom of God “on earth as it is in heaven”; and, having been called to unity by Christ “to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:20–23). MGN exists to enlist, equip, and encourage others in pursuit of this dream.

“I have no doubt that the coming integration of the local church will be the single greatest force defining church history, growth, and effectiveness in the 21st century,” says Cofounder Mark DeYmaz. Toward this end, church planters and reformers are now coming together to pioneer the movement through MGN.

To learn more about MGN or to get involved in the network, visit <http://www.mosaix.info>.



MARK DEYMAZ, senior pastor, Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas, Little Rock, Arkansas. DeYmaz has written *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church* (Jossey-Bass/Leadership Network) due out in September 2007.

racial groups may need to endure a short-term loss of members to undergo a long-term trend of growth and revitalization.

Finally, as you begin to attract people of different races, consider a few important issues: First, those in the numerical minority may feel more alienated from the culture of the church than those in the numerical majority. They are less likely than those in the numerical majority to have their closest friends in the church, and often the numerical majority members tend to be less sensitive to

the cultural norms of those in the numerical minority. The numerical majority is often comfortable in the church because they have the lion's share of the organizational and cultural power. To make multiracial congregations work, those in the numerical majority will need to make

more cultural sacrifices than those in the numerical minority.

Second, when we begin to attract people of different racial groups, we usually first gain people who are more culturally similar to us. For example, if your church has been a white church that supports Republicans, the first

Our congregations have remained quite racially homogeneous and, to our shame, are less racially integrated than our schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

► Literature To Help Minister to Multiracial Families

If you are successful in attracting people of different races to your church, you will need to deal with issues of interracial dating/marriage. Despite contemporary social pressure to exhibit racial acceptance, many Christians are still uncomfortable with interracial romance. To help you to minister to interracial couples and to prepare your church for an increase in interracial romance, here is a brief annotated bibliography of resources.

DeCaro, L. "The Bible, Race and Interracial Relations," *Interrace Magazine* 7, no. 2: 9–12.

A brief article showing that the Bible does not racially limit whom we can date or marry. The article also provides scriptural support for those who fear that interracial marriages are not biblical.

Driskill, J. Lawrence. 1995. *Cross-Cultural Marriage and the Church: Living in the Global Neighborhood*. Pasadena: Hope Publishing House.

Driskill examines intercultural marriage with equal emphasis on international marriages and interracial marriages. Driskill relies on several stories of interracial Christian couples rather than on analysis of the concept of interracial marriages.

Frazier, S. 2002. *Check All That Apply: Finding Wholeness as a Multiracial Person*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

This is the best book for ministering to multiracial people. Frazier explores how multiracial people can understand their racial identity as a gift from God.

Funderburg, L. 1995. *Black, White, Other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race and Identity*. New York: Quill Publishers.

Containing several excerpts of interviews of black-white biracial individuals, this book can help you gain an understanding of the biracial community from the words of the people in that community.

Ham, Ken, Carl Wieland, and Don Batten. 1999. *One Blood: The Biblical Answer to Racism*. Green Forest, Ark.: Master Books.

The value of this book is its argument that there are no biological contrasts between different races. This indicates that there are no physical reasons to oppose interracial marriages.

Mathabane, Mark, and Gail Mathabane. 1992. *Love in Black and White: The Triumph of Love Over Prejudice and Taboo*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

A good, readable biography about an interracial couple and the struggles they have undergone. This book may help you understand some of the problems interracial couples face.

Prinzing, Fred, and Anita Prinzing. 1991. *Mixed Messages: Responding to Interracial Marriage*. Chicago: Moody Press.

A great book about a white couple with two children who both married African-Americans. It shows how they learned about interracial relationships and grew in their own racial understanding. This book is out of print but can be found online.

Yancey, George, 1994. "What the Bible Really Says About Interracial Marriages," *Interrace Magazine* 26.

Much like DeCaro's work, this article offers a scriptural argument concerning why interracial relationships are biblical by outlining the major Christian arguments against interracial marriage and then rebutting them.

Yancey, George, and Sherelyn Yancey. 2002. *Just Don't Marry One: Interracial Dating, Marriage, and Parenting*. Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press.

This edited book contains many of the above authors and offers a Christian perspective on interracial marriage from a variety of experts. The issues covered include: biracial identity, stereotypes, transracial adoption, counseling interracial couples, interracial dating, and other related topics from a Christian perspective.



GEORGE YANCEY, Argyle, Texas

Need Mentoring and Support?

Striking out in a new direction can be scary. One has few templates to follow. Until recently, there has not been much support for those who have braved a calling into multiracial ministry. However, a new organization called Mosaix Global Network has formed to provide resources and mentoring for church leaders who want to engage in multiracial ministry. For more information, visit <http://www.mosaix.info>.



GEORGE YANCEY, Argyle, Texas

African-Americans and Hispanics you will attract are likely to be Republicans as well. Later, however, the African-Americans and Hispanics who come to this now multiracial church will often be dissimilar to those who first came. In this example, they are more likely to support Democrats. Adjusting to this cultural, or in this case political alteration is important if we are to keep attracting people of different races. Do not think that the first few people of a different race will adequately represent all members of their racial group. It is your responsibility to continually learn about the needs and desires of these people as they worship with you.

It is my hope and prayer that you will take up this important challenge and consider the ideas in this article. Space does not permit me to explore all of the important issues in planning a multiracial direction for your congregation; but, if you maintain a flexible, adaptable attitude, you will be able to prepare for this new direction. In maintaining such an attitude, you may find new paths toward a racially inclusive congregation not previously discovered. Flexibility and a willingness to continually learn are important values for anyone who wants to embark on a journey toward multiracial ministry. It will be hard work for our previously monoracial congregations to transition to multiracial sites of racial

reconciliation. But with the power of God and the efforts of sincere Christians it is a task that we not only can do, but that we also must do if we are to create a relevant, vibrant church in the 21st century. 🌱



GEORGE YANCEY, Ph.D., is associate professor of sociology at the University of North Texas. He is coauthor of *United by Faith: The Multiracial*

Congregation as An Answer to the Problem of Race; coeditor of *Just Don't Marry One: Interracial Dating, Marriage, and Parenting*; and author of *Beyond Black and White: Reflections on Racial Reconciliation*; and *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. His latest book is *Beyond Racial Gridlock: Embracing Mutual Responsibility*. As founder of Reconciliation Consulting, he helps churches and ministries develop and sustain their multiracial emphasis.

NOTES

1. I intentionally use the term *multiracial* in describing the type of churches discussed in this article. Some may prefer the terms *multicultural* or *multiethnic*. These terms, however, do not offer precise enough descriptions. Multicultural can mean a variety of different cultures that

have nothing to do with racial differences (that is, age, region, lifestyle, occupation). Furthermore, this term comes with a great deal of baggage that must be overcome before many Christians are comfortable with it. Multiethnic can mean Swedish/English or Cuban/Mexican congregations rather than white/Asian or African-American/Hispanic ones. While multiethnic congregations have their own challenges, in our contemporary society racial divisions have more saliency than ethnic ones, and I choose to concentrate on the challenges of developing multiracial congregations.

2. When I use the term *monoracial* I am not suggesting that our churches are all white, all African-American, all Hispanic, or all of any single racial group. I am suggesting that our churches are usually dominated by only one racial culture and are *monoracial* in their social character.
3. While many people supported certain parts of this research process, Michael Emerson and Karen Chai were most helpful to me. I am indebted to them.
4. For a good example of how a church can use its multiracial makeup to aid in efforts toward foreign ministry read about Wilcrest Baptist in Michael Emerson, *People of the Dream* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006) 109,110.
5. I write about numerical majority and numerical minority members. This refers to the members of a church, not the surrounding community. It also is not a reference to concepts, such as majority group members, that generally refer to whites or European-Americans. In a multiracial church that is 65 percent Hispanic and 35 percent white, the numerical majority is not the whites but the Hispanics. The Hispanics have the power within that church even though whites may have greater power within our general society.
6. A mistake many multiracial churches, even the successful ones, make is that they do not prepare their members for the increase in interracial dating that will occur. Fears about interracial dating and marriage are often unspoken but are reasons why some will leave a church that is racially diversifying. Open conversation can reduce the possible loss of some members who fear interracial dating. My wife and I have developed a resource entitled, *Just Don't Marry One* (Judson Press), to help prepare Christians and their congregations for the eventualities of interracial dating and multiracial families. (For more possible resources see sidebar "Literature To Help Minister to Multiracial Families.")

Discussion Questions To Take up With Pastoral Staff and Church Board Members

1. What is the basic mission of our church, and how would developing a multiracial congregation aid us in fulfilling that mission?
2. Do you use your cultural values to unfairly judge the leadership ability of people from other races?
3. If you could take one step that would make musical and/or nonmusical worship at our church more racially diverse, what would that step be?
4. Are we willing to lose some members of our church to reach the mission outlined in question 1? Why or why not?



Greg Schneider

Beyond the Color Line:

MODELS OF RACIAL INTEGRATION

By Mario H. Guerreiro

In April 2006, Pentecostal believers from around the world gathered in Los Angeles to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Azusa Street Revival. A century earlier, the event that precipitated this historic gathering began with little fanfare or public notice. While significant from our vantage point, early 20th-century journalists were not particularly impressed. In fact, many felt the tenement-based revival scarcely warranted mainstream media attention. This anonymity proved short lived. As both attendance and manifestations of the Holy Spirit increased, secular journalists were drawn to the meetings and coverage evolved in a highly prejudicial fashion. Headlines from Los Angeles area newspapers reported “arrant tomfoolery” and “religious mania.”¹ One newspaper reporter indicated, “There were all ages, sexes, colors, nationalities, and previous conditions of servitude.”²

At a time when segregation was the norm, this demonstration of racial unity was particularly alarming. William J. Seymour, an African-American pastor who served as one of the leaders of the mission, believed that God was “blending all races and nations into one common family in the Lord.” Eyewitness observers, such as Frank Bartleman, echoed this observation claiming, “The color line has been washed away in the blood.”³

Clearly, the Pentecostal movement was birthed in an atmosphere of racial reconciliation. Why, then, was its *ethos* of unity short lived? Was this element of the Movement firmly rooted on biblical principles? If so, how can 21st-century church leaders dealing with rapidly shifting demographic realities empower Seymour’s vision of one common family in the Lord?

Many successful models of racial integration are being employed in Assemblies of God churches across the United States. We need to look at the pros and cons of various models as well as their applicability in various ministry contexts.

The Great Commission compels believers to “go into all the world and preach the Gospel” (Mark 16:15, NASB),⁴ but few pastors are prepared to deal with the unique challenges that occur when the world comes to them. Changing immigration patterns and an increasingly mobile society have brought about dramatic changes in the ethnic composition of American communities. As new people groups are introduced to the gospel, integration of these racially and culturally unique peoples is changing the formerly homogeneous face of our congregations.

As the national immigration policy debate rages on, church leaders should seriously consider their mission and policies regarding this emotionally charged and potentially divisive issue. As Christian leaders, we have an obligation to carefully examine our attitudes toward minorities to ensure that our response is built on a solid understanding of biblical principles, rather than blind adherence to any particular political ideology.

It would be naive to assume that American churches exist in a vacuum, that their beliefs and attitudes toward minority newcomers are radically different from those of the world. The challenge for the church is to act and behave in a manner contrary to our social and historical norms. It is critical that we model and lead from a biblical perspective.

The church is called to be a prophetic voice concerning racial integration and may well play an important role in ensuring racial harmony as sweeping demographic trends shift the balance of power in years to come. An article in *Time* states: “A truly multiracial society will undoubtedly prove much

harder to govern. Even seemingly race-free conflicts will be increasingly complicated by an overlay of ethnic tension. For example, the expected showdown in the early 21st century between the rising number of retirees and the dwindling number of workers who must be taxed to pay for the elders' Social Security benefits will

value system that is shaped by Judeo-Christian ideals. Many immigrants are drawn to the American way of life because they value its emphasis on freedom and democracy. Because of this attraction, the Christian lifestyle and its institutions have tremendous potential to influence minorities both as citizens and as believers. Christian

All across America, Assemblies of God pastors are accepting the challenge to meet the needs of minority newcomers. Their commitment to multiethnic ministry is intentional and their passion is contagious.

probably be compounded by the fact a large majority of recipients will be white, whereas a majority of workers paying for them will be nonwhite."⁵

The church has a tremendous opportunity to help newcomers develop a Christian identity that supersedes nationalism. The future of America may depend on the church's ability to help immigrants adopt a

leaders must be prepared to address issues concerning Christian identity and nationalism, and to teach, train, and provide opportunities for integration and healing. The future of American society may well be in our hands.

Does God Give a Mandate for Inclusion Within the Church?

Inclusion was an integral theme of Christ's earthly ministry. He sought to provide life-changing opportunities for everyone. The qualifications for membership in His group were simple: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

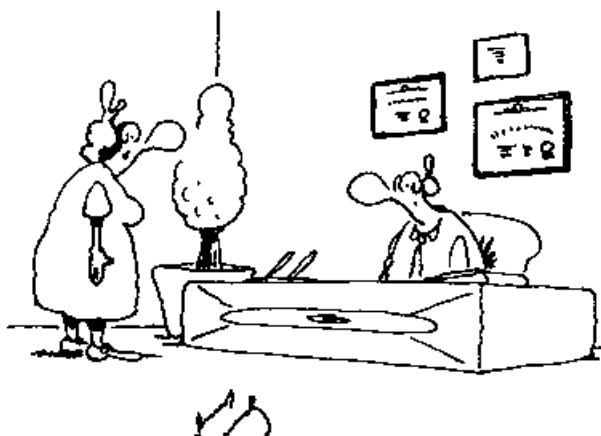
Salvation was the entry point into a community of

believers whose existence was governed by a passionate commitment to Christ. His message of inclusion became the engine behind the Early Church's expansion. Fueled by the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the homogeneous group of disciples who had gathered in the Upper Room in Acts 2 set out on a first-century "mission impossible." They were to provide the catalyst for fulfillment of the Great Commission: to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

The disciples inherited a commission of seemingly insurmountable proportions. In a world sharply divided by religion and language, they were to make disciples. Then, as now, the Holy Spirit provided empowerment for ministry. Jerusalem was the setting for a scene that caused as much uproar in the first century as the Azusa Street Revival did in the 20th century. People from multiple races and languages were present: "Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 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 — we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' " (Acts 2:7–11).

It is unlikely that the disciples could have anticipated what would happen next. Peter's bold proclamation of the gospel led to a dramatic and instantaneous transformation of the fellowship. A movement that had been largely homogeneous welcomed 3,000 diverse believers in a single day: "The opening of the fellowship of the children of God to uncircumcised,

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"I know you don't have all the answers, Pastor. I was your high school teacher, remember?"

untaught, heathen (Gentiles) was a completely new concept for which there had been no precedent. The spreading of the gospel had moved from the purest Palestinian Jews to the Greek-influenced Hellenists to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch — all with the Holy Spirit's strong influence."⁶

Seemingly overnight, God moved the young church from a homogeneous model to a new paradigm. It is clear that all believers were part of the same Body and that God's intent was for them to coexist under the diverse leadership He chose. As early as Acts 6 we see God's intent for an inclusive Body as the disciples dealt with the inevitable stresses of this transition: "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food" (Acts 6:1).

Mission, values, and leadership needed adjustment to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse body. Yet the apostles remained firmly committed to God's unified vision for the church. They did not suggest separate bodies, but instead appointed inclusive leadership chosen from within the group: "'Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.' This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism" (Acts 6:3–5).

By Acts 13, Antioch has a fully functioning *ekklesia*. The church was not only diverse in its membership, but also in its leadership. "In the church at Antioch there were prophets

and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul" (Acts 13:1).

God's passion for inclusion extends well beyond the moment of salvation. His desire is for all people to become productive members of His body, regardless of ethnicity. Our mission is not to evangelize to pile up points on some heavenly checklist. No, the by-product of our evangelistic efforts must be to enter into relationships and build community despite cultural differences: "A disciple is not simply one who has been taught but one who continues to learn."⁷ In fact, the nature of this commission implies a long-term commitment to one another.

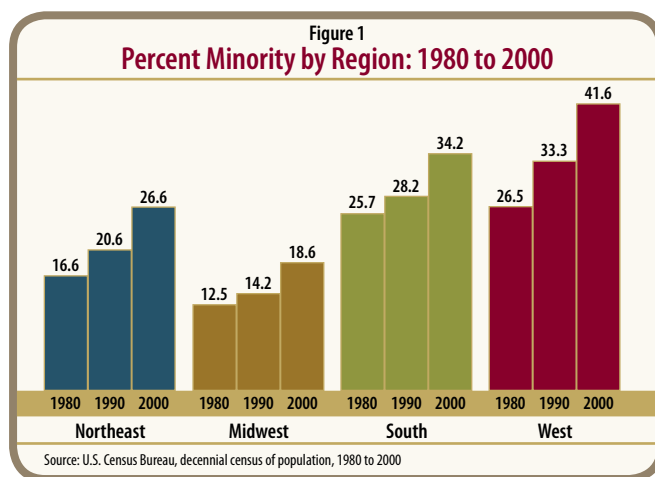
Why Integrate? A Look Into the Future

According to the Census Bureau, the U.S. foreign-born population is 33.5 million, representing 11.7 percent of the population. Among the foreign born, 53 percent are Latin American, 25 percent are Asian, 14 percent are European, and the remaining 8 percent migrated from other regions of the world. Immigrants from both Latin America and Asia are more likely to live in the West, while Central Americans are concentrated in the West and the South. In comparison, immigrants from the Caribbean and South America are concentrated in the Northeast and the South.⁸

Figure 1 shows the growth in minority populations by region since 1980. The West leads with a 15.1 percent increase, but even the

Midwest experienced a 6.1 percent growth rate. The overall average for the four regions was at 9.9 percent. This demonstrates the national impact of this phenomenon.

As their numbers increase, foreign-born residents are becoming increasingly mobile. By 2000, nearly one-third of U.S. immigrants resided outside established settlement states.



Seeking an escape from the cost and congestion of urban areas and because of the availability of jobs elsewhere, immigrants are increasingly leaving traditional gateway states in search of better opportunities.

Thirteen states — including many that had not previously been major destinations for immigrants — saw foreign-born growth rates more than double the national average. (See *10 Fastest Growing Minority Gateway Cities* chart and Figure 2 on pages 84 and 85.)

Foreign-born residents are also migrating away from urban areas to the suburbs. While more than two-fifths lived in a central city in a metropolitan area, the proportion living outside central cities but within a metropolitan area exceeded 50 percent. Not surprisingly, the 10 metro areas with the fastest growth in minority households serve as thriving immigrant gateways.

10 Fastest Growing Minority Gateway Cities

CITY	POPULATION IN 2000	CORRESPONDING METRO AREA	FOREIGN BORN	ENGLISH IS SECOND LANGUAGE
Hialeah, Fla.	226,000	Miami	72 percent	93 percent
Santa Ana, Calif.	338,000	Los Angeles	53 percent	80 percent
Daly City, Calif.	104,000	San Francisco	52 percent	66 percent
Sunnyvale, Calif.	132,000	San Francisco	39 percent	46 percent
Anaheim, Calif.	328,000	Los Angeles	38 percent	55 percent
Chula Vista, Calif.	174,000	San Diego	29 percent	53 percent
Pembroke Pines, Fla.	137,000	Miami	29 percent	37 percent
Irving, Texas	192,000	Dallas	27 percent	38 percent
Bellevue, Wash.	110,000	Seattle	25 percent	27 percent
Aurora, Colo.	276,000	Denver	16 percent	23 percent
U.S. Average	--	--	11 percent	18 percent

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and *USA Today*

Recent arrivals to the newest immigrant gateways often come from Asia or Mexico, are poorer than the native-born population, have low English proficiency, and lower rates of U.S. citizenship.⁹

It is important for churches to note that the nation's two largest minority groups follow strikingly different paths. While African-Americans tend to migrate to areas with large black populations, Hispanics are more willing to settle in areas with few from their ethnic group.

"These are two major waves in America," says William Frey, demographer at the Brookings Institution in Washington. "One is the black return to the South. ... The other is Hispanics going to places where everybody else is moving, following the jobs."¹⁰

Church leaders need to pay careful attention to these emerging trends to respond to the changing ethnic realities within the communities they serve.

In most less-populated areas, minorities represent only 5.3 percent of households. In fact, the minority share

is less than 5 percent in fully 1,000 of the nation's 2,400 nonmetro counties. Being responsive to the spiritual needs of minorities, while still important, may be less of a priority for congregations serving such communities.¹¹

Integration Models and Practices

A variety of models for integrating minorities within the church have been suggested over the past decade. Each

of your ministry context. In addition, I recommend further study before embarking on a paradigm shift, and I have included a suggested reading list.

As I interview pastors across the United States, it is apparent that the best practices within our Movement are evolving as rapidly as the demographic shifts that necessitate them. Pastors, inspired by the Holy Spirit, are creating new models and

It is my belief that the synergistic model is God's ideal for His body, and it is most congruent with the spiritual unity characterized by early New Testament churches such as Jerusalem and Antioch.

has its pros and cons and no single solution applies to every ministry context. Pastors seeking assistance in this area should consult the AG Demographic and Church Research Network at <http://www.demographics.ag.org>. This department will help you understand the unique characteristics

applying combinations of existing models in original and inventive ways. Our Movement is experiencing a journey of transformation. As congregations and communities evolve, their ability to apply these models will also evolve. Movement from one model to the next or even

shifts within a model may take entire generations to develop. In fact, they often occur in tandem with the cultural assimilation of a particular ethnic group. Churches that are effective in integrating minority newcomers demonstrate a consistent and mission specific intentionality that does not waver over time. It is a core value of the congregation that influences nearly every aspect of its ministry. Pastor Steve Allen of Life Church International in Columbia, South Carolina, describes it like this:

"Intentionality is the key. What I mean by this is that every ministry has to demonstrate intentionality in terms of its relationship and committee structure. I want to see a mix of African-American, white, and Hispanic."

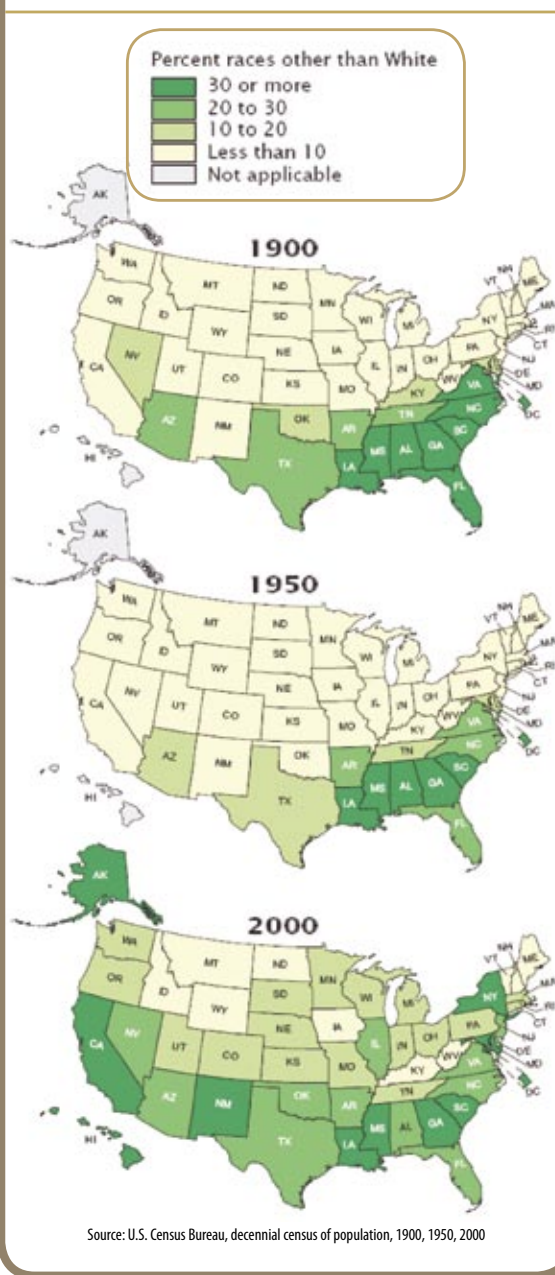
The passion and intentionality demonstrated by Allen and other pastors living the reality of multiethnic church ministry are inspirational; and, although their methods and ministry contexts differ, they are unified in their determination to reach their communities with the gospel.

After interviewing numerous pastors, I see three predominant models of racial integration within our Movement in the United States. They are homogeneous, heterogeneous, and synergistic, each representing a step on the continuum of full racial integration. (See *Church Models sidebar on page 86.*)

Homogeneous model

A homogeneous congregation is predominantly uniform in its ethnic

Figure 2
Percent Races Other Than White by State:
1900, 1950, 2000



or racial makeup, extending from the leadership to its congregants. This model tends to closely mirror the demography of the community it serves. We often associate this model with rural communities lacking racial diversity, but homogeneous congregations often spring up to serve the needs of recent immigrants

or unique people groups. Steve Allen states: "The church should reflect its community. If you are within the Amish community, try to reach them. Not every church can be as intentional about race as we are in the south, but every church should reflect the demographic of its community and try to assimilate new people as the community changes."

Some churches that utilize the homogeneous model are comprised largely of first-generation immigrants who lack proficiency in English. It can be reasonably argued that a single-race congregation cannot be considered a model of integration. However, homogeneous churches in gateway cities serve a valuable role in the cultural and spiritual assimilation of newcomers. Often these newcomers represent the poorest strata of society and need considerable help in finding employment and housing, learning English, finding legal counsel, and qualifying for U.S. citizenship. Qualifying for U.S. citizenship is a complicated process that often takes many years to accomplish, regardless of the circumstances of one's arrival.

Allen cautions, however, that building one's entire ministry around a single population can be shortsighted: "Second-generation people speak English and they

want to learn in English. There are some good Hispanic churches, but if you are an all-Spanish church, you need to have something going on in the English/Spanish realm or you will become obsolete."

Pastor Wallace Horton of Hope Chapel in Berwick, Maine, wrestles with these realities each day. Horton

is working to blend two formerly homogeneous churches, one Indonesian and one Caucasian, into a single congregation. Future plans include the integration of an African congregation. According to Horton:

"The integration model you use must be effective with the people group you seek to reach. Your timing must be responsive to their felt needs, not based on your timetable. We need to strive toward relevance in everything we do."

Given the demographic realities of our changing world, a church that is largely homogeneous today should continually seek ways to broaden its scope of ministry. Loss of relevance is a paramount risk for

Church Models

Homogeneous (Uniform)

Homogeneous churches are racially uniform. In some cases, this uniformity is representative of the racial composition of the community. In others, it is an intentional decision to minister to a particular ethnic group, often first-generation immigrants with unique needs. Challenges for the homogeneous church include:

- a narrowly defined target audience that may hamper growth.
- perceptions, both real and imagined, of exclusivity.
- diminished capacity to evangelize effectively outside the target audience.
- loss of relevance as the community evolves through generational changes and shifting immigration patterns.

Heterogeneous (Diverse)

The heterogeneous model allows established churches or new church plants to move toward a fully integrated paradigm. It represents the middle ground on the pathway toward a synergistic model.

In its most rudimentary form, the heterogeneous church may involve an ethnic group renting facilities from another church and have little ministry collaboration with that church. Some pastors see this as a first step toward eventual integration. Churches are increasingly moving beyond rental agreements and blending formerly diverse congregations into a single body of believers. This may occur in a variety of fashions. In some cases, separate worship services are held concurrently in different languages with opportunities for joint ministry and fellowship in home settings or discipleship groups. Challenges for heterogeneous congregations include:

- overcoming language barriers, deep-seated prejudice, and cultural expectations.
- developing a culture of intentionality toward evangelism and discipleship of minority newcomers.
- attracting and retaining newcomers from other cultures.

- modifying the way we "do church" to create a truly inclusive worship experience.
- providing a broad range of assistance to first-generation newcomers.

Synergistic (Inclusive)

Synergism implies an intentionally diverse and spiritually dynamic congregation. It represents the highest ideal among integration models. Synergism represents the biblical ideal as depicted in the Book of Acts. Churches utilizing this model demonstrate intentionality at every level, including mission, ministry, leadership, membership, and worship styles.

These churches provide opportunity for conversion, discipleship, and integration of minority groups. Churches that adopt this model notice significant changes in their worship services, including a renewed hunger for God and for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, an atmosphere of excitement, an interest in prayer, and a renewed expectation of the miraculous. Challenges with this model include:

- exegeting the cultures you seek to reach.
- dealing with problems that develop promptly and prayerfully; correction is context-sensitive.
- helping all disciples adopt the culture of Christianity.
- providing a broad range of assistance to minority newcomers.
- helping the American Christian church adopt a more global view to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for minority newcomers.

Hybrid

This model is an adaptation or a combination of the other three models. It usually represents a church in transition, moving intentionally away from a homogeneous model, but not fully functioning at the level of synergy.



MARIO H. GUERREIRO, Springfield, Missouri

homogeneous churches. The world is changing, and the needs of these communities are evolving rapidly. It is important to monitor subtle changes in your community. Horton states: "Everywhere else, Hispanic populations are growing; but in New England, the Asian population has mushroomed. We have Vietnamese,

Heterogeneous model

Churches utilizing a heterogeneous model are comprised of a variety of races and ethnic groups with varying levels of involvement in the leadership and ministries of the church. At its most basic level, a church using this model may share facilities with another ethnic group with few opportunities for

How can 21st-century church leaders dealing with rapidly shifting demographic realities empower Seymour's vision of one common family in the Lord?

Malaysians, Indonesians, and Chinese, and we need qualified people to minister to these groups. We need to rethink our philosophy toward home missions. What is it to win the whole world for Christ and lose our own country?"

Russell C. Rosser, a retired pastor from Flushing, New York, describes this paradigm shift as the difference between a port and a fort: "What happens when a church becomes a port rather than a fort? ... The church that remains a fort — no matter how large their mission budget, it begins to shrink as does the congregation. The church that embraces the world around them grows — so does their mission budget. But greater is the movement of God within the ethnic congregation that touches the world because of their extended family."

For several decades now, demographers have been warning that the *browning of America* will influence every aspect of life as we know it. Homogeneous churches must seek ways to respond constructively to these changing paradigms or risk becoming a fort — a citadel effective only for safeguarding a slowly dwindling population while keeping others out.¹²

shared ministry or leadership. Pastor Phil Hilliard of Bethany Assembly of God in Alhambra, California, notes that his congregation is host to five foreign language groups. While three are divisions of his congregation, two are independent entities. All pay a monthly facility use fee that helps defray expenses in pricey Los Angeles County. In some cases, this partnership may be further developed. For instance, at First Assembly of God in San

Antonio, Texas, Pastor R. Wayne Clark shares with enthusiasm about his congregation's growing Korean ministry:

"Our congregation has a history of being traditional, but we are slowly moving away from that. We have about 30 Koreans in our congregation. They have their own pastor, a missionary from David Paul Yonggi

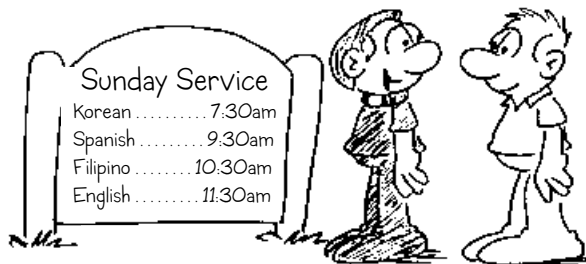
Cho's church in Seoul, Korea, who is a member of our staff. Their Sunday morning services are conducted separately in Korean, but they join with us for Sunday evenings and special events."

In the high rent districts of California, Jeffrey Campbell, pastor of Hacienda Heights Assembly of God, led his church in a dramatic paradigm shift 9 years ago. His church abandoned a renting model in favor of full integration with the Spanish, Filipino, and Korean congregations that rented its facilities.

Raised in Latin America as the son of missionary parents, Campbell credits his heritage with helping him adapt a multiethnic leadership model.

While the church continues to hold separate worship services in Spanish, Filipino, and Korean, outreach, worship teams, missions activities, leadership, and youth activities occur in blended settings. Leadership is shared among a team of pastors that includes Korean, Filipino, and Spanish speaking associate pastors who conduct the foreign-language services. Discipleship occurs predominantly

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"It was my broker's idea; he told me to diversify."

through Sunday School classes and home cell groups.

As is often the case, this paradigm shift has had its share of challenges. Campbell describes the evolution: "I prayed and the Lord gave me a vision for our community. I realized we had to change. I felt we shouldn't charge rent, but work together to increase the Kingdom. Southern California is

so multicultural that it doesn't make sense to have 10 Assemblies of God churches devoted to different ethnic groups. It takes pastoral vision and leadership to bridge the gaps and bring diverse congregations together. Some people feel we should let each culture reach its own, but I challenge churches to consider adopting minority congregations in their midst."

Synergistic model

The third model is the synergistic model. *Synergism* is the "combined or correlated action of different organs or parts of the body, as of muscles working together." Implicit in the definition of synergy is an understanding that the cumulative action of these diverse parts is greater than the sum of their individual

► Profile: 'Just Like Heaven'

Washington, D.C., and its Virginia/Maryland metropolis encompass people from more than 140 nations. Approximately 103 of those countries are represented at Word of Life Assembly of God in Springfield, Virginia.

Pastor Wendel Cover has his sights on the others. "We probably have about 30 to 40 more nations to reach," he says.

The church of 1,600 lives and breathes a multicultural gospel. Communion services are just one avenue of worship used to drive home the reality of the worldwide body of Christ. The congregants, many wearing traditional clothing, walk to the front of the church to receive the emblems. As each emblem is taken, two people pray in different languages. Their prayers are interpreted.

Interpretation is also vital to the regular flow of the service. Interpreters translate Cover's sermons into Spanish, Farsi, French, and Korean. Headphones are available for parishioners' use.

"We eventually had to create a booth for the interpreters," Cover says, "because the interpreters would get fired up with me and everyone could hear them."

When he came to the church 29 years ago, the congregation was predominantly white. But the world has come within the Capitol's shadow, and Word of Life has consistently reached out to new neighbors.

As a result, the church has expanded its facilities (the latest addition will be a state-of-the-art children's ministry center) as well as its international ministries. When accelerated payments eliminated all remaining debt on their buildings 5 years ago, Cover asked his board to redirect their monthly \$25,000 mortgage payment to missions.

"We use that to build a Bible school or a church somewhere in the world each month," he says.

Another \$5,000 a month goes to train church leaders in Africa. Word of Life hosted the first Africa's Hope leadership conference last year.



Word of Life's annual missions giving is third in the nation, with special offerings targeting disaster-related needs around the world. Whether the money goes toward an earthquake in Pakistan or a tsunami in Asia, there are families in the church representing those regions and the congregation takes the need to heart.

"We recently received an offering for flooding in Suriname," Cover says. "Usually we give through Convoy of Hope and send at least one shipping container of relief supplies."

Often, tragedy is on a more personal level. Church members may lose a loved one in their homeland and cannot return for the funeral. In that event, Word of Life invites family members and friends to receive congregational prayer. After the service the church prepares a meal for them.

When Cover organizes missions offerings on the first and third Sunday each month, he invites a national choir to sing.

"We have choirs from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, the Philippines, India, and our Spanish-speaking countries," he says.

With each choir, each song, the joy is multiplied.

Cover takes that joy to heart. "I'm the most privileged pastor in the world," he says. "My guest speakers tell me, 'This is just like heaven.'"



SCOTT HARRUP is associate editor, *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*

efforts. A synergistic church is one in which all races are fully involved in every aspect of the church's ministry and leadership. A synergistic church has no color line. The church's mission statement reflects this core ideal and intentionality is evident in all aspects of its administration, including the way it markets itself. Synergistic churches are in touch with their communities. They strive to be responsive to change. Maintaining the status quo is less important than being relevant to their culture. The ethnic diversity of the board and pastoral staff are representative of the various people groups the church serves. This diversity is also reflected from the podium and in the worship style. Finally, the synergistic church is a vital, growing, Spirit-filled community in which the gospel is being preached and the lost are brought to Christ.

It is my belief that the synergistic model is God's ideal for His body, and it is most congruent with the spiritual unity characterized by early New Testament churches such as Jerusalem and Antioch.

As I travel the country, I have come to realize that synergistic churches are unique, and many churches within our Movement are making positive strides in this direction.

New Life Assembly of God in Pembroke Pines, Florida, is another example of a synergistic church. Founded by Pastor Maria Khaleel 14 years ago, NLA is comprised of approximately 30 nationality groups resulting in a Body that is 35 percent Caribbean, 35 percent Hispanic, 15 percent American (native to the United States both black and white), and 15 percent other. NLA is a dynamic, Spirit-filled congregation, of which 80 percent have come to Christ through the ministry of the church.

According to Pastor Khaleel, "All races and ethnicities within our congregation are integrally involved in every area of ministry, and the overall life of the church. It has just happened naturally, because we love and treat everyone the same. We are no respecter of persons." The church Web site supports this with member photographs depicting a broad range of diversity.

Located in Southeast Florida in a residential suburb between Miami and Ft. Lauderdale, the city of Pembroke Pines grew 110 percent between 1990 and 2000 to 137,000 residents, making it one of the fastest growing, emerging immigrant gateways.¹³

Khaleel states, "Our area is transient. Many

people enter the United States through south Florida and then move on to other parts of the country, or return to their native countries. It is estimated that churches in south Florida experience approximately a 30 percent annual attrition rate. This means that a church must replace 30 percent of its congregation every year. To be a growing church is a real challenge, but God has given us favor, and seeds of our ministry are now sown through the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States."

Sheffield Family Life Center in Kansas City, Missouri, is another synergistic church. The Kansas City area has a troubled history of racial unrest stemming back to the Civil War era when pro-slavery Missourians battled with Kansans seeking to enter the Union as a nonslave state. SFLC has a long history of working to heal these rifts.

According to the church's history, Pastor Frank Brewer led his all-white congregation to hold joint meetings with an all-black congregation as far back as the 1930s. Over the years, as the church's name, leadership, and location changed, its effectiveness as a multiethnic church wavered. When George Westlake, Jr., assumed leadership of SFLC in 1973, it had reverted to an all-white congregation. Pastor Westlake was determined to change this, and he purposefully reached out to the African-American community.

Now copastored by Westlake and his son, George Westlake III, SFLC is living out its historic commitment to racial unity from its campus in the city's inner core. A visit to the church's Web site reveals consistent proclamation of its core values:

"We rejoice in the opportunity we have been given by our Heavenly Father to add to His family people from every race, background, and culture."

Like many midwestern cities, Kansas



City is predominantly white with blacks representing 31 percent of the population and Hispanic/Latinos at 7 percent. While this represents a slight increase in the Hispanic/Latino population, the rate of change is significantly lower than the dramatic increases in other parts of the country.¹⁴

Clearly, the Westlakes operate in a different context than churches in gateway cities like Pembroke Pines, but their intentionality is no less apparent. On a recent visit to the church, I observed a beautiful unity in action. Worship was spontaneous and Spirit-inspired, with a blend of musical styles led by a multiethnic team. The warmth was palpable. Asians embraced Hispanics. Blacks knelt with whites for prayer. As a mixed-race couple, both my wife and I felt welcome and were quickly embraced by the community.

Westlake III states that the staff and board work hard to create an atmosphere of unity: "We don't do things to separate and stress racial differences. Rather, we reach and teach people in the same manner. We don't try to bring unity by segmenting a population for special treatment; we emphasize unity across the board. Widening the chasm would be a great detriment in our church. You don't attain unity by promoting separation."

The challenges facing synergistic churches are manifold, but the blessings are worth the effort. Many who have walked this journey have paid a great price. Ask Wally Horton. He lost more than half of his original congregation when he led his church toward a multiethnic model. Wally is not alone. Steve Allen lost about 300 Anglo-Americans and half a million dollars in tithes over a 6-month period when his church changed its ministry paradigm.

Why then am I suggesting that pastors embrace this journey?

Resource List

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Census data clearly shows that minority populations are increasing dramatically across the nation. In fact, the impact of these trends is clear within our own Movement.

If homogeneous churches represent God's ideal, why are their growth rates so dramatically outpaced by multiethnic churches?

In 1995, the AG had 271 churches where no single ethnic group represented a majority. Ten years later that number has risen to 420. While these numbers represent only a small fraction of our churches, their growth is impressive. In just a decade, the number of multiethnic congregations increased by 55 percent. This phenomenon is even more compelling when compared with statistics pertaining to Anglo (white) churches. During the same decade, the number of Anglo churches dropped from 9,032 to 8,564, a decrease of 5 percent. While Hispanic churches did increase in number by 27.6 percent, their rate of increase was half that of their multiethnic peers. While multiethnic churches experienced a 44 percent increase in average attendance over the same 10 years, attendance at Anglo (white) churches grew by just 8 percent and Hispanic churches by 18 percent.

If homogeneous churches represent God's ideal, why are their growth rates so dramatically outpaced by

multiethnic churches? The answer is simple: Synergistic churches reflect God's heart for humankind. He is the Creator of a marvelously diverse humanity. Within the church, there should be no division. The emphasis on inclusion and discipling is a recurring theme throughout the New Testament. Galatians 3:26 is a strong reminder: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ" and, consequently, "discrimination is incompatible with what the gospel of Christ teaches."¹⁵

The pastors I spoke with are courageous leaders guiding their flocks on an exciting journey. The landscape in which they minister differs as does their pace, but all have their eyes firmly fixed on the finish line. Universally, they describe a deepening of their spiritual walks and revitalization within different aspects of their ministries. Clark shares how his Korean members have ignited a passion for prayer within the rest of the Body. Khaleel states that 4,000 people have been saved over 14 years of ministry.

Campbell says his only regret is that he did not move to integrate his church sooner, because "culture should never supersede the teachings of the Bible."

Horton perhaps best describes their vision: "My understanding is broader. My vision has become without walls, without compromise. Many of these people come out of such persecution, and they have such a hunger for God. When you worship with them, come expecting. I see healing when I pray for the sick now. My faith has been challenged. The power didn't stop at the Upper Room. We need to press in. It has changed my ministry."

One hundred years ago, William Seymour dreamed of a day when all races would come together as

a common family in the Lord. All across America, AG pastors are accepting the challenge to meet the needs of minority newcomers. Their commitment to multiethnic ministry is intentional and their passion is contagious. God is blessing their endeavors with an outpouring of His Holy Spirit. On a daily basis they are making Seymour's dream a reality within our Movement. It is a timely accomplishment. 🌟



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Shaking Off the



Shackles:

God's Multiethnic Vision From the Book of Romans

By Isaac Canales

Pastors need to embrace God's purpose for civilization and history. His purpose is expressed with perceptive brilliance in Paul's letter to the Romans — to call a people for His name and gather all nations for worship in His house. God's multiethnic vision is mutually inclusive for the New Israel. Since God's vision for the nations was multicultural worship, Israel's Old Testament mandate was clearly *missional* and *global*.

The Jewish people rejected God's call to evangelization, but the prophets corrected the Jewish rejection of the nations. Jesus made it clear that the Kingdom was global, not just local. In Romans, Paul makes it clear again, "Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ ... now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, *namely* (my translation) so that all the Nations might believe and obey him" (Romans 16:25,26).

The gospel is intended to gather out of the world a people for God that resemble an exotic, mixed bouquet. The future of the church — the greatest organism on earth — is heterogeneous by cosmic will, prophetic vision, and supernatural intent. We have a biblical and pastoral mandate to move with God toward a more heterogeneous vision of the church in our time using Romans as our guide.

Multicultural theology in Romans unfolds from Paul's deep understanding of God's purpose for the nations in the Old Testament. Paul saw God's plan for the nations as the good news promised in the prophets (Romans 1:2). His gift as apostle to the nations is rooted in God's biblical mandate to Israel that salvation was for "everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Romans 1:16, NKJV).

God's Intention

From the beginning of Scripture, God's intention was to reveal His purposes for the world through His chosen people Israel (Romans 1:20; 3:2). He first chose Abraham as the father of the Jews. God called Abraham out of ancient Babylon. Abraham obeyed God by faith and was circumcised (Romans 4:11).

God promised to make Abraham the father of many nations, not just of the Jews (Genesis 12:3; 17:5; Romans 4:18). God's relationship with Abraham and

Israel revealed His purposes and also revealed Israel's prideful rejection of His purposes (Romans 10:3).

God chose Abraham and brought him out from among other multicultural groups who worshiped pagan gods. He called Israel to worship Him alone and taught them to teach others to do the same (Romans 2:17–21). Through His covenant with Israel, Yahweh's original intention was to reveal His nature to all nations. Through the people of Yahweh, the Almighty wanted to reveal His character to all nations. God wanted to use Israel as the example to all nations — neighbors should love one another and take care of each other. This showed that from creation God is a multicultural God. He gave His people a multicultural mission: Bring others into our covenant.

The Prophet's Vision Is Blended

In Romans, Paul continually refers to the prophets, especially Isaiah. Isaiah understood God's heart for diversity. In the prophets, the Lord spoke a multicultural word: "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:6). "And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord ... these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:6,7).

The vision of reaching the nations, expressed by Isaiah and the other prophets is understood by Paul to be from God's heart. This was Israel's mission and is now the church's mission. It is prophetic. It is biblical. It is imperative. God was not merely

suggesting this multinational vision to Israel. They *were to* be the light of the world. Israel was given a missionary task.

Paul reminds us of Israel's task in Romans 9–11. This vision is also revealed clearly in Romans 15:7. It begins with a theology of welcome that is consistent with the Old Testament and is the basis for multiracial worship and fellowship. What is revealed in the purposes of God for Old Testament Israel is

To the degree that the strong of Romans 15:1 in our churches refuse to bear the burden of the weak of other cultures is the degree in our churches that we pastors please ourselves and not Christ.

continued in the New Testament. For example, Yahweh insisted that the Israelites accept aliens: "For the Lord your God is God of gods ... who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends ... the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt" (Deuteronomy 10:17–19). Jesus understood the nations as His other sheep (John 10:16); Paul also understood this principle of diversity (Romans 15), as did John (Revelation 7:9,10).

Aliens Are Part of Covenant

The Israelites were to bring these aliens into their covenant and win them over to the love of God through hospitality and through God's revelation of His goodness and trustworthiness. If they repented of their pagan ways and embraced Hebrew culture and faith, proselytes were welcomed and accepted into the people of God. Jesus

and Paul reminded the Jews of their neglect and rejection of their mission. Every prophet before Jesus and Paul reminded the Israelites of their prideful rejection of this multicultural mandate from God.

God's Multiethnic Vision

Though God made it clear that their privileged position was granted, not earned, the Jews felt smug and comfortable in their election. They forgot that they were not elected

because they were special; they were special because they were elected. They disregarded the overarching commandments for love and justice, and they dwelt safely and securely in their comfort zone (Micah 6:8; Leviticus 19:18). They forgot Moses was married to an African woman, Abraham was from modern-day Iraq, and Ruth was a pagan Moabitess. The genealogy of Messiah was multiracial. There was no pure Jewish bloodline in history. They forgot their own heritage was diverse, and ironically, ruled others out of the blessings of the God of Israel. They became arrogant in their ability to keep God's law. They completely forgot the reason Yahweh had set them apart; they lost their multicultural mandate to be a light to the nations. As a result, their mission self-imploded, ending in a crucible of ethnocentric pride. The Israelites replaced God's multicultural vision by justifying the self-elevation of their history, traditions, and strict religious practices. They were all unity, but no

mission. The pool stagnated where the waters of mission were no longer running.

Multiethnicity Is Prophetic Vision

In contrast to His fellow Israelites' arrogance, Jesus — God fully revealed as man — powerfully and radically lived out the Old Testament's theology of welcome. He was controversial. He shocked the establishment, but He was ruthlessly true to it. Jesus embraced lepers, Greeks, and dogs (a Jewish term for Gentiles). He welcomed every repentant sinner into His kingdom of healing and intimacy with God through His embrace of a multiethnic, sinful world. He claimed to do only what He saw His Father doing (John 8:28). His welcoming of Gentiles and sinners fulfilled the Law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17–20), and challenged the Pharisees to major in the lofty themes of Scripture and not major on minors. In Romans, Paul reminds us of Jesus' multicultural attitude: "be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus" (Romans 15:5, NKJV).

Jesus fully revealed this Kingdom culture to Paul. Paul saw Jesus as the measure of what is true and good — the non-negotiables of Christian faith. His kingdom is the standard of all cultural values, beliefs, and characteristics. Paul said, "For the kingdom of God is ... righteousness and peace and joy" (Romans 14:17,

knowing the gospel to be offensive to all cultures on some points, we can enjoy our Creator's handiwork in cultures other than our own.

Paul tried to teach the weak (Romans 14:1) and strong Christians of Rome this truth: We can learn from other people's unique encounters with the Lord of all cultures. But bringing together different cultures into one body is no easy thing, as we see in the Roman church (Romans 14:1 through 15:13). Paul faced a huge culture clash.

Multiethnicity in Romans

The Jewish weak and the Gentile strong of Romans are examples of multiethnic challenges in the church (Romans 14:1; 15:1). Paul was a witness to this reality. The Book of Romans is Paul's answer to the questions that emerge from God's theology of welcome in Christ, as practiced at Rome among Jews and Gentiles. What happens when Jews and Gentiles are saved, join together in common worship and fellowship? Is it possible for whites, blacks, browns, or Asians to gather in worship? Should they? What color does normative worship look like? Is it one culture only? What about a church in the city as opposed to one in rural America or rural India? Can it be multicultural?

These are heavy questions along multiethnic lines. Paul's answers to the multiethnic issues of his day are appropriate for pastors today. In

satisfying answers anointed with the biblical, prophetic, and theological foundation laid down by God in the Old Testament and by our Lord Jesus in the New Testament. In Romans, Paul revealed his theology of welcome in Christ from 1:5–15:13. In Romans 1:5 the apostle reminds us of the multiethnic mandate: The grace of God has been received to bring about the "obedience to the faith among all nations for his name" (NJKV). He ended the letter with the same mandate (Romans 16:26).

The word for nations is *ethneis*, where we get the word *ethnic* (non-Jewish). Romans 1:16 reminds us that the good news of God's covenant love is "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Before that, as a Jewish Christian, Paul defined himself humbly and consciously as a missionary to the barbarians and Greeks (Romans 1:14). Clearly, he was the multicultural apostle. If we have multicultural concerns today, we can go to Romans for answers.

God's Multiethnic Revelation in the Church

As Paul pressed his missionary concern on the nations of the world, he revealed the great prophetic truth that Jews and Greeks all come short of God's glory and all are justified freely by faith in Christ (Romans 3:22,23). He openly presented Abraham, the father of all nations, as the example of obedient faith. He called Israel to remember its forsaken mission to the nations, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15, NKJV).

In a more provocative prophetic passage, Paul reminded rebellious Israel of God's multiethnic purpose in spite of her parochial rejection: "I

**So a question to every pastor of any color is:
*Shall I build a church that isolates us from others,
or should I embrace Paul's theology of welcome?***

NKJV). By its very nature, the kingdom of God affirms, encompasses, and transforms every culture it embraces. Therefore, acknowledging that no one culture embodies the whole truth, and

addressing cultural conflicts between Jews and Gentiles in the Roman church, Paul established multicultural guidelines for the church throughout the ages. These guidelines are

▶ Creating an Interculturally Friendly Environment

Every intentionally intercultural church works hard to ensure people of its target group or other internationals feel welcome. This goes well beyond a perfunctory handshake by greeters on Sunday morning. It includes both internal changes in the way the church staff and congregation think, as well as external evidences of cultural appreciation. Perhaps the only way to overcome barriers is to gain experience with the culture. This takes determination and persistence. A church's leadership fosters its corporate culture. If the pastor and other leaders are sensitive to people of other cultures, congregants will soon pick up on this *ethos* as well.

Milton Bennet has proposed a six-stage model that helps to understand how people transition through stages from hostility or indifference to other cultures (ethnocentricity), to understanding and appreciating other cultures (ethnorelativity). Adapting Bennet's model, we might classify churches (their leadership, congregation, and programs) as follows:

Stage 1 — Deny: The congregation as a whole has almost no experience with other cultures. Their culture is the only real one. Forms and customs intentionally maintain psychological and/or physical isolation from other cultures. Members are disinterested in cultural difference but will act aggressively to eliminate a difference, if it impinges on their cultural preference.

Stage 2 — Defend: Congregants' experience with other cultures creates acknowledgment of their existence, but one's own culture is considered the only good one. An us/them mentality prevails where *our ways* are superior and *their ways* are inferior. Church leaders and congregations are highly critical of other cultures, particularly if they find themselves in the role of hosts.

Stage 3 — Diminish: The congregation has experienced enough cultural differences to explain them away. Cultural differences are minimized, trivialized, or romanticized. Elements of one's own cultural worldview are experienced as universal, obscuring deep-seated cultural differences. Leadership's goal is to correct cultural behavior to match their expectations.

Stage 4 — Accept: The church and its leadership have finally accumulated enough experience to recognize that one's own background is only one of many equally complex and perhaps valid cultural outlooks. This does not mean total agreement with or approval of different cultural behaviors, but the congregation expresses respect

and perhaps curiosity toward other cultures and includes them through special events and recognition.

Stage 5 — Adapt: The church and its leadership have come to the point where their experience with another culture allows them to associate with that culture using behavior appropriate to that culture. They are able to look at the world, at least partially, through the eyes of another culture and will intentionally change their own behavior to communicate more effectively in that culture. The church expresses its cultural diversity in appropriate ways and leadership and resources are shared.

Step 6 — Integrate: People from different cultures feel comfortable in each other's culture. This is not *assimilation*, which is what most often happens to nondominant minority groups entering dominant culture churches. People who are forced to assimilate will be dealing with issues related to their own cultural marginality and may feel they are not wholly accepted in another culture. This is particularly true of second-generation immigrants. Although many immigrants exhibit great competence in moving between cultures, this is an unrealistic expectation for most dominant culture congregants. If achieved, the leadership and membership of this kind of church would have the ability to move readily between their own culture and other cultures present in the congregation. This kind of mobility implies a great degree of cultural competence including bilingualism.

Having persons with this highest degree of intercultural competence on the church's leadership team is desirable. Such people lead many of the most effective intercultural churches. In most cases, stage 5 (Adaptation) will be the highest achievable goal for congregations. In time, however, it is reasonable to expect that the leadership of the church will include highly competent, intercultural leaders that can move readily between at least two cultures.

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was found by those who did not seek me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.' But to Israel God said: 'All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people' " (Romans 10:20,21, NKJV). God reminded Israel (as He does every pastor) that they had lost their sense of mission to the world because of their desire to remain in their cultural comfort zone. This should be a lesson for us today. Our mandate is to mix the colors — from the pews, to the platform, to the board — as much as demographically possible and let the Holy Spirit put the brush to the canvas.

Focus on Being Biblical

As we look around our country, we remember God's intention is that all cultures, tongues, and types worship in His house as His family. We tell our friends that the kingdom of God is a big party with a piñata where all are welcome. But what kind of fiesta is it, really? For the documented only? A party with Asians in one room; African-Americans in another; Pentecostals all crammed into the afterglow room; whites in the living room; and Mexicans in the back? Some historical demonstrations have shown that our non-Christian friends have seen through the hypocrisy of our party long ago because not everyone is welcome. Our evangelical slip is showing. We are worried about being cute when we should be focused on being biblical.

One Color, One Culture — Too Easy

The root of American evangelical hypocrisy is an ongoing smugness, a historical inability to understand God's unfailing mercies for everyone, and His unfailing love for the unlovely among us. To the degree our sense of worth and value is maintained

through religion and culture — from our color, to our work ethic, to the neighborhood we live in — is the degree we remain independent of God and self-sufficiently smug. Christ cannot help us. To the degree that the strong of Romans 15:1 in our churches refuse to bear the burden of the weak of other cultures is the degree in our churches that we pastors please ourselves and not Christ. "For even Christ did not please himself," Paul tells us (Romans 15:3, NKJV). So a question to every pastor of any color is: *Shall I build a church that isolates us from others, or should I embrace Paul's theology of welcome?* (Romans 15:7). It is easy to raise a church with one color and one language. Anyone can raise a megachurch that is one color and one culture. However, try blending by intention. Try to build a multiethnic church if place, time, and demographics permit. This is a challenge. But this is what Christ died and rose for. It is worth sacrificing comfort for the glorious blending of a thousand tongues.

God's Way May Not Be the Easy Way

Paul says in Romans 15:7, thinking of the Jewish/Gentile conflict in Rome and in many of his churches, "Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (NKJV). This word of hope and glory was given in the light of cultural conflict in the church. The easy way would have been to form a church for Jews and a church for Gentiles. But God's way may not be the easy way. Biblical exegesis explains that the best reading is always the hard one. The tough way brings greater glory to God. God's glory is a mixed worship team in an all-white church. God's glory is a white pastor in an African-American church. God's glory is a rural, white church with an African-American pastor.

The weak of Romans 14:1 were the Jewish Christians. The strong of Romans 15:1 were the proud Gentiles who despised Jewish dietary regulations. The glory of God is that they were in the same church working it out. The Jewish brethren did not eat ham, bacon, or pork. The Gentile Christians, who supposedly lived by faith, could enjoy these foods with a clear conscience. Paul reminded

Try to build a multiethnic church if place, time, and demographics permit. This is a challenge. But this is what Christ died and rose for.

both cultures that Christ died for our differences. His work was to unify, not to divide (Romans 14:19). Is the food really worth it?

The important thing today is to resist the steady suction of single-color religion. Drop the fear of what's-not-like-me and adopt the attitude of Christ who was a servant (Romans 15:8) sustained by love for the weak.

Acceptance Is Not Toleration

Paul teaches us in Romans to struggle through the issues of multiculturalism and not give in to the solutions of our world. To deal with the issues of diversity in the Fellowship by embracing and accepting one another in Christ is to say no to the world's answers. The world's answers are: prejudice, racism, segregation, violence, toleration, and comfort-zone fellowship. Paul did not say tolerate one another. Toleration is a

► Profile: Southern Comfort

Originally from Mississippi and with 49 years invested in the ministry, Pastor J.B. Ellis can remember the days of Jim Crow and the struggles of the Civil Rights movement. He is glad to see the changes that have taken place in the culture at large. He believes the church should be ahead of the culture when it comes to accepting all people.

Ellis brought that philosophy to Evangel Assembly of God in Durham, North Carolina, when he accepted that pastorate in 1976. His commitment to fully sharing Christ's love with one and all would prove to be the key to the church's renewal and growth after years of decline.

"This was a very troubled church when I came here," Ellis says. "The board had run the three previous pastors off. The congregation had dropped to about 30 people. After the Lord had worked us through the problems, it began to move forward."

God worked Evangel Assembly through its problems by bringing a spectrum of nations to the previously all-white church.

"When we began to have people of different groups attend our church," Ellis admits, "we lost some people at first. I told the congregation one Sunday, 'We have to make people comfortable that come to church. We can't run people off. I'm from farther South than you are. It doesn't bother me, and maybe it shouldn't bother you.'"

About 10 years ago, the influx picked up, and the church began to experience steady growth. Today, besides about 50 white parishioners, there is a transitional group of 150-175 Hispanics. Faces change regularly because many are migrant workers. African-Americans, Filipinos, and West Indians round out the congregation. In all, 200-300 people make Evangel Assembly their church home.

"I can't begin to count the people who have accepted Christ over the past 10 years," Ellis says. "They may not stay



long, but we know we have touched their lives."

Saturdays are devoted to community evangelism during the day and home groups in the evening. Sunday morning's service is in English, Sunday afternoon's service is in Spanish, and the evening service is in English.

"We have a union service the first Sunday of the month," Ellis says. "I preach through an interpreter. We also have union services on Mother's Day, Father's Day, and any special holidays."

Evangel Assembly is planning to expand its facilities. Ellis believes new construction could easily grow the congregation to 400.

He describes his church as "a Revelation 7 church, from out of all nations and kindreds and tongues."

He admits a multiethnic emphasis is less than popular in some corners of the South.

"There is no doubt in our part of the country it takes a special people to do what we're doing," he says. "And the Lord has chosen us to be that people. This has been the most rewarding aspect of my 49 years of ministry."



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polite racism, a quiet sin. Paul says "receive" one another, not tolerate one another (Romans 15:7, NKJV). The word *proslambano* means accept and welcome, not tolerate or put up with.

The word for "receive" (Romans 15:7, NKJV) is like a big hug. *Proslambano* means embrace. In Romans, Paul's answer to segregation is a multiethnic embrace. God does not prefer one color when all colors could

be in your board, staff, family, and team. The Kingdom costs of ignoring the biblical mandate to multiethnic worship are too high. The church, as Paul reminded us, must look to the Scriptures for God's future, shaking off the shackles of our ethnic comfort zones, individualism, and polite toleration. The way is marked out for us in Romans 14:1 through 15:1-13. Therefore, "receive one another, just as

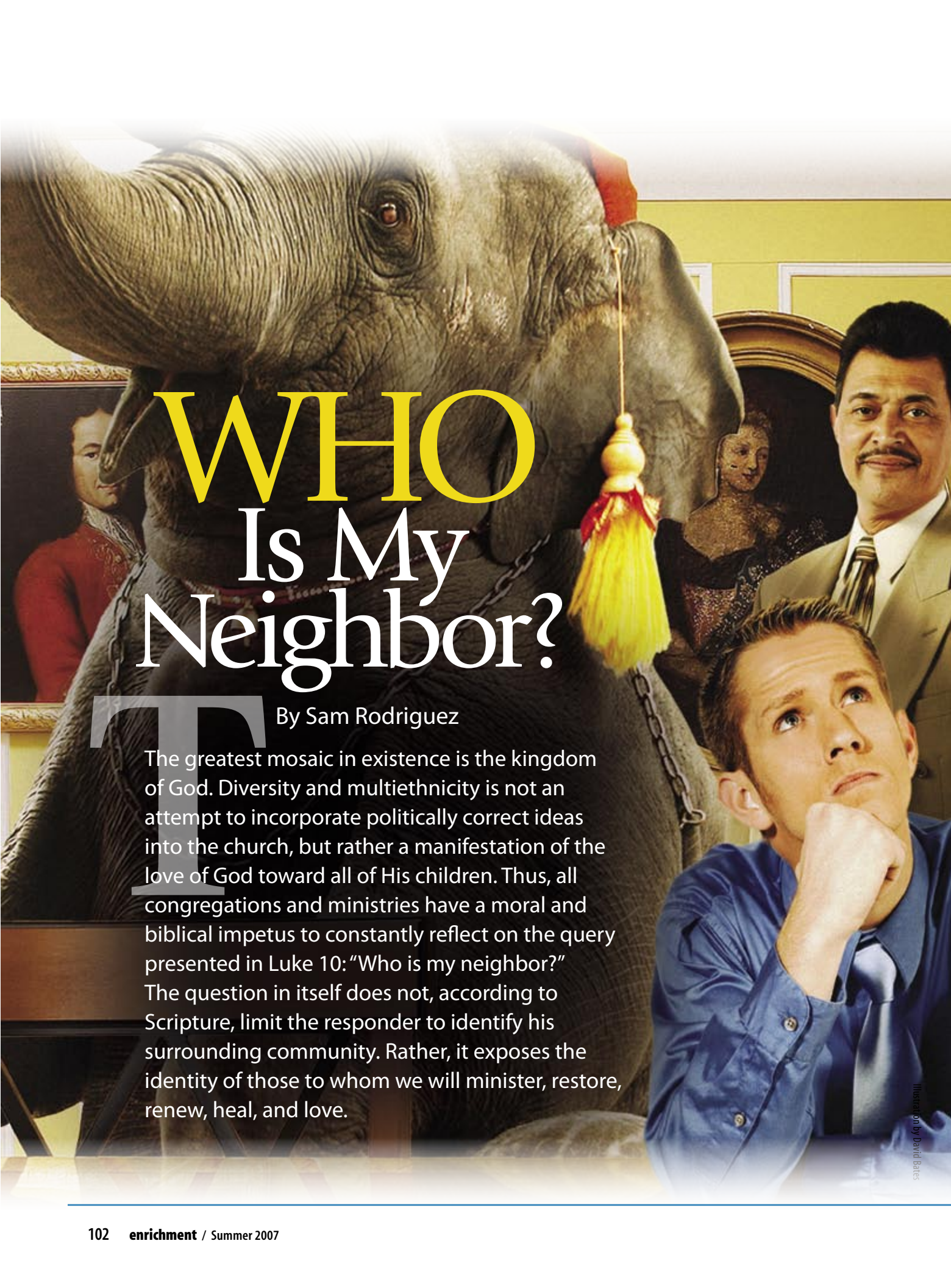
Christ also welcomed us, to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7, NKJV).



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NOTE

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WHO Is My Neighbor?

By Sam Rodriguez

The greatest mosaic in existence is the kingdom of God. Diversity and multiethnicity is not an attempt to incorporate politically correct ideas into the church, but rather a manifestation of the love of God toward all of His children. Thus, all congregations and ministries have a moral and biblical impetus to constantly reflect on the query presented in Luke 10: "Who is my neighbor?" The question in itself does not, according to Scripture, limit the responder to identify his surrounding community. Rather, it exposes the identity of those to whom we will minister, restore, renew, heal, and love.

Illustration by David Bates

Who is my neighbor? This query introduced in the Parable of the Good Samaritan exemplifies the debate in the heart of the ethnic church and the primary challenge to the evangelical body at large. As we continue to thread the Hispanic-American Pentecostal narrative, we find ourselves negotiating a historical juxtaposition between preserving our cultures and building His kingdom. After 100 years of exponential growth in the Latino church, Hispanic pastors find themselves struggling to define a new missiological baseline. Here is the primary question in the Latino church: Do we exist to preserve an ethnocentric ideology, or do we focus on intentionally building the kingdom of God?

The Latino Elephant in the Room

The Latino church is strategically and prophetically situated to provide leadership to the collective evangelical church in America by both incorporating the tenets of the Good Samaritan Parable and nullifying the MySpace.com version of Christianity. Yet, the elephant in the room is the amount of consternation and angst that exists in the Latino church, particularly in pastors and leaders who see the exodus of second- and third-generation Hispanic-American Christians — especially leaders who leave Hispanic churches and go to non-Latino congregations — as wrong and egregious.

The concern of many Latino Christian leaders was recently expressed by a Pentecostal leader addressing hundreds of Latino Pentecostal pastors: “We must take whatever steps necessary to stop the exodus of our young leaders to Anglo churches. It is wrong, and we must address this issue.” Are some in the Latino church harboring a

segregationist spirit that focuses more on preserving the culture than building His kingdom?

Pastor Steve Perea believes so. An Assemblies of God Hispanic pastor from Manteca, California, and one of America’s premier church planters, Perea plants churches throughout different parts of the country. His own congregation of approximately 2,500 worshipers reflects the mosaic of diversity in which he wholeheartedly believes. “I have been ostracized and looked down upon because I ventured to plant churches beyond the Hispanic community,” declares Perea. “I have been called a traitor to our people only because I wanted to see churches planted that gathered all races, backgrounds, and tongues in one place to know God and make Him known. The only reason I facilitate a Spanish service is because of the language barrier.” Perea expresses his concern about this ethnocentric mindset by emphasizing that segregating congregations for any thing other than language is against the very heart of the gospel.

Key Assemblies of God leaders see forcing second- or third-generation Hispanic Christians to stay within the confines of a Spanish-speaking-only church as a detriment to the incorporation of a Kingdom mindset. “We are doing a great disservice to second- and third-generation Latino young people by forcing them to stay within the confines of a first-generation Latino church,” declares Sergio Navarrete, superintendent of the Southern Pacific Latin American District. “We must present a global

perspective of the gospel rather than an *ethno*-exclusive version. This is why we are encouraging our pastors to begin English services and cater not only to Latinos who are learning English but to all in the community who speak English. In our district we have added an English executive presbyter to minister to the needs of our second- and third-generation pastors and ministers,” adds Navarrete.

MySpace.Com Christianity

Some see the cultural protectionism issue as a deterrent to assimilation into the corporate culture. “The Latino, African-American, Anglo, and other racial segments of the church must go beyond the MySpace.com mindset,” stated Assemblies of God Pastor Nick Garza of Sacramento, California. He sees the functional structure of the MySpace Web site as the antithesis to successful biblical outreach. “MySpace.com is a worldwide Internet phenomenon because it enables the subscriber to determine who has access to his profile, pictures, stories, and information. In other words, unless you have been given access, you cannot come in. Only my friends who share my interests are granted access. All granted, of course, if you initially become a friend of Tom, one of the cofounders of this virtual social networking site. Accordingly, the church has operated under a MySpace.com model. As long as Christ is our default Friend, we are somehow allowed to build our own space with limited access to include only those whom we know or permit,” explains Garza.

“Although I believe a need exists for ethnic and racial churches to

We must never see the preservation of the ethnicity, language, or culture as the primary purpose of the local congregation.

serve the various constituencies in our communities, we must never see the preservation of the race, ethnicity, language, or culture as the primary purpose of the local congregation. We must be readily accessible to all our neighbors.

"I recently heard a Hispanic denominational leader warn pastors and leaders to be careful in starting English-speaking services because it may result in the loss of our heritage and culture. This sort of statement exemplifies the limited thinking that hinders cross-threading of the collective narrative and fosters an atmosphere of segregation and competitiveness," Garza adds.

Historical Perspective

To understand the reasoning behind the aforementioned concern, we must first be privy to the historical narrative. The current immigration debate succeeded in removing the grave clothes from one of America's best-kept secrets — the Hispanic evangelical church. According to Hispanic evangelical scholar Gaston Espinosa, 37 percent of the U.S. Latino population (14.2 million) identifies themselves as "born again" or evangelical. This figure includes Catholic charismatics who constitute 22 percent of U.S. Latino Catholics. The Latino church is the fastest-growing segment of churches in the United States. If current migratory and birthrate trends stay constant, by the end of this century the majority of born-again Christians in America will be of Hispanic descent.

Emerging out of the plethora of streams currently inundating the Kingdom is the transformational narrative of a church that just recently experienced its Protestant Reformation. The Hispanic missional movement is defined in the heel of the first Protestant reformation in the

Hispanic Church. For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church prevented any significant penetration by the Protestant Reformation initiated by Martin Luther in the 1500s. Thus, the first serious Protestant impact in Latino America came via the evangelical wing of the church, particularly the Pentecostal movement. As a result, many Latino leaders see the churches not only as spiritual centers of renewal but also as cultural centers providing stability and continuity of traditions, particularly for the immigrant community.

Concern for Losing Leaders

Consequently, some Latino Christian leaders might argue that we need to prevent the exodus of next-generational leaders to help us address the negatives in our community. Hispanic congregations must focus on the Hispanic community first before we begin to impact outside our walls, according to Pastor David Sandoval of Dallas, Texas. "Hispanic evangelicals 1.0 or the first century of Latino evangelicalism was focused on personal piety and experiential Christianity. Hispanic evangelicals 2.0 [second century of Latino evangelicalism] will continue to do such; however, they will expand their reach to include corporate piety and holiness alongside relational Christianity. For example, not only will we be preoccupied with personal holiness, but we will also address issues in our community that we neglected," states Sandoval. In addition, "We focused for too long on the length of a dress, jewelry, hairstyles, and physical appearance, while our teens were getting pregnant, dropping out of school, and becoming totally disconnected to the church. We have, for the most part, emerged out of legalism. Yet, we are beginning to tackle the true bondage in our

community, such as sexual immorality, poverty, domestic violence, drug abuse, witchcraft, strife, and lukewarmness."

Why Anglo and Non-Hispanic Churches Need Hispanic Leaders

Many see the Latino exodus to non-Hispanic churches as a testament to the growth of the Latino church and a viable opportunity to influence beyond the Latino community. Hispanic evangelicals 1.0 focused on Latinos and Latin America. Hispanic evangelicals 2.0 for the first time is looking beyond the culture and addressing the spiritual and social needs of other cultures around the world. "Globalization has hit the Hispanic evangelical church. More than 99 percent of our outreach and 99 percent of our giving in the 20th century went to other Latinos. In 2001, for the first time, more than 50 percent of all missions giving from Hispanic churches went to Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East," states David Espinoza, former World Missions board member of the Assemblies of God and current trustee of Global University. Espinoza also adds that Hispanics are deliberately focusing on India, Africa, and the Middle East because in the current political environment of these nations, Latinos are embraced with much less trepidation than North American Anglos.

"Latino missionaries are impacting nations where Anglo Americans cannot reach due to media and historical stereotypes. When they see us coming, there is no sense of imperialism, colonialism, or a hidden agenda. What they see is a brother who was once bound but now is free. Although the stereotypes regarding Anglo Americans are incorrect, we believe the Latino church can reconcile perception with reality and bring

► Profile: No labels here, please

If you walk in any direction from Belmont Assembly of God in Chicago, Illinois, you will likely encounter people of different nationalities on each block. But regardless of background, chances are anyone you ask has been contacted by the church.

"We formed four evangelism teams and named them after the Gospels," says Pastor Carlos Paniagua. "We call our church 'Jerusalem' and send teams out in each direction according to the biblical model."

Last year "Matthew," "Mark," "Luke" and "John" teams went house-to-house, praying over every residence. They left cards at the homes to let the people know they had prayed for them. Paniagua plans to repeat the project this year.

Paniagua's nearly 3 years at Belmont are the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the church's history. The congregation of 700 is about to celebrate a century of outreach in Chicago, and their passion is to reach every nation in the area. This ministry focus creates a solid partnership with their pastor.

"All I have known is multicultural urban ministry," Paniagua says.

He planted Christ Tabernacle in New York City under the direction of Jim Cymbala and Brooklyn Tabernacle, then pastored the church for 18 years and saw it grow to a congregation of 2,000.

The multiethnic aspect of Belmont's ministry convinced Paniagua that this was what God had for him next.

"I did not want to come to a church that wasn't multi-ethnic," he says.

Paniagua's passion for inclusion expresses itself in a way that may surprise some pastors. No national flags or other foreign symbols adorn the sanctuary. English is the only language used in services, Paniagua, a Puerto Rican, avoids any use of Spanish.

"I don't throw in Spanish one-liners," he says. "I probably go to the other extreme, downplaying Latino."

His rationale is simple. It would be too easy for Belmont, with about one-third of its congregation Hispanic and led by a Hispanic pastor, to become known in the community as a Hispanic church. That label could discourage the many other nationalities in the area from attending.

In a typical service, the sanctuary is filled with Central and South Americans, Filipinos, Nigerians, Scandinavians, Italians, and people from other nations.

"We once scheduled an International Cuisine Sunday and piled all the dishes on one table and encouraged everyone to try them all," Paniagua says. "I ate way too much that Sunday."

Paniagua has enjoyed total support for his efforts to reach all the communities around his church, but a friend of his was not so blessed.

"He was doing some tremendous things in his ministry and God was saving souls," Paniagua says. "It just so happens that many of the souls God was saving were not part of the fabric that already made up the church. He was told, 'They are not our kind.'"

It is a scene Paniagua cannot even imagine occurring at Belmont.



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about the day when those stereotypes are shattered," states Espinoza.

How will Hispanic Christians assimilating and bringing their ethos to the nonethnic American church benefit the body of Christ? Albert Reyes, prominent Latino evangelical leader and national Hispanic Baptist leader, believes the Latino church personifies the 21st century Good Samaritan. "Samaritans were a mixed breed much like Latinos are mixes

of European, Indian, and Afro-American cultures. Samaritans were rejected because of their makeup. We see our diversity as strength. We can reach out to Anglo, Asian, black, and other ethnicities because racially and culturally our fabric reflects the various threads. Latino evangelicals have a prophetic calling to build bridges between the various communities and facilitate a fruitful ministry of reconciliation.

"Hispanics in America will continue to shape and influence our nation as population demographics change. When we think about the influence of Hispanic evangelicals in the evangelical church, we will see several trends begin to surface over the next 20 to 30 years. We will begin to sense a paradigm shift for what it means to be an evangelical in America through cultural, social, ecclesiastical, and political venues. Hispanics will

►► Moving Forward: Strategizing for Effectiveness

Becoming a truly intercultural church will require change. This change is toward greater understanding and acceptance of people who may think quite differently about realities and function with a very different values system. The following process steps will provide some guidance for developing plans that will allow you to move forward in the development of the intercultural vision. They will lead to effective planning and its implementation.

Steps To Planning

1. Envisioning: Who should be involved and what will the results look like? The envisioning process usually produces a vision statement — a picture of the future in a defined time period.

2. Defining your mission: What will we do to make our mission a reality? This step usually produces a mission statement that squares with who you are as a congregation and the opportunities God is giving you to reach your vision.

3. Reverse planning: How will we do it? In what order? How will we know we are on track? This step produces a timeline that works from the farthest point out in your vision statement back to the present.

4. Assess resources: Who and what are available to implement the vision? This step eventually leads to determining who will be responsible for and involved in different aspects of the plan as well as creating a budget for it.

5. Implement the plan: Who is committed? Who is responsible? The best plans will not work unless they are implemented. With careful, strategic planning that involves those who will bear the responsibility, the plan will gain momentum.

6. Review and adjust: Is the plan working? What must be done to improve it? This step is ongoing. Regularly schedule times to review and evaluate the effectiveness of your plans.



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bring their cultural values to bear on evangelical Christianity with an influence of a collective worldview. That is, Latino/Hispanic evangelical Christians will be more interested in the welfare of the community at large than in their own personal welfare.

"The locus of control for Hispanic life is in the community. How well the community is doing matters greatly to Latinos/Latinas. Hispanics can help evangelical congregations gravitate toward a balanced

application of the gospel to include issues of social justice and equality for everyone in the community. Social issues will take center stage in congregations because the Scripture bears witness to Jesus' focus on the poor, the prisoner, the blind, and the oppressed. Those in need are our *primos y primas, tios y tias, hermanos y hermanas* as well as our neighbors."

In addition, Reyes adds that Hispanic evangelical Christianity will change

the texture of *all* congregations as they begin to reflect the Hispanic culture and community. "Worship, discipleship, missions, evangelism, and church planting will have a nuanced Hispanic flavor in its implementation. Hispanics will take a more active role in the political landscape of our day while respecting the long-held value of church and state. Hispanic evangelicals will find their voice and speak their convictions from a biblical/theological perspective and a Judeo-Christian worldview that is distinctly shaped by Hispanic culture." Finally, Reyes concludes by prophetically declaring, "As the decibel level of the Hispanic evangelical voice increases, the message will become convincingly clear along the lines of social justice, incarnational approaches to mission, contextually accurate congregational life, and political involvement."

Conclusion

Latino leaders need not fear when our young people venture into congregations where Hillsong and "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" fill the sanctuary rather than Marcos Barrientos and "En la Cruz." At the end of the day, the Latino church may very well be sending ambassadors who will not abandon their Hispanic heritage at the door of First Assembly but rather expose it in full and rich color to add to the Mosaic of this great collective we call the kingdom of God. 🌍



SAM RODRIGUEZ, an Assemblies of God minister, lives in Sacramento, California, and is president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership

Conference of the National Hispanic Association of Evangelicals, serving approximately 15 million Hispanic believers in issues of leadership, fellowship, networking, partnerships, and public policy.

A portrait of a young Black man with short hair, smiling and looking slightly to the right.

Cooper

A portrait of a man with dark hair and a mustache, smiling.

Murillo

A portrait of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a suit and tie.

Soto

A portrait of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light blue shirt.

DeYmaz

A portrait of a man with dark hair, smiling.

Llarena

A portrait of a man with short hair, smiling.

Saji

A close-up of a paintbrush with a wooden handle and a black ferrule, resting on a canvas with vibrant, abstract brushstrokes in red, yellow, blue, and green.

Multiethnic Church Plants Difficult, But Necessary

How courage, patience, resilience, compassion, and passion for souls enabled six pastors to plant multiethnic congregations

By John W. Kennedy

Not until half a century ago did public schools in Little Rock integrate — after Gov. Orbal Faubus ordered the Arkansas National Guard to block nine African-American students from entering the all-white Central High School as angry Caucasian parents amassed outside. Ultimately, President Eisenhower ordered federal troops to escort black teens inside, but racial tensions closed schools the entire next year.

Fifty years later, the capital of the Natural State has progressed in many respects. In other ways, attitudes have changed little since 1957. Most churches, not only in Arkansas or even the South, but also across the entire United States, have a long history of like-minded people assembling. Segregation has remained entrenched in houses of worship longer than practically any other institution.

Many Christians still see it as somehow unnatural to worship with a majority of people from another race.

A fully integrated church model is rare, but it is being done, and in some places, done well. In Little Rock, where around 55 percent of the population is white and 40 percent black, a congregation leading the way is Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas.

When Pastor Mark DeYmaz planted the inner-city church 6 years ago, he left a comfortable pastoral staff position in a predominantly white suburban Little Rock neighborhood. He intentionally sought racially and ethnically diverse leadership. Today, more than 30 nationalities are represented among the more than 700 members of Mosaic.

"Many churches have the potential to become diverse and emerge as multicultural," says Steve Pike, director of church planting for the Assemblies of God. "The key is to recruit leaders who reflect the diversity of people you're trying to reach."

An important first step is to exegete the neighborhood — to find out the ethnic makeup, education levels, and economic status of those who call the area home.

Diverse leadership — in the staff, the board, and the worship team — must be evident to those in the pews.

"It's not really diversity if you just

talk about it, but don't take steps to make it happen," says Herbert L. Cooper, Jr., pastor of People's Church in Oklahoma City.

"It's important for the congregation to see the mixture," says Ray Llarena, pastor of Harvest Christian Center in Chicago, a church with a Mexican-American youth pastor, Filipino worship leader, African-American care pastor, and white Christian education minister.

Multiethnic Opportunities

Many Christians still see it as somehow unnatural to worship with a majority of people from another race. More than 90 percent of U.S. congregations are bodies in which one racial group makes up at least 80 percent of the attendees.

Clearly, a multiethnic congregation does not result from a church planter's wishful thinking.



Our community is
a diverse place, so we ought
to reflect a little heaven
on earth.

— Cooper

The goal is not necessarily to goad various races to get along, but rather to reconcile everyone to Christ. Personal reconciliation is a byproduct.

"The Bible tells us to go into all the world and preach the gospel," says Llarena, a Filipino. "It doesn't say to concentrate on one ethnic or racial group. If it's one ethnic or racial group, it won't grow."

Steven Sijaji, pastor of All Nations Church in San Antonio, Texas, had a rude awakening when he emigrated

from Kenya. "I noticed churches seemed to be based on ethnicity — whether black, white, Hispanic, Korean, or Chinese," Sijaji says. "That isn't the biblical concept of doing church."

If the neighborhood has recently experienced demographic shifts or is in the throes of transitioning, it presents a prime opportunity to implement a multiethnic model, especially in inner-city environs.

"A healthy church responds to changes around it," Pike says. "God's mission is always to seek and save lost people."

The more diverse the neighborhood, the greater the opportunity to reach different ethnic groups. Besides English, New Hope International in Salt Lake City, Utah, has a hand in reaching 16 language groups, including Tongan, Ethiopian, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, and Marshallese.

"Our intent isn't to have everybody together in one service with earpieces," says Alfred Murillo, pastor of New Hope International. "Even though we're a multiple of churches, we're

one congregation. We can do an international missions trip within our church."

While pastors may not need to organize missions trips to evangelize people from other cultures, they should take extra steps to make visitors feel welcome when they show up.

Opportunities to reach myriad multiethnic groups could mean delving into the roughest part of a city. Immigrants tend to gather where housing is least expensive, which often

is in crime-ridden neighborhoods. But that also is the place of greatest need.

Harvest Christian Center in Chicago, for instance, is located in an area populated by homosexuals, drug addicts, the homeless, prostitutes, and newly arrived immigrants. The church is able to attract some disaffected people by offering a feeding program, after-school daycare, and English as second language classes.

"You've got to be willing to implement multiethnic leadership and not just as tokens," Cooper says. "You have to be willing to integrate people into the life of the Body, whether it's on a board or on the platform."

Sometimes that means purposely recruiting outside the box. DeYmaz, for instance, was able to attract Cesar Ortega from his lucrative insurance business in Honduras to head up Latino ministry at Mosaic. Harry Li, a second-generation Chinese-American, was led to relinquish a tenured electrical engineering professorship at the University of Idaho — even though it meant a significant dip in pay — to head up small groups.

Having only a multiethnic service ignores the needs of Christians who only speak their native language. They naturally tend to cluster with those who talk the same.

Every Sunday, New Hope International offers five services in five different languages. Because a building is shared for services, Murillo has had to stress the importance of starting on time as a courtesy for the next group; some cultures are accustomed to beginning 2 hours late.

New Hope International holds a Friday night prayer meeting where all language groups come together. All pray in their own language — and it is a beautiful sound.

Another major challenge is funding. Many immigrants arrive with few resources. In addition, the concept of tithing may be unfamiliar to them. As such, programs may need to be deferred and locations for services may not be ideal.

Sometimes financing means doing the unconventional. Mosaic, which meets in a former Wal-Mart, is now pursuing a move to a long-abandoned

three services; the worship space is too small for the 1,300 people who attend Sunday mornings. But it is what the church could afford at the time. Cooper thinks the relocation is an important sign to the community.

A fully integrated church model is rare, but it is being done, and in some places, done well.

"People took us seriously when we built a building," Cooper says. "They know we're going to be around."

The move allowed People's Church, which is small-group driven, to facilitate its discipleship program. Previously the church had to rent various meeting sites in different locations just to accommodate ministry needs.

Although money may be tight, it is essential for church planters to get the word out. Llarena advertises Harvest Christian Center using television, radio, newspapers, and fliers. The church has grown from 75 in 2002 to 500 today.

Llarena knows more people would come if the church could show signs of stability by moving into permanent facilities. Harvest Christian Center is renting a school for services while looking for a property to buy in Chicago, which has zoning laws among the least church-friendly in the nation.



Even though
we're a multiple of churches,
we're one congregation.

— Murillo

Church-Planting Challenges

Language is the most formidable obstacle in making a multiethnic church thrive.

"Ethnicity and race is not a legitimate barrier," Pike says. "But language creates barriers. If the first-generation immigrants don't speak English, we can't realistically expect them to come to an English-only service. They can't really worship and feel a part of it."

K-Mart only three blocks away, and located at one of the busiest intersections of the state across from the University of Arkansas-Little Rock. Although still not in the safest area, a shift to the 100,000-square-foot building would give the church more visibility.

People's Church moved into a 17,500-square-foot building in 2006. However, Cooper still must preach

All Things To All People

"The person leading a multiethnic church must almost morph a little bit as the church goes along to communicate to different groups," Pike says.

Sammy Soto, pastor of Power House in Clifton, New Jersey, is Puerto Rican, but in 2005 he began to intentionally eliminate most of the Latin flavor that marked services during the first 4

► Profile: 'This is a Spirit Thing'

Between 4,000 and 5,000 people from Africa, South America, the Pacific Islands, Europe, as well as from various U.S. ethnic backgrounds, attend International Church of Las Vegas, Nevada, each Sunday. Many use the translation headphones made available. Dozens of flags hang from the sanctuary ceiling as a testimony to the nations God has brought together in a city better known for its vices than its role in fulfilling the Great Commission.



"Vegas is a wild place," admits Pastor Paul Goulet. "If people don't pray, we're done. I might as well go back to Sacramento and be a therapist again. If this can work in Vegas, it can work anywhere."

When Goulet obeyed God's leading and left his counseling practice 14 years ago to pastor International Church, it was a different congregation. About 250 people, the great majority of

them white, met in a rented facility next to a bar.

Goulet had been pastoring about 4 years when the subject of prejudice began to monopolize his attention. He scheduled a foot-washing service on a Sunday night. God worked a miracle in his congregation.

"We had young people washing the feet of older people," he remembers. "We had different races washing each other's feet. We even had an Arab washing the feet of a Jewish believer."

The past 10 years have witnessed explosive growth in the church, and an outreach that is encompassing all of Las Vegas and is growing internationally. Besides planting churches in Las Vegas, Goulet and his congregation want to

plant churches around the world. As part of that goal, they have established schools of ministry in India, Mexico, and Egypt with others planned for Canada and Europe.

Goulet observes two opposing dynamics at work concerning a multiethnic philosophy of ministry. From a human point of view, Goulet believes most people retreat from the unfamiliar. They have a natural tendency to remain with people of their own background. But a divine point of view promotes diversity. Goulet points to the Day of Pentecost as primary evidence.

"If that's not the heartbeat of the Holy Spirit, I don't know what is," he says. "The Holy Spirit felt that to initiate and birth a real church it would be a multilingual church."

Goulet believes the key to opening a church to the widest possible audience requires a pastor to first accept that such a focus is God's desire. "They have to come to a point that they know that they know that they know that the Bible says so," he says.

Second, a pastor must teach those principles over time and actively shepherd the process. Patience is vital to successfully expanding a church's ethnic footprint.

Third, pastors need to be willing to pay a price. Two of Goulet's friends who attempted similar transitions were unable to gain the support of their churches and eventually left those pastorates.

But Goulet is convinced the pastor and congregation that unites in their pursuit of multiethnic and racial outreach will encounter God's blessing.

"This is a Spirit thing," he says. "I wish every church in America would have this."



SCOTT HARRUP is associate editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.

years. Although many Hispanics dwell in the neighborhood, there also are enclaves of Turks, Italians, Palestinians, Jamaicans, and Irish.

"We could be successful in targeting just one demographic group," Soto says. "But we want to reach the city, and if we're going to do that we need to transcend cultural differences."

Murillo says it is important to allow

ethnic groups to retain their identity. That means allowing Polynesians to wear their lava lavas to church if they desire. "We want people to feel like they belong before they believe rather than saying, 'When you believe, then you belong,'" Murillo says.

The church started by offering a sidewalk Sunday School. Clothing, furniture, and food distribution

to refugees followed. Then came educational opportunities such as ESL and General Equivalency Diploma classes. Bible studies and cell groups eventually formed.

Murillo opened a Dream Center that acts as neutral ground for various churches — from Baptist to Foursquare Gospel — to reach the community together.

The name of a church can be a welcoming first step to show inclusiveness: People's Church, All Nations, Mosaic. The diversity message must be stressed without apology.

"I preach and teach that we are multiracial," Siaji says. "If somebody is not comfortable being with everybody, this is not the place for them."

Still, the desire to reach the immediate area must be built on a biblical mandate, rather than adapting to who lives there. "If everyone in the neighborhood is homosexual, a church doesn't need to conform to reach them," DeYmaz says.

Integrating Worship

DeYmaz recognized that a one-style-fits-all approach doesn't work in worship. So there is no dominant style at Mosaic. Seven worship teams take turns leading worship on Sunday mornings.

"If the worship style is the same from week to week, it will appeal only to a certain segment of the population, thus an unintended barrier is established," DeYmaz says.

While worship in most churches is not blatantly discriminatory, DeYmaz contends there is latent bigotry. "Well-meaning believers will often describe themselves as open to diversity and to having anyone who so desires become a part of 'our church,'" says DeYmaz. "What they mean, however, is that these newcomers are welcome as long as they embrace the majority culture of the church and do not try to bring their own culture with them."

As a family, Mosaic members learn to endure other styles of worship for the sake of unity. While non-Hispanics might not care for Latino worship at first, it does help break down racial barriers. Song lyrics are projected in both English and Spanish.

Initially, worship at Power House involved singing a song in English followed by the same song in Spanish

to accommodate Hispanics. But Soto figured if he wanted to reach the growing local African-American population, he could not have a service with five Spanish-language songs. So now the contemporary worship service might include one Spanish-language song and one black gospel number.

"It's foolish for us to be selective about who we worship next to," Soto says. "We'll have no choice later in heaven."

Cooper says People's Church has a strategically diverse worship team that includes blacks, whites, and Filipinos. Not that it has been easy forging a blend.

"People have had to totally compromise," Cooper says. "I've had white folks who thought we ought to be doing rock music and black folks who thought we ought to have a gospel choir every Sunday. I've had to gently preach about loving each other's differences."



The movement toward multiethnic churches will be the key movement of the 21st century. — DeYmaz

The music style ranges from Darlene Zschech to Israel Houghton, with some salsa-style in between. Cooper says the worship pastor is white, yet many people think he sounds black. Personally, Cooper loves black gospel music, but he does not allow it to dominate corporate worship.

"When it comes to worship, the gospel doesn't mention any color," Llarena says.

Internal Cooperation

Attendees must learn to drop their prejudices quickly. That is easier to do with a church plant because pastors can clearly explain their vision from the beginning.

"Heaven is going to be diverse," Cooper says. "Our community is a diverse place, so we ought to reflect a little heaven on earth."

Cooper preaches specifically about race three times a year, plus he regularly weaves the theme into messages. "Every Sunday I say, 'Welcome to People's Church, a multiethnic church designed with you in mind.'"

Church planters advise keeping the message positive when stressing scriptural mandates about the broad spectrum of the body of Christ.

Sometimes the melting pot is a matter of appearance. DeYmaz is white, even though he has olive-toned skin and a Latino surname (the result of his stepfather adopting him); he often is mistaken as Hispanic.

Murillo, whose grandfather moved to the United States from Mexico, has been

mistaken for Chinese and Slavic. A face that defies ethnic characterization breaks down barriers.

If the vision of a church plant is altered midstream, it can cause backlash. Soto says some Hispanic members resisted when he began to move the church into a multiethnic mode because they wanted an exclusive outreach to Spanish speakers.

"We lost a few folks," Soto says. "There are many Spanish-language-only churches in this community. But we're called to reach the entire city." Rather than pointing out ethnic differences from the pulpit, Soto talks about the common bonds that unite the congregation as Christians.

About one in three congregants at People's Church is white, in part because Cooper has overloaded the staff with Caucasians. African-American ministers do not lead most diverse churches, and there are few instances of white laity following black leadership. As a black senior pastor, Cooper knew

he would not have difficulty attracting black families.

Getting To Know You

One of the great icebreakers for integrating different people groups is the old-fashioned potluck. Soto and Siaji urge attendees to bring a dish

from their native land.

"If you like their food, why don't you like them?" Siaji bluntly asks his members.

The message starts from the top. Cooper, who is black, has a white wife named Tiffany. People's Church publicizes that fact whenever possible.

Every Church A Parent or a Partner

"Every Church A Parent or Partner" is a powerful strategy for church multiplication. Does your church want to become a parent or a partner? If so, a good way to start is to contact both your district's missions department and the Church Planting Department of U.S. Missions.

Another resource for those with a vision for church multiplication is the ethnic minority and immigrant churches connected to one of the Assemblies of God's ethnic/language fellowship groups. By partnering with one of these fellowships, your church could become the parent or partner with an ethnic/language church in America.

Psalm 2:8 says that if we ask God He will give us the nations. Perhaps it is in answer to this prayer that people from other nations are flooding America. In light of that reality, God is asking His church to strategically reach the nations in our nation. Thousands of ethnic churches could be planted among the more than 100 million ethnic minority people living in America. The saying, "Missions begins at home," has never been truer.

The church is God's plan to bless this fast-growing group of people in America. As your neighborhood changes, ask God to make your church as diverse as the community you are called to reach and represent. God may also ask you to help plant a new church.

In several Assemblies of God districts, over 50 percent of the new churches planted in recent years are ethnic. Planting, growing, and multiplying ethnic churches is a cutting edge way for the church to redeem the reality of changing demographics.

Here are a few ways that your church could parent or partner with an ethnic church:

- **Parent or partner with a Russian-speaking church.**

A Slavic church grew to 250 members in 6 months. The pastors work full-time. Despite that, they helped parent another church in a city with 200,000 Russian-speaking people. The Slavic and Romanian Fellowships need partners.

- **Parent or partner with a Native American or Deaf**

Culture church. For example, the doors have never been more open to plant churches in the Navajo and Apache nations. The Native American and Deaf Fellowships need partners.

- **Parent or partner with an Arab church.** One district, working with U. S. missionaries, has an opportunity to purchase a building for an Arabic language church in the midst of one of America's largest Arab communities. The Assemblies of God Arab Fellowship need partners.

- **Parent or partner with an Asian or Pacific Islander church.** Through the cooperative effort of a district, an Assemblies of God church, a U.S. missionary, and a fellowship, Victory Hmong Assembly of God was birthed in the Ozarks. The Hmong, Chinese, Samoan, Filipino, Tongan, Fijian, and Indonesian Fellowships need more partners to help them plant churches to reach millions of Asians and Pacific Islanders in America.

- **Parent or partner with an African or an African-American church.** Nearly 40 million Americans of African descent represent one of the America's largest mission fields. Your church could partner with the Assemblies of God's Black Fellowship, the African Assemblies of God Fellowship, or the Haitian-American Fellowship, and parent a new church. The demands of the harvest call us into partnership.

These are some ways your church could partner or parent a new church. You can also partner with one or more of our Fellowships through monthly Faith Promise support given through U. S. Missions.

For information on supporting or connecting with one of our 15 National AG Fellowships, please contact the U. S. Mission Department of Intercultural Ministries (417) 862-2781, extension 3256, or e-mail: intmin@ag.org.



SCOTT TEMPLE, director, U.S. Missions Intercultural Ministries of the Assemblies of God

Ethnicity and Church Planting

In regard to one's ethnicity, people have the option of several attitudes.

Nuclear Ethnic

Nuclear Ethnics are immersed in their own ethnicity. They surround themselves with people who speak the same language, eat the same foods, and hold the same values.

Barring some extraordinary act of the Holy Spirit, such as a healing in the family, Nuclear Ethnic

Affiliate Ethnic

Affiliate Ethnics look and act like Nuclear Ethnic

s, but hold less tightly to their distinguishing characteristics. They are typically younger relatives of the Nuclear.

Borderland Ethnic

Borderland Ethnics like their origins, but consciously want to broaden their world and experience life and relationships outside their group.

Borderland Ethnic

s will seek out a church that includes or targets people of different ethnicities. Such churches will be most successful if located on the border between ethnic clusterings.

Departing Ethnic

Departing Ethnics are because of pain in their past or a desire to be immersed in another group, Departing Ethnic

Arriving Ethnic

s want out, and are fleeing from their roots. They will go anywhere, or with anyone but that group.

Nine Observations

1. We need church plants all along this spectrum of attitudes if we are to make the gospel accessible to as many as possible.

2. People like to be with others who are like themselves. In heaven, we assume, language and personal preferences

will be transcended; but, until then, we will cluster.

3. A church plant with a specific target group has the best chance of success. Of the more than 150 successful church plants since I began chairing the Church Planting Task Force in Southern California, in 1991, all began by targeting either a specific mainstream neighborhood or a specific ethnic group. Church planting is hard.

4. Borderland Ethnics, who may be of several ethnicities, are considered as one group because they share a desire to be in a multiethnic setting. Church plant location is especially important for them because churches need to be in neighborhoods that include multiple ethnicities.

5. Socioeconomics sometimes trump ethnicity. In many neighborhoods a common education, income, employment, style of home, and values form a subculture more useful as a classification than just the ethnicity factor.

6. Having an ethnic target is an effective starting point, but not the end of the matter. Our task is to teach the full counsel of God, which includes leading the church into a full appreciation for those who are unlike us. Sectional and district events offer great opportunities for the saints to get acquainted and grow in love.

7. Visionary mainstream culture churches make good hosts for ethnic church plants because ethnic churches need time to focus on their group and opportunities for joint worship and fellowship to deepen appreciation for one another.

8. The church at Antioch is my favorite in the New Testament. If we infer the elders' ethnicity from their names, it was multiethnic. It started Jewish and along the way began to broaden. This church gives the best foretaste of heaven. May their tribe increase. Their potlucks were probably delicious.

9. My prayer has been that our fellowship of churches be as ethnically diverse as our neighborhoods. Not every church can accomplish this because each church will do well to reach even one group. But I desire that the Pentecostal church as a whole be ethnically diverse. We need one another. If we take each other's hand in cooperation, we will have our best chance of fulfilling the Great Commission in this new mission field — this North America in which we live.

NOTE

1. Carl George described these attitudes in a seminar on church planting during the 1980s. Experiences since have led me to believe he had it right.



DAVE GABLE, former assistant superintendent, Southern California District of the Assemblies of God, Irvine, California.



We could be successful in targeting just one demographic group. But we want to reach the city, and if we're going to do that we need to transcend cultural differences.

— Soto

Herbert and Tiffany are pictured on all advertising and marketing — TV commercials, billboards, and the church's Internet home page.

"This communicates that everybody is welcome at our church," Cooper says. Subsequently, the church has attracted dozens of mixed-race couples. The congregation, which began with eight people in a living room in 2002, now has 1,300 attendees on a 50-acre campus.

Another major way to integrate the Body is through home groups, where people fellowship, eat, worship, and pray together. People's Church uses small-group ministries as a primary method of bridging the racial gap. It breaks barriers when different races hang out together.

"Some people have a lot of preconceived ideas about other ethnic groups when they get here," Cooper says. "But soon they figure out, 'Hey, that person is not that different from me. He has the same feelings and hurts.'"

"Our main common denominator is Christ," Soto says. "Most folks understand this."

Although Power House still provides a service where Spanish is translated via earphones and a Bible study is conducted in Spanish, Soto says the one common language of the congregation is English. Unless they are recent arrivals, most Latinos understand most of what is spoken in English, even if they are not comfortable speaking it, he says.

Murillo has formed an international

council with other multiethnic pastors in Salt Lake City. "My team isn't here to manage the others," Murillo says. "We're all friends. We all work together."

The main offices of New Hope International are in a Nazarene church. "In Utah we're such a minority that it's in our favor to work together," Murillo says. Two-thirds of the state's residents claim Mormon affiliation.

Long-Haul Perseverance

Indoctrinated prejudicial attitudes do not change overnight.

"Americans have taken the gospel to other nations for many years," Siaji says. "But here Americans have stayed with the same race. I don't get it. If Christ is coming soon, it's about time we change."

"We need to look at our community through the eyes of Jesus Christ," Llarena says. "We need to reach out to all kinds of people, not just one race, not just one color."

"The movement toward multiethnic churches will be the key movement of the 21st century," predicts DeYmaz.

Nevertheless, multiethnic church planting is not for the faint of heart. Vision casting is easier preached than accomplished. Pastors, in many cases, face overcoming years of narrow-mindedness in a community and a lukewarm — if not hostile — reception from other local pastors.

Some of the strongest opposition comes from the newcomers themselves — people who may have been wounded

in other churches; people who bring baggage with them; people who bring strong views on how church should be run and do not keep their views private.

"Sometimes people have attitudes," Siaji says. "They may not want to clap, raise their hands, or dance. But they have learned to adapt."


For 2 years, Cooper had to contend with anonymous notes dropped in the offering plate.

"There were times early on when I didn't know if it was going to work," Cooper admits. "I had a lot of discouraging days."

Yet Cooper stood firm in his convictions because he knew God had called him to plant a multiethnic church. Laypeople who gave him trouble in the beginning adjusted, grew, and stayed.

It takes a lot of energy to make it work. Many of the church planters having a great impact started in their late 20s or early 30s. It also takes a great deal of courage, patience, resilience, compassion, and passion for souls.

Above all, a pastor should not experiment in starting a multiethnic congregation merely as a technique to try if nothing else has worked.

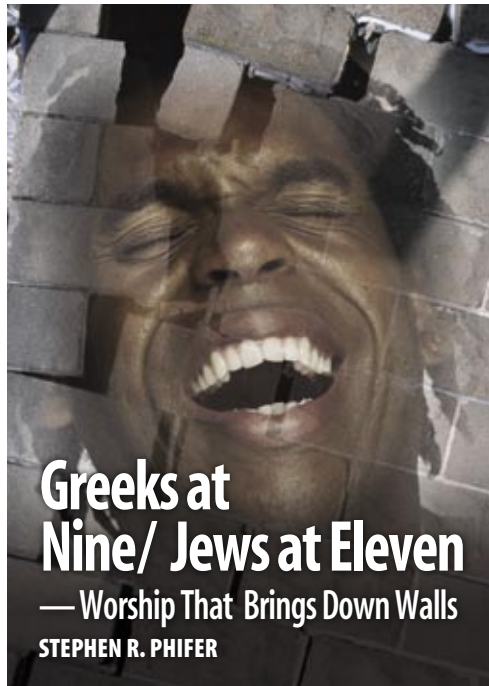
"A pastor must be called, must have a burden, and a vision, to do this," Llarena says. "Only God can give that." 



JOHN W. KENNEDY is news editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.



Check out
Enrichment journal's
Web site for these
and other great
ministry resources.

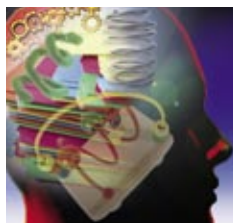


Greeks at Nine/ Jews at Eleven

— Worship That Brings Down Walls

STEPHEN R. PHIFER

Music Pastor Stephen Phifer of Word of Life International Church in Springfield, Virginia (Wendel Cover, senior pastor), serves a congregation representing dozens of nationalities. Phifer issues a call for unity in worship, noting Jesus' emphasis on "spirit and truth" in such worship. "We should merge the musical languages of the congregation into cohesive, integral sacrifices of praise and worship with Jesus at the center," Phifer insists. "Let's focus on the Lord, not our music!"



Get Tough on Clutter

T. RAY RACHELS

"A large measure of our
success in Christian
living and ministry is
knowing what things
to keep and what to

throw away," T. Ray Rachels advises. A cluttered attic is a nuisance; a cluttered mind and heart can become a spiritual handicap. Rachels admits it's easy to put off removing nostalgic detritus from the nooks and crannies of one's home; however, "the time to clean out your mind and heart is always now."



The Latest Trends in Church Web sites

NICK B. NICHOLAOU

According to Nick Nicholaou, president of Ministry Business Services, most North American churches today have Web sites but few of those sites are effective at helping the church fulfill its mission. Too many church Web sites are little more than electronic brochures, and those that are intended to offer regularly updated material often fail to live up to the church's goals. Some basic changes in how a church manages its Web site can transform tepid technology into an effective means of evangelism.



What's Keeping Volunteers From Volunteering?

TEENA STEWART

Teena Stewart is a volunteer ministry director for Northgate Christian Fellowship in Benicia, California, and a consultant/writer for <http://www.ministryinmotion.net>. "Where being raised in church and volunteering in ministry from an early age was once the norm," Stewart observes, "these days it is the exception." Stewart outlines eight roadblocks to volunteer involvement. All are significant; none are insoluble. As church staff understand why people avoid service, Stewart says, they can help them become active participants.

Leadership Defined

G. RAYMOND CARLSON

Former General Superintendent G. Raymond Carlson described the godly leader as one with the right ambition (to serve God and others). That ambition needs the right motivation and methods to effectively direct others. "Anyone can crack a whip, swing a club, or throw a tantrum in an attempt to get his way," Carlson wrote. "But it takes a special kind of person to be an example in servanthood and a model in leadership."



May God Save the Queen!

THOMAS LINDBERG

Lindberg, pastor of Memphis First Assembly of God, encourages an ever-deepening respect for homiletics

as the "queen" of ministerial studies. Lindberg outlines six principles of effective preaching. That effectiveness, Lindberg says, is not based on any amount of talent, experience, or homiletical skill. Rather, effective witness "comes only through the power of the Spirit" working through "a heart and a life that is filled with joy ... seen on our faces and in our actions."

Church in Black and White

JOHN W. KENNEDY

Wallace Phillips, pastor of The Carpenter's Shop, has shaken the status quo in rural Ahoskie, North Carolina.

Phillips took the reins of a church that went through 11 pastors



in 15 years and dwindled to a dozen white attendees. He has seen his congregation grow to become the most integrated 10 percent of the town's population. "The purpose of ministry is people," Phillips says, "not selective people."



Helping America's Immigrants

JOHN W. KENNEDY

"In this season when public opinion is clamoring for us to close our borders, the church must not close its doors," says Scott Temple, director of Intercultural Ministries for the Assemblies of God. Opportunities for evangelism and compassion ministry are multiplying as families with a spectrum of needs are coming to the United States. Rather than resent the growing immigration trend, say pastors and church leaders, Christians need to fulfill the Great Commission among the nation's new arrivals.



Love and Acceptance or Rejection and Condemnation: Our Response to the Postabortive Man or Woman

*One in six women
— 5.6 million in
evangelical
churches today
— have chosen
abortion.*

I greeted the pastor who approached our exhibit booth with a friendly hello and handshake. I handed him our brochure and began my 20-second version of the SaveOne ministry. As he listened his smile faded and his eyes narrowed. This was a look I had seen only a handful of times. I finished my advertisement and braced myself for what I knew was coming. His gaze slowly went to my feet and back to my eyes as he said with much disgust, "We don't have women like that in our church." He tossed the brochure on our table, turned, and walked. My heart was broken, not for myself and the judgment I had just received, but for the women and men who were sitting in his congregation week after week unable to turn to their pastor or their church for help after their abortion.

Staggering Truths

With 47 million abortions in America since 1973,¹ no church is exempt from the effects of abortion. One in six women who have had abortions are evangelical Christians. This

means 5.6 million women in our churches today have chosen abortion. In addition, 40 percent of women ages 15 to 44 have had at least one abortion.²

Many of these women suffer from what is known in pro-life circles as Post Abortion Syndrome. They not only have varying degrees of guilt and shame, but they also are dealing with a deep-rooted issue of unforgiveness. They cannot accept forgiveness from God because they do not feel worthy to ask, or they refuse to forgive themselves. (*Read my testimony in the sidebar, SaveOne — Emotional Health After Abortion.*)

Most women who experience abortion are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, suffer from depression, have deep feelings of unshakable guilt, disrupt the bonding process with their children, develop eating disorders, have uncontrolled outbursts of emotion, suffer from thoughts of suicide,³ have an increased risk of breast cancer, and have ongoing problems with sleep disturbances.⁴ This is not an exhaustive list, but the most typical symptoms.

NOTE: Photographs accompanying this article are used for illustrative purposes only. Individuals shown are models and have no connection to concepts, behaviors, or events referenced in the article.



SHEILA L. HARPER is founder and president of SaveOne, Nashville, Tennessee.

Furthermore, PAS is not limited to women. Men also suffer from many of these same symptoms. Pastors can no longer exclude men from the help they give to those who have had an abortion.

Concerning men and PAS, Brad Mattes, president of Life Issues Institute, says, "When the conscience kicks in, symptoms appear. The most common symptom is anger, and he will act on that anger." Men do not feel there is anyone available who understands their pain. They are unfairly stereotyped and pushed to the side as though their grief and feelings of loss do not matter. Take into account the 47 million abortions mentioned earlier. Imagine the hurting women who experienced those abortions; now add as many hurting men to that equation — the numbers are astonishing.

This is why we can no longer sweep the abortion issue under the rug. Our churches are dealing with the rampant divorce rate, starting to address the problem with pornography, and even helping victims of childhood sexual abuse. But for some reason, abortion is being ignored. Abortion is an ugly issue to deal with; but even though it is difficult to address, we must not tolerate it.

You Can Help

Pastors can do many things to help those in their churches who have already had an abortion, as well as those who may be faced with this decision in the future.

First, do not be intimidated by the controversy you may create in your congregation by speaking against abortion from the pulpit. Second Timothy 4:2–5 says, "Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (italics added).⁵ Tell people the truth about abortion. Your words may stop someone from making this dreadful choice.

Second, remember the men and women in your congregation who know all too well the truth of what you are saying. Your words may be like

daggers to their hearts. Let them know, as horrible as abortion is, that you realize many have already made this choice, and they can live in peace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:7). Many times, just hearing *you* affirm the fact they can talk about their pain and regret will pave the way for them to seek help and receive healing.

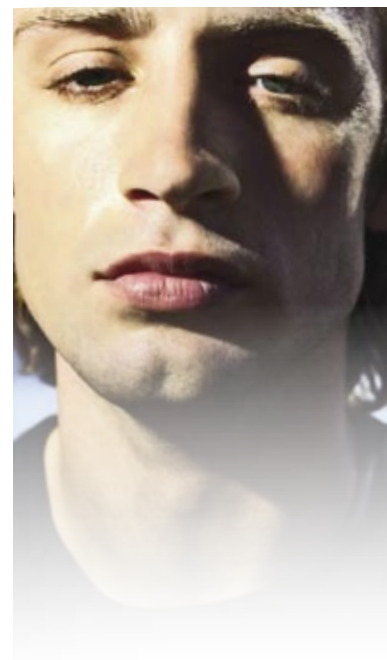
Third, when a man or woman gathers the courage to seek help, he or she may contact your pastoral care department or come to you. Your response needs to be one of complete love and acceptance. "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). More than likely these people believe if they tell their secret, they will be rejected, ostracized, and condemned. Satan knows if he can keep them in the dark, he can keep his stronghold on their lives. Your job, as senior pastor, is to bring them into the light. As repulsed as you may be from their stories, remember to love and accept them above all else.

Fourth, be careful not to ask condemning questions, or use harsh words such as *murder* or *kill*. Watch your body language; folded arms or crossed legs are signs of rejection. A man or woman seeking help for the first time is fragile. He or she needs to see, hear, and feel acceptance and know that your office is a safe place of refuge where they can discuss extremely private matters.

Fifth, listen; then listen some more. James 5:16 says, "Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed." You will find men and women who have lived with this secret since the 1960s. Some have been dragging this unopened luggage with them for 4 months or as long as 40 years. Let them speak unabashedly and confess their sin.

Sixth, do your homework before you are faced with this situation. Before they enter your office have a plan to help them find forgiveness. Send them to God's Word, our only true healing balm. Use the resources available to help others. There is abundant research and well-documented PAS studies, as well as PAS Bible studies. (See *Abortion Resource List sidebar*.) Educate yourself on this subject.

Seventh, start a postabortion Bible study or abortion recovery at your church and advertise it in your community. This service offered to hurting



Men are unfairly stereotyped and pushed to the side as though their grief and feelings of loss do not matter.

SaveOne — Emotional Health After Abortion

When the doctor said I was pregnant, I could not believe my ears. I was told that abortion was easy and that no one would ever know. It was legal, so it must be all right. Months later, the reality of my choice took a toll on me. The shame and humiliation of what I had done became unbearable. I wanted to die. I turned to drugs and alcohol for solace because I thought God would never take me back.

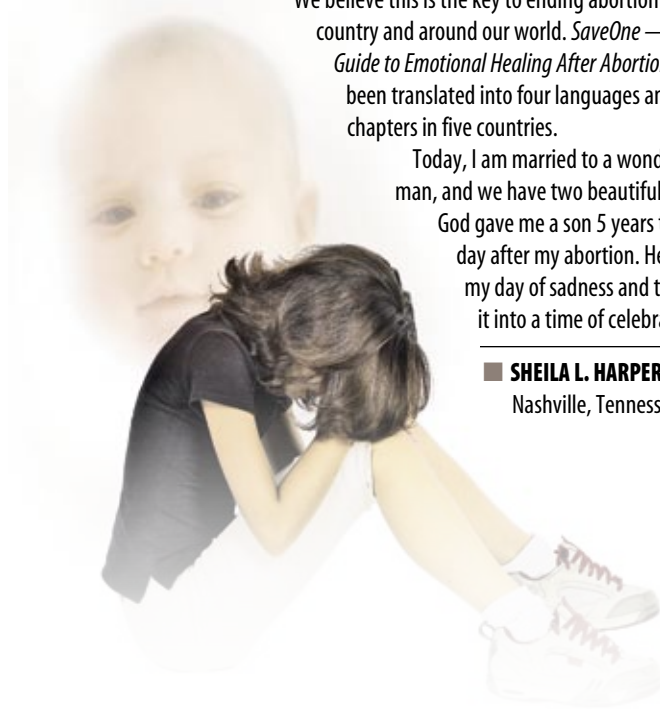
After living this way for 7 years, I heard about a class designed for women who had chosen abortion. My need for help outweighed my shame. I attended the class and learned that God still loved me and that His grace was sufficient for me. He restored me and gave me a passion to help men and women who have had abortions.

I began teaching this class and continually heard people say, "If I could just save one person from living with this pain any longer, I would tell my story." Thus, the nonprofit organization SaveOne was born. We help men and women who have gone through an abortion find freedom from the grief and regret they have experienced. This process enables them to free others from the pain caused by abortion.

We believe this is the key to ending abortion in our country and around our world. *SaveOne — A Guide to Emotional Healing After Abortion* has been translated into four languages and has chapters in five countries.

Today, I am married to a wonderful man, and we have two beautiful sons. God gave me a son 5 years to the day after my abortion. He took my day of sadness and turned it into a time of celebration.

■ **SHEILA L. HARPER,**
Nashville, Tennessee.



individuals will bring great gratitude and loyalty from those who are helped. We have had dozens of families join our church through the postabortion Bible study we offer. They come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior; or if they are already Christians, they usually remain in our church.

You Hold the Key

At SaveOne we believe reaching postabortive men and women is the key to ending abortion in our country. Think about your own personal life. If you were going to buy a car, would you listen to someone who has never driven a car? Or would you ask the previous owner who has driven the car, knows it inside and out, and can tell you any problems you might have with it? We look at abortion the same way. When a person has experienced abortion and is healed and set free through Jesus Christ, she will never choose abortion again. She will also be able to tell her story with deep conviction to others. No one can argue with her personal experience. God is able to use her sin for His glory. Once set free, she becomes a walking billboard for God's grace, mercy, loving kindness, and goodness. She knows the pain; she knows the choice inside and out; and she can discuss every problem that is common with abortion. She is able to tell the truth about the horrible consequences of abortion, and *people listen*.

Healing the Wound

A friend compared abortion to a gunshot wound. Imagine having a moral lapse and breaking into a friend's home to steal something. Now imagine that your friend sees you and shoots you in the leg as you scramble back through the window. Since your friend did not see you well enough to identify you, this moral lapse is your secret.

You are embarrassed about what you have done and vow that you will never tell anyone, but something must be done with the gunshot wound. If you go to the hospital, you will have to explain how you were shot and that would get you into trouble. You cannot tell your family because the humiliation to you and your family would be catastrophic, so you decide to deal with the wound the best way you can. You pour ointment into the wound, stop the bleeding, and tightly bandage it. You feel a sense of relief because you were able to take care of the wound on your own.

After a few days, the wound starts to ooze, so you wrap it tighter and add layers of bandages. A couple of weeks later the pain becomes a throbbing, aching pain that seems to never go away. You start to limp, although you try not to show any signs that you are wounded. Months go by and you are managing, but the pain is starting to affect your marriage, your

relationships with friends and family, and your job performance. Everything in your life is revolving around the gunshot wound and how to manage the pain. By now, the infection is seeping into your bloodstream and has affected every area of your body. Your head hurts; you cannot sleep; your joints ache; and you have no appetite.

You can no longer manage on your own; your need for medical treatment finally outweighs your shame, and you seek help. You know you will be ostracized, bring shame to your family, and be rejected by those who have never experienced your situation. But you cannot deal with it alone anymore, so you go to the hospital.

What is the first thing the doctor will do? He removes the layers of bandages one by one. He needs to uncover the wound and see it for all its ugliness before it can start to heal. Then he must get to the root of the problem — the bullet. By now, the bullet is covered with scar tissue, and will be painful to remove, but the root of the problem has been found and will be taken care of. As the doctor takes out the bullet, he exposes the wound and applies the healing balm.

As a pastor reaching out to this hurting sect of people, you are that doctor — the catalyst who helps heal people's painful wounds.

End the Naiveté

I choose to believe that the pastor at our booth that day was just naive to the monumental problem abortion has caused in our country. I believe his church suffers just like our country suffers. But I ask you to not let this naiveté continue. Educate your congregation, educate yourself, and extend a helping hand.

Abortion Resource List

The following is a list of Web sites and books to help educate you on abortion and its effects.

Web Sites

<http://www.saveone.org>
<http://www.lifeissues.org>
<http://www.nrlc.org>
<http://www.afterabortion.org>
<http://www.lifecall.org>

Books

- Alcorn, Randy. 2000. *ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments*. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Press.
- Burke, Theresa, and David C. Reardon. 2002. *Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion*. Springfield, Ill.: Acorn Books.
- Condon, Guy, and David Hazard. 2001. *Fatherhood Aborted: The Profound Effects of Abortion on Men*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House.
- Hayford, Jack. 1990. *I'll Hold You in Heaven: Healings and Hope for the Parent of a Miscarried, Aborted, or Stillborn Child*. Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books.
- Reagan, Ronald. 1984. *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation*. Nashville, Tenn. Thomas Nelson.

■ SHEILA L. HARPER, Nashville, Tennessee.

NOTES

1. National Right to Life Committee, *Abortion in the United States: Statistics and Trends*. Visit <http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/facts/abortionstats.html>.
2. Focus on the Family resource division for pregnancy centers. Visit <http://www.heartlink.org>.
3. Teri Reisser and Paul Reisser, *Help for the Post-Abortion Woman* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989).
4. Fact sheet compiled by David C. Reardon for The Elliott Institute, *A List of Major Physical Sequelae Related to Abortion* (Springfield, Ill.: The Elliott Institute, 1997). Visit <http://www.afterabortion.org/>.
5. All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Some individuals have been dragging this unopened luggage with them as long as 40 years. Let them speak.

Pontius' Puddle

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Biology and Human Behavior: Do Genes Determine Destiny?

Behavioral traits are complex, making the search for a genetic basis for these traits difficult and controversial.

Ministry involves dealing with all aspects of human behavior. To point people to the Cross ministers must meet people in the midst of their needs and personal struggles. Whether the minister is preaching to an entire congregation or counseling an individual, biblical truth must be accurately and sensitively applied to issues of human behavior. In addition, in his role as a moral leader within a community, a minister is often called on to address social issues that

arise as ramifications of human behavior.

When discussing human behavior, ministers typically emphasize personal responsibility, the need to uphold biblical standards, and the role of free will. Yet in society today, people often look to science to reveal the origin for a given human behavior, seeking to find the roots of a behavior in either our genes or our environment. Unfortunately, the findings of scientific studies on human behavior often become distorted in popular literature because of perceived social and political implications. A scientific study suggesting a possible genetic link becomes proof that the behavior being studied is innate and unchangeable. When further research disproves the link, often little media attention is given to correcting the previous overstated claims. Examples of this disconnect between scholarly research and popular understanding can be found for research on the biological basis of aggression, intelligence, schizophrenia, alcoholism, and homosexuality. This article looks at the relationship between biology and human behavior as it relates to the development of homosexuality, a controversial topic that ministers are often asked to address. Do genes determine destiny?

Biological Determinism and Human Behavior

Now that scientists have sequenced the human genome, the thought that human behavior might be determined by our genetic makeup is gaining in popularity. This thinking is a form of *genetic determinism*, a belief that genes largely determine physical and behavioral characteristics. Some diseases, such as Huntington's disease, clearly do result from the presence of a certain gene. Some traits, such as eye color, result from the interaction of two or more genes. Some disorders, such as Down syndrome, can be clearly mapped to a chromosome aberration. Behavioral traits — such as aggression, intelligence, and sexual orientation — however, are complex, making the search for a genetic basis for these traits difficult and controversial.

Scientists have employed a variety of different approaches to try to find a biological basis for homosexuality. These approaches include looking for differences in neuroanatomy (brain structure) between homosexual and heterosexual males,



CHRISTINA M.H. POWELL, Ph.D., an ordained minister and medical research scientist, preaches in churches and conferences nationwide. She is a research fellow at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital as well as the founder of Life Impact Ministries.

studying twins and siblings of homosexuals, and linkage analysis to search for the existence of a gay gene. We need to take a closer look at each of these approaches and the conclusions that can be drawn from them.

Seeking a Biological Basis for Behavior in Brain Structures

First, consider the studies looking for differences in brain structure between homosexual and heterosexual males. These studies have their basis in earlier studies done to locate small differences between the brains of males and females. Small variations in the regions of the hypothalamus, which links the nervous system to the endocrine system, and the corpus callosum, which connects the left and right sides of the brain, have been noted. These differences between male and female brains are thought to be due to the effect of sex hormones (particularly androgens) on the developing brain before a baby is born.

In 1990, Dick F. Swaab of the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research found in his postmortem examination of homosexual males' brains that a small portion of the hypothalamus of the brain, termed the suprachiasmatic nucleus, was twice the size, in general, as it was in heterosexual males; and, its shape was more like the shape typically found in women. The SCN, an area of the hypothalamus the size of a pair of pinheads, is sometimes referred to as the *clock of the brain* for its role in coordinating circadian rhythms. Another study, published in 1992, by Laura S. Allen and Roger A. Gorski, a neurobiologist from the University of California in Los Angeles, showed that the anterior commissure, a bundle of nerves that connects a small region of the right and left sides of the brain's cortex, is larger in women than men and larger in homosexual men than in heterosexual men.

Neither the SCN nor the AC is known to regulate sexual behaviors, so any differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals do not imply that these regions of the brain determine sexual orientation. The findings of these two studies have neither been replicated nor refuted by other laboratories.

In a third study, published in 1991, neuroscientist and gay activist Simon LeVay, working at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, found that the third interstitial nucleus of the anterior hypothalamus (INAH₃) was smaller, on average, in homosexual men than in heterosexual men. INAH₃ is generally smaller in women than in men. In animal studies, this region of the hypothalamus

has been implicated in the generation of male-typical sex behavior. To the degree that you can compare sheep to humans, studies done in sheep at Oregon Health and Science University in 2004, support LeVay's findings.

Only one other research group has tried to duplicate LeVay's findings. In 2001, William Byne of Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, and coauthors, confirmed a significant difference in size between men and women similar to that found by LeVay. While these researchers also found a difference in size between homosexual and heterosexual males, the difference they found was small and not statistically significant. These researchers went a step further than LeVay and counted the number of neurons (nerve cells) in the region in addition to measuring the region's size. While they found a difference in the number of neurons between males and females, they did not find a significant difference between homosexual and heterosexual males.

An important point to note regarding all studies of brain structure is that a correlation does not imply a cause. A correlation between the relative size of a region of the brain and a behavior may mean that behavior changes brain structure instead of brain structure changing behavior. For example, brain imaging studies have demonstrated changes in brain structures related to learning Braille and becoming proficient in playing a stringed instrument. Another important point about brain structure studies is that differences between individuals varied greatly compared to the average differences between groups. For instance, three of the homosexual men in LeVay's study had INAH₃ areas as large as those of heterosexual men, as did two of the women. Thus, a person can be a homosexual without having a smaller INAH₃ region. Furthermore, it would be impossible to predict the sexual orientation of an individual from a single brain measurement.

Finally, brain structure studies are notoriously difficult to reproduce. One problem when measuring the size of a small region is determining the boundaries of that region. Where does one region end and another begin? Variations in how a researcher defines these boundaries in his study can lead to different results between one study and the next. For this reason, many of the conclusions about differences between males and females are in dispute. New technologies, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) methods, that allow measurement of structures in living human brains, as opposed to the brains of cadavers, have caused researchers to rethink



*A predisposition
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Many of the conclusions about differences between males and females are in dispute.

previous theories. For example, using MRI methods some researchers have found no difference in the size of the corpus callosum between men and women, although others have found differences in shape. Thus, the popular notion that women multitask better than men because of greater communication between the left and right sides of the brain is still up for debate.

Studying Twins and Siblings to Find a Biological Connection

Another approach for attempting to establish a biological basis for homosexuality is twin studies. Twin studies are the traditional way to establish a genetic basis for a trait. These studies measure *concordance*, which is the probability that a pair of individuals, such as a set of twins, will both have a certain characteristic given that one of the pair has the characteristic. Theoretically, concordance for a trait determined by genes between identical twins would be 100 percent, since they share the same genes. Concordance between fraternal twins and between biological siblings would be 50 percent since a child inherits half his DNA from each parent. Genetically unrelated adopted siblings should show a lower concordance for a trait than biological siblings.

In a 1991 study from Psychologist J. Michael Bailey at Northwestern University in Evanston,

Illinois, and Richard Pillard, a professor of psychiatry of Boston University, that attracted much media attention, the researchers looked at the concordance of homosexual behavior in four groups of men: 56 pairs of identical twins, 54 pairs of fraternal twins, 142 nontwin brothers of twins, and 57 pairs of adoptive brothers. They found that a man with a homosexual identical twin brother had a 52 percent chance of being homosexual while a man with a homosexual fraternal twin had only a 22 percent chance. Researchers also found, however, that while genetically unrelated adoptive brothers had an 11 percent chance of both being homosexual, nontwin biological brothers of twins had only a 9.2 percent chance, significantly lower than the expected probability. Concordance between fraternal twins and between biological siblings should be the same for a trait solely determined by genes. The fact fraternal twins of homosexual men were more than twice as likely to be homosexual as other biological brothers (compare 22 percent to 9.2 percent) shows that environmental factors were involved.

One factor that might have affected the results of this study is *ascertainment bias*, which is a systematic distortion of data caused by nonrandom sampling. Bailey and Pillard did not study a random sample of homosexuals; instead, they recruited homosexuals for the study through advertisements placed in homosexual publications. If the likelihood that a person responds to such an advertisement is influenced by whether or not his twin is also a homosexual, then statistics will be skewed. This possibility is suggested by another twin study, which used data from Australia's national twin registry instead of self-selected participants. In this study the rate of concordance for homosexuality among identical twins was only 20 percent. These results mean that an identical twin brother of a homosexual has an 80 percent chance of being heterosexual, despite sharing the same genes and prenatal environment, and being raised by the same family.

Looking for a Genetic Link

One approach to finding a potential genetic link for a characteristic is *linkage analysis*, which involves scanning part or all of the human genome to look for sites where pairs of siblings with a given characteristic inherit DNA more

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**"Boy, he sure can talk!
He'd make a great lobbyist down in Washington!"**

frequently than would be expected by chance. In 1993, Dean Hamer, a molecular geneticist from the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, found that specific genetic markers within a small region of the X chromosome (in males inherited always from the mother) called Xq28 were shared by 33 of 40 pairs of homosexual brothers. The common sequences within this region that were shared were not the same for all pairs of brothers. When Hamer's study was first published, it appeared that he might have found a genetic link for homosexuality.

Hamer's study, however, had serious flaws and more recent scientific studies have not upheld his findings. One important flaw in his study was his failure to include the obvious control for his study, whether or not heterosexual brothers of the men being studied also shared the genetic markers. A follow-up study in 2005, led by Brian Mustanski of the University of Illinois at Chicago (and including Hamer as a collaborator) that scanned the entire human genome did not confirm the Xq28 linkage although they found evidence for linkage at three other sites on chromosomes 7, 8, and 10 instead of the X chromosome. Researchers, however, were not able to perform a statistical analysis to evaluate whether or not linkages at three other sites were simply due to chance. Thus, genes responsible for influencing sexual orientation have not been discovered.

Behavior Not Predetermined by Biology

Although the scientific research may be intriguing, the general conclusion drawn from studies seeking a biological basis for homosexuality is that genes do not determine destiny. No brain structure or gene has been shown to cause homosexuality. Most of the time, even identical twins raised together are not both homosexuals. Cultural influences on homosexual behavior cannot be denied. For example, homosexual behavior is more prevalent in all boys' schools, prisons, and other single-sex institutions, often occurring even among those who consider themselves heterosexuals. Research suggests that the development of homosexuality can be influenced by social and psychological factors, such as early family relationships, sexual seduction, and sense of inadequacy with same-sex peers.

Suppose scientists do demonstrate a biological predisposition for a human behavior. What

would it mean? The discovery of a biological predisposition for a behavior would not mean that the behavior is inevitable or unchangeable.

A predisposition is not a destiny; our free will supersedes behavioral tendencies. The ability to make choices is what gives us human dignity and sets us apart from animals. Scripture paints a picture not of fatalism but of free will and moral responsibility. In Deuteronomy 30:19,20, God reminded His people of both their moral responsibility and their freedom to choose: "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him."

As a minister of the gospel helping people understand and address issues of human behavior, you would do well to remind people that this choice is still before them today. couple at a time. ☺

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Article Summary

■ Brain Structures:

No human brain structure has been shown to cause homosexuality. The sexual orientation of an individual cannot be predicted from measuring brain regions.

■ Twins and Siblings:

An identical twin brother of a homosexual has an 80 percent chance of being heterosexual, despite sharing the same genes, prenatal environment, and being raised by the same family.

■ Genes:

Genes responsible for influencing sexual orientation have not been discovered.

■ General Conclusions:

Genes do not determine destiny. A biological predisposition for a behavior, if discovered, would not mean that the behavior was inevitable or unchangeable. Free will supersedes behavioral tendencies.

Cessation of the Miraculous?

The Age of the Apostles From Biblical, Extra-biblical, Theological, and Logical Perspectives

Cessationists say spiritual gifts were done away with following the Age of the Apostles. Are Pentecostals adequately equipped to share why they trust God for the miraculous today?

Right: Peter and John heal a lame man at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:1-10.)



Pentecostals are often asked to explain why they believe and practice the way they do. Unfortunately, most are not “prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls” on them (1 Peter 3:15, RSV).¹ Often this is either because Pentecostals have not become grounded in the evidence or have not thought through the issues behind the content and practices of their faith. Instead, they usually respond with defensiveness, embarrassment, or an appeal to their personal experience. Their

hearers easily dismiss these appeals as, “Okay for you but of no relevance to us.” Therefore, it is important that pastors better equip their members to share with others why Pentecostals trust God for the miraculous today.

One question frequently asked of Pentecostals is why they believe miracles, gifts of the Spirit, personal revelations, and divine interventions continue to happen today. Most Christians outside of Pentecostal/charismatic traditions believe these manifestations of the Spirit ceased when the last apostle died, commonly referred to as the end of



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the Age of the Apostles. This term represents the belief that the revelatory and miraculous power of God, having been absent for more than 400 years, was reinstated among men between circa A.D. 30 and A.D. 90. According to this theory, at belief that the revelatory and miraculous power of God, having been absent for more than 400 years, was reinstated among men between circa A.D. 30 and A.D. 90. According to this theory, at the conclusion of the Apostolic Age, these powers were recalled to heaven once again, wherein they await the return of Christ.

Refuting Historical and Logical Arguments for an Age of Apostles

The phrase *Age of the Apostles* is used among dispensationalists and covenant theologians who also link it to a related issue — the closure of the biblical canon. Both camps attempt to use the doctrine of the Age of the Apostles to protect and justify the closure and contents of the New Testament canon. Their rationale is that the end of this apostolic period in church history provided a natural and logical break in revelation. This, in turn, signaled the conclusion of the divinely inspired writings we call the New Testament. There is no need, however, to attribute the conclusion of the canonical process to men, whether by their vote (The New Testament canon had become a reality hundreds of years before any church council ever officially ratified it.), or by the death of all the apostles.

The phrase *Age of the Apostles* and the concept it represents cannot be found in the New Testament. This means the doctrine of the Age of the Apostles and its consequences — the end of revelation and the closure of the canon — are post-New Testament ideas (or revelations). If this is the case, we have a logical contradiction. One cannot logically claim cessation of revelation at the conclusion of the writing of the New Testament while at the same time claiming to receive additional revelation beyond the conclusion of this process.

The cessationist position rests solely on extra-biblical and postbiblical inference. This inference, however, appears to have achieved *canonical status* (authority equal with the Bible) by those who adhere to this position. This is evidenced by the fact the communities of faith that maintain a belief in the Age of Apostles have allowed this concept to inform their *faith* and *conduct*. Since matters of faith and conduct

in Protestant Christianity are to be informed exclusively by divine revelation, this extra-biblical position can be said to have achieved a status previously reserved for the Bible alone. Ironically, in an attempt to preserve the unique status of the Scriptures, the individuals and communities who espouse the cessationist theory have themselves elevated their own extra-biblical revelation to the same status as the Bible, a charge usually leveled at Pentecostals/charismatics.

Proponents of the doctrine of the Age of the Apostles also attempt to buttress their belief by referencing the close of the Old Testament canon. They maintain that revelation and miracles ceased with the last prophet of the Old Testament — which to them is analogous to the relationship of the apostles to the New Testament, revelation, and miracles in the Church Age.

At first glance, this argument appears defensible. On greater scrutiny, however, it also appears to be poorly formulated. First, like the New Testament, the Old Testament canon was determined by *usage* within the community of faith, not the vote of an official body or the life span of any particular individual or individuals. Second, prophecy and miracles are well attested in literature related to the Intertestamental Period, such as Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, early rabbinic literature, and the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Third, historical reports in the New Testament record events that occurred during the Intertestamental Period.

Both Matthew and Luke report revelations, angelic interventions, prophecy, and miracles that predate the conception, birth, and ministry of Jesus. Zechariah received revelation and uttered prophecy (Luke 1:11–20, 67–79). Joseph received supernatural revelation and direction through dreams (Matthew 1:20–24; 2:13, 19–22). Mary received revelation and uttered inspired song (Luke 1:26–38, 46–55). Simeon had received a revelation long before the events surrounding the birth of Jesus and John the Baptist (Luke 2:25, 26). Like the shepherds (Luke 2:8–16), Simeon had received divine direction (verse 27). Both Mary and Elizabeth experienced miraculous conceptions (Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:13, 24, 36, 37, 57). The wise men obtained divine guidance by means of a supernatural sign (Matthew 2:1, 2, 9, 10) and a dream (verse 12). These and many other relevant supernatural events show that in the New Testament divine revelations and miracles were taking place before Jesus' birth and ministry.



Above: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4).

The cessationist position rests on extra-biblical and postbiblical inference given canonical status.

The Early Church believed that God's activity in redemptive history remained constant — from Creation to Incarnation to consummation.

On the basis of these observations, it must be concluded that there was no cessation of the prophetic or the miraculous in the history of Israel prior to the coming of Jesus. This reconsideration of the relevant data not only removes the foundation of the argument for cessation based on Old Testament parallels, but it also argues the opposite.

The Immutability of God, the Sacredness of History, and the Difference Between Inspiration and Canonization

Our God — the God of the Bible, the historical God of Israel — is a God of consistency. He is not capricious or fickle, as pagan deities were often portrayed in ancient mythologies. The God of the Bible is a God of covenant faithfulness. He does not change (Psalm 55:19; 102:27; Isaiah 46:4; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:12), and His Word does not change (Isaiah 40:8). He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). In Him there is “no shadow or change due to turning” (James 1:17, RSV). He deals with man consistently, and His dealings with man display continuity. The present matter is no exception. Since God’s miraculous dealings with His people continued between the Testaments, there is no precedent or logical necessity that requires us to believe He would act any differently at the end of the New Testament.

A discussion of intertestamental developments must also address some issues raised by

referencing the Intertestamental Period. First, all of history is sacred. God was as involved in the lives of His creation during the Intertestamental Period the same way He was at other times. For example, many prophecies contained in the Book of Daniel were fulfilled in the Intertestamental Period. In addition, the New Testament gives examples (cited above) of God’s activity before the inauguration of the New Testament Period. Therefore, God had His hand on the Jewish nation, the tribe of Judah, the clan of Jesse, and a specific branch of the family of David.

It is also evident that God directed the development of this branch even during the Intertestamental Period, and that He eventually caused the Messiah to be born from this specific family tree. That God was at work controlling this process, even in the Intertestamental Period, is evidenced by the inclusion of names from this time in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:13–16; Luke 3:23–27). Evidently, the entirety of this history was important because the Holy Spirit orchestrated the telling of the whole story.

The Holy Spirit made no distinction between *secular* and *sacred* (or *biblical*) history in the genealogies of Jesus recorded by Matthew or Luke. Furthermore, the preservation of these verses by the Early Church and their attitude toward them suggests they believed that God’s activity in redemptive history (including divine orchestration of human history, revelation, and the miraculous) remained constant — from Creation to Incarnation to consummation. The Early Church was a truly Pentecostal church.

Second, we must make a distinction between prophetic activity and canonized Scripture. In many Pentecostal churches today, the authentic voice of prophecy is still heard. But these modern-day prophecies are not equal with Scripture. The biblical canon is no longer open, and such prophecies should not be included in the canon of Scripture. These messages from God to His people are for a particular time, place, and situation. They do not dictate matters of faith and conduct for all people, in all times, and in all places. Furthermore, their legitimacy is to be judged by the standard of the revealed Word of God, the Bible.

The prophetic activity of the Intertestamental Period must be viewed in a similar way. These prophecies represent the needs and pious reflections of the individual communities from whence they were derived. The fact prophecy was one medium of communication is a matter of the historical record. Its literary status as

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“No representation is being made that the quality of pastoral services to be performed is superior to the quality of pastoral services to be performed by others.”

noncanonical, which reflects the God-directed process whereby the canon took shape, is also a matter of historical record. All that remains is to prove that the relationship between the Old Testament and intertestamental prophecy is analogous to the relationship that exists between the New Testament and modern-day prophecy.

Old Testament and New Testament are canonized Scripture. As such, they represent the culmination of a process under the direct guidance of God. Scripture is normative — eternally relevant — and is our only rule for faith and conduct. Intertestamental prophecy was not, and modern-day prophecy is not, considered Scripture. Neither has undergone a divinely directed process of popular, universal usage. Neither is eternally relevant, or normative. Both are conditioned by time, place, and situation, and therefore do not have the intrinsic authority to dictate matters of faith and practice.

In the Intertestamental Period, the community of faith needed the voice of prophecy. Even though it had the Bible (the Old Testament), it needed to hear the prophetic voice of reproof, correction, challenge, hope, encouragement, and call to repentance as it addressed contemporary situations. God in His wisdom and consistency has instilled a similar dynamic in our community of faith. Although we have the Bible (both Old and New Testaments), God continues to invest His church with the voice of prophecy. He has an intimate knowledge of the nature of man (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 103:14; 139; Matthew 7:11; Romans 3:23).

Throughout the ages, man's nature and his need to hear the prophetic voice of God have not changed. Similarly, the nature of God has not changed. He still loves His creation, has a plan for it, and desires to communicate His plan dynamically to every generation.

The Age of the Apostles Versus the Teaching of the New Testament

The New Testament testifies against the theory of an Age of the Apostles, and the cessation of prophecy and other supernatural phenomena. Ephesians 4:11 tells us that God has gifted the church with individuals who function as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Those who contend for an apostolic age and the cessation of the miraculous must be selective with this verse. On one hand, no one would argue that the offices of evangelist, pastor, and teacher have been rendered ineffective. On the other hand, cessationists

must maintain that the offices of apostle and prophet no longer exist because of their charismatic and revelatory nature.

The problem with this position is its purely arbitrary approach. The human and divine authors of this passage intended this list to be taken as a whole. There are no indications that a distinction exists within the list concerning the duration of some gifts as opposed to others. To tamper with, truncate, or draw a line of distinction between any of the elements of this list violates the text.

Paul does, however, place temporal limitations on the entire list. The passage does indicate that all of these offices will ultimately pass away. The question is not, however, *Which?* but, *When?* Verses 12 and 13 clearly address this question. These offices are given “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to:

1. the unity of the faith
2. and the knowledge of the Son of God,
3. to mature manhood,
4. to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (RSV).

No Christian has fully achieved all of these goals. Therefore, all the offices of Ephesians 4:11 are still needed to mature the church. It may be further suggested that the immaturity and inadequacy of the church in the past and present are directly related to the lack of respect and emphasis from which the charismatic gifts have suffered. “The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. ... If one member suffers, all suffer” (1 Corinthians 12:22,26; note that the context refers specifically to the issue under discussion).

A second text to consider is Romans 11:29, “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Obviously, the “gifts” mentioned here are not the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12. In this sense, the immediate context of this passage is not related to the passages cited above. Nevertheless, the basic principle in operation is relevant. Romans 11:29 speaks of the faithfulness and consistency of God's dealings with man. Not only does His immutable nature prevent Him from abrogating His promises to ethnic Israel, His nature also prevents Him from abrogating His promise to bestow the gifts of the Spirit on man throughout the Church Age.

A third passage that requires attention in the present context is Acts 2:39. In this first Christian sermon, in an eschatologically charged situation, Peter declared that God's promise to



Above: Paul the Apostle in prison writing his epistle to the Ephesians.

Although we have both the Old and New Testaments, God continues to invest His church with the voice of prophecy.



The immaturity and inadequacy of the church are directly related to the lack of respect and emphasis from which the charismatic gifts have suffered.

give the Holy Spirit — complete with the phenomena that accompany His residence within a human being — “is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him” (RSV, italics added). This verse has been a *locus classicus* for the Pentecostal position. The text suggests that at the beginning of the Church Age, at the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the manifestations He inspires, Peter declared that this experience is to be the norm for the entirety of the Church Age. By specifically mentioning, in sequence, the present generation, the next generation, and all future generations, Peter gives explicit apostolic evidence for a belief in the relevance of this promise for all generations.

A fourth but more obscure passage that is nonetheless important to a well-rounded biblical approach is 1 Corinthians 1:7. Paul noted that the members of the Corinthian church have been “enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge” (1 Corinthians 1:5, NASB).² The truth of the gospel had been miraculously “confirmed” among them “so that you are not lacking in any [spiritual] gift” (verses 6,7, NASB).

The end of verse 7 requires our attention. Paul said the Corinthians were being enriched, having the gospel miraculously confirmed among them, and enjoying every spiritual gift — *but for a specific time period* — “as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (RSV). What Paul has in view is the same eschatological timetable he put forth in Ephesians 4:13 and 1 Corinthians 13:10–12. (A discussion of this text is below.) The charismatic gifts of the Spirit will come to an end. This end is not at the conclusion of the Age of the Apostles or at any other point in human history. The cessation of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit will occur when time is no more — when the King returns and the present world order is brought to an end. At this time, evangelistic efforts will cease. Sin and sickness will be a part of the past. Revelatory gifts will not be needed because we will have immediate, unbroken fellowship with the divine — “face to face” (1 Corinthians 13:12; compare 1 John 3:2). Even the gifts of supernatural knowledge will lose their usefulness in this blessed state, because at the return of

Christ, we “will know fully, even as [we] have been fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12, RSV).

A final Pauline text that has possibly been the most neglected of all appears in 2 Corinthians 3:3–11. In this passage, the apostle is comparing the splendor of the *dispensation of the law* with that of the *dispensation of the Spirit*. He argues, “Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendor that the Israelites could not look at Moses’ face because of its brightness, *fading as this was, will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendor?* For if there was splendor in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of righteousness must far exceed it in splendor. ... For if what faded away came with splendor, *what is permanent must have much more splendor*” (2 Corinthians 3:7–9, 11, RSV, italics added).

Paul draws several interesting parallels between the two dispensations. The only one of concern in the present discussion, however, is the distinction between the temporary or “fading” splendor of the dispensation of the law with the greater splendor of the dispensation of the Spirit, which he says is “permanent.” Again, Paul gives evidence of an eschatology/pneumatology that views the baptism in the Spirit, and the gifts that this brings, as being permanent fixtures in the church until the return of Christ.

Based on the statements of Peter and Paul, we can conclude that if there ever was an Age of the Apostles, the church must still be in it.

In this light, it is hard to imagine a scenario such as the one required by the Age of the Apostles theory. Consider Timothy. Paul charged Timothy with the responsibility of pastoring the church at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). Timothy was specially empowered by God when Paul and the elders laid hands on him (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). Imagine Timothy, busy fulfilling his pastoral duties, praying for a person’s healing or exorcising a demon from someone’s only child. Now imagine that in Ephesus (according to Early Church tradition), at that moment, the aged apostle John, the last of the inner circle, breathed his final breath and went to his heavenly reward. Would God arbitrarily revoke the power to work wonders that He had given to Timothy and stop a miracle in progress? Could Timothy give an acceptable, biblical explanation to this needy individual as to why the person he prayed for the moment before was healed or delivered but this second person was not? How would this affect the

witness of the local church? Imagine how this would negatively impact the ministry God had entrusted to Timothy. On a personal level, he would no longer be able to respond in obedience to the command he was given by divine inspiration, “rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:6, RSV).

Obviously, this scenario is untenable. It goes against the nature of God, who is consistent, faithful, unchanging, and ever merciful to those in need. It runs contrary to the Word of God, which as we have argued, lends its exclusive support to the concept of *continuation*, while saying nothing in support of *cessation*. Thank God that the church relies not on the fleeting, fragile, physical condition of an apostle for its power, but on the eternal, resurrected Jesus, who “always lives to make intercession for” us (Hebrews 7:25, RSV).

New Testament Texts Used Inappropriately To Support the Age of the Apostles / Cessationism

Proponents of cessation theories often refer to 1 Corinthians 13:10, “But when the perfect is come, the imperfect will pass away” (RSV). “The perfect” does not refer to the New Testament, as they claim, but to the return of Jesus, as is clear from verse 12. There is no need for further argument beyond that of context. It is interesting, however, to note that the gender of “the perfect” (*teleion*) is neuter, whereas the word translated “testament” (*diatheke*) in other places is feminine. Had Paul intended the reader to understand that this adjective-used-as-a-noun represented the New Testament, he would have placed “the perfect” in the same gender — feminine.

Likewise, 1 Corinthians 15:8, “Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me” (RSV), does not indicate the end of revelation or the close of the canon. Paul continued to receive revelation after the Damascus Road experience. Others in the New Testament received revelation after Jesus appeared to Paul. Furthermore, the entire New Testament was inspired by the Holy Spirit *after* Paul’s Damascus Road encounter with Christ. To what, then, does this statement refer? Paul is only stating that of those men referred to as apostles, he was the last to see the resurrected Christ.

Hebrews 1:1,2 is another popular proof text for cessationists. One only needs, however,



Above: Peter’s miraculous deliverance from prison (Acts 12:6–11).

Based on the statements of Peter and Paul, we can conclude that if there ever was an Age of the Apostles, the church must still be in it.

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to point out that the “days” are “last,” not the revelation of Jesus in the flesh. Otherwise, the author would be breaking his own rule by attempting to communicate revelation after the earthly revelation of Christ.

Revelation 22:18,19 is a final proof text employed by proponents of cessation. In this verse believers are commanded not to add to or take away from “the words of the book of this prophecy” (RSV). Cessationists argue that since the Book of Revelation comes at the end of canonical revelation, this passage prohibits any further revelation. The problems with this interpretation are multiple. First, the author tells us specifically what this prohibition refers to. He is not speaking in general terms, but is referring to his words only — “*this prophecy*” (italics added). Second, the author could not have had the entire New Testament in mind, since it had yet to take shape. Thus, authorial intent rules out this line of reasoning. Third, other books include similar prohibitions. One example is Deuteronomy 12:32. Does this verse mean that further revelation beyond the Book of Deuteronomy is illegitimate? Let’s hope not.

Conclusion

Three important applications can be drawn from this article. First, no historical analogies or passages in the Bible offer a legitimate argument to support an Age of the Apostles or the cessation of the miraculous. Second, the nature of God, the unified message of Scripture, and the consistently needy nature of fallen man argue for continuation of the miraculous in today’s world. Third, today’s church is on firm biblical ground when it seeks empowerment for more effective service to God through the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. We have every reason to seek God for divine guidance, healing, protection, and provision. In this day of unprecedented need and opportunity, “Rekindle the gift of God that is within you” (2 Timothy 1:6). 🌀

NOTES

1. The Bible text designated RSV is from The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version. Copyright 1946, 1952, 1959, 1973 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
2. Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission (www.Lockman.org).

Pop the Red Pill



The key to unforgettable preaching is packaging truth in ways that are biblically sound and culturally relevant.

A few months ago I was invited to speak at a twenty-something conference. I was driving north on Interstate 95 listening to a CD when I heard something totally deflating for anyone who is a preacher by trade: "Studies indicate that we forget 95 percent of what we hear within 3 days."

I felt like doing an illegal U-turn and driving home. I remember praying this prayer at 70 mph (with my eyes open): "God, I do not want to invest my time and energy saying things that people are going to forget. Help me say things in unforgettable ways."

Unforgettable.

Isn't the holy grail of preaching to speak in such an anointed way that hearers not only remember, but they also cannot forget?

I have a simple conviction: The most important truths ought to be communicated in the most unforgettable ways.

There is a riveting scene in the blockbuster movie *The Matrix* where Neo meets Morpheus for the first time. Morpheus gives Neo a choice between two pills: "You take the blue pill and

the story ends. You wake up in your bed and you believe whatever you want to believe."

Unfortunately, that is what happens with most messages in most churches on most Sundays. People pop the blue pill. They may be inspired, convicted, or challenged by a message, but they go to bed Sunday night; and, when they get up Monday morning, they cannot remember a single word you said.

But Morpheus gives Neo another option: "You take the red pill and you stay in wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes."

That is the goal. Get people to pop the red pill and go down the rabbit hole of faith.

Brand Truth

Here is my philosophy of preaching in six words: *Say old things in new ways.*

Truth is kaleidoscopic. It is multilayered and multidimensional. Sometimes a new angle on an ancient truth can result in *metanoia* — a paradigm shift.

I recently preached a series entitled *The Physics of Faith*. Each message revolved around a law of physics familiar to anyone who has taken Physics 101. I used Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, Bell's Theorem, and the Second Law of Thermodynamics to frame spiritual truth. I believe every *ology* is a branch of theology. The way we add depth perception to our preaching is by cross-pollinating with different disciplines. If all truth is God's truth, we need to redeem scientific research, leadership theory, and cultural trends and use them to serve God's purposes.

An old, but real adage is: location, location, location. In the realm of communication, it is: metaphor, metaphor, metaphor.

In *De Poetica*, Aristotle claimed: "The greatest thing by far is to be the master of metaphor." Jesus set the standard. He used agrarian metaphors to frame truth because He knew that most of His listeners spent most of their day in the fields. He used familiar metaphors to brand truth. We call them parables.



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A Picture Is Worth ...

We try to brand every message series with an organizing metaphor. The organizing metaphor for our last series, *On Mission*, was a customized passport that was so authentic it could probably have gotten you through customs. For our next series, *Wired*, we will use wireless technology to talk about increasing spiritual bandwidth. We kicked off 2007 with a series called *Fuel*. We are currently buying gas station relics for staging at our coffeehouse on Capitol Hill.

The key to branding a message series is redeeming metaphors that are on the frontal lobe of cultural consciousness. A few years ago, OnStar launched its marketing campaign in the Washington, D.C., market. It seemed I could not turn on my radio without hearing the tag line: "Always There. Always Ready." We decided to call our series on the Holy Spirit *OnStar Onboard*. I even borrowed a Ford Explorer with OnStar onboard and we shot the series trailer driving around Washington, D.C., talking to an OnStar operator.

Who said you have to preach from behind a pulpit? Jesus did most of His preaching at the beach or on the mountain. We are currently experimenting with off-site preaching that is shot on location and preproduced as a short film. Why not? Especially since our church meets in a movie theater. Our theater screens double as postmodern stained glass. They enable us to communicate truth in moving pictures.

The brain is able to process print on a page at a rate of about a hundred bits per second. A picture is processed at about a billion bits per second. That means a picture is not worth a thousand words. A picture is worth 10 million words.

Red Pill Ideas

Every week I convert my weekend message into an Evotional and e-mail it to several thousand subscribers (<http://www.evotional.com>). The evotional increases the retention rate of NCCers by giving them a double dose. We have also begun podcasting (<http://www.theaterchurch.com>), and I use my blog (<http://www.markbatterson.com>) to supplement my weekend messages.

MARK BATTERSON, Washington, D.C.



Core Convictions

Three core convictions are the driving engine behind National Community Church:

- **C1:** The church ought to be the most creative place on the planet.
- **C2:** The greatest message deserves the greatest marketing.
- **C3:** The church is called to compete in the marketplace of ideas.

MARK BATTERSON, Washington, D.C.



Irrelevance Is Irreverence

The key to unforgettable preaching is packaging truth in ways that are biblically sound and culturally relevant. Let me borrow from the parable of the wineskins. Think of biblical exegesis as the wine. Think of cultural relevance as the wineskin. If you have one without the other, you will not quench anyone's thirst. You need the substance (biblical exegesis) and the container (cultural relevance).

If we divorce biblical exegesis and cultural exegesis, we end up with dysfunctional truth that does not help anyone. Either we answer questions no one is asking, or we give the wrong answers.

National Community Church has a core value: Irrelevance is irreverence. God is not just omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. He is also omnirelevant. He knows the number of hairs on our head. He knows our every need before we verbalize it, and He speaks more than 6 billion dialects. No one is more relevant than God, so anything less than relevance is irrelevance. Relevance equals reverence. Cultural relevance does not mean dumbing down or watering down the truth, but incarnating timeless truth in timely ways.

Two of our hardest hitting series each year are two of the most relevant: *God @ the Billboards* and *God @ the Box Office*. The 60 percent of Americans who do not attend church get their theology from movies and music. So we redeem popular songs and popular movies by juxtaposing them with Scripture. We roll out the red carpet during *God @ the Box Office* and treat every NCCer like an Oscar nominee.

Red carpet treatment does not hurt when your goal is getting people to pop the red pill. 🍷



God is not just omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. He is also omnirelevant.

Athanasius and Nicea

Before Athanasius, Nicean orthodoxy was assumed; afterward, it was clearly spelled out.

In A.D. 325, the Roman emperor Constantine (A.D. 272–336) convened what Philip Schaff calls “the most important event of the fourth century.”¹

This event — the first ecumenical council of the Christian church — would permanently shape the history of the Western World.

Constantine invited all of the nearly 2,000 bishops in the Roman Empire to a council in the little resort town of Nicea in Western Turkey. The emperor guaranteed all travel expenses, including board and room for each bishop, two elders, and three attendants. Constantine’s invitation was accepted by 318 bishops.

These bishops met for 3 months. No minutes from their meetings have survived, but their efforts produced the first draft of the Nicean Creed still used by many churches today. Of the 318 bishops attending, 316 signed the Nicean document. Two abstained. It was the first time Christian leaders signed an official document.

The idea of an ecumenical council was new and radical. Since the death of Christ, Christianity had been reviled. The most recent period of persecution had ended around A.D. 310. Because of this persecution, many bishops who came to Nicea had scars or missing eyes and limbs testifying to their suffering.

In A.D. 312, at the battle of Milvian Bridge, Christ’s cross appeared to Constantine in a vision. In A.D. 313, the Edict of Milan granted religious toleration to all Christians. By a decade later, the emperor had decided to use the Christian religion to unify his far-flung empire.

Constantine’s plan faced one obstacle: The Christians were divided. Since A.D. 313, a long-simmering debate concerning the nature of Christ had boiled to the surface, and it threatened the emperor’s plan. Was Christ truly God or

was He godlike; a created being or something less than deity? This was the issue. To resolve it, Constantine convened Nicea.

To understand what happened at Nicea, we need to examine the lives of three men, Arius, Alexander, and Athanasius.

Arius, Elder of Alexandria

Arius was born circa A.D. 260.² He was “a man of tall stature, of austere countenance and ascetic life. He had charming manners and went about from house to house with his sleeveless tunic and scanty cloak, popular especially among women.”³ Others describe Arius as “a man of ascetic character, pure morals, and decided convictions.”⁴ Pride is the fertile soil in which heresy usually thrives. Schaff adds the telling details: He was an “austere, fascinating man, but *proud, artful, restless, and disputatious*” (italics mine).⁵

Arius was a priest in the church at Alexandria, the prestigious city at the mouth of the Nile, the second city in Christendom. A popular and winsome preacher, his teaching gained widespread interest from friends and foes alike. The problem was his teaching’s content.

Most Christians adhered to the doctrine of Christ’s full divinity, and no one had contested this doctrine. As a result, the church had not formally defined what it believed about Christ’s nature.

Arius’ trouble started when his teaching concerning Christ became contrary to the teachings of the church (after A.D. 310). Almost no written record remains of Arius’ thoughts or ideas. We learn about his teaching from the written reports of those who knew him.

Like many bishops and priests of his day, Arius was uncertain about the nature of Christ. He feared polytheism and could not reconcile one God with three Persons. Specifically, Arius taught: First, that the Son and the Father were not of the same essence; second, that the Son was a created being; and third, that even though He was as the Creator of the worlds,



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and therefore must have existed before them, there was a time when He did not exist.⁶

This teaching brought him into direct contact with his superior, Alexander, bishop of Alexandria (A.D. 313–328). Alexander summoned Arius before his peers to correct his theology, but Arius would not yield. Next Alexander convened a council of nearly 100 bishops from the greater Egyptian area. They weighed Arius' teaching, excommunicated him, and banished him from the Egyptian church.

Arius, however, knew of Eastern bishops who sympathized with his teaching. He went around his Egyptian brothers and contacted Eusebius of Nicomedia (Western Turkey), and Eusebius of Caesarea (Judea). Within a few years the controversy had gone public.

The nature of Christ became the hottest debate of the fourth century. "In Constantinople," notes Schaff, "all classes, even mechanics, bankers, frippers, market women, and runaway slaves took lively part in the questions *Homousion*⁷ and subordination, of the begotten and unbegotten."⁸

When Constantine invited the bishops to Nicea, he also invited Arius.

Alexander and Athanasius

Alexander, a wise and gentle man, clung tenaciously to the orthodox, biblical formula of Christ's full divinity and humanity.

Around A.D. 318, a precocious youth named Athanasius came to Alexander's attention. Athanasius was born between A.D. 295 and 300. He was short and stocky, but what he lacked in physical appearance he made up for in fervent piety, holiness of life, penetrating intellect, and unusual gifts of leadership. In A.D. 321, on behalf of Bishop Alexander, Athanasius wrote the excommunication statement that banished Arius.⁹

Alexander quickly perceived Athanasius' gifts. He began grooming the youth to replace him. When Alexander sailed for Nicea in A.D. 325, his young lieutenant sailed with him. At Nicea, Alexander, with the young Athanasius by his side, took a strong stand for Christ's full divinity, signed the new creed, and then sailed for home. It appeared all was settled, but matters were to prove more complicated.

In A.D. 326, Alexander died. On his deathbed, he appointed Athanasius as his successor. Because of his youth and the prominence of the position, there was vigorous debate over the young man's qualifications. He was ordained bishop of Alexandria in A.D. 328, a position he held until his death in A.D. 373.

Reaction to Nicea

The victory at Nicea was hollow. All but two bishops had signed the Nicene Creed, but many, it turned out, signed dishonestly. They signed because they feared the emperor. They had little conviction about the importance of the doctrine.

Meanwhile Constantine continued to receive counsel from Eusebius of Nicomedia who supported the views of Arius. Slowly, Constantine weakened. By A.D. 335, 9 years after Nicea, Eusebius had convinced Constantine to command Athanasius to readmit Arius to communion.

Unlike his peers, Athanasius perceived the importance of sound doctrine concerning Christ's nature. He saw the crucial issue: If Christ were not God, men were not saved. Since sin is an infinite offense to God, only a sacrifice of infinite value — God himself — would be sufficient to propitiate the wrath of God and atone for sin.

Athanasius understood the holiness of God and the sinfulness man. He was one of the first to see that salvation depended on a right formulation of Christ's nature. Because of the doctrine's importance, Athanasius defied the emperor and refused to reinstate Arius. He spent the rest of his life defending and suffering for the doctrine of Christ's divinity.

Constantine did not appreciate Athanasius' stubbornness. In A.D. 335, Constantine banished Athanasius to northern Gaul (modern France). The intellectual turmoil that precipitated Nicea was back. Schaff notes that "the highways were covered with galloping bishops."¹⁰

In A.D. 336, Constantine died and was replaced by his son, Constantius II (A.D. 317–61). Constantius was in full agreement with Eusebius and the growing Arian party. Under political pressure from Constantius, many



The nature of Christ became the hottest debate of the fourth century.



Theological controversy is often a sign of spiritual life. God uses debate to sift the wheat from the chaff.

bishops capitulated to the Arian view of Christ's nature. The Nicean victory that seemed sure and complete only 10 years prior was now in full retreat. Athanasius stepped into the fray and contended earnestly and persistently for orthodoxy. He came into direct conflict with Constantius and the new Arian majority.

The Nicean Council had asked the Alexandrian church to set the date for Easter each year. Attached to this announcement sent to all bishops was a Paschal letter from Athanasius. He used it to cajole, persuade, and convince his readers to stand on orthodoxy.

Because of Athanasius' many efforts, Constantius repeated his father's actions and banished Athanasius, first to Rome for 6 years, and then to the Egyptian desert for 7 years. Athanasius suffered greatly for upholding the truth.

Meanwhile, God used this evil for good. Athanasius used his banishments to travel, teach, and broadcast the truth in far-flung corners of the Roman Empire. Over time, his influence was great.

Athanasius *Contra Mundum*

In A.D. 373, Athanasius died not knowing if the orthodoxy, for which he spent his life, would prevail. Many believed he had wasted his life. The controversy raged on for another decade, but slowly orthodoxy gained the upper hand.

In A.D. 381, 56 years after Nicea and 8 years after Athanasius' death, the emperor called a second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople. By this time the perseverance and insights of Athanasius were impacting the church. Constantinople reaffirmed the Orthodox Trinitarian formula. With minor exceptions, this formula has continued to be our understanding of Christ's nature.

The Roman church awarded Athanasius two titles. The first was *Contra Mundum*, Latin for "against the world." He stood for the truth when the world stood against him. He was a man of great courage, fortitude, and insight. When the world was going left, Athanasius went right.

Second, the church dubbed him "The father of Orthodoxy." Before, Nicean orthodoxy was assumed; afterward, it was clearly spelled out. Athanasius spent his life defending and vindicating truth.

S.J. Mikolaski notes that Athanasius "was a

clear-minded and skilled theologian, a prolific writer with a journalist's instinct for the power of the pen, and a devout Christian — which endeared him to the large Christian public of Alexandria and the vast majority of the clergy and monks of Egypt. ... Almost single-handedly Athanasius saved the Church from pagan intellectualism."¹¹

Speaking of the fourth century, Philip Schaff gives Athanasius this high compliment: He "is the theological and ecclesiastical center, as his senior contemporary Constantine is the political and secular, about which the Nicene age revolves."¹²

Application

What can we learn from Nicea and Athanasius?

First, theological debate is good. Most people avoid controversy, but controversy has been the lifeblood of the church. Throughout history, theological debate has usually followed the release of God's power; and, often the greater the power, the greater the disagreement. Theological controversy is often a sign of spiritual life. God uses debate to sift the wheat from the chaff.

"Some controversy is crucial for the sake of life-giving truth," notes John Piper. "Running from it is a sign of cowardice but enjoying it is usually a sign of pride. Some necessary tasks are sad, and even victory is not without tears — unless there is pride. ... Historically, controversies that have swirled around the meaning and implications of the gospel, far from damaging the Church, have contributed to its vitality. Like a refiner's fire, intense theological debate has resulted in clarified belief, common vision, and invigorated ministry."¹³

Gresham Machen (1881–1937), a man embroiled in great controversy, wrote, "In the sphere of religion, as in other spheres, the things about which men are agreed are apt to be the things that are least worth holding; the really important things are the things about which men will fight."¹⁴

Second, truth is not defined by majority opinion. Crowds are often wrong. For decades Athanasius was in the minority, but that did not make him wrong. It takes great courage and conviction to persevere when most people disagree with you. Only daily immersion in Scripture and prayer will provide the power to prevail.

Third, theology matters. Not all theological issues matter as much as the assertion of Christ's divinity, but major doctrines are worth living and dying for. The Trinity, substitutionary atonement, justification by faith alone, the inerrancy of Scripture, the Incarnation, and Original Sin are a few such doctrines.

Fourth, theological conflict will never cease in this fallen world. Sin influences our intellects and ideas, and infects our wills. Until Christ returns, this world will remain a spiritual Normandy. History is a battleground of contending ideas. Each generation must contend again for basic truths.

Fifth, God protects His church. Why were men like Alexander and Athanasius present at Nicea? Why did the fourth-century majority opinion not prevail? Because "the gates of hell" will "not prevail against" Christ's church (Matthew 16:18, KJV). The Holy Spirit gives the Church stalwart men who will stand for the truth when the day is evil. For that we give God praise, honor, and glory.

History is His Story. 🌀

NOTES

1. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2006), 631.
2. The birth dates of many men in this article, and other dates, are contested. Scholars date Arius' birth between A.D. 250 and 260.
3. Elesha Coffman, "Saints and Heretics," *Christian History Magazine* 85, (2005): 85.
4. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy, ed., *A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 41.
5. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, 620.
6. Wace and Piercy, *A Dictionary of Early Christian Biography*, 41.
7. The Greek word *Homousion* means "one substance" or "same in essence" when comparing Christ with His Father.
8. Schaff, vol. 3, 601.
9. John Piper, *Contending for Our All* (Wheaton, Crossway, 2006), 44.
10. Schaff, vol. 3, 632.
11. J.D. Douglas, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 81.
12. Schaff, vol. 3, 885.
13. Piper, *Contending for Our All*, 17, 30. Piper is quoting Parker Williamson, *Standing Firm: Reclaiming Christian Faith in Times of Controversy* (Springfield, Pa.: PLC Publications, 1996), 2.
14. J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1923), 1,2.

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"I Have Trouble Saying No!"



When certain limits are crossed, our capacity to function quickly deteriorates.

Q I feel overwhelmed by the many responsibilities I have in my personal and church life. I often feel exhausted and have little joy in ministry. I hate to say no, especially when I am capable of doing what is needed; and, I believe people expect me to do it. Lately I have been dropping the ball and half-heartedly doing things. What can I do?

A The issue this question raises is the tension between managing your own life versus letting felt needs and other people manage it. While the second option may bring approval and admiration, it sets us up for burnout and discouragement.

We all have limitations. Our time, energy, and stamina are all limited. When these limits are crossed, our capacity to function quickly deteriorates. Imagine a small table in my office that is a catchall for items I am not yet ready to put away. Gradually the pile builds as I add pieces of paper, books, coffee mugs, and miscellaneous items. If I keep adding more items without regarding the limits of the table's strength, it will eventually collapse. When the table crashes, it happens quickly and disaster ensues.

We often disregard our personal limits, or worse still, we let others determine where they should be. When our collapse comes, we are often surprised and bewildered. The negative effects can be felt spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Saying no is not so much about declining opportunities as it is about prioritizing responsibilities. Every time you agree to anything that requires your time or attention, you limit yourself in another area. When you say yes to dropping everything and meeting with a person in crisis, you are saying no to whatever you were going to do before the phone call came. You may be saying no to having dinner with your family or spending quiet time with the Lord. God requires us to make wise choices, keeping in mind the cost of each commitment.

Each person has a different measure of stamina, energy, and resilience. Understanding your limits is an important part of managing your life. Ask yourself: *Is it feasible for me to do this? Can I freely say yes because I believe this is God's will for me? In light of the other responsibilities I have, how likely is this to negatively impact other things I am responsible for?*

But what about the need? Who will fill it? What about people in crisis? If I say no, what will become of them? What if they resent me for failing them? These are compelling questions. If we consider these from a narrow



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viewpoint, our logic might be: *This person has a need. They have asked me for help. I am able to provide help (even though it will cost me in other areas). Therefore, it seems that the Christian thing to do is respond.*

The difficulty with this logic is that it makes you responsible for the outcome. I would suggest that this might be pride in a subtle form. The thinking is: *I am the solution for this person's need. If I do not step in, they will fail.*

Now let's broaden our perspective by looking at ministry opportunities from an eternal perspective: A person has a need. She has asked me for help. *What will it cost me to provide that help? Does God want me to prioritize my life to include this opportunity in what He has already called me to do? If He does, He will help me. If He does not, He will take responsibility for the other person's need by providing another means.* This way of

thinking removes the responsibility from you and requires that God be responsible for the outcome.

Doing things because we fear that someone will be unhappy, angry, or rejecting is not proper motivation. We need to feel called to serve. God makes a distinction between these two motivations as well. God's will for His children is not a burden. If we live our lives to please people, we are in for many ups and downs. If we live our lives to please God, we can live to our fullest potential without being overwhelmed.

For further reading on this topic, I suggest *Boundaries* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend. 📖

If you have questions you would like Gabriele to answer, e-mail them to: enrichmentjournal@ag.org. You can also mail your questions to: Q&A For Pastors' Wives, *Enrichment* journal, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

Saying no is not so much about declining opportunities as it is about prioritizing responsibilities.

What If Jesus Were Black?



Our efforts to bridge racial barriers, develop sincere cross-racial friendships, and clearly explain Jesus' teaching on this theme can help open hearts.

Have you ever felt nauseous about an impending ministry opportunity? If so, maybe you can identify with what I was feeling.

I found a college course on African-American history both academically and personally challenging. Our professor was African-American. He seemed to feel that white Christians caused just about every problem African-Americans had suffered throughout history.

I agreed that so-called Christians too often had terrible track records in race relations. The Ku Klux Klan was infamous for using biblical symbols and burning crosses. Some pastors even wrote books justifying slavery. All of this offended me because it went against my sense of racial equality and justice. Racism made my blood boil.

Two years earlier, a friend had brought an African-American student to a church I attended near our campus in North Carolina. The next Sunday, the pastor announced that because of last week's racial incident (the attendance of an African-American), church leaders had voted to maintain their longstanding policy of racial segregation. Thereafter, any African-Americans attending would be handed a note explaining the policy and would be asked not to return. I was outraged and left the church.

In our African-American history class, from my front-row seat beside my roommate, I tried to communicate that racist Christians were not really following Christ. They might be church members who had never come to personal faith, hypocritical believers who chose not to follow Jesus, or dedicated believers who were blind to racial insensitivities in their words or actions. Class discussions were lively.

One morning late in the term the professor was being particularly pointed in his remarks about

white Christians. As he enumerated various problems in African-American history that were due to the influence of white Christians, he would gesture toward me.

His intentions were obvious. I prayed silently; then raised my hand. "Professor," I addressed him politely, "I fear that once again you are not criticizing true Christianity, but rather a caricature of it. Would you be willing to let me take a class period to present a biblical perspective on racism?"

"Oh, so you want equal time, do you?" he replied somewhat snidely.

Open-Minded Approach

I opened the notes I had taken on the first day of class and read him a statement he had made. A campus minister had told me if a professor ever made such a statement, I should write it down and date it. "Professor, on this date, you said: 'We want to be open-minded in this class and consider all viewpoints.' It seems an historical Christian perspective has been lacking on



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this issue." I was trying to be tactful. What could he do? He gave me the last class meeting.

I taught the last class session I attended as an undergraduate. I was not the perfect picture of peace and serenity going into that presentation. My knees were not knocking together; they were missing each other. I lost my breakfast three times before the class began ... not in front of the class, fortunately. In retrospect, I had forgotten the role of the Holy Spirit. I had done my homework, but I was anxious that I might forget an answer when I needed it.

During my presentation I explained that Jesus and His early followers were not racists, that some have distorted the Bible to support racism, and racists followed neither Jesus' example nor His teaching. I illustrated racial reconciliation through Christ, and I handled student questions as best I could.

As the class neared its end, the professor rose from the back of the room and walked slowly to the front. "This has been interesting," he commented. "I feel like King Agrippa in the Book of Acts when he said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian' " (Acts 26:28, NKJV).¹ Surprised, I wondered what was coming next. "Now, as Agrippa did with Paul," he continued, "let us proceed with your execution."

I had relaxed my mind a bit because I thought my part was over. Now he was about to ask me a question as we both stood before the class. I needed to focus.

"What would you do," he asked, "if you got to heaven and discovered that Jesus' skin were black?" I had not prepared for that question. In my 3 years as a believer, I may have heard someone answer that question before, but I was not aware of the answer at that moment.

Black, White, or ... ?

God's Holy Spirit brought an answer to my mind: "Professor," I said, "Jesus was of Semitic descent, and His skin pigmentation was probably closer to yours than to mine. But the important thing is not whether His skin was black or white but that His blood was red, and He shed His blood so we could be forgiven of our sins."

As we both stood there, he ignored my response, turned to the students, and began to discuss the final exam. I quietly took a seat.

I cannot declare that any came to Christ from that class. But I know that students heard the gospel, and some indicated they respected

me for presenting a biblical perspective. One friend, not a believer, told me, "This is probably the toughest class in the university for such a presentation." And the encounter taught me some valuable lessons for ministry.

Lessons for Communicating in Secular Universities

How might this story relate to your outreach for Christ? Consider some lessons I learned.

Racial reconciliation is a powerful theme that can be used to present God's truth

Racial and ethnic strife abounds. Jesus modeled and taught love and harmony amid cultural and social diversity. Our efforts to bridge racial barriers, develop sincere cross-racial friendships, and clearly explain Jesus' teaching on this theme can help open hearts. I had sought to connect with my classmates by example and precept, both inside and outside of class. I was not always successful, but opportunities like the one presented in this class helped sow seeds.

Love your adversaries

Not everyone will appreciate your bridge-building efforts. Some of my classmates were open or sympathetic; some scoffed. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:27,28, NASB).² It was not always easy for me to have a loving attitude toward people who opposed my convictions and who could be quite disrespectful. I learned I needed to love them anyway, with the Holy Spirit's power.

Engage the academic community

Your students spend a significant part of their academic career in class. Ask if you can join them in class sometime. Learn about what they are studying and suggest biblical perspectives on questions that puzzle them. Meet their professors. Take a professor to lunch. It would have been good for me to have dropped by my African-American history professor's office more frequently — perhaps merely to interact on topics of mutual academic interest — to create friendly interaction that was less charged than some of our classroom encounters.

Take risks and trust God for courage

Ripe fruit is often out on the end of the limb. Once I saw God could take care of me in front

*Once I saw
God could take
care of me
in front of a
somewhat hostile
audience,
I felt emboldened
to continue.*

*Not everyone
will appreciate
your bridge-
building efforts.*

of a somewhat hostile audience, I felt emboldened to continue. This assurance helped empower me to speak in hundreds of university classes across the United States and worldwide. I do not always have perfect peace, but the knowledge that God has sustained me in the past gives me confidence that He will sustain me in the future.

Trust the Holy Spirit to give you the words you need

My natural tendency is to thoroughly prepare. Sometimes I need to be reminded to trust the Spirit to bring to my mind what I need when I need it. Jesus gave His disciples wise advice about speaking in tight spots: "When you are arrested, don't worry about what to say in your defense, because you will be given the right words at the right time. For it won't be you doing the talking — it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:19,20, NLT).³

Encourage classroom outreach

Your students' faith will soar when they communicate Christ in their classrooms. Encourage

them to be good students, but equip them to tactfully and lovingly answer objections to the faith. Skeptics in their classrooms need Jesus. I know. I was one.

Students can present biblical perspectives in class discussions, speeches, or term papers. With permission, they can announce a public campus lecture or bring in a Christian film or speaker to present in class. They can share Christ individually with classmates after class. Imagine if your disciples were properly trained and motivated to present Christ in some way in each of their classes each term. How many students on your campus would be hearing of Christ? 🙏

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Sermon Seeds



God's Special Creation

GARY R. ALLEN, Nixa, Missouri

TEXT: Genesis 2:18-23; Exodus 2:1-10; Proverbs 1:8

INTRODUCTION

God created the heavens, the earth, and the animals, but man and woman were His crowning act of creation.

MESSAGE

1. A special place.

- Woman is different from man, not inferior.
- There is a difference in equality and sameness.
- Woman is a complement to man; she enhances.
- God has a special place for each young woman and each wife.

2. A special love.

- God has a special love for all women.
- God gives women the ability to love in a special way.
- God has a special place for the mother and the childless.
- God has a special love and strength for the widow.

3. A special power.

- Jesus included women in His ministry.
- Women were present and part of Acts 2.
- God has poured His power on both men and women just as Joel prophesied.
- God has a special power for the divorced and single parent.

4. A special reward.

- Being a woman, wife, mother, lover, and friend is a great responsibility.
- Do not give up doing what is right and good.
- There is a special reward for you now and in the life to come.

CONCLUSION

You are special. You are even more special when you make a special place in your life for Jesus.

Turn Your Tragedies into Triumphs

JAY HERNDON, Burlingame, California

TEXT: Joshua 8:1-30

INTRODUCTION

Even though the Ai defeat was a terrible tragedy, God instructed

Joshua to use Israel's failure to its advantage by setting an ambush. This story is one of the clearest illustrations in Scripture of how God can turn our tragedies into triumphs.

God wants to transform our losses into wins, but the transformation is not automatic. Many people experience misfortune and never recover from it. Instead, we must cooperate with God's activity if we expect to benefit from His healing power.

These two steps given in acronym form will help you cooperate with the transforming power of God:

- Acknowledge.
- Integrate.

MESSAGE

1. Acknowledge your tragedy.

- Joshua would not have been able to turn the defeat of Ai into a victory if he had looked at it as a minor mishap. "Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads" (Joshua 7:6, NASB).¹
- People must honestly acknowledge what has transpired in their lives before they can benefit from it. Many people choose to rush past tragedy, ignore it, or treat it like it is not a tragedy at all. When something bad happens, admit that it is bad. Do not paste on a smile or pretend things are okay.
- Once Joshua acknowledged the situation, he was free to correct the fault. Furthermore, Joshua was quick to correct the fault. Not every tragedy has a fault, but some do. People may need to take some responsibility and do some cleansing.

2. Integrate the event into your life.

- Joshua gave the event a name that would live on in Hebrew lore, "The Valley of Achor" (Joshua 7:26). He did not ask people to forget it. Instead, he used the failure to set up a new victory.
- People must integrate their tragedies into their lives to benefit from them. Learn from them; use them.

CONCLUSION

- God promised to restore the Valley of Achor for His people (Isaiah 65:10; Hosea 2:15).
- God also promises to turn your tragedies into triumphs (Romans 8:28).

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Compassion That Makes a Difference

GREG PERSONS, West Plains, Missouri

TEXT: Matthew 9:36; Mark 1:40,41; Luke 10:30-35; Jude 22

INTRODUCTION

- Some things stir our emotions and others do not.
- Our emotions are stirred because of the value or lack of value

- we have assigned to what we are seeing or experiencing.
3. Jude challenged us to make a difference with compassion.
 4. Jesus was often moved with compassion, but Christ's compassion was more than just a stirring of His emotions.

MESSAGE

1. **He went to the multitude** (Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:34).
 - a. He was moved with compassion.
 - b. They were as sheep having no shepherd.
2. **He met people at the point of their need** (Matthew 14:14; 15:32; 20:33; Mark 1:41).
 - a. He touched them.
 - b. He met the source of their need.
3. **He gave of himself** (Matthew 9:20-22; 14:34-36).
 - a. They touched him.
 - b. He counted no cost.

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus was moved because He saw:
 - a. where they were.
 - b. where they were going.
 - c. where they could be.
2. What stirs me? Am I more concerned about the physical or the spiritual? Am I repulsed at the sore, or am I broken over the cancer?
3. This kind of compassion comes only through the heart of Jesus.
4. Will we purpose to have Christ's compassion? This purpose must be active in our lives. We must:
 - a. go where people are.
 - b. meet people at their point of need.
 - c. give of ourselves.

Divine Honor for Mothers

GARY R. ALLEN, Nixa, Missouri

TEXT: Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 20:9

INTRODUCTION

Mothers are to be honored everyday. God has given special honor to mothers.

MESSAGE

1. **God's plan for mothers.**
 - a. He designed them differently.
 - b. They fill a unique place in the human plan.
 - c. A mother's love is unique.
2. **God's strength for mothers.**
 - a. Demands on mothers are great — 168 hours a week.
 - b. Many mothers must work outside the home, which adds much to their load.
 - c. Mothers need help from dads.
 - d. Mothers and dads need help from children.
3. **God's reward for mothers.**
 - a. Homes are more than things.
 - b. Watching children grow — pictures.
 - c. Heaven will be filled with mothers.

CONCLUSION

God has placed a high honor on mothers. We should do the same.

The Promises of John 14

GELSON BRENNER, Pocomoke City, Maryland

TEXT: John 14

MESSAGE

1. **Promise of heaven** (John 14:2).
 - a. A declaration for troubled hearts (John 14:1). Trust.
 - b. A description of the Father's house (John 14:2).¹ "Many mansions."
 - c. A designation of the Way (John 14:6). Jesus said, "I am the way."
2. **Promise of Christ's return** (John 14:3).
 - a. Resurrection of the dead: First the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:14,15).
 - b. Rapture of the living: Then the living (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
 - c. Reunion: Together we meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
3. **Promise of greater works** (John 14:12).
 - a. Requisite is believing — faith precedes, works follow.
 - b. Result of greater works — not a cessation of Christ's works but a succession (Mark 16:17).
 - c. Reason is Christ ascends to the Father and sends the Spirit — our divine enablement.
4. **Promise of prayer** (John 14:13,14).
 - a. The pledge: "whatsoever," "any thing." No limits.
 - b. The precept: "In my name." According to His will.
 - c. The purpose: "That the Father be glorified."
5. **Promise of another comforter** (John 14:16,17).
 - a. Proceeds from the Father (John 14:26).
 - b. Promotes Christ (John 14:26).
 - c. Powers the believer (Acts 1:8).
 - (1) Indwelling.
 - (2) Overflowing.
6. **Promise of peace** (John 14:27).
 - a. A precious possession: "My peace."
 - b. A personal possession: "I give unto you."
 - c. A present possession: "I leave with you."

CONCLUSION

We have been given "exceedingly great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4).

NOTE

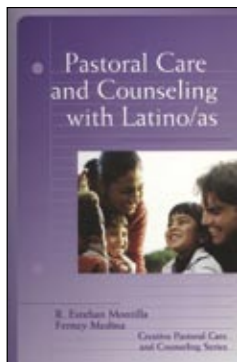
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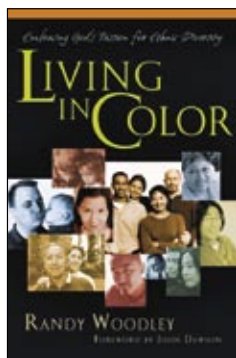
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Pastoral Care And Counseling With Latinos/as

Both pastor and congregation must have an understanding of inherent Latino/Hispanic values — faith, family, and community.



Living In Color: Embracing God's Passion for Ethnic Diversity

Pastoral Care and Counseling with Latinos/as

R. ESTEBAN MONTILLA and FERNEY MEDINA (Fortress Press, 146 pp., paperback)

Current demographic trends point to the growing Hispanic/Latino population. The impact of this growing segment of our population is being felt in rural communities as well as in major metropolitan areas. While the immigration issue continues to fuel much debate and minimal consensus, the reality is that a large portion of our growing Hispanic population is not confronting residency issues. Many of these Latinos/Hispanics represent ministry opportunities for the local church through pastoral care and counseling.

In the book, *Pastoral Care and Counseling With Latino/as*, Montilla and Medina offer an excellent resource to describe the multifaceted challenges of ministering to Hispanics (authors use the term *Latino/as*). Three important factors must be addressed in developing effective ministry to Latinos:

1. A description of the multinational, heterogeneous nature of the Latino culture.
2. An understanding of inherent Latino/Hispanic values — faith, family, and community — that must be considered as the pastor and the church minister to Latino/as.
3. A presentation of the biblical role of the pastoral care and counseling ministry.

The authors address the serious challenge that Latinos are a singular ethnic group in language and values yet a variegated people in their culture. Their book is a clarion call for serious ethnic and gender awareness. Even the title of this book signals the need for gender sensitivity — Latino/as equals Latinos and Latinas.

This book is a must-read for church leaders and pastors who have Latinos in their communities. Many of these principles are applicable for leaders dealing with the growing number of Hispanic ministers. It is also an excellent reference book to provide assistance in understanding the Latino culture in the emerging paradigm of multiethnic ministry.

— Reviewed by Ephraim Espinoza, liaison, Assemblies of God Office of Hispanic Relations, Springfield, Missouri.



Living In Color: Embracing God's Passion for Ethnic Diversity

RANDY WOODLEY (InterVarsity Press, 217 pp., paperback)

Randy Woodley invites the reader to join him in discovering God's passion for diversity. As a Native American, Woodley understands diversity is invaluable. He points out several cultural links to immigrants and indigenous peoples that compel us to move beyond toleration to celebration, and to find synergy in diversity.

Part 1, "Understanding Diversity," provides a biblical basis for convictions and suggestions he mentions later. The Creator purposed in the beginning to cultivate diversity within humanity. God, the creator of rainbows and ethnicities, is not colorblind, and He does not call us to be colorblind. The Trinity challenges us to tri-unity. Woodley's message is timely — changing demographics compel us to strong conviction and strategic thinking.

Part 2, "Opposition to Diversity," looks at

walls of division that provide comfort zones that some will not readily abandon. The author effectively challenges the church growth movement that is based on targeting homogeneous people groups. Woodley uses a Native American illustration of the conscience and compares it to a pointy triangle within the heart that spins and pokes when energized by conviction.

Part 3, "Restoration Through Diversity," contains examples of a Christlike spirit among God's servants. Woodley's joyful honesty imparts hope and clear direction for attaining restoration. For those wanting insight into ministries or services of reconciliation, Woodley provides helpful protocols, models, steps, and suggestions.

Heaven's integrated worship is described in Revelation 7:9. The fact John saw "nations" (*ethnos*) in glory reveals that our ethnic distinctives are immortal — possessing eternal

value. On my quest to discover this eternal value, I gained insight through Woodley.

Read slowly through Woodley's book. You may not always agree with the author. For example, many Native American ministers would disagree with bringing as many Native tradition elements into church as the author supports. But set that issue aside. Let the triangle spin and the Spirit lead.

— Reviewed by Scott Temple,
Assemblies of God U.S. Missions International,
Springfield, Missouri.

Hit the Bull's-Eye: How Denominations Can Aim the Congregation At the Mission Field

PAUL D. BORDEN (Abingdon Press, 144 pp., paperback)

In 1997, Paul Borden became a district superintendent overseeing 229 American Baptist churches on the west coast. At that time, only 16 percent of them were growing.

Within 5 years, 72 percent of the congregations were growing, more money was being given to missions (\$1.2 million), and 11,000 persons had been added to Sunday worship attendance.

Borden is straightforward in his assessment that the church is identified too much as *family* and needs to be identified with a more biblical tag: *army*. Pastors are too identified with being good servants and shepherds (inward church focus) and need to become mission-focused leaders.

Mission is not a reference to *foreign missions*, but the focus all churches must have: To call women and men to repentance through faith in Jesus Christ. The author believes everything must be assessed through this dominating mission. It represents the heart of the bull's-eye.

Because of Borden's position in ministry and effective illustration, district leadership should find this book an important read.

There is much to consider here, and some portions made me wince. Perhaps that is why we all need to read this book thoughtfully: To make certain we are on target.

— David Argue, director of pastoral care
for the Rocky Mountain District of the Assemblies of God,
Colorado Springs, Colorado.

One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches

GEORGE YANCEY (InterVarsity Press, 180 pp., paperback)

Do your church demographics mirror the demographics of the community God has called you to reach?

If not, and if you have a vision for your church to become ethnically diverse, Yancey's book can provide some inspirational truth and practical help.

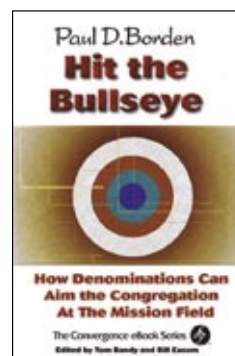
The author issues the call to build intentionally multiracial communities of worshipers. He views these churches as the natural outcome of racial reconciliation as well as the best mechanism for continued reconciliation. The author, who is African-American, offers helpful answers to two questions that haunt church leaders who desire diversity: Why are we so homogeneous? and, What can we do about it?

Yancey's statistics and suggestions are derived from a first-of-its-kind nationwide church survey financed by a Lilly grant. This survey identified seven factors that help create and sustain racial diversity: 1) Multicultural Worship; 2) Diverse Leadership; 3) Compelling Vision and Clear Goals; 4) Intentionality; 5) Skillful Leadership; 6) Location; and, 7) Flexibility and Adaptability. A full chapter is devoted to each of these factors.

Through the survey, Yancey discovered that less than 8 percent of America's churches qualify as diverse. He found that whereas 57 percent of homogeneous churches grew last year, 66 percent of diverse churches experienced growth. The author's study reveals that the advantages of a diverse church include: 1) reaching the entire community; 2) demonstrating genuine reconciliation; 3) providing a united and appealing witness; and, 4) manifesting obedience to the call and will of God.

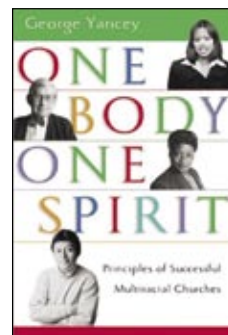
Fulfilling God's will and obeying His call comes at a price. Yancey claims no quick and easy solution, but takes into account the difficulties and hard work necessary. As John Perkins, a hero and pioneer of reconciliation, once asked, "Why bother?" Perkin's answer, like Yancey's, is because the gospel compels us. This is a compelling book. Now is the time to be compelled.

— Reviewed by Scott Temple,
AGUSM International, Springfield, Missouri



*Hit the Bull's-Eye:
How Denominations Can
Aim the Congregation
at the Mission Field*

*The church is
identified too much
as family. It needs
to be identified
with a more
biblical tag: army.*



*One Body One Spirit:
Principles of Successful
Multiracial Churches*



Ready-made Media Plan Helps Churches Easily Reach Their Communities

The Nothing's Too Hard for God media plan is designed to help your church reach its community for Christ using a simple, affordable process that encourages unity among local Assemblies of God congregations.

The Nothing's Too Hard for God media plan emphasizes the power of God to change lives. Churches can send their communities this dynamic message through a variety of methods, including postcards, door hangers, signs, and radio and television spots. Every part of the campaign directs readers to the <http://www.nothingstoohardforGod.org> Web site where they

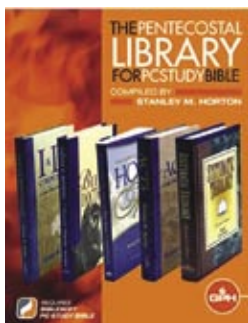
will find spiritual truths that lead them to Jesus.

Media options are available to all churches, regardless of size. Churches can use this plan alone, but are encouraged to partner with other AG churches in their area to share the cost of reaching their community.

A disc with sign files and specifications is also available for churches to develop and personalize any size sign through their local sign company.

A great new feature of this media plan is that it can now be used in the form of a sustained 2-year media release as well as a 4- or 8-week campaign blitz.

For more information, visit <http://nothingstoohardforGodcampaign.ag.org/>.



Pentecostal Library for PC Study Bible

Pentecostal Library

Leaders at BibleSoft PC Study Bible have partnered with Gospel Publishing House to bring pastors and students a digital library compiled by Stanley M. Horton.

The Pentecostal Library for PC Study Bible includes five Horton volumes on one CD-ROM that interfaces with users' BibleSoft study tools. Content is hyperlinked to other PC Study Bible search tools, including dictionaries, lexicons, and encyclopedias. In-depth searches yield immediate results.

These five Horton classics include *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective*; *What*

the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit; *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary*; *Systematic Theology*, and *1 & 2 Corinthians: A Logion Press Commentary*.

Horton is distinguished professor of Bible and Theology Emeritus at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. He has authored 17 books and manuals.

A video demonstration of the Pentecostal Library along with the system requirements to run the program can be found at <http://www.Gospelpublishing.com/PCStudyBible>.

To order the Pentecostal Library on CD-ROM, call 1-800-641-4310 and request item #28TW5000.

National Missionettes Ministries Department Broadens Ministry

Effective March 15, 2007, the national Missionettes Ministries Department became the national Girls Ministries Department. This change allows the department to broaden its scope of ministry.

"We are excited about where the Lord is taking us in ministry," says Candy Tolbert, national girls ministries director. "We have a vision to reach more girls with the knowledge of Christ and even integrate girls' families into our outreach."

The change of scope and department name was announced to attendees of the National Missionettes Ministries Conference in Springfield, Mo., March 15, 2007. At this conference,



*National
Girls
Ministries
Lives in the Making*

Tolbert shared her vision to branch out beyond Missionettes Ministries by including new resources for leaders of teen girls, for parents, and for addressing current social concerns relevant to all girls.

Included in the changes is the name change from Missionettes Ministries to Mpact Girls Clubs.

"Missionettes will continue to be a vital part of what our department provides to our churches," says Tolbert. "The

name change will better communicate how our ministry desires to shape girls so they can impact their world. We see our department title and responsibility to be 'National Girls Ministries — Missionettes and more.' "

The name change will not require churches to buy new curriculum and support materials. Clubs will continue to be Rainbows, Daisies, Prims, Stars, Friends, and Girls Only. As materials and products are reprinted, they will reflect the name change. Churches should continue to use the curriculum they have but use the new name in promotional pieces and advertising. A new logo and promotional video reflecting these changes in department structure is available from Gospel Publishing House.



Mpact Leadership Development Units: Gold Released

The third continuing development book for Mpact Girls Clubs leaders is now available.

Topics covered in the Gold Level leadership training book are: Conflict Management Training for Local Church Leadership, Living Graciously (determining to be an example of God's grace in every aspect of life), and Building a Biblical Worldview. The information presented will benefit church leaders. This resource is available from Gospel Publishing House.

Is the Lower Cost Worth the High Price?

A free article, "Is the Lower Cost Worth the High Price?" is available from The Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education. This article compares the ways secular universities impact Christian students with the ways Assemblies of God universities affect Christian students.

Why should I attend an AG college or university? This edited compilation of three research studies answers this question by thoroughly examining why education and finances are not the only factors to consider when choosing where to attend college.

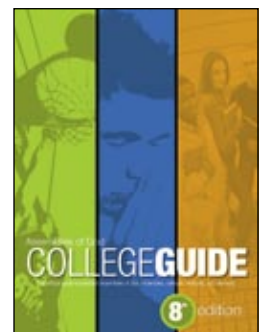
Part 1 reveals that 52 to 67 percent of Christian students leave the faith after attending a secular college for at least 3 years. Part 2 says that based on these statistics, approximately 189,000 AG students could be lost to the faith in the next 9 years. Part 3 points out the significant differences between secular and AG colleges and universities.

This resource is a must for pastors, parents, and students selecting a university. For a free copy, contact the Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 3315.

The revised eighth edition of the *Assemblies of God College Guide*, an informative resource featuring all 19 endorsed Assemblies of God colleges, is available. To receive free copies of this guide for your church library and college-bound students, contact the Christian Higher Education Department at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 3315, or visit <http://www.colleges.ag.org>, and request item #747001.



189,000 AG students attending secular colleges could be lost to the faith in the next 9 years.



Assemblies of God College Guide

Hillcrest Children Need Sponsors

Since the merger of Hillcrest and Highlands into Assemblies of God Family Services, many new children, ages 5 to 18, have entered the residential ministry at Hot Springs, Ark. Hillcrest provides these children with a safe environment while they recover from traumatic experiences.

You can make a difference in the lives of these children by becoming a sponsor. For \$25 per month, you can provide necessities for one child. Sponsors are given a description and picture of the child they sponsor along with his or her needs, sizes, and birth date. Sponsors also receive updates regarding how their child is progressing in school and life.

To make a difference in the life of a child, call Assemblies of God Family Services/Hillcrest at 501-262-1660, or visit <http://www.agfamilyservices.org>.



Assemblies of God Bible Alliance

Since its inception, the Assemblies of God has been based on the Word of God. When the first missionaries were sent out, they quickly became involved in translating and duplicating the Word.

In the mid-1990s, Assemblies of God World Missions leaders were presented with the first copy of the *Full Life Study Bible*. Its Pentecostal notes, edited by the late missionary Don Stamps, were intended for use in Latin America. These leaders quickly recognized the need to provide this Pentecostal study Bible worldwide.

Assemblies of God Bible Alliance was formed in 1997 to help meet this tremendous goal. One decade later, Light for the Lost, many districts, churches, and individuals now partner with this ministry to provide the *Fire Bible* for pastors and church workers around the world.

One of the greatest needs the church has today is providing biblically based doctrine so believers can learn the importance of a personal daily walk with God. The *Fire Bible* — with its commentary, concordance, Pentecostal notes, articles, maps, and other study helps — provides the tools pastors, church workers, and parishioners need to grow in their faith, in a language they can read and understand. The *Fire Bible* will soon be available in 41 languages, spanning every continent and most major population groups around the world.

The second Sunday of December is Bible Sunday in the Assemblies of God. Each year a new theme and set of promotional materials are created for specific *Fire Bible* language projects. For more information on how you or your church can participate, call Assemblies of God Bible Alliance at 1-800-532-0440 or e-mail: info@biblealliance.org. Materials are free.

Bootie Banks Still Available

Be a lifesaver. Join the Baby Bootie Club, and you will join with fellow lifesavers who show love, care, and compassion for infants and young women. The Baby Bootie Club provides quality medical assistance for Highlands' babies and care for young women living on the Assemblies of God Family Services Agency campus who are facing unplanned pregnancies.

With rising medical costs, your support will give hope and a future to these infants and young women. Please invest in someone's future and join the Baby Bootie Club today.

Banks are sent to individuals, families, and church groups. To order your bank and start saving for life, contact Highlands at: Assemblies of God Family Services Agency, 2325 Malvern Ave., Hot Springs, AR, 71901; call 501-262-1660; or visit <http://www.agfamilyservices.org> (click on the contribution link).



Life Publishers International

For 60 years, Life Publishers International has served Assemblies of God World Missions by publishing Bibles and gospel literature in many languages for distribution around the world. Our mission is: Publish the Word.

LPI was created in 1946 when missionary H.C. Ball began printing Sunday School materials and a hymnal in Spanish. Like many missionary ministries, LPI was created to meet a need — supplying teaching and worship materials to Spanish-speaking people.

This field-driven service ministry has greatly expanded through the years. LPI now provides overseas ministries — missionaries, national churches, and Bible schools — with the printed materials they need for leadership training, Christian education, discipleship, church growth, and evangelism.

The buzzword at LPI is *synergy*. Synergy is "the interaction of two or more agents or forces whose combined effort is greater than the sum of their individual efforts." Working with ministry partners, LPI continues to help produce the *Fire Bible*, *Enrichment* journal, Sunday School materials, popular Christian books, and other spiritual resources in many languages. Together we can more effectively evangelize the world for Christ.



Increasing Support Produces Record Key Bearers Donations



Growing support from Assemblies of God churches, ministers, and laity contributed more than \$172,000 to the Key Bearers outreach in 2006. Since its creation in 1996, Key Bearers has provided more than 6 million copies of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* and *Evangelio Pentecostal Hoy* to the incarcerated.

"The record giving stands as a tribute to those in the Fellowship who want to see these men and women reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ," says *Evangel* Editor in Chief Hal Donaldson.

"Over the past 3 years we have received written salvation reports from nearly 3,200 inmates. This is made possible by the Key Bearers program. It is a great way for churches to reach inmates in nearby prisons and jails."

Donaldson encourages all churches to become part of Key Bearers. A congregation giving just \$1 per week will provide 200 *Evangels* during the course of a year. Because of the pass-along practice within most correctional facilities, these *Evangels* will typically be read by 1,000 prisoners. The magazine's goal is to reach 100,000 inmates every week.

To join the Key Bearers ministry, visit the *Evangel*'s secured Web site at <http://www.tpe.ag.org> and click on the KB logo, or call Light for the Lost at 1-800-988-0292. Donations via bank debit/credit card can be made by calling 1-877-840-8400 and specifying project 028-001-0085928.

New From GPH—MEGA Ministry Camp

At MEGA Ministry Camp children discover how to minister every day. Children try different



activities to discover where God has gifted them. In this first kit, children learn about cooking, drama, and card making. Most important, they discover how to look for opportunities to use these skills in daily ministry.

"For years, children's leaders have been talking about the importance of getting kids personally involved in ministry, but it is not easy for churches to do ... until MEGA Ministry Camp," says Julie Horner, head of Research and Development at GPH. "Our goal is for children to walk away from MEGA Ministry Camp knowing they can use every talent God gave them for ministry."

MEGA Ministry Camp is flexible. The program can last between 1 and 3 hours. Some churches are using it as a VBS alternative, 5- to 10-session midweek program, even as a special ministry emphasis in children's church.

For more information visit <http://www.gph.org> or call 1-800-641-4310.



Media Opportunity for International Media Ministries in Bosnia Herzegovina



Tourists believe Bosnia Herzegovina is a great place, but there is a serious discrepancy between visiting and residency. Sarajevo, the capitol, is filled with hurt, fear, grief, and bitterness. Located in a valley, armaments on the hillsides have rained down shells, mortars, rockets, and sniper fire for nearly 3 years — the longest siege in modern history. Another battle is also raging, not for the soil of Sarajevo, but for the souls of Sarajevo.

Sarajevo is 80 percent Muslim — but not yet "Islamicised" — with 350 mosques and four evangelical churches.

Since the war, the church has persevered, struggled, and is inching forward. At this moment, there is a window of opportunity to reach Bosnia with the gospel. The government in Sarajevo has pledged television time to all religious groups. The small evangelical churches, however, are not capable of producing quality programs. Using the International Media Ministries Bible stories, they can replace the English voice with a Bosnian storyteller and their new programs will be of professional quality.

By faith, IMM has committed to broadcasting Bible stories in Bosnia. You can share in this opportunity by sending your gift to: International Media Ministries, c/o AGWM, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, Mo., 65802. ☺

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The Intentionality of Church Diversity

Jesus' prayer for all believers prior to His crucifixion portrays His passion for His church to be unified (John 17:20–26). This prayer for *oneness* is crucial to evangelizing the world — the purpose for the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ — because the most profound demonstration to the world that God sent Jesus is in the unity of diverse people groups operating as one in Christ. This beautiful mosaic of oneness will enchant those who are still searching for acceptance regardless of their race or ethnicity.

The multiethnic world we live in is no mistake. It does not and should not validate an excuse for separation, exploitation, inferiority, or superiority. Where humankind has used diversity for evil, God has called His church to use it for good. The church must be intentional about including all ethnic groups under the banner of oneness.

The world needs a role model for the cause of unity and oneness. God has responded by designing His church as the ultimate role model. God is no respecter of persons. He denounces separation based on ethnicity because all humanity is made in His image and likeness; everything God made is good. It is imperative that the church identifies with the heartbeat of God and makes inclusion intentional in the life of the church.

This challenge for the church depends on Spirit-filled men and women who will intentionally embrace inclusion as the mandate of God. The expressed desire of God is that none should perish but that all would come to repentance. This is an injunction for the church to espouse without reservation. The 21st-century church must take heart and learn from the behavior of the Early Church recorded by Luke: "Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Acts 4:32, NKJV).¹ This precedent can and must be followed.

The church is divinely positioned to be the difference maker in a troubled, complex, and confused world. As people of the Spirit, we must seize this opportunity to tell this lost world that there is hope in Jesus Christ. This witness must come through the authentic demonstration of *inclusion* where everyone is welcomed to sit at the feet of Jesus. Some visionary leaders who are intentional about having an inclusive congregation are fulfilling part of this task. According to statistical data, these congregations, classified as "others," are the fastest growing congregations in the nation. Church leadership must set the tone for inclusiveness by promoting multiethnic and multiracial involvement in every aspect of ministry at the national, state, and local levels.

All Christians must play a role in seeing Jesus' prayer fulfilled. God made us *one* so the world would know He sent Jesus to redeem it. The issues of diversity, multiethnic, and multiracial integration should not be an issue in the church. This will take place naturally when we look at the world through the eyes of Jesus where, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The church constitutes a *new race* — a race that is spiritual, holy, righteous, and divine — made up of multiethnic people who are called to Kingdom ministry in an evil, lost world where ethnicity, race, or culture is not seen as a problem but as an opportunity.

The authors of the various articles addressing the theme, *Embracing Diversity: Kingdom Ministry in a Multiethnic World*, have provided insight, wisdom, and guidance to assist the church in becoming inclusive. We can and must make it a reality by embracing diversity and being intentional in making it happen where we are. Thanks to the leadership of *Enrichment* journal for providing us with an invaluable resource tool that encourages and embraces diversity — intentionally. 🌍

NOTE

1. Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Where humankind
has used
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ZOLLIE SMITH, JR., Piscataway, New Jersey, is secretary of the New Jersey District, president of National Black Fellowship of the Assemblies of God, and ethnic representative on the Executive Presbytery.