

ABSTRACT

PLANTING, TRANSITIONING,

AND GROWING MULTIETHNIC CHURCHES

by

Gloria Young-Eun Kim Fowler

The purpose of the research was to discover key characteristics and strategies to help churches plant, transition to become, and grow as multiethnic congregations by investigating the characteristics and strategies of churches within the United Methodist Church that have successfully done so. Fifty United Methodist churches from nineteen different states across the continental United States contributed useful feedback to this study by means of surveys. Twenty had been planted as multiethnic churches, and thirty had made the transition from homogeneous to multiethnic churches. The research followed an exploratory, ground theory approach; through surveys, data was collected and analyzed to determine key characteristics and strategies commonly used by churches in each of the research areas.

The key characteristics and strategies that contribute to successfully planting, transitioning, and growing of the multiethnic churches in this study include the following: (1) the presence of diverse leadership in all areas of ministry; (2) a pervasive culture of hospitality and a DNA of openness, inclusiveness, and acceptance; (3) a worship experience that speaks to the diversity of the congregation; (4) an outward focus and community outreach to connect with the mission field; (5) location in a diverse and/or changing community; (6) being driven by a clear vision and commitment to be a multiethnic church and strategic planning to follow through with the vision; (7) urgency

to change, especially for existing churches faced with changing demographics in their neighborhood ; (8) effective and committed leadership of both clergy and laity; (9) proactive preparation for cultural differences and conflict; (10) financial stability; and, (11) celebrating and understanding of different cultures.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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Gloria Young-Eun Kim Fowler

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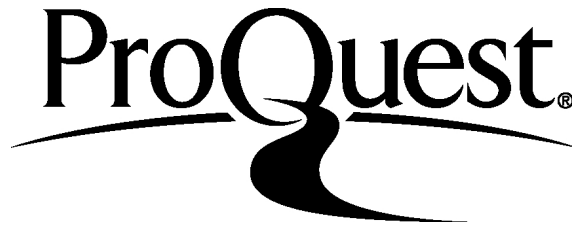
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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

Much of my life has been spent in cross-cultural settings. I was born in Korea, and my father was a pastor with an outwardly focused, global, missional mind-set. He was determined to raise his daughter with cultural and language diversity. When I turned twelve, he sent me to an international boarding school in India that had been set up for missionaries but later expanded to include all kinds of people. The reason for this was so that from an early age I would see that the world is bigger than just Korea and be immersed in diverse cultures and languages to serve God better in the world. My father had a great vision for his daughter from an early age. During middle and high school, I spent my time in an international school of more than forty nationalities in India and then moved to the United States for college. As an international student in college, I was privileged to meet many other international students from all over the world, not to mention, of course, many Americans.

As I entered ministry after college, I started to work with second-generation Korean Americans, bridging the language and culture gap between the first and second generations. My first exposure to this ministry was during a ministry internship just after my junior year in college in Killeen, Texas. Even though the youth with whom I worked were second-generation Korean-Americans, when I got to know them I saw so much more diversity: Korean/Philippine, Korean/Hispanic, Korean/African-American, Korean/Anglo, and so on. The majority of them were mixed with another ethnicity

because Killeen hosts an army post, and many of the soldiers had married Korean women while they were based in Korea at some point in the past.

Later, my own family would come to look like them, also, because my husband is also an Anglo-American. In fact, the two of us got along and understood each other well because both of us had cross-cultural experiences growing up—myself as a Korean growing up in India, and my husband as a missionary's son who grew up in Honduras. Due to our cross-cultural backgrounds, we have been diligent in raising our children to be fluently bicultural and bilingual.

Moreover, in my most recent pastoral appointment, I worked in a predominantly Anglo church as an Asian, in an ethnically and culturally diverse community. My current appointment is as the associate director of the Center for New Church Development and Congregational Transformation of North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, serving the great diversity represented in the Dallas metroplex and surrounding suburbs and rural areas.

Having been surrounded by ethnic diversity my whole life and seeing the diversity all around me today, especially living in the Dallas Fort Worth metroplex, I have been struck by the fact that the majority of the churches in the United States stay homogeneous and do not adequately reflect the diverse ethnicities and cultures of their communities. The United States is still a leading country in sending missionaries overseas, yet it puzzled me that Christians are failing to reach the world that has come to us. The current reality is that the world's mission field is moving into our increasingly diverse neighborhoods. Jesus commanded us to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV).

In this globalized world, America is increasingly attracting immigrants from all corners of the earth. Without giving up the sending of missionaries to faraway countries, Christians must also expand our understanding of reaching “the ends of the earth” to include those who have come to us from all places. In fact, we live in an age of great missional opportunity when we can reach the world while reaching our own neighborhoods.

We also live in an age when large numbers of our young people have never known a segregated society, especially in urban areas of the United States. Although the natural human tendency is to associate with those who are similar, the social norm of today’s young people is multiethnic, and, in fact, many feel more comfortable in a multiethnic setting. For example, my children who live in a suburb of Dallas, Texas, have close friends who are Chinese, Kurdish, Korean, Indian, Mexican, Jewish, African–American and Anglo. The lady who watches my youngest son at her house is from Armenia. At our last house in Grand Prairie, we had an African-American family on one side, a Hispanic family on the other side, a Philippine family across the street, and a Japanese woman married to a African–American next to them. Of course our family, a Korean and an Anglo couple, was part of this great diversity. This diversity is becoming more and more a norm in our communities. Therefore, when young people grow up with diversity everywhere six days of the week, they immediately notice the segregation of the churches and view it negatively. Unlike past generations, young people find a multiethnic setting more natural. In fact, churches need to be leading the culture in this aspect, not falling behind.

More churches should seek to become multiethnic, not only for the sake of diversity but because they are called to bring Christ to those who surround them. As more churches find themselves in an ethnically diverse mission field, they need a vision with an explicit emphasis on reaching this diversity. If congregations do not continually reach out and reflect their communities (e.g. by age, ethnicity, social status, and more), not only are they missing their God-given mission but many will either decline until they no longer exist, as seen in many neighborhoods, or they will serve only a small subgroup of the population. Now is the time to embrace the diversity of today's mission field and start to live out the heavenly vision of all nations coming together to worship God.

Several problems prevent our churches from becoming more diverse and reflecting their communities:

1. Many congregations are too inwardly focused and fail to realize that they need to be missional, reaching out to the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples of the diverse people from the community, intentionally attempting to reflect the diversity in the community.
2. Some church leaders recognize the need for diversity that reflects God's kingdom, yet they fail to carry out their good intentions or overcome initial resistance in their congregations.
3. Some churches want to change and become ethnically diverse but do not know what steps and strategies to use, whether it is to transition their church from homogeneous to ethnically and culturally diverse fellowships or to start new congregations with the intent of embracing the diversity of the community.

Though there are many factors that have prevented churches from becoming diverse congregations that reflect their mission field, there are still many that have been able to go against the cultural norm of the churches to become multiethnic churches. They prove that this task is not just a dream but a real possibility and a lived-out reality. Their experiences can provide valuable lessons and strategies from which others can learn, so that more multiethnic churches can be planted, more existing churches can transition from homogeneous to diverse, and, so that while remaining diverse, churches can continue to grow in numbers, maturity, and diversity.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to discover key characteristics and strategies that can help United Methodist churches transition from homogeneous to multiethnic, that can help new church plants start as multiethnic churches, and that can help multiethnic churches continue to grow and thrive in their ethnic diversity.

Research Questions

The research sought to find the key characteristics and strategies that helped some United Methodist churches achieve diversity and reach more than one ethnic group in their mission field. I sent surveys with several open-ended questions to leaders of churches that have been planted as multiethnic churches or transitioned to become multiethnic churches, and are continuing to grow and sustain themselves as multiethnic churches. The questions on the surveys were designed to answer the following research questions.

Research Question #1

What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches that have been planted as multiethnic churches?

Research Question #2

What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches that have transitioned to become multiethnic churches?

Research Question #3

What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches to continue to grow as multiethnic churches?

Definition of Terms

A *multiethnic church* is a church whose congregation consists of several ethnicities, races, and/or cultures. Furthermore, the distribution of races, ethnicities, or cultures in the congregation is somewhat balanced, such that no single group is dominant to the point of making other groups conform largely to them. The ethnicities should worship together, for the most part, not in segregated sub-congregations. The proportion of one ethnicity should not exceed more than eighty percent of the church; this threshold is a commonly used benchmark, such as in the multiethnic church definition by Curtiss Paul DeYoung et al. Ideally, a multiethnic church should be roughly reflective of the community in which the church serves. In addition to being a simple representation of ethnicity and culture, multiethnic churches celebrate the diversity of race, culture, language, and unique gifts brought by different individuals and groups, and the agenda of each person and group is not focused primarily on a particular subgroup, but on unity arising from diversity.

A *planted church*, for the purpose of this study, is a church that is started with the vision to establish a multiethnic church.

A *transitioned church* is a church that has made a transition from being a homogeneous church to a heterogeneous, multiethnic church.

A *growing church*, for the purpose of this study, has been planted or transitioned and is continuing to grow as a multiethnic church by intentionally working on the qualitative aspects that make a multiethnic church and sustain its diversity.

Ministry Intervention

In order to determine key characteristics and strategies that can help United Methodist churches become multiethnic in communities with diverse demographics, I surveyed leaders of United Methodist churches that are carrying out ministries as multiethnic churches to identify the key characteristics that helped them plant, transition, and grow. I then analyzed the survey results to find key concepts and strategies that can help other churches become multiethnic churches. Often in my ministry, I have heard people asking for examples that come from their own United Methodist heritage and polity, rather than from other denominations, to ensure that whatever is being presented to them can work in a Methodist context. Thus, my research was narrowed to investigating United Methodist churches that were able to plant, transition, and grow as multiethnic churches.

Context

The research was drawn from surveys of sixty-eight United Methodist (UM) churches in the United States that have succeeded as multiethnic churches. I examined their survey responses about how they were planted or transitioned to multiethnic

churches and the key characteristics that have helped them continue to grow as multiethnic churches. The key concepts and strategies derived as a result of the study will likely be most helpful to those who wish to plant multiethnic UM churches or transition existing UM churches to become multiethnic, particularly in ethnically diverse communities of the United States.

Methodology

The methodology used surveys in a qualitative, exploratory, ground theory study design. I surveyed United Methodist churches that have been planted as multiethnic churches, and United Methodist churches that have transitioned from homogeneous to multiethnic churches. The same surveys also asked these churches what they are doing to continue to grow as multiethnic churches after having been planted or transitioned.

Participants

The participants for the study were selected out of a database of multiethnic churches compiled by Path 1. Path 1 is a branch of the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church that focuses on resourcing the conference and churches to plant various new churches. In that data, a little more than 800 churches are identified as multiethnic churches according to DeYoung et al.'s definition that no ethnic group constitute more than 80% of the whole. I narrowed it down to just under 400 churches by selecting those whose largest ethnic group was less than 70%, *and* whose average worship attendance was at least thirty. This figure of 70% was intended to ensure greater diversity and to overcome small errors in the data or drift (some churches may have drifted from their reported numbers since last surveyed). I

combined it with another database from Path 1 consisting of new church starts that fit in the category of multiethnic church plants. Finally, I surveyed the leadership of all of these approximately 440 churches, 67 of whom responded to the survey. Of the 67 churches, 23 were planted as multiethnic churches, 32 transitioned from homogeneous to heterogeneous congregations, and 12 were disqualified by the working definition of multiethnic church used in this research. The disqualified churches fit into a multi-congregational model instead with sub-groups that worshiped together less than 50% of the time.

Instrumentation

To collect data for the study, I used the instrument of an online survey conducted through SurveyMonkey, with the option to fill it out on paper for those who preferred to do so. The survey contained a number of demographic questions, questions about the church worship model and the leaders, and finally a set of open-ended questions designed to elicit responses that would satisfy the research questions in this study (see Appendixes A and B).

Variables

The dependent variable examined in this study was the outcome of becoming and remaining a multiethnic church. The congregations chosen for the study had to meet the criteria for fitting into the ratio for being a multiethnic congregation, whether they transitioned into or were planted as such.

The independent variables were the key strategies and characteristics that contributed to the success of the church plants and transitions to multiethnic congregations and to their continued growth as multiethnic churches. The intervening

variables were the selection process and getting the churches to participate in this research.

Data Collection

The majority of the surveys were collected during the late summer and early fall of 2014. I sent letters to approximately 440 churches, asking them to participate in the survey. For convenience, they could respond online or by paper; I entered all paper responses into the online survey tool, for consistency. Sixty-three churches participated at that time. In the winter of 2014-2015 I asked ten church plants again to participate and received five more responses to help round out the data on church plants.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the survey using a ground theory approach. After reading the results multiple times, I identified key quotes, concepts, and ideas in the open-ended questions of the survey responses, coded them, and clustered the codes. The clustering of the codes helped common themes to emerge, and the frequency of occurrence highlighted the relative importance of certain phenomena. I then printed out the quotes organized by codes and then began to analyze the quotes and codes to identify and describe the key commonalities and emerging themes.

Generalizability

The delimitations for this study include the fact that it focused only on multiethnic churches from the United Methodist Church, most of which are located in urban areas of the United States. Such churches are found mainly in the urban areas of the United States; rural areas historically have tended to be more ethnically homogeneous, although that situation is also changing.

With those delimitations in mind, the hope is that this study can help any team that desires to plant, transition to, and grow as a multiethnic church. Although the contexts may be different and although no formula can guarantee success, the research may be of help to churches wishing to become multiethnic in areas around the globe that are experiencing an increase in diversity due to globalization, migration, and marked demographic change. This study may not be helpful to churches in areas with little ethnic diversity.

Theological Foundation

After creating the first people, God blessed them and commanded them to “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth...” (Gen. 1:28). However, people rebelled and disobeyed God. In Genesis 11, they built themselves a city and a tower to reach heaven and make a name for themselves because they were afraid that “... otherwise [they] will be scattered over the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 11:4). Because of their arrogance, what they feared came true: “the LORD confused the language of the whole world ... [and] the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 11:9). This passage is the biblical account of how the many languages, cultures, and ethnicities came about.

God dispersed the people in this way as a result of their arrogance and sin. This passage has been interpreted by some as a justification for continued racial and cultural segregation. However, God desires his followers to be united, to bring glory to his name. Revelations 7:9-10 shows God’s ultimate vision:

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding

palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’

God’s ultimate plan is to bring together once again the scattered groups of people from many nations, languages, cultures, and ethnicities as a multinational church gathered before God’s throne to bring glory to God’s name. If God’s vision for his people and the church is to be diverse, believers must strive to make the heavenly vision a reality as much as possible, even here on this earth. As Jesus taught us to pray, “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). Especially in a place such as America, where Christians have been given the privilege of living with each other, celebrating our differences and diversity, we have an even greater opportunity to experience this vision on earth as a foretaste of the kingdom—if we are intentional about pursuing diversity.

When God called Abraham in the Old Testament, he called him with the purpose that “all peoples on earth will be blessed through [him]” (Gen. 12:3). Thus, from the beginning, God pointed the attention of his people not just to their own kind but also to others. God’s special purpose for the Jews was to reach out to the Gentiles. In the same way, Christ-followers are to reach out to those who are different from them, so that the different colors, languages, and cultures may be united and believers live for one another. As Psalm 133:1 says, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” How wonderful would it be if God’s people regardless of color, ethnicity, culture, nationality, and language could come together in unity for the sake of Christ!

In the New Testament, Jesus sent his disciples out with the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20). With this command, Jesus showed his disciples that the gospel is not for one ethnicity and nation but for all nations and ethnicities. Furthermore, he sent Christians as his agents to carry the good news to them.

In accordance with this vision, in Acts 2:19-11, readers witness the first multiethnic/multicultural church gathering at the Pentecost. This text lists at least fifteen ethnic groups that were present at the Pentecost and witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament teaches that God wants his people to reach out to those who are different and to worship God together and work together. Acts 8:26-40 tells how God sent Philip to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch and baptize him. In Acts 10:34, God sent a powerful vision to Peter to correct his Jewish ethnocentrism and encourage him to reach out to the Gentiles. Peter proclaimed that he saw that God shows no favoritism. He went on to baptize Cornelius’ household and stays to fellowship with them for several more days. Galatians 2:28 says, “You are all one in Christ Jesus.” Many other such exhortations and many examples of Jewish Christians fellowshipping with Gentile Christians are given in the Bible.

Some may say that these passages can be fulfilled by foreign missions. This claim is partly true, yet even so, with the growth of the immigration population in the United States, *the mission field is coming to us* and we need to think differently about missions. Not only should Christians reach out to foreign countries, but they must realize their own land has turned into a mission field. Whether from a mission-minded

motivation or any of the reasons already mentioned above, Jesus would not have believers simply stay in their comfort zones. Our neighbors must be included in our churches.

Overview

Chapter 2 provides a review of existing literature in the area of multiethnic churches and establishes the biblical and theological foundation and support offered by the literature regarding the need for multiethnic churches. Chapter 3 presents the details of the qualitative ground theory study and data collection, including the design of the surveys. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the research. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the results and discusses the study as a whole.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Introduction

The United States, especially in urban areas, is becoming increasingly multiethnic, yet churches are failing to reach out to this mission field in their own communities. The ethnic representation in most churches does not reflect the diversity of ethnicity in the community. This disparity shows that the church is not fully living a missional life or fulfilling the Great Commission of reaching the ends of the earth, whose people are coming to their neighborhoods (Matt. 28:19). Many churches, especially in diverse urban and suburban communities, are declining to the point where they must decide either to move out of their communities, do nothing and continue to decline, or change. The reality of many churches is that because they are unable to reach out to their immediate communities, they eventually have to close their doors (Benefiel 39-41).

The church's commission is to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to "Jerusalem... Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Congregations should not retreat to places where they can continue to form churches with the familiar and similar. In this case, they are limiting their mission, unwilling to go beyond Jerusalem. This job of going to the ends of the earth does not belong exclusively to other people such as missionaries, especially now when the reality of many communities today is that they are increasingly becoming "*JerusaJudeaSamariaEnds*" (Stetzer 155) as people move in from all over the world. The opportunity for the church to be at the center of God's work and be part of God's mission to reach everyone is great. In order to reach their

diverse communities, churches need awareness, commitment, and strategies. I believe that the multiethnic church is one key way to reach the people in a neighborhood and is the future for many of our churches in the United States. The task now is to find ways to plant new multiethnic churches, transition existing churches, and continue to thrive and grow as multiethnic churches.

The purpose of this research was to discover key characteristics and strategies that can help United Methodist churches transition from homogeneous to multiethnic, that can help new church plants start as multiethnic churches, and that can help multiethnic churches continue to grow and thrive in their ethnic diversity.

To develop key strategies for such transitions, I investigated the characteristics and strategies used by churches that have been planted, transitioned, and grown as multiethnic congregations. In this chapter, I first explore what the existing literature says about these topics to illuminate the need for multiethnic churches, understand the challenges, and know the characteristics that are helpful in planting, transitioning, and growing healthy multiethnic churches.

Theological Framework

For many years, Christians have sent missionaries overseas to do the hard work of taking the gospel across cultures. Often, this delegating of the Great Commission has been encouraged when church members have not been comfortable going or courageous enough to commit themselves to be away from their culture and country. By supporting missionaries financially and in other ways, Christians have often considered their part done, thinking that the job now belongs to those who have the constitution to cross cultures. Many times we think of the Great Commission “Go

therefore and make disciples of all nations,” (Matt. 28:19) as primarily directed toward overseas missions. However, globalization has changed the nature of our world.

Immigration is on the rise worldwide, which has increased diversity and resulted in the fragmentation of a formerly uniform culture as people try to find meaning in their own sub-communities and subcultures. This situation has brought us to a place where “the *center* and the *periphery* have merged in new and surprising ways. The church and the mission field are both *here* and *there*” (emphasis mine; Tennent 2010, p. 494).

Now, a microcosm of the world can be found in local communities, as immigrants come from all over into the United States. Believers no longer have to cross borders or seas to reach the world. They now see the calling to reach *all nations* has become accessible at home. Furthermore, much of Western countries’ domestic population and culture has fallen away from Christianity and needs to hear the gospel anew. Christians are still called to send missionaries overseas to unreached groups to bring the redemptive work of Christ to them, but they are also called as missionaries to their own communities because their neighborhoods have become the mission fields (Appleby 1986, p. 107).

The Homogeneous Unit Principle

Even though Americans have known for a long time that their communities are changing, for generations they have insisted on attending a homogenous church. One of the leading reasons they have kept their churches homogeneous was the influence of the Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP), as expressed by Donald A. McGavran, who is considered the father of the modern Church Growth Movement. Through his missionary work in India, he studied the growth of churches and people movements,

finding theories and principles that allow growth to happen. According to McGavran, “the homogeneous unit is simply a section of society in which all the members have some characteristic in common” (1970, p. 69). He believes that people are most open to the gospel message when they hear it from other people most similar in race or clan to themselves (165) because racial, linguistic, and class barriers get in the way of people receiving the message (163). Though society has become more diverse, he believes that the HUP is an undeniable fact and, therefore, churches need to work with the principle to bring fast growth to the church. C. Peter Wagner also affirms this theory over the reconciliation and unity of the larger body of Christ, saying that the principle not only affects church growth, but its very survival (Wagner 1979, p. 15):

[T]he direct benefit of close intercultural relationship will be sacrificed, but in all probability the evangelistic potential of the congregation will be higher. Other things being equal, a higher rate of conversion growth can be predicted for the homogeneous unit church. (33)

According to Wagner, McGavran’s purpose in promoting the HUP is to evangelize those who are not already Christians (32), and he assumes that once they mature in Christ, “they will lose their inclination toward racism and prejudice” (32). However, I question both McGavran and Wagner’s theology for insisting on the HUP as the main church growth principle. Their focus seems to be on quantitative growth, rather than on the qualitative growth of truly raising disciples of Jesus Christ that understand and embrace the heart of God for the world. Moreover, this principle lacks trust and faith in God who grows the church (1 Cor. 3:6-7) and relies rather on human cause and effect. Although logical action, in the pursuit of growing the church, might be to exploit a seemingly natural human tendency to seek out similar people, this choice may not be

the *right* thing to do. “While racial separation may be sociologically comfortable, we do not accept it as ordained by God” (DeYoung et al. 131).

The Homogeneous Unit Principle promotes the wrong message of who God is and what God is about. As people pass their time in these homogeneous churches, they will miss out on the theology of a God who loves and cares for the whole world and who desires God’s people to live in unity and worship him. In contrast, the church that embraces diversity becomes a picture of the Trinity, different yet unified, and is able to bring the good news of love and unity to a world full of divisions and conflicts (Ortiz 1996, p. 45).

Furthermore, if the HUP in itself promotes church growth, one would expect the opposite of the epidemic of church decline evident throughout the United States. The HUP is clearly insufficient *in itself* to grow or even maintain the church. Homogeneous churches are in decline, especially in cities throughout the country that are undergoing demographic changes. Instead of inviting the new people in to fill the church, the congregations prefer to stay comfortable in their homogeneous group even as they decline in numbers (LeBlanc 2010, p. 67). Perhaps at one point in the life of the city, the HUP may have worked, but the churches were not prepared for the demographic changes that are now washing over them, failing to embrace their new, ethnically diverse neighbors. Instead, many simply move away in a phenomenon known as *white flight*. Some continue to drive to their old churches in their former communities. In other cases, the congregation relocates the church out of the original community to continue on as a homogeneous church in newer neighborhoods. This refusal to engage

the changing community sends the wrong message to the world about who our God is and what God is doing in the world.

In today's world, "cross-cultural relationships are increasing in every venue except the church" (LeBlanc 2010, p. 91). Daily interaction between diverse peoples is becoming the norm in most cities throughout the country: in schools, businesses, city councils, and public arenas (DeYmaz, 2007, p. 82). Young people have grown up seeing this integration as the new norm. Therefore, to many of them, segregating on a Sunday morning just for the purpose of church growth seems hypocritical to what Christianity is about and who God is. Christians cannot insist on a questionable human principle of the past in a changing culture. As the culture changes, old models for growth become like old wineskins, unable to carry the ever-new wine of God's spirit and message. Believers must use new wineskins in order for God's glory to be fully seen in today's diverse world (Luke 5:37-38).

Going beyond the practical and cultural reasons why the church must become diverse, there are clear theological reasons as well. Churches must embrace all ethnicities because God embraces all ethnicities; God has made people of all nations in the image of God. Christians are called to reflect who God is in the way they minister, relate to, and interact with others. Throughout the Bible, God's intent and ultimate desire is to bring people from all over the world to worship him and be in relationship with him. Following is a survey of this theme from the beginning of God's story to the end.

Creation (Gen. 1-3)

The first three chapters of Genesis tell about the nature of God, and the beginning and current state of humanity. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (NIV). Later, in creating humankind, God spoke these words, “Let *us* [emphasis mine] make mankind in our image, in our likeness” (Gen. 1:16) implying the presence of the Trinity at creation. Genesis 1:1 supports this concept by using the plural word *Elohim* for God (Enns 1997, p. 201). In the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, God himself embodies a diversity of persons in relationship with one another, coming together in unity. Then, Genesis 1:27 tells the reader that “God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” In creating humankind in his image, God desired them to reflect the same diversity and unity found in the Trinity.

First, all people are unified as descendants of Adam. Acts 17:26 states, “[From] one man [Adam] he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.” Paul emphasizes the unity of the human race under a common ancestor and with a common Creator God in contrast to both the Greek and Jewish cultures, which disdained races other than their own. “The cosmopolitanism of Paul here rises above Jew and Greek and claims the one God as the Creator of the one race of men” (Robertson 1997, p. on Acts 17:26).

Second, all people are created in the image of God or, to use a theological term, bear the *imago dei*; as Genesis 1:27 says, “God created mankind in his own image.” Genesis 5:1-3 repeats that humankind is made in the “likeness” (בְּדִמְיוֹת *bid-mūt*) of God,

and that this likeness and image of God was passed down from Adam to his children (Mathews K. A., 2001, p. 169).

Third, all are fallen from their original design, through the sin of the first people, the sin that entered through Adam (Rom. 5:12). “[Human] sinfulness, rooted in our common identity in Adam’s rebellion, is a universal norm that has implications for every culture in the world” (Tennent 2010, p. 172). Now however, together as the descendants of Adam, humanity is also given redemptive grace through Jesus Christ to be saved from sin into an everlasting relationship with God. Redemption is God’s desire for all people, and for this reason God sent Jesus Christ (John 1:7; 1 Tim. 2:4-6).

Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9)

Genesis 11:1-9 tells how the many ethnicities, tribes, nations, and languages came into being. In the beginning the whole earth shared one common language (v. 1). Though God had told his people to “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen. 1:28), they were afraid to scatter throughout the earth as God had commanded them. Scattering, to them, was about losing the power that their unity could achieve. Therefore, they built themselves a tower to symbolize and reinforce their unity and to make a name for themselves by reaching the heavens.

One interesting item in this passage is the use of the language *let us*. In Genesis 11:4 the people say “*let us* [emphasis mine] build,” and in verse 7, the Triune God says, “Come, *let us* [emphasis mine] go down and confuse their language.” The first conclusion is that God is the one truly in control. The people believed they could unify and maintain power, yet God revealed his true power as he frustrated their plan. Second, although unity is good and is found in the very nature of God, the humans

abused it; they were unified in rebellion to God. Their unity was not being used for the right purpose of fulfilling God's intent for them, which was to fill the earth with his glory (Num. 14:21, Isa. 43:7). Instead, they used their unity to rebel against God:

One way humanity was designed to mirror forth God's triune image was to exist as multitude of diverse individuals living in complete unity throughout the earth. Ironically, the key verse in this text reveals that they did just the opposite. (Woo 2009, pp. 75-76)

When they sought the security that their unity could provide, God scattered them so that they would put their trust in him alone (Mathews and Park 2011, p. 72). Scattering them would mean sending them back to a situation similar to that of Adam and Eve in the garden, where their trust would be in God (Mathews K. A., 2001, p. 485).

Today, in one way, Christians build a tower of Babel for themselves by gathering with those who are similar, even when they find themselves among increasing ethnic diversity. Eric H. F. Law states, "[O]ur tower of Babel is our ethnocentrism" (43). The Homogeneous Unit Principle may not have ethnocentrism as its intent, but putting humans in control over church growth, and clustering in a homogeneous community, sends out a message of both ethnocentrism and anthropocentrism. God wants his people to scatter, fill the earth, and subdue it by trusting God alone. Instead of building the towers of churches, God wants believers to step out of their boundaries and reach out to those who are not like them culturally, racially, or ethnically. As Law reiterates, "[T]he first step toward becoming a multicultural community is to recognize our own tower of Babel—our ethnocentrism" (1996, p. 43).

Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-4)

In spite of their continuous rebellion and sin, God scatters the people throughout the earth as God had intended from the very beginning (Davis, “Building a Biblical Theology” 96). However, God chose Abraham from among the nations to be a blessing to God’s people scattered throughout the world. In this story, the Lord called Abraham to a new place, saying, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you” (Gen. 12:1). Here, God initiated his plan for saving his people by choosing Abraham to begin to bring salvation to all people. The *missio dei* is God’s initiation and activity in the world to bring about the redemption of his people. God’s blessing on Abraham is not only to bless him and his family, but the universal blessing is ultimately to bless “all the families of the earth” (v. 3). *Families* in this verse in Hebrew is מִשְׁפָּחָה (*mishpachah*), which can be translated as *tribe* or even *clan*, the smallest unit within a tribe (Thomas and Wilkins, 1998), implying God’s blessing to all units of families, large or small, and thus to all people of the earth (Davis, “Building a Biblical Theology” 97). “The covenant is simultaneously personal *and* global, local *and* universal” (Original emphasis; Tennent, 2010, p. 107; original emphasis). This promise of blessing for all people is repeated throughout Genesis in 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, and 28:14. Whereas the people of Babel were afraid to be scattered and trusted in the power of their own unity, Abraham, in faith, stepped out of his country, kindred, and father’s household (v. 1) to the land God promised to show him. Through his obedience in leaving his culture and crossing the boundaries, God blessed Abraham, his descendants, and all the nations of the earth. Christianity itself spread and took root throughout the nations because people were willing to cross boundaries to

share the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ with others different from themselves. God is not just a tribal God, but a God of all nations, who deeply cares for the redemption of his people in the whole earth (Peskett and Ramachandra 2003, p. 101). Even more today, as the world moves into our neighborhoods, God calls his people to cross cultures and comfort zones. In unifying as a homogeneous community, congregations may grow and be powerful, yet God's purpose for his church and his people is to show God's heart for the world by embracing diversity.

Old Testament Prophecies

Throughout the Old Testament, abundant passages reveal a God of all people and show God's sovereignty over all nations. Many scriptures also foreshadow how God intends to draw all to him and bring all to worship him. These passages show that God's heart for all nations and all people is not just a New Testament idea but an eternal, unchangeable attribute of God. Psalm 113:4 proclaims, "The Lord is high above *all nations* [emphasis mine], and his glory above the heavens." Other passages such as Psalm 46:10, 47:8, and 99:2 exalt the sovereignty of God over all nations. Our God is the Lord of the nations, a ruler who sits on the throne as the judge and king over the nations. God's great eschatological vision is to gather his people from all nations to worship him. Isaiah 2:2-3 and Micah 4:1-2 declare, in identical phrasing, the following:

In the last days
 the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established
 as chief among the mountains;
 it will be raised above the hills,
 and *all nations* will stream to it.
Many peoples will come and say,
 "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,

to the house of the God of Jacob.
 He will teach us his ways,
 so that we may walk in his paths.”
 The law will go out from Zion,
 the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. [emphasis mine]

Although the vision is centered on God’s rule from Jerusalem, it includes all nations.

Even passages such as Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 11:10-11, and Zechariah 8:20-23 state that people from all the nations will gather to seek God and glorify his name. When God brings all his people in the last days, they will come together to worship God (Ps. 22:27; 67:1-4; 72:11; 86:9) for he has made known his “salvation among all nations” (Ps. 67:2). Some passages specifically name places such as Egypt and Assyria from which God calls his people to worship. They will even worship together in unity as they travel the highways (Isa. 19:21; 23-25; 66:19-23) with purified lips, calling on the name of the Lord and serving shoulder to shoulder (Zephaniah 3:9).

The Incarnation of Jesus

God initiates and reaches out to his creation to redeem and reconcile the world—the *missio dei*. In the incarnation, God’s active, involved love became embodied in Jesus Christ. John 1:1 states that in the very beginning “was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” and the Word created all things in the world at creation. This Word, Jesus, in obedience to his Father, “became flesh and *made his dwelling among us*” (emphasis mine; John 1:14, emphasis mine). Out of consideration for humankind, he left the throne in heaven and his position as equal to God the Father, and humbled himself in every way (Phil. 2:6-8). He left his privileges and native culture of heaven to enter into and become part of the Jewish culture, committing his entire life to them; living with just the resources they had (Boyd 2008,

pp. 95-96). Through his words and by his very act of coming to live with us, Jesus explained or *exegeted* (*exēgēsato*) God's nature to us (Flemming 2005, p. 20). He vividly demonstrated and *was* the love of God—a living, breathing attribute of God, not merely an abstract theological concept.

By his incarnational ministry, Jesus set the example for the church not only to carry God's message but *embody* it as well (Tennent 2010, p. 82). Jesus showed his church what contextualizing the gospel means—to live faithfully in the midst of, and identifying with, people in their real situations (86). Therefore, as Christians live in communities that are moving from mono-ethnic to multiethnic, the church must follow Jesus' incarnational ministry—boldly to cross cultures, ethnic boundaries, and language barriers to be a unified body of Christ with those who may not be similar, just as Christ crossed great boundaries to share the love of God with humankind.

Genealogy of Jesus

Jesus embodies God's love for the world by his incarnation. His genealogy, which includes Gentiles and goes back to Adam, the father of the entire human race, makes even clearer that salvation and redemption are for the whole world and not exclusively for the Jews.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke both list the ancestry of Jesus. Matthew appears to be written for a Jewish audience, who were proud to be the children of Abraham, so naturally the book starts with Abraham and emphasizes that Jesus is from the line of Abraham and David. In contrast, Luke takes Jesus' genealogy all the way back, not only to Abraham but to Adam, indicating the universality of the offer of salvation. A strong theme in Luke is that Jesus came to save all people: Gentiles as well

as the nation of Israel (Luke 2:32; Walvoord and Zuck, 1983-, pp. on Luke 2:24-38). As discussed in the section on Genesis 1-3, the human race originated from Adam, and Acts 17:26 states, “from one man he made all the nations.” Therefore, Christ, who is descended from Adam, came to save all of Adam’s descendants or the whole human race.

Second, the genealogy in Matthew does something that is unusual and unnecessary in a typical Jewish genealogy. The passage includes four women who were also Gentiles at that: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. By doing so, the account raises the problem of the illegitimacy of King David as a pure Jewish King and of the awaited Messiah who will come from this line of which Jews had been so proud. Even so, and even for a Jewish audience, Matthew does not shrink back from mentioning them, which makes them even more significant. Luke’s genealogy, although it mentions Joseph, is often understood to be traced not through Joseph’s line but through Mary’s line because the genealogy from David on down is different. This passage says that Jesus was *thought* to be the son of Joseph; implicit in the story is that the virgin birth through the Holy Spirit shows that the Messiah was ultimately from above and not literally from the human line. The inclusion of the Gentile women, and Jesus humanly coming from Mary’s line, suggests God’s acceptance and value of all people from all nations and genders, whether legitimate or illegitimate by earthly standards. Jesus’ ministry confirmed this principle, as he ministered to all, including the most downtrodden and outcast in his society. The heart of the gospel points to all as one race created by God, and no one is illegitimate in God’s sight once they come through his

Son, Jesus. The church, therefore, must carry this gospel even to those in their communities they may regard as different or even illegitimate.

Prophecies about Jesus

The passages describing Jesus' early life and ministry contain prophetic statements of salvation for all. For example, when his parents took him to the temple on his eighth day, Simeon took the baby Jesus and proclaimed, "For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation *to the Gentiles* [emphasis mine], and the glory of your people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32). First, God's salvation in Jesus is shown to the whole world and, second, the light is for the Gentiles and Jews alike. Another passage that affirms the universality of salvation in Jesus is seen at the beginning of Jesus' ministry when Jesus approached John the Baptist. John pointed to Jesus, saying, "Look, the Lamb of God, who *takes away the sin of the world!*" (emphasis mine; John 1:29). The word for *world* in this verse is the Greek *kosmos*, which can mean (1) the universe created by God, (2) the planet earth, or (3) the totality of humanity (Elwell and Comfort 2001, pp. 1310-11). John the Baptist's statement proclaims that the mission of Christ is to atone for the sin of all humanity so that "*all flesh* shall see the salvation of God" (emphasis mine; Luke 3:6).

Jesus in Galilee

Jesus was from Nazareth in Galilee (John 1:45), and Matthew 4:12 records that Jesus *withdrew* to Galilee to begin his public ministry in Galilee after hearing about the execution of John the Baptist. Galilee was an area with a mixed population of racial and ethnic diversity. The Jews of Galilee were known for their distinct speech (Matt. 26:69-73) and were despised by the Jews of Judea (John 1:46) for their association with the

Gentiles. The ethnic groups found in Galilee included Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Macedonians, Persians, Romans, Syrians, and indigenous Canaanites (DeYoung et al. 15). Galilee was part of the land conquered by the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua and was given to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. In the eighth century BC, the Assyrians invaded the land, took many of the inhabitants into exile, and repopulated the region with Gentiles. Despite an attempt in the second century BC to circumcise and convert the populace forcibly, the province remained religiously and ethnically mixed (Elwell and Comfort 2001, pp. 510-11).

Though Matthew presents Jesus as the Messiah from the line of David, he shows that this Messiah spends a large part of his life in *Galilee of the Gentiles* (4:15). Jesus chose to base himself here at the beginning of his public ministry, subsequently moving toward Jerusalem and his destiny of death that would bring salvation. Matthew 4:15-16 is a fulfillment of a prophecy from Isaiah 9:1, which says that the Messiah was to be a light among the Gentiles of the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali:

His home was not the sacred temple-city, Jerusalem ... but Nazareth in Galilee, a region surrounded by Greek states and permeated by Hellenism. It is appropriate that a message that was to be taken to the Gentile world should be centered on one who was nurtured and raised in Galilee of Gentiles. (Barnett 1999, p. 48)

Jesus as suggested above, truly did command his followers to go and take the message to the whole world, including the Gentiles.

The Great Commission

The *missio dei* is summed up in John 3:16-17, which states, “For God so loved the world that he gave his ... Son ... to save the world through him.” Jesus’ obedience

to the mission of God the Father meant giving up his place of comfort and status. He entered into a lowly place, where his creatures dwell, to be close to the heart of his people, to understand and sympathize with them (Heb. 4:15), and to take on the punishment for their sin (Col. 5:21). Having accomplished the mission of God even to the point of death, and now having risen, Jesus challenged and commanded his disciples to continue his incarnational ministry and carry on the *missio dei* (John 20:21). Jesus' great commission to his followers is to take the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth and not only retain the gospel in the geographical location where they resided. God's love was meant for the whole world from the very beginning and throughout history. God purposed the people to be *scattered* and fill the earth from the start, so that the earth would be filled with those who trusted in him. So Jesus sent the disciples saying, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). Being a follower of Jesus Christ means being challenged to abandon comfort and social affinities to follow the example of Jesus' incarnate ministry, taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations, clans, tribes, people groups and individuals. The phrase "all nations" is directly related to the phrase "all families of the earth" in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:3), showing the continuity of God's heart for the nations and the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's blessing on the human race.

Acts 1:8 expands on how we are to carry out the Great Commission: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." In Acts, the movement of the gospel began in the upper room of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Waiting for the Holy Spirit, as Christ had told them to do, they finally

received the power of God. On that day, they were witnesses of God's great work to Jews gathered from all over the world. However, the Christian movement that began at Pentecost stayed in Jerusalem for a while.

Though their mission was to take the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth, the movement was contained in Jerusalem at first. They felt too comfortable in their homogeneous Jewish culture until the martyrdom of Stephen. After this, the Jerusalem church suffered great persecution, and they became "scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). The word *scattered* has been a recurrent theme throughout biblical history because God's desire is for his people and his gospel to go out to the whole world so that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). As they were scattered from Jerusalem, the gospel message carried on to Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1, 4). As the gospel moves outward from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, the evidence shows that their own will does not cause them to leave their context for a strange land, but the *missio dei*, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the persecution pushes them to go.

Even at the end of Acts 8, the Spirit moves Philip to meet an Ethiopian eunuch, a man of high position who carries the gospel back to his country (Acts 1:17). In ancient times, Ethiopia was often associated with the ends of the earth, even more so than Rome. The story of the Ethiopian eunuch who took the gospel to his homeland is really a foreshadowing of the fulfillment of Jesus' command in Acts 1:8 to reach the ends of the earth. In order to do this, God not only sent Philip to the road where he could meet this Ethiopian eunuch but has him "sit beside him" (Acts 8:31) to interpret

the Scripture to him. After hearing the good news of Jesus Christ proclaimed to him, the eunuch was baptized and went on his way, rejoicing (Acts 8:35-39). In order to share the gospel, Philip had to cross ethnic and social boundaries, approaching and sitting beside an Ethiopian high official riding on a chariot so that the gospel could be shared with him and eventually be taken to the ends of the earth. This beautiful picture shows how diverse people can be united when they are willing to cross boundaries and culture for the sake of the gospel and fellowship in Jesus. This movement is also a fulfillment of Isaiah 56:3-7, which states that even a foreigner or a eunuch, if he or she would love the Lord and follow his ways, will not be cut off but instead be brought into the house of the Lord to worship, for “[God’s] house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples” (Isa. 56:7).

In another cross-cultural and cross-ethnic story in Acts, God led Peter through visions to agree to go to the Gentile household of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, where the people received the Holy Spirit and were baptized. At their conversion, Peter said to them, “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:34), showing Peter’s experience of the nature of God through the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit and fellowship across ethnic boundaries.

Cornelius’ conversion was just the beginning. With the conversion of Paul and his missionary journeys, the message of Jesus Christ spreads to Asia Minor and eventually to Rome at the end of his life. Rome was Paul’s strategic place of mission. Not just because the gospel needed to reach there, just like any other place, but also because Rome was a center of commerce and power. People coming and going from

Rome would hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and spread it throughout the rest of the known world. As we are witnesses, the gospel of Jesus Christ has reached vast parts of the world today. This advance happened because Paul carried out the heart of God, embodying God's love, sharing Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and taking the gospel to places where the story had not yet reached (Rom. 15:14-21; Polhill 2001, pp. 406-07).

Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47)

After the ascension of Jesus Christ, the disciples waited for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. On the day of Pentecost, as Christ had promised them, they received the power of the Holy Spirit. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit that day has a special meaning, and shows God's vision for the church. This initial church gathering was multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual from the very first moment of its existence. This work of the Holy Spirit was no accident but showed them the true nature and heart of God: his inclusive love for all humanity. At the tower of Babel, God dispersed the people because of their lack of trust in God and for their refusal to follow the will of God to scatter and fill the earth. However, this story shows how God will reverse this dispersal, gathering his church from the earth—from all nations, languages, and cultures—by the redemption and salvation offered through his son Jesus Christ. God never gave up on his people, but through Abraham promised to bless everyone, if they would come to Jesus Christ, the one whom God sent to bless the world. With Jesus' work accomplished on earth, God sent the disciples filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

On that day, the place was filled with the sound of rushing wind, and tongues of fire rested on each person, causing them to speak in the different languages of the world

of the apostles' time. This scenario is a reversal not only of what was done at the tower of Babel but of the disobedience of those people: The disciples, instead of building a great name for themselves, praised God's holy name for his greatness.

The Jews gathered in Jerusalem were from all over the world. They heard the disciples speak in their own languages. These included "both Jews and proselytes," meaning they could have been born Jews living in another nation or converted to Judaism from a non-Jewish ethnicity (Acts 2:11). The outpouring of languages shows God's celebration of ethnicities, cultures, and languages, valuing what is unique to each yet bringing them all together to praise God in unity, the commonality that they share. All this celebration is simply a foreshadowing of the kingdom of God that is to come, filled with God's people from all nations, celebrating their unique identities and backgrounds, yet in one voice and one heart praising God, dwelling in the presence of God seen again in Revelation 7.

Antioch Church

The Antioch church was an example and a role model of the first multiethnic church plant since the birth of the Church. With the martyrdom of Stephen, and the persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem, the disciples were forced to migrate as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. However, at first they spoke the good news of Jesus Christ only to the Jews (Acts 11:19), again failing to break out of their comfort zone. At the time, Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire, with around half a million people. As a port city and a transportation hub, Antioch attracted all kinds of people from different nationalities, languages, and cultures. This cosmopolitan city had a pluralistic population, both ethnically and religiously. Greeks, Syrians, Phoenicians,

Jews, Arabs, Persians, and Italians were all part of the city's population mix (Lorg 13-16; Viola 63-64). Understanding the nature of the place and understanding God's heart for all people, some disciples from Cyprus and Cyrene began to share the good news with the Hellenists (Acts 11:20). *Hellenists* were either foreign Jews or proselytes, whether converted to Christianity or not (Zodhiates, 200). Acts 11:21 states, "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord." Throughout Acts are many stories of the growth of the church (Acts 1:13; 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 9:31, 35, 42). When God blessed their work with the Hellenists, he showed that his grace is for everyone, not just Jews. Given the diversity of Antioch, and with Hellenists coming to the Lord, we can only imagine the diversity of all those who became believers in that church.

The leadership of the Antioch church also represented its diversity. Acts 13:1 lists the teachers and the prophets of Antioch: "Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul." Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus (Acts 4:36). Simeon was called Niger, which means *black* in Latin, suggesting his African origin, and Lucius was from Cyrene, in North Africa. Manean is believed to have been brought up by Herod of Antipas, the youngest son of Herod the Great (Polhill 2001, pp. 289-90). Finally, Saul was a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia and a Roman citizen (Acts 21:39).

Furthermore, because of its commitment to reach the diverse community in which they resided, the church at Antioch not only grew in number but in faith and maturity, which can be seen in their aid to the Jerusalem church during the worldwide famine (Acts 11:27-31), and in becoming the first missionary-sending church. Also in

Antioch the believers were first called *Christians* (11:26). That the term was first used in Antioch suggests that the Gentiles were being successfully reached in good enough numbers to attract a label from the other local Gentiles. The characterization also shows that they saw Christianity as its own religion and not as just another Jewish sect (Polhill 2001, p. 273). The fact that they were called *Christians*, followers of Jesus Christ, is an important matter. The movement of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit could have easily been seen as a Jewish religion or identified by the ethnic makeup of their gathering. The fact that they were identified primarily as followers of Jesus shows that their beliefs and mission were clearly seen even by outsiders. They were not just a multiethnic church, but their gathering was identified with a new nature and culture in Christ Jesus.

Finally, as mentioned above, the church of Antioch was a missionary sending church. They took Jesus' command seriously to "be my witness in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). While they were worshipping the Lord, in prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit told them to set Paul and Barnabas apart for God's work. Acts 13:3 says that "after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off." The church in Antioch probably did not want to lose two of their great and treasured teachers. Even so, they sent them off with a blessing, and Antioch became a base for Paul as he made his missionary journeys. Moreover, their church already included people from all over the world, and their relatives back in their home countries most likely gave them a heart for the gospel to reach the ends of the earth.

Revelation 7

The beginning of the Scripture and the eschatological end provide the biblical frame for how Christians are to live and be the church in between. Revelation 7 gives God's ultimate vision for his children, the church. God has had the vision from the very beginning and has been pursuing it throughout. God's Word says that on that day "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hand" (Rev. 7:9-10), a diverse crowd, will all be praising God together in unity. This vision shows us the full future reality, not just a hint or a glimpse of what is possible such as was seen at Pentecost, and not just an idealistic goal to be pursued in areas like Antioch, where becoming a church of all nations was probable due to their context. Believers are all destined for a multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual reality in the house of God, celebrating the unique cultures that they have been granted. However, they will share their true and common identity in that all "have been washed ... in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14) and unceasingly praise God's greatness and his abundant grace and love in providing for the salvation of the world through Jesus Christ. Jesus, in quoting Isaiah, said, "[M]y house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations" (Matt. 21:13; Isa. 56:7), and this vision shows the eschatological fulfillment of that prophecy.

Today, believers live in the tension of *already and not yet*. People still struggle to reconcile the differences between races and ethnicities before coming together to worship God, even in areas where they dwell together in one community. Even so, God's kingdom can still be experienced here on earth, through those who have grasped

God's vision for the world, for the nations, and for each individual person, from the largest to the smallest unit on earth. Therefore, when humankind allows God to come into the midst of them and reign, this future reality can be a present actuality even here in this imperfect world. Thus, whenever God places people in a context to do so, they must reach out and build multiethnic churches as a body of Christ and as spiritual children of Abraham, called like him to be a blessing to all nations.

The Growing Need for Multiethnic Churches

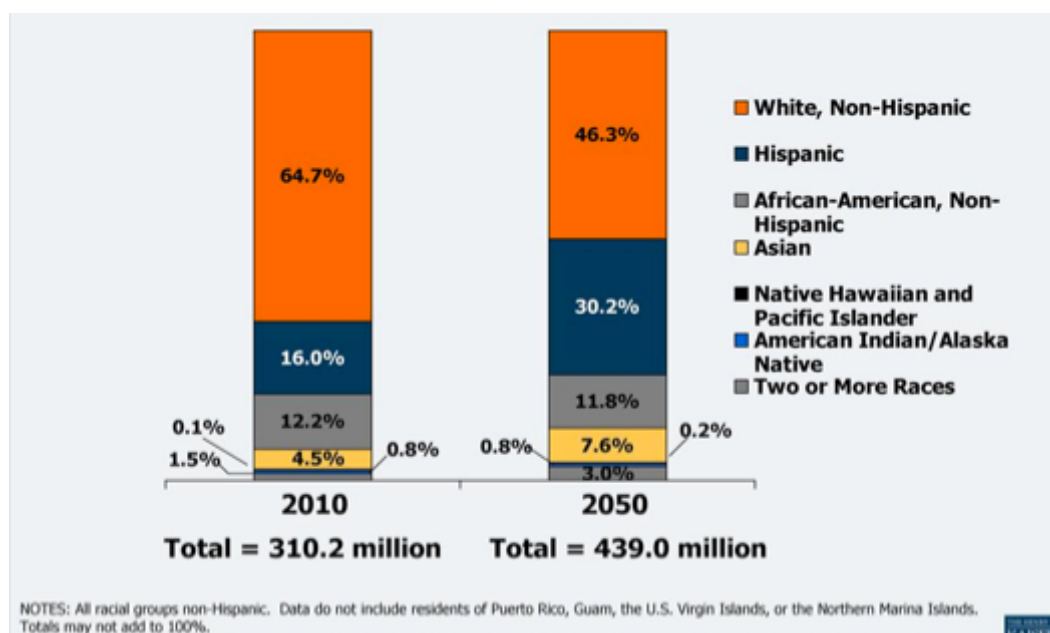
The demographics of the United States are undergoing rapid change. More and more people are living in bigger and more diverse cities. In his analysis of the 1990, 2000, and 2010 census results, William H. Frey finds the following:

- Hispanics now outnumber blacks and represent the largest minority group in major American cities;
- Well over half of America's cities are now majority non-white;
- Minorities represent 35 percent of suburban residents, similar to their share of the overall U.S. population;
- More than half of all minority groups in large metro areas, including blacks, now reside in the suburbs; and
- Fast-growing exurban areas remain mostly white and depended overwhelmingly on whites for growth in the 2000s (Frey 1).

Clearly the United States is no longer a white, mono-cultural nation.

Figure 2.1 is a graph from the Kaiser Family Foundation, comparing the composition of the population in 2010 with the projection for 2050. By then, minority

populations catch up to the white population, and America becomes a nation with no majority group.



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Figure 2.1. Distribution of US population by race/ethnicity, 2010 and 2050

Frey concludes that these radical changes will require leaders to work hard to adapt to the continual social, economic, and political shifts (1). If Figure 2.1 above is the current and future reality, Christians must prepare themselves and strategize for the changing population both now and for the future as well. The North American Mission Board concludes, “America will not be won to Christ by establishing more churches like the majority of those we now have” (6). Instead, congregations will need to customize their strategies and styles to meet the needs of each unique community and the diverse people groups it contains (Stetzer and Putman 134-35).

The Homogeneous Unit Principle and the Congruence Model

As mentioned previously, the model used by many churches to grow is the Homogeneous Unit Principle. However, with the rise of the immigrant population and the increasing diversity of ethnicity and cultures, urban cities raise the question of whether or not the HUP is still the most effective model. David Britt observes that the societal basis for the HUP, which seemed to work well for McGavran in rural areas, is no longer relevant in the pluralism of today's American cities (Britt 136). For one, the HUP ignores the dynamic of changing demographics. A homogeneous church may grow when their people group is dominant and growing, but if that group starts moving away or being displaced by a different people group moving into the neighborhood, the congregation will decline. The HUP constrains a church from adapting to these changing realities. Even Wagner, an advocate of the HUP, observes a church disease called *ethnikitis*, whereby a church shrinks and dies when their community changes (Wagner 166-68). Communities have changed due to the inflow and movement of people from other ethnic, socioeconomic, language, national, or educational backgrounds. Because of the transformations, many church members leave the community, except senior citizens and those who cannot afford to make the move. Wagner states that such a church will "never break the 200 barrier because its days as a church are numbered" (Towns, Wagner, and Rainer 13).

In a diverse neighborhood, a church based on the HUP may grow for a while but will peak in its growth earlier as it exhausts its pool of available members from its target ethnic group in the community. Other people groups will be left largely unreached and may even contribute to further resentment among people groups in the

larger community. In the Acts 1:8 model, this kind of church limits itself to carrying the gospel to Jerusalem and does not venture out into the uncomfortable neighboring Judea or Samaria.

The HUP is based on people identifying with each other through a common identity and the shared interests and understandings such an identity brings. This homogeneity makes it easier for the church to fellowship and reach others from the same people group. In light of changing demographic circumstances, however, Britt asks the question, “What does homogeneity mean in the city?” (137). For the ever-increasing and diverse urban population, *homogeneity* is difficult to pin down. The word connotes something that is consistent and unchanging, which can be an uncommon concept in an urban setting. Many urbanites today would say that they do not even know what kind of person they are, but change their self-identification all the time, depending on their context or the circle of people with whom they are interacting (138). Urbanites easily have separate social lives, work lives, family lives, and religious lives, for example. Britt quotes sociologist Peter Berger’s declaration that “inevitably our self-understanding relies upon our social context” (138).

Today’s generations are also growing up in a “*glocal*” context—the converging of global and local realities (Stetzer and Putman 5). Therefore, to today’s people who have grown up in ever changing communities with a diversity of ethnicities, values, and cultures, “it seems incredible that anyone would suggest a homogeneous church in a setting which makes even psychological consistency itself a struggle” (Britt 138). Researchers C. Kirk Hadaway and Douglass A. Walrath show that the HUP is valid as a descriptive concept, inasmuch as churches reflect their neighborhoods; yet problems

arise when the neighborhoods undergo change. However, along with many others, Hadaway objects to the HUP on ethical grounds (qtd. in Britt, 139). Furthermore, Claude Fischer argues that unlike the traditional rural setting from which the HUP arose, the connections and relationships in the city are no longer tied so strongly to geography and similarity as in the past (qtd. in Britt, 140).

With the demographic changes, and people's experiences of diversity from a young age living in urban cities, we should also reexamine the idea that people are necessarily more comfortable in a homogeneous setting. Daily interaction among individuals of different ethnic and cultural groups is becoming a norm in today's glocal context. One implication for church ministry is that we may need to reexamine our church growth model. The church sends the wrong message to this diverse generation about the gospel if it does not live out its mission within its immediate, diverse context.

Britt points out that the church growth strategy based on the HUP seems to ignore other internal and contextual factors affecting church growth, such as the effectiveness of the church institution, the belief systems of the church, the dynamics of demographic change, and the degree to which people in the community are already comfortable forming relationships with others that are different from themselves, whether ethnically, economically, or educationally and so on (141). In place of the HUP, Britt proposes the *congruence model*, where the church seeks to make the congregation look more like the community in which it exists. He explains that "where the cultural symbols of a congregation are congruent with those of a local community, the gospel will receive an easier hearing. Church-community congruence forms the backdrop for church growth or decline" (144). A church that is incongruent with its

community may be unable to grow even with a talented pastor, while a church that closely fits its community may find itself growing even under less talented guidance. Of course, it could grow even more with a skillful leader; the point is that congruence of a church with its community is a more foundational factor (145).

A church that is congruent with its community is well contextualized. In theological terms, a church following the congruence model will tend to be a missional, incarnational church, pursuing ministry to everyone within its community. Churches following the HUP may tend to be more attractional, drawing in members of the community through their interest in joining a group of similar people to whom they can relate.

To provide conceptual clarity for discussions of church growth, and to test the validity of the church-community congruence model, Britt studied congruence of seventy congregations to their communities in Jefferson County, Kentucky. To summarize his results, “perceived homogeneity within the congregation did not correlate with growth” (147). Rather, “church-community congruence variables predicted church growth to a significant degree, especially congruence in education and ancestry” (147). Interpreting these statements, we may conclude that homogeneous churches grow in homogeneous neighborhoods because of their congruence, not necessarily because of the homogeneity itself. In a sense, the Homogeneous Unit Principle may be considered a special, static case of the congruence model in a mono-ethnic and largely uniform surrounding culture. Indeed, many fast-growing churches are located in the suburbs where greater homogeneity exists, so following the HUP *does* bring them into a certain kind of congruence with their community. Extending the

congruence model to the more general case, however, homogeneous churches may not do so well in mixed neighborhoods. Rather, if the neighborhood is mixed, a church that reflects that mixture and the dynamics of the interactions already going on in the community may grow better.

Britt's study also confirmed that other factors, such as pastoral competence, did help but did not correlate with growth as much as the congruence of the congregation to its community. For example, the study also concluded that conservative or more orthodox congregations tended to grow more but *only* if they were congruent with their neighborhoods (147). This research indicates that multiple factors contribute to church growth, but congruence seems to be one of the more important and foundational factors for church growth.

One qualifier to the congruence model when applied to a multiethnic context is that simply proportionally copying the mixture of a diverse community is not enough to be congruent with the community. Another factor mentioned in the literature is the ease with which these diverse groups in the community already form relationships outside their group that is, their cross-cultural competency. "[T]he cultural character of churches in inter-ethnic urban communities should normally follow the interactive pattern of peoples outside the church" (Davis, "Multicultural Church Planting Models" 115). If significant racial tensions exist in the community, it will naturally be a challenge to grow a multiracial congregation there. Nevertheless, I believe that Christians must not be content with merely *following* the community; they must try to *lead* the community into racial reconciliation by modeling it first in the church.

In the light of this newer and broader church-context congruence model, congregations need to plant new multiethnic churches and transition their monoethnic churches to multiethnic churches, particularly in neighborhoods with increasing or changing ethnic diversity. Christians must also consider socioeconomic diversity and other types of diversity, which are the other side of the same coin (DeYmaz, 140).

As stated already, the *glocal* phenomenon is becoming more of a norm in many cities, which gives us a great opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission. Eric Swanson and Sam Williams state, “God has localized the Great mission by bring the nations to the cities of the world. The ends of the earth have, in large measure, come to the cities” (37). Ed Stetzer and David Putman, church planters and missiologists, challenge us to speak and act differently in this new glocal world. The culture around us is shifting, but most evangelical churches are not adapting to the changes. In this chaotic interplay among cultures, ethnicities and groups, hundreds of new cultures are emerging, and these present a challenge that North American churches must rise to meet (14). No longer do Christians only send out missionaries to faraway lands; now everyone’s job is to be a missionary in his or her own backyard (Appleby; Boyd). Even more, all should be hospitable hosts to their new neighbors, serving them with incarnational ministry that reaches them where they are. The congruence model is better suited to this kind of ministry than the homogeneous unit principle.

Planting Multiethnic Churches

Compared to the literature available on the growing church-planting movement in general, very little has been written that focuses specifically on planting multiethnic churches. Few are venturing into this specific topic area or have done any in-depth

study of methods, models, and strategies. Charles E. Van Engen goes to great lengths to state how in researching the literature on the issue of planting multicultural churches, he found that few recognized authors in the areas of church growth and/or church planting give more than a cursory mention of multiethnic churches. The focus is almost entirely mono-ethnic and disturbingly “Anglo, affluent, educated, suburban America,” and if they do deal with multiethnic churches, their treatment of the topic is “disturbingly brief” (37-40). Nevertheless, the literature on the growing missional movement, in combination with general literature on church planting, can teach great strategies for planting multiethnic churches, which are missional at their core.

The models, processes, strategies, and how-to lists for starting new churches are many and detailed. A full review here is beyond the scope of this document. However, it will be helpful to describe a few key concepts useful to the discussion of starting multiethnic churches. A new church is usually started by a church planter with a strong calling to start a new church in conjunction with a launch team. The process typically includes steps such as determining the purpose and mission of the new church, picking a location, studying the community, determining the target audience, setting up a prayer team, developing strategies and plans, finding funds and, finally, launching. Many models have been developed for how to start and run a church, some independent but most relying on a supporting organization or church (Logan and Ogne; McNamara and Davis; Payne; Searcy and Thomas).

Some of the steps in the process of planting a church may be different for multiethnic church plants. First, the audience will be different. People who may not fit into the average homogeneous church and will be drawn to multiethnic churches

include interracially married families, immigrants or their children who prefer speaking English, people who live and work in the midst of diversity or who appreciate ministry done in diversity, third-culture children, hyphenated-Americans, hybrids, transnationals, international students and families, members of Generations X and Y, and people in general who are turned off by a mono-ethnic church and/or racism (North American Mission Board 6-7; Garces-Foley 220; Ang; Klukach). Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Along with Mark DeYmaz, many today find themselves asking, “If the kingdom of heaven is not segregated, then why on earth is the church?” (Ethnic Blends 4). Multiethnic churches will be better positioned to reach these groups and show an example of how church should be against common preconceived notions of the church as segregated, irrelevant, judgmental, and authoritarian (North American Mission Board 6).

Second, planting a multiethnic church may require more from the leadership and launch team. Attributes that are handy for any leaders but especially for those leading a multicultural church include a commitment to biblical principles, particularly reconciliation and unity; a missional orientation; a commitment to inclusivity; a strong prayer life; a servant’s heart; a sense of humor; cultural competency, flexibility, and ability to enjoy and compromise with cultural differences; ability to handle criticism and rejection; visionary leadership; and pastoral gifts; a good background in theology and in the social sciences and more (North American Mission Board 7-8).

Finally, the model for the church itself is also going to be somewhat different. Most churches that follow the HUP do not need this extra step, but for a multiethnic or multicultural church plant, care must be given to selecting the right model of interaction

between the different cultures and/or ethnicities, depending on the situation in the community. Curtiss Paul DeYoung et al. describe three categories of multiracial congregations, in order of increasing preference and integration: the assimilated church model, where one group dominates and the others assimilate to them; the pluralist model, where no single group or culture dominates, yet interactions among members are superficial and they each maintain their separate identities; and, the integrated church model, where the disparate cultures and groups come together to form a new, hybrid but unified culture, with no *us* versus *them* (164-68). Kathleen Garces-Foley lists three similar models: the assimilated model; the multilingual church, similar to the pluralist model above but with subgroups that speak their own language to each other when fellowshiping; and, the multicultural model, similar to the integrated model above (212-15). Laurene Beth Bowers speaks of the renting model, the sister church model, and the integrated church model (113-22). All express a preference for the integrated model.

Other sources deal more broadly with planting *ethnic* churches and only include one or two multiethnic models among them. For example, Roger N. McNamara and Ken Davis list several models for planting ‘ethnic’ churches (only some of which are multiethnic):

- Mother/daughter ethnic church model, where the daughter congregation is homogeneous and typically serves first-generation immigrants;
- Multi-congregational model, where multiple congregations share resources and facilities, usually with a separate worship service for each group;

- Multiple sponsorship model, where several churches partner to start and support a mono-ethnic sponsored congregation;
- Multilingual satellite or multisite model, where a single church meets in multiple places, perhaps by linguistic or cultural groups;
- House or cell church model, where all members meet for a celebrative worship on a regular basis but meet in homes or cells according to ethnic or language groups; and,
- Multiethnic church model, where a culturally and ethnically diverse church meets together (Davis, “Multicultural Church Planting Models” 116-19; McNamara and Davis 613-14).

Ken Davis defines a multicultural church as a “biblical community where people (1) intentionally recruit, recognize and embrace a diversity of people; (2) are committed to racial reconciliation; and (3) are working out administrative structures that assure the continuation of both unity and diversity” (115). Jerry L. Appleby lists several models for starting ethnic and multiethnic churches: by natural birth, adoption, implantation, or transition. He also discusses multi-worship, multi-language, and multicultural church models (82-97). Manuel Ortiz presents two major models: the multi-congregational model (broken into three subcategories—the rental, celebration, and integrative models); and the multiethnic model (63-84). He describes the latter as a church where believers see what God would want to see—“diverse people in one place at one time worshiping God together. This group of worshiping people is what we term ‘multiethnic church’” (86). Eldin Villafaña et al. use four models from David Sanchez’s paper *Viable Models for Churches in Communities Experiencing Ethnic Transition*: the

multi-congregational model, the temporary sponsorship model, the bilingual-bicultural model, and the total transition model (54-56). Oliver R. Phillips suggests neighborhood-oriented churches, immigrant-specific churches, and multicultural churches as models (28-32).

Though all of these models try to embrace diversity and are steps ahead of many of the homogeneous churches that do not have much interaction with other cultures, many of these models still rely on the Homogeneous Unit Principle to attract and grow, as fellowship occurs primarily in homogeneous separate congregations, subgroups, or sub-congregations. The integrated multiethnic church models that celebrate each ethnicity and culture, yet are able to unite by the gospel of Jesus Christ to form a new common culture, are the kind of churches that should be planted whenever and wherever possible. Van Engen's work is very helpful in understanding this need. Instead of simply insisting on the assimilation model, he challenges the church planter to start multiethnic churches where cultural and ethnic differences are affirmed, appreciated, and celebrated. Therefore, since the ethnicity (particularity) is not these congregations' basis of unity, the planter must emphasize the religious principles that unite them as the body of Christ and the universality of the gospel. This universality must complement rather than eclipse the marvelous richness of ethnic diversity that can be fostered in multiethnic congregations (36-37).

Many of these authors do believe that such authentic integration should be the ultimate goal of a multiethnic church. Instead of assimilating one group into another or keeping all the cultures largely separated, they agree that the effective multiethnic church reflects and celebrates all component cultures but also makes its own new,

unique, and lasting culture that both includes and transcends the component cultures and is based in our identity in Jesus Christ (DeYoung et al. 168-69; Lo 47; Marti 13-14; Rhodes 46).

However, every community and church is unique and has different needs, and having one model to satisfy the needs of all multiethnic churches would be impossible (Garces-Foley 217-18). Each community, language, and congregation may need its own action plan, and at least one of these models can be adapted to fit the local context without loss of workability (Davis, “Multicultural Church Planting Models” 119). Several authors note that the fully integrated multicultural church, though ideal, is very rare and takes the most creativity, hard work, cultural sensitivity, persistence, and prayer on the part of church planters, yet they are still worth the effort when possible (Davis, “Multicultural Church Planting Models” 119; DeYoung et al. 168).

Something that Stetzer and Putman suggest in response to the plethora of overlapping models is that rather than looking at the models first, leaders need to take a process approach. If pastors do not take time to research and analyze the community and instead just pick a model that they like, they may plant something that is not aligned with the community and the people that they are trying to reach. Stetzer and Putman suggest these essentials: (1) recognizing a calling from God, (2) exegeting the community, (3) examining ways God is working in similar communities, (4) finding God’s unique vision for your church, and (5) adjusting that vision as you learn the context (21). In a later chapter, they say successful church planters do not just copy the latest model they have found but are (1) learning their contexts before choosing their methods, (2) learning from others without copying them, and (3) finding new methods

and models by learning from their predecessors (154). Too many unique situations and too many different groups exist for a single model or even a handful of models to cover them all. When a cultural group finally sees a church that is truly contextualized, the “impact can often be explosive” (155).

Transitioning to a Multiethnic Church

Paul G. Hiebert says that church planting and church renewal are two sides of the missions coin. Without church renewal, nominal Christianity becomes the rule; without church planting, the church lives without a purpose. When a church is involved in missions, it often revives itself as well, and church renewal at home can produce fresh missionary fervor and vision to reach the world (172). Similarly, transitioning existing mono-ethnic churches to multiethnic congregations is just as important as planting new multiethnic congregations.

The need for the multiethnic church is felt most strongly in the many communities that are going through a demographic transition. Existing churches that may have once thrived now realize that unless they do something differently, they will inevitably decline (Bowers 31). However, Raafat Girgis warns that growth cannot become the main purpose for becoming a multiethnic church; rather, the purpose must primarily be to transform attitudes and embrace the strangers in the community (70).

Garces-Foley thinks that multiethnic churches “are interesting sociological[ly] because they challenge a well-entrenched social pattern of separation along ethnic lines” (219). Therefore, whether a particular church follows the assimilation model or the pluralistic model, it has overcome this strong social pattern, which is not easy to do. Glenn Rogers emphasizes that becoming a multiethnic church is hard: “It requires a

good deal of thought, insight and information” (61). Far more churches choose to do nothing even in the face of inevitable decline and death or decide to move to a new location at great cost. Their reaction (or lack thereof) illustrate how hard it is for institutions to adapt to change and how difficult it is to achieve integration (Garces-Foley 219).

Many aspects of transitioning a mono-ethnic church to a multiethnic church are similar to planting a multiethnic church. Some of the aspects discussed here may be applicable to planting multiethnic churches, and vice versa. Furthermore, the literature on transitioning to multiethnic congregations seems much more extensive and practical than the literature covering the planting of new multiethnic churches, so there may be more in this section on transitioning that can be applied to the section on planting churches than the other way around. The following is a summary of the literature that deals with transitioning a mono-ethnic congregation to a multiethnic church.

Steps to Transition to a Multiethnic Church

Once the determination has been made to transition to a multiethnic congregation, a number of steps are discussed in the literature. The various lists overlap but follow logically enough that they can be put together.

Knowing the community. The first step is to study or *exegete* the community—what Michael Pocock and Joseph Henriques call “reality recognition.” This step is often done as a team effort or by a task force appointed by the leadership. Today many sociological tools can help inform planners of the demographic data and transitions occurring in the community. Once the information has been gathered, the interpretation of the data should be shared with the congregation in a nonthreatening

and understandable way so that everyone may grasp the reality of the church and the community (Ortiz 119-20; Pocock and Henriques 198). The suggestions that Rogers gives for studying the community include in-depth demographic studies, taking the time to drive around the neighborhood, and observing the community, including its people, neighborhoods, housing, infrastructure, and businesses. Furthermore, meeting different types of leaders in the community can help reveal its needs, how they are being met, and what is being left unmet. Websites about the community can give insight as well (62-63). Pocock and Henriques give many other specific suggestions for studying and understanding the community and the transitions, whether ethnic, generational, economic, or spiritual (200-06).

When Rodney M. Woo came to Wilcrest Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, he conducted random interviews with individuals from the neighborhood to learn from them their view of the church. He learned that the church model was very outdated. The neighborhood had changed dramatically while the church had stayed the same. To maintain the church as-is in the current neighborhood would be very difficult, as the neighborhood became more multiracial (Woo 29). The Village Baptist Church also went through a similar process to know its neighborhood (DeYmaz 168).

Knowing your church. Rogers suggests spending time with church members, talking with them specifically about becoming multiethnic, gauging their spiritual maturity, commitment, and openness to close relationships with other ethnic people (64). Pocock and Henriques suggest making an inventory of spiritually gifted people, skills, expertise, experience, and facilities available to the church (199).

Selecting a specific target ethnicity. A. Timothy Heijermans suggests, early in the process, to choose a specific country, read news about it, meet people from that country in the neighborhood, learn a few phrases of its language, and learn about the concerns of the people from that country in your community (2-3). Rogers says a specific ethnic group needs to be identified as the initial focus of outreach activity. While the church wants to be open to all, ministry is always specific. Knowing the community, its needs, and the church, the church must ask themselves which ethnic group the church can reach best and focus on them first (66).

Preparing the church. Leaders should present the information discovered in the previous steps to the church, along with a preliminary version of the dream or vision you have for how the church can change to become multiethnic. Ortiz recommends having frank discussions about practical aspects of multiethnicity, presenting the pros and cons of the multiethnic church: “There is going to be a loss when we contextualize, but there is also going to be a gain. Both of these dimensions need to be reviewed. This kind of honesty will pay major dividends” (125). Furthermore, through the process, leaders should provide debriefing sessions where members can share their concerns and frustrations (126). Woo took his church, Wilcrest, through a detailed process such as this (29). Ortiz offers more helpful suggestions to prepare the church, such as visiting other multiethnic churches and having combined worship with an ethnic church, with fellowship time to help them envision the future (126).

The church needs to be prepared to reach out to and interact with other cultures and ethnicities. The church can offer cultural awareness programs to help counter

humanity's natural tendency toward ethnocentrism (Rogers 66). Heijermans suggests, early on, that leaders and church members begin by reaching out and making friends with people of other ethnicities, particularly the ethnicity the church is trying to reach. They should find creative and resourceful ways to make contact and build relationships. The leadership should also disciple members in the skills required to reach across ethnic divisions, showing them an example and involving them in concerted efforts. He gives other creative ideas such as inviting a missionary to speak on crossing cultural barriers, joining a language club together, and reading about cross-cultural communication (3).

Ortiz suggests the intentional teaching of biblical justice and multiethnicity to transform the hearts and minds of the congregation. Biblical and theological teaching must play a major role in the process of transitioning to a multiethnic church (124). He also advises sharing biblical and historical stories to let the people know that they are not the first ones to deal with the challenges of a multiethnic ministry (124). Leaders can teach the past history of diversity and inclusiveness in the church itself: It is amazing that many churches in the past, such as the Nazarene, Methodist and Reformed denominations, had a greater understanding of the needs of the poor and of multiethnicity than many of our contemporaries. Going back to tradition may serve the church well. Tradition can provide affirmation to a church that wants to make major transitions. (125).

Defining the vision. Woo took fifty-one key leaders and members on a retreat to finalize the new vision statement for the church. They dialogued until they reduced it to three points: (1) personal relationship with Christ is the foundation for everything;

(2) intentionally be multiracial; and, (3) God calls the church body to become missionaries (Woo 30). The Village Baptist Church also articulated its vision for multiethnic ministry (DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church* 169). Pocock and Henriques give some detailed suggestions about how to bring the church together to recast its vision to become a multiethnic congregation (199, 206-11).

Choosing a model. Many models exist for multiethnic and multicultural churches. Most of them were covered in the section on planting multiethnic churches. Depending on the church and community, some may be appropriate and others may not.

Determining your outreach ministry. The church will need a clear focus and direction for the ministry. The church needs to ask, “What kind of ministry will we engage in to serve the people of the target community?” The answers to this question will help determine the overall ministry strategy, the spiritual formation strategy, the outreach strategy, and the growth strategy (Rogers 70-79).

Implementing the vision. Rogers gives some more specific steps for implementing the vision and suggests a twelve- to eighteen-month time frame for additional research and groundwork activity:

1. Further strategizing and planning,
2. Establishing some basic goals,
3. Finding an ethnically appropriate minister,
4. Continuing community research, conducting profiles and interviews to discover how to serve and reach the target population,
5. Preparing cost analyses,

6. Allocating facility usage,
7. Studying churches in other locations that are working successfully among the same target population, and
8. Making a realistic and firm financial commitment for at least five years (Rogers 65-67).

Woo concurs that implementation will take additional strategizing, praying, and planning (101). Pocock and Henriques suggest starting with a few pilot programs to implement specific parts of the new vision and assigning specific people to lead them to ensure their success (199, 211-12).

Evaluation and readjustment. Pocock and Henriques say to have regular evaluation periods and course corrections to ensure the process stays on track (199, 213). This suggestion is covered by many others and discussed further in the following section.

Elements That Must Be Present

Intentionality to be multiethnic. Ortiz stresses that throughout the entire process, the most important is *the element of intentionality* (118). Others agree that intentionality is one of the most important factors in bringing the races together. The church must explicitly state their desire to become multiracial so that making it a priority to achieving and maintaining racial diversity are priorities. This intentionality is crucial because the natural human tendency is to segregate and prefer homogeneity (DeYoung et al. 177-78; Washington and Kehrein 127-28).

Humility. Heijermans suggests asking God to give his workers his eyes to see people and the servant attitude of Jesus Christ, putting Philippians 2:3-11 into practice (2).

Adaptability. Multiethnic churches must be adaptable and flexible, prepared and ready to embrace new ethnicities and cultures and to bring them into the body of Christ (DeYoung et al. 178-79).

Agreement and buy-in. Early in the process, all of the leaders and a majority of the congregation must agree and fully commit to becoming a multiethnic church in order to succeed, be healthy, and grow. In particular, if the leaders are not unified and some of them lack enthusiasm for the project, the church will become divided (Rogers 65).

Leadership Aspects

Most sources state the importance of finding the right kind of pastoral leadership to lead a healthy multiethnic church. This leadership, and the process of selection, is different from that of the homogeneous churches (DeYoung et al. 177). The type of pastor that is more likely to succeed is not just any seminary graduate but one trained in reaching unchurched people missionally (Rogers 69-70). Aside from the regular qualifications for leadership, pastors should ideally also be evangelistic, culturally competent, prayerful, teachable, and good at conflict management and resolution and more (Woo 205-18). The team itself should be ethnically diverse, reflecting the desired makeup of the congregation, and given real responsibilities in the major ministries of the church, not just token positions. This diversity in the leadership presents the church's multiethnic vision and physically shows that different ethnicities are not only welcomed but are given respect, responsibility, and power (DeYmaz, Building a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church 170-71; DeYoung et al. 177).

Mark Lau Branson and Juan Francisco Martinez recommend that in order to lead such a large change, what they call a *leadership triad* is necessary (54-57). The

triad is interpretive leadership, relational leadership, and implemental leadership.

Interpretive leaders are those who are able to practice theological reflection, interpret it for their context, and help the congregation see where they are, where the community is, and where God is leading them, to help them respond to God's initiatives (123-27).

Relational leaders pay attention to the important relationships, make new connections in the community, and build trust to make new actions possible (127-20). Implemental leaders are able to lead and initiate change by implementing actions that are consistent with the interpretation and relationships (220-26).

Worship Aspects

Worship style preference is a big challenge for any church, but especially for churches wanting to become multiethnic. In addition to the racial diversity, a generational dynamic plays a role in finding the worship style. Worship is important because "some people join or leave church solely based on their like or dislike of the congregation's worship style" (DeYoung et. al. 175-76). Worship style in a multiethnic church includes music, message, décor, and expression of responses. Multiethnic church worship needs to express in every way that all races and ethnicities are welcomed (175-76). Multiethnic worship is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet mentioned in Revelations 7:9-17, as Gonzalez explains:

Worship is a rehearsal and an act of proclamation. For both reasons, in order to rehearse and in order to proclaim, the church must make every effort to make certain that here and now, as there and then, "every nation and tribe and people and language" be present and represented; that no one be excluded or diminished because of their tribe, or nation, or people, or language. (Gonzalez 110)

Worship in a multiethnic church must be inclusive, not exclusive, and try to represent the tastes of all the subgroups.

Woo states the importance of singing each other's music. "When we begin to listen to and in time sing one another's songs, we may have a new and renewed ecclesiology which will favor more and more unity" (189).

Karen Hernández-Granzen tells the story of how music played a crucial part in helping Westminster Presbyterian Church of Trenton, New Jersey, transition to a multiethnic church. They also went through a significant decline in their attendance due to demographic change in their church's immediate community. This change led them to trying a worship style that was more "engaging and energetic" and would appeal to the diverse ethnicities (17). Hernández-Granzen suggested that pastors give all people a way to praise him, preparing worship that uses "all-inclusive music, languages, arts and theological expressions" (20).

Several sources seized on the concept that the focus of worship should be God as the audience, and that the performing cast is global in scale, which means all cultural expressions are welcomed (Hernández-Granzen 17; Woo 180-81). Hawn says, "When we understand that Christ's church is global, it becomes clear to us that culturally conscious worship is a significant aspect of reaching congregational excellence through cultural diversity. Such worship is challenging, even in the abstract" (37).

Process for Organizational Change

Making this kind of large change is challenging for any organization, and several sources discuss some processes to achieve it. Branson and Martinez recommend

using five praxes that come out of theological reflection (43) and applying them to the transition to a multiethnic church:

1. The church describes its current situation, its homogeneity or heterogeneity, the relationships and practices they have inside the church and with their community.
2. They analyze their environment, including demographics, history, worldview, cultural resources, politics.
3. They then compare their understanding of Scripture, church traditions, and beliefs with the current way of behaving toward the ethnically diverse. They rethink their practices and traditions in the light of truth.
4. They tell their personal ethnic stories and the stories of their congregation. They tell stories of crossing ethnic boundaries and the results of it and evaluate their experiences in light of the previous steps and analysis.
5. The church prayerfully asks God, "What do you want?" They then change their behavior through imagination, planning, experiments, evaluations and commitment (48-49).

Furthermore, Branson and Martinez propose to use the five stages of organizational transformation by Alan Roxburgh, Fred Romanuk, and M. Scott Boren to help effect change (Branson and Martinez 226). These stages of change are: awareness, understanding, evaluation, experiments, and commitment. Branson and Martinez believe that practical theology and the steps of transformation can together determine the resources and activities the church needs to practice intercultural life (231).

Scott Williams bluntly says that secular organizations are much better at embracing diversity in their organizations than churches. He lists the top ten diverse companies that *Diversity, Inc. Magazine* put out in 2010: IBM, Coca-Cola, Merck, Kaiser Permanente, Sodexo, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Marriott, Ernst & Young, AT&T, and Johnson and Johnson. The process that these companies took to become diverse was simplified to the three steps of assess, believe, and change.

Pocock and Henriques, as covered before, recommend a process consisting of the following steps: recognizing reality, assessing the situation, recasting the vision, implementing the vision, and evaluating/refining (198).

Barriers to Transformation

DeYoung, et al. warn of several potential barriers to becoming a multiracial church. These include lack of good leadership, relying only on human effort rather than on God's power, racial prejudice that is not addressed, unbalanced exercise of power between the ethnic groups, assumptions about shared perceptions, resistance to moving from an assimilation to an integration model, and an overemphasis on unity at the expense of diversity and unique differences (170-75).

Stories of Transformed Churches

In his book, Woo shares the detailed story of Wilcrest Baptist Church, which transitioned from a declining white church pondering the possibility of moving out of the changing community to making a decision to stay instead. Through the hiring process, they found Dr. Woo, whom they saw as someone who could lead them through a major change. Before coming to Wilcrest, Woo had a clear call and desire to lead a multiethnic church. He is of mixed race, Caucasian and Chinese, well trained, the son

of a missionary, and with eight years of pastoral experience. Moreover, what expanded his desire to lead a multiethnic church was his interracial marriage to his wife, a descendant of Mexican immigrants (Emerson and Woo 28-31).

The process that he took to lead transition and transformation is very helpful. First, Woo led his church through a decision-making process to move them from survival mode to visioning and action. His church had to answer the following questions:

1. Would the church survive the white flight?
2. If the church were forced to change, would the church be radically different than it was presently?
3. What type of leadership was required to turn the church around in a new direction?
4. Would there be so many changes that the church would lose its original identity?
5. Were large scale changes really necessary?
6. Could the church keep pace with the changes that were occurring in the surrounding neighborhood?
7. What would the worship services be like?
8. Would our church be a white church with other races attending or would it be a minority-led church with whites attending?
9. If other races were incorporated into Wilcrest, could there ever be true fellowship among believers who were so different from one another?
10. If other races were incorporated and given equal standing, would they be able to carry their part of the financial load?

(Woo 29)

After a frank discussion with the church, he designated a task force to work with his denomination and conducted random interviews with individuals from the

neighborhood to learn their view of the church. Woo then took fifty-one key leaders and members on a retreat to finalize the new vision statement for the church.

Woo admits that after the vision was finalized, he could see how they were to look like five to ten years down the road. However, he did not know exactly what steps to take to get there. This led him to devote himself to a personal study of the Bible and dialoging with his missionary colleagues who advised him on what elements would be needed to transition to a multiethnic church from a predominantly white church. He also invited people from different cultures to come speak to him. The major two elements that emerged from those discussions were worship and leadership (Woo 101).

Woo explains that for worship, the concept of the “audience of One” (God) is very important (180-85). Again he admits that “one of the most difficult areas of struggle in the transition from an all-white congregation to a multiracial congregation has been music” because everyone believes that “their heart expression of worship is the best expression” (186). But, Woo tells us that although music plays a vital role in expression of one’s faith, Christ transcends all cultures. “In multiracial worship, the church gives the world an opportunity to see the glory of God as reconciled humanity sings in harmony” (189). Woo incorporates many different ministries so as to “expose and expand people to different preaching traditions and expressions” (190). Furthermore, “different expressions of worship occur simultaneously while focusing on the *audience of One*” (emphasis mine; 191).

As much as finding and developing a diverse leadership is important, once again Woo admits “the discovery and development of nonwhite leaders has been the most difficult part of the journey for me as the pastor of a multiracial congregation” (203).

Ron Benefiel tells the story of Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene's experience of decline due to demographic transitions in the city. The congregation examined five strategies in their situation: to hold out, keep out, move out, close out, or reach out. They took the latter choice: to reach out to the new ethnicities moving into their area. In order to do this, they had to go through a change of perception about the church being for one group of people, moving to a commitment to include "all the cultural groupings represented in the surrounding community" (41). Transitioning helped the church reassess the mission of the church, shifting the focus from "addressing the needs of the congregation to including and even prioritizing the needs of the community" (42). Eventually, this church became a multi-congregational church that was able to embrace Hispanics, Filipinos, Koreans, and English-speaking congregations.

Sustaining and Growing a Multiethnic Church

Once the church has been planted or transitioned to a multiethnic church, sustaining itself and growing as a healthy multiethnic church remains a big challenge. Tracey M. Lewis-Giggetts indicates that maintaining a strong commitment to a multicultural strategy even after achieving apparent success is necessary. Over time, "most people, even those who in theory believe in the significance of diversity, tend to revert back to what is most comfortable for them" (116). If the dominant group gets too comfortable and does not maintain their commitment, they risk reverting to a mono-ethnic church as the minorities cease to feel welcomed and honored. Therefore, the leadership must "be committed to keeping the issue of diversity in the forefront of the minds of their congregation in order to maintain what has been implemented, and until

there is a complete shift in what is comfortable” (116) or until diversity becomes more natural for them than homogeneity (116). Woo shares how, by their tenth year anniversary, “it had been an uphill battle to realize Wilcrest’s vision, and the growth of Wilcrest’s racial diversity had seemed to stall” (Emerson and Woo 158). They even went through a time of being exhausted, wondering if they were losing the chance of “realizing the dream to become a dynamic church of all people” (158).

Another risk is that the church may decline in number or even die. Being multicultural is not a panacea for church growth; in fact, it may be one of the harder ways to do church, albeit worth the effort. Some churches may find that it takes a significant investment of money, commitment and time, and may not be able to find enough reserves of these to make it past the initial and ongoing obstacles.

Definition of a Healthy Multiethnic Church

Ortiz challenges his readers that the mission of the multiethnic church is “to grow qualitatively and quantitatively in a multiethnic milieu” (42-43). A healthy multiethnic church grows both numerically and in its core qualitative characteristics; both are important aspects of being a multiethnic church. The reason a multiethnic church needs to grow quantitatively is because “there must be sufficient representation of any particular ethnic group in order to claim that a church is multiethnic” (88). DeYoung et al. define a multiracial congregation as “a congregation in which no one racial group accounts for 80 percent or more of the membership” (3). Most of the churches they studied showed that the church grew by reaching out to the unchurched groups or people new to the area. In addition, once they gained a reputation for being a

multiethnic church, they attracted people looking for a church of mixed races (175).

This growth is quantitative in numbers and in ethnic representation.

Simply meeting the numerical standard of growth does not tell everything about a church, and “it is not an end in itself” (Ortiz 89). Rather, a multiethnic church must also commit its church to growth in the qualitative dimension (89). The qualitative dimension for a church includes “biblically contextualiz[ing] its ministry to the multiethnic context in which it finds itself demographically” (89), the degree to which each ethnic group is represented and involved in the life of the church, and matters of racial reconciliation and justice (89). Ortiz believes that the church improves on the qualitative dimension when the members are discipled and become mature members of the church’s ministry (91). Both the quantitative and qualitative improvement of a multiethnic church do not occur on their own; “there must be intentionality in a church’s plan to grow as a multicultural church” (Lewis-Giggetts 141).

Ortiz gives an example of two churches that he believes represent both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of a multiethnic church. The first is International Bible Church in Los Angeles, pastored by Mark Oh, who has a strong biblical theology of multiethnic church. The church believes that they are called to reach all ethnic groups because Jesus’ Great Commission calls them to make disciples of all nations. When a new ethnic group arrives in the community, the church reaches out because the church strongly believes that “‘Christ culture’ [transcends] ethnic differences so that they could minister together, live in harmony and learn from each other as children of God” (92). Because Oh’s multiethnic ministry is strongly grounded in his biblical and theological foundation, teaching the Bible becomes one of the fundamental tasks of the

church (92). The first priority for their ministry is “to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all ethnics with whom [they] come in contact, so that these ethnics may become disciplined Christians” (94). The second priority is to make disciples of all nations. This church consists of fifteen different ethnicities, and although the makeup is primarily Asian, Hispanic, and Anglo, it definitely represents the quantitative aspect of a multiethnic church (94). At the same time, the qualitative dimension is also clear in the “formation and structure of the church” (95). Multiethnicity is represented in all aspects of the church and their church board. Ortiz noticed that “no one ethnic group seemed to dominate the life of the church” (95). Oh dealt with the common disease of “koininitis,” where one ethnic group become a clique and excluded others, by correcting them “gently and biblically in order to maintain multiethnicity with biblical integrity” (95).

The second church that grew both quantitatively and qualitatively is Rock of Our Salvation in Chicago, pastored by Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein. Their multiethnic church ministry focuses on being intentional about reconciliation (99). They believe that quantitative “presence is not enough” (99). The two pastors authored eight principles that they have discovered to help develop an authentic multiethnic ministry. The principles are commitment to relationship, intentionality, sincerity, sensitivity, interdependence, sacrifice, empowerment, and call (Ortiz 99). These principles overlap with many of those already covered in the previous sections about planting or transitioning to a multiethnic church, but the focus when growing a multiethnic church will be on preserving and deepening them in the congregation. For example, intentionality is key in being a healthy multiethnic church. Mark DeYmaz and Harry Li say that diversity does not just happen or maintain itself but requires

“intentional steps.... Intentionality, then is both an attitude and an action. It must permeate and inform every corridor of a multiethnic church” (45).

Racial Reconciliation/Cultural Competence

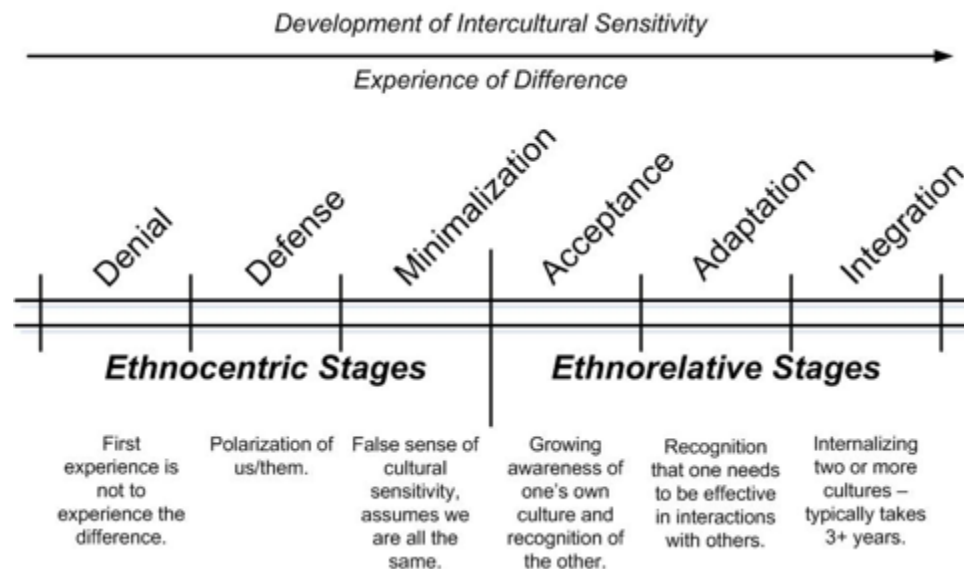
One topic that was not covered in great detail in the previous sections on planting and transitioning to a multiethnic church is that of racial reconciliation. Wilcrest Baptist Church and Bridgeway Community Church in Columbia, Maryland, are among the most racially diverse churches. Racial equity is important to these two churches and has played a crucial role in helping them be healthy multiethnic churches. Following are some principles that helped these churches prevent conflicts. First, they state clearly in their mission statement their intent to be a multiethnic church. More than just a statement, this shows people the church’s commitment to be multiethnic (Emerson and Woo 168). Moreover, the leaders are strongly committed to bringing about racial equity: “Wilcrest and Bridgeway succeeded in becoming multiracial in good part because of the resolve and faith commitment of Rodney Wood and David Anderson and other key leaders” (168). The way to bring racial equity is by having “a common purpose that supersedes racial equity.” Their focus is not *just* on being multiethnic or overcoming racial divisions; rather, their statement says, “They will be multiracial communities to live out their faith” (169); where Christ and their faith in Jesus is the focus and center of all. Kenneth Boa explains how Christ transcends ethnicities, races, and cultures:

First, Christ is the Reconciler of cultures—he is the one who can bring people of different cultures together. Second, Christ is the Redeemer of culture—he brings wholeness and hope to people of all cultures. Third, Christ is the Ruler of cultures—he is the one who establishes the standards by which all cultures are ultimately to be judged. (146)

The common ground, then, that all cultures can find is in Christ himself and his redemptive work.

Furthermore, although not overtly done, they intentionally have times where they can talk about racial issues and misuse of power to educate their congregations on the issue. The suggestion given by both churches is that the leaders need to be like a DJ who must constantly adjust the sound and the music to the people in the room. By this they mean leaders must constantly be attuned to the situation, adjusting to compensate, while keeping the larger picture and the purpose in mind (Emerson and Woo 169). Finally, they recognize that people are in different places of racial acceptance and cultural competency; therefore, the church needs to move people one step at a time.

Dan Landis, Janet Marie Bennett, and Milton J. Bennett present a graph showing different cultural competency levels at which people find themselves (see Figure 2.2).



Source: Landis, Bennett, and Bennett 153. adapted by Wheeler

Figure 2.2. Cultural competency levels.

In a study, they observed students over the course of months and sometimes years, and saw that the ones who experienced cultural differences helped them increase in cultural competency (Landis, Bennett, and Bennett 152). David Anderson also presents something similar on a chart that he calls a “racial reconciliation continuum” (97). This chart has five stages of people’s positions for racial diversity and equity: antagonists, seekers, converted, integrated, and proselytizers. People can move only one step at a time; they do not jump steps, so our job is to move them from one step to the next as they are ready (Emerson and Woo 169). David A. Livermore encourages improving our Cultural Intelligence Quotients (CQ) and engaging in cross-cultural relationships in the multicultural, multiethnic world (*Cultural Intelligence* 13). “The research demonstrates that organizations and leaders who prioritize cultural intelligence are more likely to accomplish their mission” (*Leading with Cultural Intelligence* 164). He suggests that Christians’ commitment to cultural intelligence will also help them fulfill God’s will:

[D]igging in our own souls, viewing the other as an image bearer of God, seeking the kingdom first, and living up close—[these] must shape everything else we do in the pursuit of living and relating in culturally intelligent ways. Cultural intelligence allows us to more fully live as God intended in relationship with those he has created from all different cultural backgrounds. (*Cultural Intelligence* 245)

As Christians become more culturally competent, they are better able to bring about God’s desire for them to build relationships with all humankind.

Soong-Chan Rah adds the observation that cultural systems are not very linear. Just because a few people improve their CQ does not mean everything will improve. Rather, in a church wanting to be multiethnic, many or all people need to go through a

CQ and system change as the entire congregation learns to become culturally intuitive (183-93):

As we move toward cultural intelligence and intuition, we recognize that the entire system must be considered when reflecting on the health of a multiethnic church. How do we generate a culturally intelligent system in the church? By moving toward a church system that has a sensitivity to all the different cultural expressions in the body of Christ. As difficult as it may be to implement, it is not only individuals who need to gain cultural intelligence—it may be that the entirety of the system must be changed. (193)

In summary, a multiethnic church will need to pay special attention to racial reconciliation issues and train the congregation to be culturally sensitive and competent to avoid conflicts going forward.

Looking Three Generations Ahead

Ray Wheeler suggests, particularly in a multi-cultural context, to look three generations ahead:

Getting through the initial relationships with other cultures is the first of the challenges. Philip's congregation made it through their conflicts much like the church in Acts 6. However, a decade later they faced new challenges as the sons and daughters of the Korean and Spanish congregations grew up in America and began to question the cultural values of their parents and began to lose their language skills. This set up new tensions with grandparents and newer members of these congregations. They feared that the "Americanized" members somehow compromised their faith. In other cases English speaking congregations find themselves dwarfed by the Spanish, Chinese, Persian, Korean, or Nigerian congregation they helped start. These congregations face the fear of being marginalized in their own neighborhood. It is like Acts 6 all over again.

When congregations anticipate these changes and challenges they are (a) better prepared to address them and (b) able to see the ways that the Bible talks about

them—like the passage in Acts 6. I find that when congregations think at least three generations ahead, their vision and their faith grow. (Wheeler)

In general, predicting what will happen next year, not to mention in the next generation, is difficult. However, if common sense, our past experiences with generational change, and an analysis of current long-term trends prevail, we can anticipate many of the changes that churches find themselves handling belatedly and in crisis mode. Gaining an early insight into these trends, and positioning to address them early on, will make a hard change easier and an impossible change possible. Research will help with this task. For example, William Strauss and Neil Howe give a lot of insight into broad generational patterns that have occurred since the beginning of America's history, and these patterns may be useful in predicting the general direction and character of the next generation or two. Another essential source of insight is long-term demographic analyses and projections of various types, not only of immigration and racial migration patterns but also of age demographics, cultural subgroups, neighborhood dynamics such as declining economic vitality or economic renewal, and regentrification and the systems dynamics of how these groups and trends interact with the aging of the generations and generational patterns.

Research Design

In order to discover practical characteristics and strategies for planting, transitioning, and growing multiethnic churches, I used a qualitative, exploratory research design following a ground-theory approach. As mentioned previously in this chapter, the literature on multiethnic churches is relatively limited, especially in the area of planting multiethnic churches. The reason for using a qualitative research design was to explore the field in areas not already covered by the literature. John W. Creswell

states that qualitative research “is best suited for research problems in which you do not know the variables and need to explore. The literature might yield little information about the phenomenon of study, and you need to learn more from participants through exploration” (53). Tim Sensing adds that qualitative research “seeks to make sense of lived experience” (57). This study matches these descriptions, so the qualitative research design was chosen.

To make sense of the many and various dynamics of multiethnic churches and to be able to collect diverse data from many different churches, I chose surveys as the instrument. Surveys are effective and economical in reaching a large and geographically dispersed base of participants (Sensing 115), which could be difficult to achieve with in-person interviews. The surveys for this study included fixed-choice questions to verify demographic data, but the core of the surveys was four open-ended questions designed to elicit any topic the participant believed was relevant. As Sensing says, “[M]ost often, open-ended and informal questions are used in qualitative interviews and questionnaires” (86), and “[o]pen-ended questions let the [participant] pursue any direction and use any words to express what they want to say” (89). This gave a chance for unforeseen observations to come to my attention.

Finally, once all the survey responses were gathered, the data was analyzed through a coding process. “Collecting and identifying themes is the primary way qualitative researchers process and analyze data” (Creswell 202):

[The] coding process is to make sense out of text data, divide into text or image segments, label the segments with code, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes. Thus, this is an inductive process of narrowing data into a few themes. (Creswell 251).

Summary

Relative to the abundance of literature about the general church-planting movement, much less has been written about the process of planting a multiethnic church. More has been written about transitioning an existing monoethnic church to a multiethnic church, but again, less is said about maintaining a healthy multiethnic congregation once this has been achieved. A survey of the literature available on these topics reveals the following major themes:

- The Bible affirms the worth of all people. It is clear that God's plan is for people of all nations to be together in heaven and for reconciliation and unity to occur here on earth. It includes many examples of people overcoming barriers.
- The United States is becoming increasingly diverse, and although pockets of segregation remain, the pattern especially in cities is toward ever greater integration even as diversity increases. The nations are coming to us, and without discounting the need for overseas missions, we can fulfill the Great Commission to "the ends of the earth" partially here in our backyards.
- The Homogeneous Unit Principle is questionable from a biblical perspective and is not serving the church well in this new age of diversity and change. The congruence model, where churches seek to reach out to and reflect their surrounding community, is more appropriate for the church's mission in today's diverse and changing neighborhoods.
- Only a few sources deal with planting multiethnic churches, often as a smaller part of a larger discussion on church planting. Some offer practical tips, insights, steps, models, and processes.

- More is written about transitioning an existing church to be multiethnic. One of the largest drivers of such transitions seems to be a need to respond or adapt to large demographic changes in the neighborhood. Several sources detailed steps and strategies for transitioning and highlighted important elements that must be present for success. Among the most important elements mentioned are intentionality, humility, adaptability to change, competent and diverse leadership, and appropriate worship style. There is some discussion of potential barriers to success and some process approaches that can help with the major organizational changes that are needed.
- The literature makes it clear that sustaining a healthy multiethnic church for the long-term requires continued effort. New changes and new challenges, or simply natural human tendencies that are not actively addressed, can undermine the unity of the whole church or cause certain groups to feel unwelcome and migrate away. To offset these potential problems and maintain a healthy multiethnic church, the literature suggests ongoing persistent effort, long-term vision, and awareness and training in cultural competency.

This study seeks to contribute to the body of literature on this important topic. Although there is some helpful material, there are still gaps in the available resources. In order to discover important themes, strategies and elements not yet covered in the literature, I designed this research project as an exploratory, qualitative study using a ground-theory approach. The study confirms or reinforces those areas that have been covered in the literature but also adds to it from the experience of about fifty churches that have gone through the process.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purpose

Churches in diverse and changing neighborhoods should plan to plant new multiethnic churches, transition into multiethnic churches, and grow as multiethnic churches. Though existing communities are changing, most churches are not keeping up. In order truly to embrace the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to take his gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, Christians need to start right where they are, especially now that the world is coming to their communities.

Some congregations are blind to this reality and are still wondering about their decline. Others choose to ignore the problem and eventually cease to exist as a house of worship. Still others choose to flee the situation to a new neighborhood with more people who look like them and make them feel comfortable. However, Christians should no longer be blind to the situation, ignore it, or flee; instead; they need to wholeheartedly take up God's desire to be sent to their communities to bring them to Christ and disciple them. Pastors must pursue strategies to plant, transition to, and grow multiethnic churches, not just because churches need to survive but because God's heart for all people and all nations is to know him and to worship together.

The purpose of this research was to discover key characteristics and strategies that can help United Methodist churches transition from homogeneous to multiethnic, that can help new church plants start as multiethnic churches, and that can help multiethnic churches continue to grow and thrive in their ethnic diversity.

Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

To achieve the purpose of this qualitative research study, the following three research questions were proposed.

Research Question #1

What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches that have been planted as multiethnic churches?

The purpose of this research question was to discover steps, strategies, and challenges related to planting a new multiethnic church and to help future church planters and churches that desire to plant multiethnic churches. As shown in Chapter 2, limited information is available on the steps, strategies, and challenges for multiethnic church planting. This research question was answered by churches that have experienced the process of being planted as multiethnic churches. The instruments used to answer the research question were surveys sent to the leaders of these churches. Specifically, on the version of the survey filled out by church plants, this Research Question #1 was expanded into three open-ended survey questions (“Q14. What key steps did you take to launch this church as a multi-ethnic or multi-cultural congregation?”, “Q15. What 3-5 key elements helped this church plant succeed as a multi-ethnic congregation?”, and “Q16. What are some things you would do differently?”). By examining all of the participants’ responses to these open-ended survey questions, coding them, and locating shared cluster themes, answers to this research question were found.

Research Question #2

What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches that have transitioned to become multiethnic churches?

The purpose of this research question was to find out what caused them to transition, what steps it took to make the transition happen, and what were the strategies and challenges. This research question was answered from the experience of churches that transitioned from monoethnic or homogeneous churches to multiethnic churches. The instruments used to answer the research question were surveys sent to the leaders of these churches. Specifically, on the version of the survey filled out by church transitions, this Research Question #2 was expanded into three open-ended survey questions (“Q9. How did your church transition to be a diverse (multi-ethnic or multi-cultural) congregation?”, “Q10. What 3-5 key elements helped this church successfully transition to be a diverse congregation?”, and “Q11. What are some things you would do differently?”). By examining all of the participants’ responses to these open-ended survey questions, coding them, and locating shared cluster themes, answers to this research question were found.

Research Question #3

What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches to continue to grow as multiethnic churches?

The purpose of this research question was to discover characteristics that lead to growth and sustainability as a healthy multiethnic church. This research question was proposed to ascertain ways to continue to be a multiethnic church and diminish the failures of multiethnic churches after they have gone through a process of planting or

transitioning. The instrument used to answer Research Question #3 was an additional open-ended question on the surveys sent to the leaders of the churches that participated in the surveys for both Research Questions #1 and #2 (both church plants and transitioned churches). Specifically, the question asked, “What are you doing to continue to grow as a diverse congregation?” By examining all of the participants’ responses, coding them, and locating shared cluster themes, answers to this research question were found.

Population and Participants

In the summer of 2014, after deciding to narrow the research to multiethnic churches within the United Methodist Church in North America, I located a database of multiethnic churches compiled by Path 1 of the General Board of Discipleship. In that data, 862 churches are identified as multiethnic churches, according to the commonly accepted criterion for diversity that no ethnicity constitute more than 80% of the total. My husband, who works as a software engineer, helped me with extracting, cleaning, merging, and loading the data into a simple relational database for further querying.

To narrow the list and to find churches that were more diverse and had enough members for the diversity to be meaningful, I then queried this database for all churches whose largest ethnic/racial group was less than 70% of the congregation, and whose average worship attendance was at least 30. By this narrower set of criteria, approximately 400 churches were selected. A few had incomplete address information, so the total surveyed from this list was slightly less than 400.

Some of these churches had been planted as multiethnic churches, but most had transitioned from a more homogeneous past. To supplement the list with more churches

that may have intentionally been planted as multiethnic churches, I looked at another list, also from Path 1, of approximately 90 churches planted between 2008 and 2014 and which were described as multiethnic. The data on this list was somewhat incomplete, contained errors and duplicates, and did not contain statistics on actual ethnic composition or average worship attendance. I manually selected approximately 60 churches from this list that had enough data to survey.

The final list of candidate churches, from these two lists, included approximately 440 churches. In late summer 2014, I mailed paper surveys on paper, with the option to respond online as well, to the leader or head pastor of each of these 440 churches. Sixty-eight responded to the survey, even after two follow-up contacts by e-mail to a number of them. Of these 68 responders, three did not fully complete the survey or provide any useful information. Fifteen were found not to match the definition of multiethnic church used in this study. These churches mostly fit into a multi-congregational model instead with sub-groups or segregated sub-congregations that worshiped together as a unified congregation less than 50% of the time although some were also simply not diverse enough according to the demographics they reported on the surveys. This left 50 responses with good, useful, and relevant data. Of these, 20 were planted as multiethnic churches, and 30 transitioned from homogeneous to heterogeneous congregations.

Design of the Study

This study was qualitative in nature, designed to explore the values, strategies, and challenges of planting, transitioning, and growing a multiethnic church. It followed a ground theory approach, as it was intended to discover common themes, strategies,

elements and insights that would emerge from responses from a significant number of participants.

In the summer of 2014, as described in the previous section, I gathered the lists of potential participants in the survey and began narrowing down the list. I sent out the surveys and gathered the majority of the results by September. Analysis proceeded in several stages until I found an approach and some tools that worked in late 2014. Over the winter, I gathered a few more responses from church plants because the responses from September were heavily weighted toward churches that had transitioned with relatively few responses from churches planted from the beginning as multiethnic churches. The data was analyzed through coding the common concepts, themes, and ideas.

Instrumentation

Within the methodology of the qualitative exploratory method design, I used the instruments of surveys to collect data. To gather information from the participating churches and answer the three research questions in this study, I created an online survey using SurveyMonkey. The survey asked for basic demographic information about the church and the community to confirm that they still met the qualifications and for more details about the model used for their church services. One question in particular asked if the different ethnicities worshiped together more than 50% of the time. This question weeded out churches that appeared multiethnic on their membership rolls but in practice worshiped as separate groups or sub-congregations most of the time. If the survey respondent answered *no* to this question, the survey was set up to short-circuit to the end, thanking them, of course, for their participation.

For those churches that met the qualification of having diverse ethnicities worshipping together the majority of the time, the survey then asked four open-ended questions. The first two questions were slightly different for churches planted as multiethnic versus churches that transitioned to become multiethnic but generally mirrored each other in purpose. The first question focused on the initial process and steps as the church was planted as (or was transitioned to) a multiethnic congregation. The second focused on key elements that helped this planting (or transitioning) process to succeed in achieving the desired outcome of ethnic diversity in the church. The third question asked what could have been done differently, in hindsight. The fourth and final question asked what strategies and actions the church was using to continue to grow as a diverse congregation.

Expert Review

To ensure the survey would properly address the research questions, I submitted it for approval to my faculty mentor and for review by my husband, who has a programming background and a strong analytical mind. Unfortunately, I did not conduct a full formal expert review of the survey with three independent experts before sending it out. However, the questions in the survey reflect the purpose and intent of the research questions fairly closely.

Variables

The dependent variable examined in this study was the outcome of being planted as, or becoming, a multiethnic church with sufficient diversity in joint worship. The congregations initially chosen for the study had to meet the criteria for diverse multiethnic congregations (in most cases, when statistics were available, no more than

70% of any one ethnic group), and the survey further ensured that the different ethnicities worshiped together most of the time. The independent variables are the key characteristics that contributed to success as a multiethnic church plant, or to success in transitioning to a multiethnic church, and subsequent continued growth as multiethnic churches. Lastly, the intervening variables were the selection process and getting the churches to come alongside this research.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are important in making sure that the study is dependable, credible, and trustworthy. The goal is to ensure the instruments are constructed to answer the research questions well, to handle the collection of data in a consistent way, and to help overcome the researcher's blind spots and biases by various approaches, such as ensuring that key survey questions are open-ended and allow the participants to express things the researcher may not have anticipated.

The churches participating in the survey were carefully selected by means of the criteria previously discussed, and these criteria were further verified by means of the initial survey questions. The survey asked them to reconfirm their ethnic makeup and further checked for integration of the ethnicities by means of several questions about their worship services and whether the ethnic groups were segregated or joined in worship. This ensured that the remaining survey questions were answered only by churches that matched the desired model.

The four key questions answered by the churches that matched the model were all carefully crafted to answer the three research questions in this study as detailed earlier. At the same time, they were open-ended questions so that participants could

express their experience and insights however they thought was best. Several of the participants wrote multiple paragraphs for some of the questions, ranging over many topics that they believed were relevant. All of this material was taken into account during the analysis.

The surveys were conducted in a consistent manner. All participants answered the same survey, with the only variation being the mechanism. For convenience, I allowed them to respond either online or by paper. I entered the paper responses into SurveyMonkey and handled all the responses in exactly the same way from that point on. There were a handful of surveys from church plants that came in during the winter of 2014-2015 that I printed out and coded by hand before incorporating them into the analysis. This is because most of the processing and coding of the previous results had already been done by computer in a group, and some of the tools used would have required reprocessing the entire group with the additional responses, erasing the coding that was already done on the previous results. However, the manual coding process on these late responses was straightforward and consistent with the processing done to the previous results, so it did not affect the validity of the analysis.

Data Collection

As mentioned before, in the late summer of 2014, I mailed a paper version of this survey to the leaders of approximately 440 churches that had already been selected as potential matches for this research. The mailing included a cover letter describing the purpose of the survey (see Appendix A). The cover letter encouraged them to respond online and included a short URL to the online survey for their convenience. All mailings also included a prepaid envelope, to make it as easy as possible for leaders

who preferred to respond by paper. Twenty-three responded via the paper version of the survey, and forty-five responded online.

Once all responses had been gathered, I manually entered the paper responses into SurveyMonkey, alongside the online responses, to have a single consistent collection of data. At that point, I had 63 results. My more technical husband helped me to export the results into a spreadsheet, load them into a database, filter and query them, and then format them into several HTML reports for easier reading and reflection. Later, I also imported them into ATLAS.ti, which is a software program used to code and analyze documents for research of this nature. All 63 results went through this process.

After realizing that the results from church plants were significantly fewer than those from transitioned churches, I did some further research on the more recently planted multiethnic churches in the original list and selected approximately 10 promising candidate churches that had not responded the first time. I e-mailed them directly, and five of these church plants participated in the survey, bringing the total number of responses to 68. Because these survey results came in after much of the data collection, transformation, and analysis had already occurred, I printed them out and analyzed them by hand to discover any additional codes, themes and insights I could add.

Data Analysis

In an initial stage of analysis, I exported all of the survey responses into an HTML report for clarity, read through them multiple times, and highlighted key concepts, phrases, and ideas. I wrote these key quotes and ideas on small sticky notes

and clustered them by hand on large easel pad papers. I used eight large sheets, divided by the two types of church (planted or transitioned) times the four survey questions (key steps in planting/transition, key elements of success, what would be done differently, and what was being done for continued success). On each large sheet, I clustered quotes and ideas topically, continually rearranging the sticky notes until major themes and groupings emerged. Although this clustering analysis was not directly used as much in the final findings, it was helpful and continued to be a reference throughout the subsequent stages of analysis.

In the second stage of analysis, I imported the survey results into a computer program called ATLAS.ti. Using its annotation and coding features, I selected important quotations in the answers and coded them with names to identify or label the main concept or idea they expressed. After coding all the text, I separated the project in ATLAS.ti into three separate projects, one for each research question listed at the beginning of this chapter. Project 1, for research question 1, focused only on the codes and quotations from the three open-ended survey questions asked to churches *planted* as multiethnic churches. Project 2, for research question 2, focused only on the codes and quotations from the three open-ended survey questions asked of churches that *transitioned* to become multiethnic churches. Finally, project 3, for research question 3, which applies to all multiethnic churches no matter how they became such, focused only on the codes and quotations from the fourth open-ended survey question about what was being done to *continue* as a diverse congregation, across both types of churches.

Having coded and separated the responses in ATLAS.ti, I then grouped the codes by major theme using ATLAS.ti's network diagram feature. I placed similar

codes side by side and created some code groups for the major code clusters or themes. Most codes fell into one of these groups or clusters, with a few outliers that stood on their own.

After these codes were clustered in this way, I printed all the quotations by code and by code group/cluster. As I read through the quotations and clusters, I continued to refine the clustering. By the time this work was finished, through having analyzed the survey results from several different angles and multiple passes, I was ready to begin writing down my findings about the themes that emerged.

Ethical Procedures

To maintain ethics in research, the participants were notified in the cover letter that their answers would be used in research that would be shared with others who are planting or transitioning multiethnic churches. By filling out and returning the survey, each participant expressed their consent for their answers to be used for this purpose. However, the cover letter did not explicitly ask permission to identify their churches or their identity, so care was taken in quoting their results to focus on general themes and to avoid details that might identify or embarrass a particular church or people. All the participants' identities were kept anonymous, and the published results did not include any information that could directly identify them, such as their names, their church names, or their addresses.

For data security, I kept the survey results, details, and other collected data in a private SurveyMonkey account used only for this purpose. After the results were exported as files from SurveyMonkey, I stored them on a secured, personal NAS server kept in a locked closet at home.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Problem and Purpose

In the midst of communities that are changing from homogeneous to multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural, many churches remain stuck in the homogeneous past. They also struggle to connect with young people, reaching the next generation. Yet this is the generation that has grown up in a racially, ethnically, and culturally integrated society. To many in this generation, a homogeneous church can look irrelevant, segregated, and “stuck up” in a diverse society. Moreover, the deeper issue is not only that churches appear irrelevant to the culture but that they are not seeing that the multiethnic church and community is a biblical mandate. Mark DeYmaz, a frontline leader of the multiethnic church movement in the United States, puts it this way in a column in the *Christian Post* in 2014:

For more than twelve years I have been helping others to see what has long been overlooked, otherwise missed, or outright ignored in the New Testament: namely, the biblical mandate of the multi-ethnic church as envisioned by Jesus Christ (John 17:20-23), described by Luke (Acts 11:19-26; 13:1), and prescribed by the Apostle Paul throughout his writings, most specifically in Romans and Ephesians. Needless to say such teaching, though exegetically sound, is not readily embraced by an Evangelical establishment more enamored by size and growth than with diversity and holistic community engagement. (“Multi-Ethnic Church”)

As a United Methodist clergy involved in the revitalization of churches, it is my heartfelt desire that churches will embrace the biblical mandate to reach their ethnically diverse communities with the love of Christ and build multiethnic churches as an

outcome of this outreach. Whether they are currently Anglo, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, or any other single group, I hope that our churches will really look at their surrounding community and society in which their children are immersed and make changes so that the UM motto of “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors” will not be just a slogan but be truly lived out in its ethnic diversity as well.

This research was conducted for the purpose of helping United Methodist churches see that although many of our churches remain homogeneous, there are some UM churches that have worked against this tendency and successfully transitioned their churches from homogeneous to multiethnic or have been planted and continue to grow as multiethnic churches. Furthermore, by surveying the UM churches that are currently planted, transitioned, and growing as multiethnic churches and analyzing their responses, this research draws out key elements, characteristics, and strategies that helped these churches across the United States, and that carry the same Methodist theology and polity, to create multiethnic churches. The findings from this qualitative study will help other churches that desire to transition or plant and grow as multiethnic churches by providing some tangible and practical ideas and strategies to help them get started and continue to grow with diversity.

Participants

I sent surveys to approximately 440 churches. Of these, 68 responded, a response rate of 15%. However, 3 did not fully complete the survey or did not provide useful data. The 65 responses that contained useful data were from 26 different states.

Upon analyzing these responses, I found that 15 were not a match for the working definition of a multiethnic church in this study. Ten of them fit into a multi-

congregational model instead with sub-groups or segregated sub-congregations that worshiped together as a unified congregation less than 50% of the time. Five of them were not diverse enough-- by the numbers they reported on their survey, their largest ethnic group was over 80% of the total.

The remaining 50 churches, from 19 different states spread across the continental United States, included 20 that had been planted as multiethnic churches and 30 that had made the transition from homogeneous to multiethnic. The responses from these 50 churches formed the body of data used for this study (see Figure 4.1). In the findings, they are referenced by their case number, which matches up to their original position in the list.



Figure 4.1. Map of churches that responded to the survey.

The churches that responded to the survey also indicated how many years they have been a multiethnic congregation. This figure ranged from 0 (a brand new church) to over 100 years, with the distribution heavily weighted toward the more recent end of this scale. Twenty of the churches have been multiethnic for 15 years or less, for

example, while only a handful have been multiethnic more than 60 years. Due to changes in society, the trend of multiethnic churches appears to be accelerating in the last few decades (see Figure 4.2).

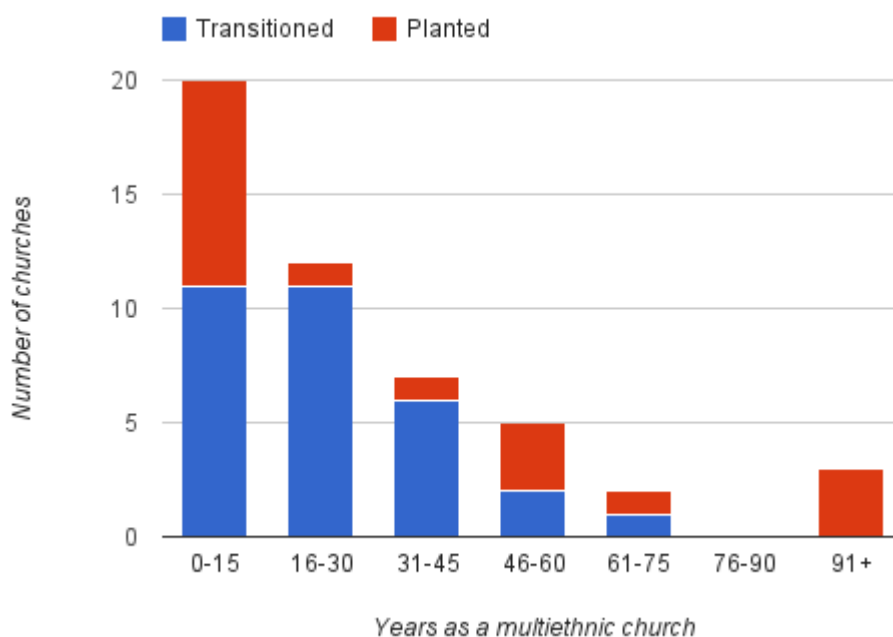


Figure 4.2. Stacked histogram of years as a diverse congregation.

Each church was asked to report on the demographic breakdown of their regular attenders and, separately, the demographics of their neighborhood. I primarily used the demographic breakdown reported by each church to ensure that they met the criteria for this study. Beyond that purpose, a few potentially interesting facts arose from looking at the demographics across all the churches. About half of the churches were still majority white (50% or more of regular attendees). A few churches had a majority of some other ethnic group, but approximately 20 churches had *no majority group* by the major ethnic categorizations used on the survey. This will become increasingly

common as the United States continues moving toward a population with no ethnic majority.

Research Question #1

The first research question was, “What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches that have been planted as multiethnic churches?” Twenty churches that participated in the survey stated that they were planted as multiethnic churches. Interestingly, one of them said that they became a multiethnic church by accident. Several mentioned that they were merged with a church of another ethnicity to start a new multiethnic church, but the majority were planted with a clear intention and strategy to achieve ethnic diversity and become a multiethnic church. The time of planting for these churches ranged from as recent as 2014 to over a century ago. Regardless of how, when, and where they were planted as multiethnic churches, some commonalities emerged about what was helpful to succeed in planting and becoming multiethnic churches.

One of the clearest themes that arose from the survey answers was that many of the churches planted as multiethnic churches had a **clear vision** of who they were going to be. Seven of the new churches spoke about the importance of vision in planting their churches. As mentioned previously, all of these churches were intentionally planted as multiethnic to reach the diverse members of their community. As they were planting the churches, they kept their vision front and center, communicating it clearly to people so they would know their mission, vision, and the future direction of the new churches. These new churches said that a clear sense of who they are and a clear vision of who they are going to be were certainly key elements that helped them to succeed as a

multiethnic church plant. Two of the churches mention that who they are going to be as a new church was presented clearly from the very beginning. One states that they “[i]ntentionally ‘set the DNA’ up front that says we will intentionally reach out to whatever demographic surrounds the church” (Case 58).

Furthermore, beyond starting the church with a clear vision and direction, they made sure that the church did not drift away from the vision and stayed focused on it. One church stated, “Most every service has some component that talks openly about our diversity and how God can use it to help change the city” (Case 50) so that people can know where this new church is headed. Case 47 says that they even created a tag line or statement that people can see, hear, and say that communicates their multiracial and multigenerational vision and helps people to buy into the vision. Another church also shares their similar experience: “We talk and talk about it. There are no misunderstandings of what kind of church we want to be; our multiculturalism is part of our DNA and we talk about it all the time... Our name, our values, our website speaks about our theology as a multiethnic church” (Case 67). It is evident that these churches are driven by their vision to a point that both members and guests can tell who they are and where they are headed.

Churches testify that having a clear vision and casting this vision of planting and becoming a multiethnic church has created a DNA that is open to diversity, living out what they value and believe. Moreover, several agreed that the core element of their success in planting a multiethnic church was the DNA of openness to ethnic diversity (Cases 54, 47). One other church shares that once their leadership caught the vision,

every day and every week they have been working hard toward that vision, bringing it into reality by consistent pushing toward the goal (Case 50).

Second, eleven of the new multiethnic churches mentioned that a key strategy in planting their multiethnic church was **ethnic diversity in leadership** that reflected the community. The diversity does not stop at the top with pastoral leadership but extends to the launch team, staff, persons on stage, and the lay leadership and volunteers. These churches all agree that they are intentional about showing diversity in their leadership. Three churches specifically mentioned that they are “intentional about who we put on stage” (Cases 50, 54, 58), and one church mentioned how they have “a worship team led by an African American with both White and Hispanic praise team members” and how this kind of intentionality “tends to help people from diverse backgrounds feel more at home” (Case 58).

Beyond the Sunday presence on the stage, these churches are making sure that “[o]ur team looks like our neighborhood” (Case 50) and that they “continue to model diversity throughout our laity and clergy” (Case 10). One new multiethnic church commented, “We have been very intentional in developing a launching team that reflects the community that we want to reach. We have the same approach for our future staffing: we are looking to reflect in our staff the demographic we want to reach” (Case 67).

Third, eight of the churches specifically noted that the key to planting a church that embraces ethnic diversity was an intentional expression of love, acceptance, and welcome to people of all ethnicities who attend each week. In my own interpretation, I would put them in the category of **radical hospitality**. The words *love*, *acceptance*, and

welcome were used together often in describing the way the churches embraced the ethnically diverse guests who came their way each Sunday. These churches embraced and welcomed people with acceptance and love “for what they are, regardless of color [or] language” (Case 1).

Fourth, eight of the churches mentioned **location** as one of the factors that contributed to success in planting a multiethnic church. Many of these new churches were planted in a place where the “make up of the community” (Case 54) and their “diverse population” (Case 17) allowed them to be poised for reaching a diverse set of neighbors to become part of their new multiethnic church. One church mentioned, “We were very diligent in [choosing] the place where we are planting the church. It’s the place in the county that gives us the biggest hope for a healthy multiethnic church” (Case 67).

Fifth, perhaps in connection with the diverse neighborhoods in which many of these churches are planted, ten churches mentioned the importance of **community outreach**: meeting the needs of the community and reaching out to the diverse ethnic groups of the community. Case 62 says that they are consistent about reaching out. These churches became missional in the midst of a diverse community by reaching out to these communities, meeting them where they are, and, at the same time, leveraging that to introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ and connect them to the church. They indicated that this has allowed them to draw diversity to their new church plant.

Something very important to note, however, is that most of the churches did not reach out to their communities and serve solely for the sake of attracting an ethnically and racially diverse group of people. Rather, by simply being a missional church that

served the immediate community, they saw that they were growing in the diversity of people attending from the community (Cases 9, 16). Moreover, these churches learned how to leverage community outreach to draw people to Christ and to the church. One testifies, “This helps us reach out not only to families of diverse cultural groups, but also [of] varied socio-economic backgrounds” (Case 58), and another mentioned, “Our intention has not been color diversity, but rather, to do church among the homeless, mentally ill and addicted. Just so happens that our street siblings are diverse” (Case 66). From their responses, it is evident that the people they were reaching were not just the ethnically diverse but various kinds of people in the community with all kinds of different needs. Being a missional church that reaches out to the community will draw people into the church from the communities; and naturally, if this is done in a diverse community, it will certainly draw diverse people.

Finally, six of the churches talked about the element of **worship** as something on which they worked to plant a multiethnic church. Interestingly, these churches were not in agreement about what particular style of worship worked for them. However, it seems that they were all intentional in the way that they planned and executed worship to draw the diversity. Among those who mentioned the styles they use, two of them use a more modern or contemporary style of music and worship (Cases 50, 58), and one mentioned a blended style between contemporary and tradition (Case 9). One mentioned multicultural worship and music (Case 62), but there was no mention of any using traditional music only. One plant elaborates that they use “contemporary worship style & music (speak/sing in the language of modern America rather than traditional music from one particular cultural heritage),” and elsewhere said, “Go light on liturgy.

Liturgy tends to use ‘insider’ or clique-ish language that may not make sense to folks in modern American culture” (Case 58). On the topic of preaching, the few that mentioned it said that they “offer culturally relevant, topically oriented (while still biblically grounded) studies and message series” (Case 58). Another church tries to lift up the oppressed in their services, saying “The voices most silenced in the world are amplified in worship” (Case 66).

Research Question #2

The second research question was, “What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches that have transitioned to become multiethnic churches?” Thirty churches indicated that they transitioned from homogenous to multiethnic. Among those who mentioned how they transitioned, five stated that they became multiethnic churches through a merger of two or more homogeneous churches of different ethnic groups, many times to strengthen and better each other’s ministries as one by sharing resources (Cases 38, 57, 6, 34, 23). Four churches became multiethnic through the initiative of the conference (Cases 55, 59, 60, 21). The conference pushed these churches to become multiethnic through different means: some by the appointment of a pastor of a different ethnicity from the majority in the church, some by the provision of funding for the purpose of becoming ethnically diverse, and some by involvement in the strategic analysis of the neighborhood and the development of the plan to become multiethnic. Others transitioned through various processes: one church became multiethnic after a restart, and four churches (Case 43, 41, 51, 32) unintentionally but gladly became multiethnic when one ethnic person visited, felt welcome, and became part of the church as a member and invited friends. This shows

the power and impact that one person can have on an organization. Finally, fourteen churches mentioned that due to the changing neighborhood they had to readjust the way they did ministry and outreach, shifting from one ethnicity to serve a more diverse demographic. Even though these churches transitioned in different ways, some common threads ran through the stories of their transitions.

First, one of the biggest reasons for transitioning was due to the **diverse and changing community** where the church was located. Fifteen of the transitioned churches mentioned that either their mission field was already very diverse or was transitioning and becoming diverse. Churches such as Case 37 stated that “[their] neighborhood is highly diverse,” and Case 49 stated that their neighborhood has an “extremely diverse ethnic make up... [and] The children attending these schools think nothing of seeing ethnic diversity, it is simply the world that they live in everyday.” Located in California, churches such as Case 49 and 25 shared how “the natural diversity...made the transition seem normal” (Case 25). Some churches were in a situation where the community had already been diverse for many decades, so it seemed natural and right to transition to embrace and reflect the diversity of the community for the church to survive and thrive. For others, as they saw their community start to change, they realized that they must adjust to the changing neighborhood if they were going to stay true to their values of sharing the gospel in their mission field.

The changing of the demographics in the community occurred in different ways and with different groups. One neighborhood shifted “from German and Polish to African American and Latino” (Case 4) another one to “mostly Hispanic” (Case 31),

and another to a “large Jamaican population” (Case 7). Churches such as Case 21 went through a strategic planning process to adapt to the fast growth and change, as they discerned, for example, that the “quickly growing and changing Mid-town area of town would be one that reflected the community.” And for a church such as Case 33, “it was simply a matter of changing demographics in our city” to start making the transition. For some as their neighborhood became very diverse (Cases 44, 36) and “increase[d] in diverse people coming in/changing city demographics” (Case 11), the transition became a necessity to reach out to the changing mission field and embrace the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Case 44 testifies that as the “community diversified ... the church naturally transitioned.”

Many of these changing communities saw that as the influx of people coming in diversified their community, at the same time many of the original white inhabitants were leaving their community. Case 56 saw that “minorities began to move into this neighborhood and whites moved to” different areas of the larger city. Case 25 saw that the number of white attendees declined “through death and geographic relocation” and even Case 24 saw that “as the city and the neighborhood changed, members moved away or became unable to continue attending.” Similarly, Case 31 in South Texas saw a transition from a “reasonably strong Anglo business/worker base to a loss of economic drivers (oil & gas industry) and flight of Anglo residents to other locales, leaving a mostly very poor Hispanic community.”

With this reality of new ethnic groups coming in, paired with the phenomenon of white flight, many churches had to transition along with the changing community and become multiethnic. Most of these churches did not become multiethnic just for the

sake of having diversity, but they saw that they had to be a different kind of church in the neighborhood that was becoming very multiethnic. Basically, a majority of these churches (such as Cases 11, 25, 33, 60) had little choice but to let go of their homogeneity and embrace their communities. Their choices were either to continue to decline by holding on to the way they had always been and eventually close their doors, or to rethink the way they do church. One of the churches shared, “The original congregation was entirely white middle class. As they aged and died, the church was in danger of closing. The Conference appointed a Hispanic pastor with a mandate to reach the diverse neighborhood” (Case 60). Whether the choice was forced upon them by the higher authority or by the urgency caused by the changing of the surrounding community and society, these churches decided to embrace the change and, when they did, they were able to grow again with diversity.

The second key element identified in the survey results which is necessary for change to occur and the transition to succeed was the element of **urgency**. This is related to the previous discussion about the changing community and the reality of declining and dying churches. Seven of the churches shared about the urgency of the situation that was before them. Two of these churches use the word *desperation*, showing the urgency of the situation in which they found themselves. One church said “desperation to keep the church open forced acceptance of others” (Case 38). And the other church said the key to their transition was “Desperation—really [the congregation] could see that their numbers were declining and they were afraid of closing and that made them risk more or be more willing to be open to God’s radical call to be for the community and not for themselves” (Case 59). Again and again

churches mentioned that the “death of white congregants” (Case 11) or the decline of the membership created the necessity to welcoming their “new neighbors of varying ethnicities” (Case 33). It is evident that the circumstances within the church and out in the community created a realization of the urgency “necessitating outreach to other ethnic cultures” (Case 31) and leaving them with “no choice” but to transition (Case 44). The reason for highlighting urgency as a separate element from the first is that many churches remain comfortable and in denial of their changing surroundings, not becoming fully aware of the great need for change until it is too late and they are forced to close.

The third element for success was **strategic planning**. Seven of the churches that saw the need to transition from a homogeneous church to embrace the ethnic diverse neighborhood did so by carefully planning and discerning how to reach this changing community. In the strategic planning process, they analyzed their community, researched and discovered tactics that may help them reach that particular mission field, and figured out ways for their leadership and their people to buy into the vision to reach out for diversity. One church testifies, “We transitioned through conversation and brainstorming within our church family of ways to be a more inviting, welcoming and inclusive congregation” (Case 28). Another stated that they had “good pre-planning and trying to give people a chance to voice concerns/support” (Case 23). Furthermore, case 21 not only did strategic work by themselves but received conference-level help to strategize for the transition: “The local district and the annual conference engaged in a strategic analysis of the city.” The strategic analysis confirmed that in order for the church to grow, it needed to reach outward and start to reflect its community: “So the

transition began with those conversations and research. The transition launched when the church's first African American pastor was appointed." Furthermore, those who did not have this kind of strategic planning at the beginning stated that if they could go back and redo things, they would intentionally plan from the very beginning so they could more strategically transition and reach their community. Case 25 stated, "It would have been healthier over [the] long-term if there had been greater intentionality to the transition."

Fourth, along with strategic planning, churches mentioned the importance of their **vision** to become diverse multiethnic churches and of keeping that vision front and center in their ministry. This helped them convince the congregation to obtain the buy-in and commitment necessary to transition through the difficult changes. As these churches decided to transition, they had a clear "[c]onviction that the church is for all people" (Case 33). One stated, "The mission of the church has embraced the opportunity and possibilities of a multi-racial congregation" (Case 34). One church shared that in order to move forward, they had to convince their people of the new vision. They approached it "first, by meeting with the leadership and asking them to embrace this plan. Later encouraged the entire membership to join in accept[ing] multiethnic visitors" (Case 22). It is important that even with good planning and vision, the existing members must be brought alongside and commit to the vision or it will remain just a dream and not reality. In addition, one of the churches that emphasized the importance of vision also talked about the importance of not drifting away from the original vision. From their experience they see that "although the congregation does have a small percentage of Asian members, this membership and that of other

ethnicities is far too low. I believe that the congregation stopped focusing on diversity once the church became bicultural rather than fully becoming multicultural” (Case 36).

The next key element of being able to transition from a homogenous church to a multiethnic church is **commitment**: commitment to change (Case 37) and commitment to the church and the neighborhood (Case 34). Two churches describe the faithfulness of their members who stayed in the neighborhood and stuck with the church and how they were committed to adapt to the change (Case 44) and continue to be faithful with the church and its new diverse membership (Case 56). For some churches, this commitment was expressed as willingness: “willingness to risk failure and disappointment” (Case 34) in the pursuit of their vision of becoming a diverse church and even “willingness to know what [they] didn’t know” as they learned to embrace and relate to their neighbors just as they are (Case 59).

About ten churches attributed their success in transitioning to their **leadership**. Often when referring to the importance of leadership in the transition, the churches mentioned both the **pastoral leadership** and the **lay leadership** together as something that helped lead the transition. In many cases, it appears that the pastor was the one who saw the changing community and the need for the church to change and embrace the growing diversity in the community. Then, these pastors convinced the lay leaders to come on board with the vision, and together they led the work of transition. This leadership also took the form of putting the new direction in front of the people and of modeling what they wanted their people to do to create a culture and DNA that welcomes diversity.

Showing that change starts from the top and influences others in the organization, the following statements illustrate how several churches' pastoral leadership set the stage of what their church could be. Case 22 states that their minister saw the need for the church to become a diverse church and set the tone for the transition that was necessary. Case 49 stated that the key to their transition was the concerted effort made by their pastor that resulted in attracting new and diverse people from the community. Case 28 shares that the pastors were "intentional about articulating the importance of hospitality and being a welcoming congregation for all people," motivating the people to catch the vision and get on board with the new paradigm. Furthermore, Case 21 echoes these churches by highlighting that competent leadership in the senior pastor's role formed the "bedrock of this change."

However, a leadership initiative in this area will have difficulty if it stays with the top leader alone. The following churches highlight that both the lay and pastoral leadership as what made the difference in their transition. The partnership of the laity and pastor alongside each other can create traction and momentum to make the changes that are necessary for the church. Case 36 exclaims that it was the "pastor and the church leadership" that made the transition possible. People saw that the entire leadership team was "focused on becoming diverse." Case 25 also raises up the "spiritual guidance" given by both the pastors and the lay leadership and how that was key to helping their congregation transition from where they were to what it is now. Another shared how their leadership painted a clear picture of their vision, modeled it to the people, and encouraged them to follow. Case 38 said, "Pastoral and lay leaders [were] willing to speak openly about the need to be a welcoming church," and these

leaders, both clergy and laity, “modeled and encouraged a genuine welcome to new groups” (Case 33).

A related factor clearly evident throughout the survey responses, and just as important as the strength and commitment of those who lead, was the intentional effort to create a **diverse leadership**, making sure the leadership reflected the color, race, and culture of the community whom the church decided to embrace. Churches saw that in order to be welcoming of ethnic diversity, they had to start with those in visible positions of leadership, so that the people of the community could see that this church welcomed diverse people and that they belonged. In a way, this was a statement for both the members and the community about the kind of church they are pursuing. Efforts were made in many churches to diversify the lay leadership, the staff, the Sunday worship team, and even the senior pastor.

Eight churches mentioned that the appointment of pastors from a different ethnic background helped them reach the diversity of their neighbors and transition to become multiethnic churches. In the United Methodist system of pastoral appointment, the intentional appointment of ethnic pastors to these churches shows that either the conference or the higher denominational structure saw, either by understanding the demographic changes through strategic analysis or by the request of the congregation, that the key to these churches’ thriving would start with their leadership reflecting the community and matching the color and culture of the mission field. Case 55 testified, “The denomination has hired a variety of ... diverse pastors to aid in the diversity.” Churches such as Cases 21 and 25 testified that these appointments were catalysts for the transition to kick off and gain traction: “The transition launched when the church’s

first African American pastor was appointed” (Case 21), and “[we] began a transition from a white-homogeneous congregation to a multi-ethnic/cultural one ... when first an African-American pastor and then a Filipino pastor were appointed to serve the church” (Case 25). From these stories, it is clear that careful analysis of the mission field, followed by the appointing of a pastor that reflects the community, can make a great statement about what the church intends to be and can provide a great start in the work to reach the diversity around it.

As important as it is to have a senior pastor that reflects the color, race, or culture of the community, at least twelve of the churches surveyed did not stop there but put an effort into diversifying leadership in every way. Cases 55 and 42 mentioned that they are “interest[ed] in having racial and cultural diversity in all levels of leadership in the church” (Case 42) and that they worked hard to ensure a “presence and leadership of people from different ethnicities.” In fact, many of the churches made sure that the diverse group of people that were joining the church became part of the lay leadership and were invited to positions on the church committees (Cases 28, 34, 49). Case 21 shares how they “intentionally utilized diversity in every possible way. All of our key leadership teams are multi-ethnic; our worship department is multi-ethnic; our preschool staff is multiethnic; even our Sunday morning welcome team is composed of multi-ethnic members.” When this kind of effort is made to integrate diversity into church life and leadership, one church “began to see more ethnic people coming for worship and joining the church” (Case 49). Case 59 makes an important statement that this intentional diversification of the leadership “can’t be underestimated.” When the leadership, the people visible on stage, and those serving the congregation are diverse,

people see that they belong; “This intentionality welcomes everyone and brings down the perceived and real barriers of cultural differences” (Case 21).

As important as it is to hear what was done right, it is also helpful to understand what some churches would do differently and to learn from their mistakes and failures. Three of the churches shared that if they could do it all over again, they would make sure to diversify their leadership from the beginning. This confirms again that having leadership that reflects the community is crucial in making the transition to a church that embraces the diversity of the community. Case 24 regretfully said that “[O]ur leadership is 90% Caucasian and, as such does not reflect our current demographic.” Case 49 stated, “Ethnic people should have been incorporated into the church leadership earlier.” Case 44 also echoes this with a similar experience: “We have struggled to diversify the leadership of our church. It is my impression that this should have been addressed much earlier.”

The next key element for transition that thirteen of the churches mentioned is **inclusiveness**: openness and acceptance toward the ethnic diversity of their community. Many talked about how their congregations are “inclusive of the surround[ing] community” (Case 27); inclusive of not only ethnic differences but also “race, gender, [and] social status” (Cases 24, 56); and, they are open (Cases 33, 51, 43, 36) and accepting (Cases 59, 21, 25, 11), including these different persons in the life of the church. For some churches, making inclusiveness part of their DNA was a conscious decision they had to choose (Case 28), while for others, it happened naturally because the church already had a history of being inclusive from a long time ago, for example, by supporting immigrants. One church had even “support[ed] the abolitionist

movement” in its distant history (Case 56). Another church also shared that they were part of freeing the slaves after the Revolutionary war (Case 32). Case 41 testified that “the ethos of the congregation seems to be one of extreme welcome. They reach out not just to other cultures, but also to the marginalized. We have homeless folks who worship here regularly. As far as I can tell, that ethos goes back many years.”

If inclusiveness and openness to the varying ethnicities is part of the DNA of the church, it will live out what it believes. The next related key element for transitioning to a multiethnic church is the **welcome and hospitality** that churches show toward those who put their feet in their churches. If inclusive and openness is a statement of their being, welcome and hospitality is a statement of their doing that comes out of their being; it is the value of openness and inclusiveness of the church toward different ethnicities and diversity that is lived out through their actions.

Fourteen transitioned churches credit their successful transition to “hospitality” and “welcome” and their commitment to “radical hospitality” (Case 37). Case 44 stated that “As the community diversified, the people being welcomed to our church also became ethnically diversified.” These churches eagerly took the opportunity to welcome them. Case 24 exclaimed, “Our members, frankly, don’t care about race, gender, social status, or anything of the like... we welcome them all.” Other churches share how this hospitality and welcome is manifested in their congregation. Words that these churches have used to show how they welcome their guests include “loving/kind” (Case 56), “friendly” (Case 11), and “warm welcome” (Case 22). Moreover, Case 33 stated that the original member had “the desire and willingness ... to extend a welcome and share the experience of community here.”

Even when hospitality and welcome came naturally to a congregation, it seems that hospitality had be taught and done with great intentionality. Two of the churches share that hospitality and welcome was something they taught their congregation. Case 28 said, “Our pastors are intentional about articulating the importance of hospitality and being a welcoming congregation for all people,” and they continue to talk about “the importance of being intentional about hospitality and helping people feel welcome.” Case 38 said, “Pastoral and lay leaders [were] willing to speak openly about the need to be a welcoming church.” Moreover, because hospitality is so important and needs to become a core value of the church, the responders said that beyond teaching the people about the importance of hospitality, the pastor, leaders, and laity also “modeled and encouraged a genuine welcome to new groups” (Case 33).

To live out their hospitality in practical ways, churches talked of creating hospitality teams that invite (Case 28), that follow up on their guests (Case 24) and that welcome them to the church. Case 33 formed a team “that was glad to welcome, support, and share with new neighbors of varying ethnicity.” To make persons feel welcome, churches created a team of “greeters at the doors and outside the sanctuary” (Case 24), and to enhance the hospitality, some worked on using their multiethnic members to be part of this welcoming team (Case 21). These churches share that receiving this kind of welcome and seeing that the welcomers look like them lowers the barriers of ethnic and cultural difference (Case 21). Churches such as Case 33 testify that “those who have become active in this church have done so because they found an authentic welcome here.”

The next key element for a successful transition, mentioned by twelve of the churches, was the **worship experience**. Again, just like the new churches, these churches did not all use the same style of worship. One mentioned how they preferred the traditional service (Case 7), and one mentioned that they use “a variety of music styles... [using] Mexican guitar one Sunday...[using] traditional hymns, praise music and jazz” (Case 37). Whether traditional, contemporary, or ethnic/cultural styles of worship were used, the reality for most of these churches is that they had to “change music style” (Case 56) and “[incorporate a] different style of music” (Case 36) in order better to reach their diverse mission field.

Several churches said that in order to embrace different cultures, they would incorporate worship in two to three languages in the service. Three of the churches (Cases 45, 37, 56) stated that they have a bilingual worship service. Case 27 states that they use a multicultural component to their worship service and also incorporate other languages whether in the music, the reading of the Scripture, or prayer. Beyond the music, those who discussed the preaching style mentioned that it is focused on the “gospel with a mildly evangelical bent” (Case 31) and “Bible-based preaching” (Case 21).

As with new churches, one of the themes that clearly rose to the top as a key element to success in transition is **community outreach**: churches becoming outwardly focused, meeting the needs of the community, and leveraging these outreach efforts to connect people to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the church. A church’s awareness of the changing community and the need to reach out to this community by reflecting the demographics of its mission field is already a sign of an outwardly focused church.

Sixteen of the transitioned churches testified that they were focused outward to meet the needs of the community, and this is what drew diversity into their congregation.

Case 34 shared, “We are intentional in our mission and ministry and have invested significant resources to develop and sustain a community ministry centered on the needs and experience of our neighbors.” One of the churches shared that they had a group come together to discuss “community concerns and issues” (Case 32). And out of understanding the needs of the community, churches then started “programs to help community” (Case 11) and to reach out to “people of different cultural backgrounds” (Case 44). Depending on the situation of the community, outreach ministries were targeted to meet the needs of the specific demographics that they were reaching. For example, Case 31 reached out to the Hispanic population of whom many were in great poverty. Case 4 reached black families through after-school programs and Saturday enrichment programs. Case 27 helped immigrants coming to the city, and Case 41 reached out “not just to other cultures, but also to the marginalized.” Now their church even has “homeless folks who worship here regularly.” All of these churches show how they are doing their best to be “inclusive of the surrounding community” (Case 27) and as they “started appealing to their neighborhood more” they witnessed people of the community being drawn to their church families. Case 59 testified that through their outreach in the neighborhood, “[n]ow we are both ethnically diverse and economically diverse.” Furthermore, making this a bit more achievable to those who may be intimidated, these programs do not have to be done by the church alone. Four of these churches mentioned that they did not provide the community outreach from scratch but

were able to participate through community partnerships (Cases 37, 27, 34) with other organizations or with the local leadership.

Perhaps not mentioned as often by the participants in the survey, but still important, is the ability to **handle cultural differences and conflicts** well. Two churches said this was key to their success, and two others mentioned this as something they would do differently if they could go back to the beginning. These churches wish that they had been trained or prepared for dealing with conflict and understanding the cultural differences they would face. Case 33 testified that “there have been some rough patches occasioned by misunderstandings or differing perspectives and perceptions.” Case 57 also stated that if they could go back, they would teach “reconciliation and peace-making skills to congregants from the beginning to prepare for conflict among ethnic groups.” Case 21 shows the fruit of having prepared in advance, as they pursued a “consistent pattern of loving people and refusing to be... ‘drama filled...’ Conflict is dealt [with] immediately using Biblical principles (Matt. 18).” And Case 43 states that they benefited from “a willingness to confront and work through areas of conflict or tension.”

Finally, five churches brought up the importance of **financial stability** in their transition to a multiethnic church. Perhaps because many of them were facing decline by the time they had the urgency to reach their changing demographic, and perhaps because the demographic they were reaching was not a wealthy crowd, they needed to be out of debt and financially stable or, in other cases, to have access to external funding in order to start the transition without financial barriers.

Two of the churches mention that they were able to transition because they did

not have to worry about the financial burden and had some financial flexibility (Case 31). Cases 45 and 31 both mentioned their debt free facility as a plus, providing room for a decline in giving or revenue as they transitioned to a diverse community that was not as wealthy as the previous demographic of their congregation.

Three churches also mentioned that they received funding from the conference or other external “investment of financial resources” (Case 34) to help make the transition. Case 21 testified that they received “adequate external funding—the conference invested heavily in the re-launch of this church. There was a sale of a nearby UMC church... and all of the proceeds were dedicated to revitalizing this congregation.” Case 60 also shared, “The transition was entirely dependent on funding from the Conference and grants from mission agencies” and how without this kind of help their transition would not have been possible because “financial resources in [their] neighborhood are simply not sufficient to support a traditional independent UMC congregation.” The response went on to say that subsidizing a full-time, salaried UM clergy is not easy for a lower income community.

Research Question #3

The third and final research question asked, “What are the key characteristics and strategies used by churches to continue to grow as multiethnic churches?” As much as we want to plant a multiethnic church or transition a homogenous church to a multiethnic church, it is important that multiethnic churches continue to grow and sustain their lives as diverse churches and not fall back into old habits that once again segregate people from their brothers and sisters. The final open-ended survey question, which was on the surveys for both church plants and transitioned churches, asked what

they are doing to continue to grow as multiethnic churches. The paragraphs that follow discuss some of the key elements that rose to the top as things that many are doing to continue to grow as multiethnic churches.

First, about six churches said they would continue to be intentional about seeking **diverse leadership** to ensure continual growth as multiethnic churches and to become even more diverse. Case 10 clearly says they will “continue to model diversity throughout our laity and clergy,” and Case 59 echoes this thought, saying that they will definitely work on “keep[ing] diversity in leadership.” Some mentioned how they are going to be even more intentional about putting diverse leaders in place (Cases 44, 38, 18) and diversifying those who are leading worship on Sunday (Case 38) because they have seen how this will help people of all ethnicities to feel included and welcomed by their congregations.

The second key element about which nine of the churches talked is continuing to live out the values of **openness, inclusivity, and acceptance**, and how these are helping them continue as multiethnic churches. Many of these churches started out with the vision to become multiethnic, embracing the ethnic diversity of their community, and these values mentioned above are the evidence that they are living out their vision. Cases 47 and 45 share that they are both very clear on their mission and vision being for all people, and they believe that “if our congregation continues to be on mission or missional we will continue to be diverse” (Case 47). Perhaps because of this kind of ongoing focus on mission and vision, people experience ongoing openness, acceptance, and inclusion in these churches.

Case 1 elaborates in saying that they are open to “love people for what they are, regardless of color, language,” and another church, Case 61, shows that they are open not only to race but that they “welcome all to [the] church no matter their ethnic background, sexual orientation, or gender.” Case 7 states that their church includes everyone. Because of their openness to welcome all people, Case 18 sees that their church is “diverse economically, politically, age-wise as well as racially” and believe that “[d]iversity is a sign that ALL are invited, welcome and an integral part of God’s Kingdom lived out in a particular place” (original emphasis).

Case 33 stated that they continue to focus on the shared values they have as a church: “on a sense of unity, on friendship, fellowship, loving one another, including each other, being one in Christ.” Because they are “open to and reflective of the changing community,” it will affect the way they conduct every ministry, to be accepting and inclusive of all. Their values are allowing these churches to press on as multiethnic churches.

The third element highlighted to continue to grow multiethnic churches is by intentionally **celebrating and understanding different cultures**. Nine of the churches mentioned that they plan to do this. Case 25 shared that they worship in one language but they would try to “incorporate ethnic traditions during special seasons of the church.” Another church, Case 29, which is based in a community of First Nations people, shared that to celebrate this culture and to gain awareness and understanding, they will make sure to “observe a Sunday recognizing the American Indian heritage of our congregation.” Beyond the worship experience, several churches said that they celebrate many different events, such as Martin Luther King day (Case 7), and put

together events for different cultures to interact together (Case 31) and to celebrate ethnic traditions (Case 6). Case 49 seems to be very intentional about celebrating cultures. They put on events that have celebrated different cultures, such as Mexican Fiesta, Philippines Fiesta, and Polynesian Luau, and they have plans in the future to celebrate events from Korea, India, Africa, and many more. Furthermore, they would take the opportunity on World Communion Sunday to have “everyone who speaks a different language share in a common liturgy. This means we will have 7 to 12 different people sharing. But it means that we celebrate the diversity of our backgrounds.”

In addition to celebrating different cultures and helping each other be aware of and understand each other’s cultures, it seems the churches are taking advantage of every opportunity to be trained in understanding different cultures and getting along. It is evident that some of the annual conferences are being intentional about teaching their churches to deal with cultural differences and cultural competency. And churches who are taking advantages of these programs seem to be in a place where they can continue to grow as healthy multiethnic congregations. Case 6 testified that the conference staff came out and led a retreat session on “cultural difference and Christian unity.” Case 41 shared, “Our annual conference provides a lot of resources and training in multi-cultural work. We have used some of those resources as a congregation, and I have received some extra training.” Outside the help of the conference, Case 37 said their people intentionally read together Peter Block’s book *Community: The Structure of Belonging* and attended a seminar together. They share from their experience that “to continue to grow as a diverse congregation we find it necessary to be attentive

constantly to everyone in the group and listen to each other,” showing that they have progressed well down the road of cultural competency and understanding.

Through intentional work on building a unified community that understands each other and works to overcome their differences, many of these churches become more sensitive and aware the way they execute certain ministries for different ethnic groups in their congregations. Case 25 shared that “We are also starting a stewardship campaign designed to address the different cultural understanding of giving that are specific to our ethnic groups. Standard ‘white’ pledge campaigns have alienated our ethnic groups.” Case 33 said that whatever they do in any ministry area, they focus on shared values rather than differences, “on a sense of unity, on friendship, fellowship, loving one another, including each other, being one in Christ.”

The fourth key element on which churches are working in order to continue to grow as multiethnic churches is the way they conduct **worship**. Eleven of the churches mentioned that they are working on changing their worship or services. Most commonly, churches mentioned that they are working on a style of worship that would speak to their diverse community. Case 21 stated that they are “maintaining worship that reflects various musical genres.” Case 33 said that they are making sure that worship is “open to and reflective of our changing community.” Case 44 also said that “[w]e are seeking to recognize and incorporate elements of global worship and church customs that are familiar to diverse Christians.” Case 38 said, “We are also taking more opportunities to be public about our diversity and its beauty in worship.” Case 22 stated that their “worship services are planned to include music, prayers, sermons that speak

to all members.” Case 29 noted that they use “visual image[s] of multiethnic” people to show what the congregation values and is pursuing.

Some like to include different languages in worship (Case 1), and one church is thinking of creating a new language service to meet the needs of the growing population that does not speak English in their community, specifically the Latino immigrants (Case 16). One mentioned that it is “in the process of changing our style of music” (Case 56) to embrace the community, and Case 31 shared that they will continue to focus on “preaching... the gospel with a mildly evangelical bent,” which seems to work for that community.

The fifth key element on which thirteen of the churches are working in order to continue to grow as multiethnic congregations is the way they approach all areas of **hospitality**, whether it’s visiting, inviting, welcoming, following up with, or helping guests connect with the body of Christ.

Cases 1 and 31 mentioned that they continue to visit people in the community. Beyond just visiting with people, they leverage this to invite people to the church and bring others (Case 1).

Part of hospitality is also inviting. These churches are intentional in inviting people with whom they come into contact. Case 60 shared that they do targeted mailings to their community but go beyond just sending a postcard. Their members intentionally “invite their friends and neighbors regularly.” Case 21 said they continue to “[invite] people of all backgrounds.”

In connection to the previous point about the value of openness, acceptance, and inclusiveness, these churches are clear that they will continue to be welcoming of all.

Cases 56, 30, 61, 18, and 32 share that it is very clear in these churches that all are welcomed because this has become part of their DNA, regardless of background. Therefore, they are “always open to new ideas to make others welcome” (Case 18) and “strive to be welcoming to all who come through the doors” (Case 32).

Case 33 said that “The main thing we continue to do is to do all we can to make any newcomer welcome.” And Case 28 says that they will continue to “seek ways to help people of all races and [ethnicities] feel welcome by continuing to make this one of our priorities as a congregation.” The statement made by Case 18 is an important insight to ponder: “[D]iversity is not [the] goal;... [rather,] diversity is a sign that ALL are invited, welcome and an integral part of God’s kingdom lived out in a particular place” (original emphasis; Case 18). The kingdom can be realized when we extend the radical welcome of Jesus Christ to the community, and we will see diversity drawn to us by the love of Jesus Christ that we share.

Finally, and probably most importantly, twenty churches mentioned that what they are doing to continue to grow as a multiethnic church is to remain an **outward-focused** church. They will continue to seek to understand the needs of the community, offer community ministries that will meet people where they are, and bridging from those ministries to bring them and connect them to the body of Christ.

These churches are very aware that they need to be very intentional about having an outward focus, going out into the community to start or do things that will reach their community (Case 55). Case 33 states that they are continually striving toward being “reflective of our changing community.” And Case 27 said they will continue to “offer support and community” to their neighbors, to continue to reach out

and grow to reflect their community. Case 43 also stated, “We are working toward stronger relationships with the community around us.” Case 24 noted that along with the help of the conference and the district “we are making an effort to learn how to be more appealing to still more ethnic groups than those already within our walls.”

As these churches stay outwardly focused, they are realizing that even though they can be proud of their current diversity, they have a lot more work to do if they are to continue as a multiethnic church. Case 18 said, “This church is racially diverse but not in proportion to the community,” and they understand that God is calling them “to be active in ministering to the whole community” and reach others of diverse backgrounds on racial, social, and other various dimensions. Cases 18, 43, 16, 41, and 45 also stated that although they are reaching diverse groups, they need to do even more to reach the Hispanic community, which is the largest component of their local diverse population, by overcoming cultural and language barriers.

As churches offered community programs to be attractional while at the same time went out to meet people in the community where they are (Cases 9, 21), some of the methods in outreach varied by the churches’ context. Instead of trying to invent ways to reach out to their community, some of these churches are continuing to find ways to partner with already existing community services, connect with ethnic community businesses, and “[engage] in the events in the city” (Case 57). Case 4 partners with organizations to provide community services such as “summer camp for neighborhood kids” and “justice ministry in partnership with a community social justice ministry.” Case 44 shared that they “are seeking to partner with local Christian leaders and congregations [to] further expand our diversification.”

On the other hand, many of the churches are trying to discern the needs of the community and leverage their current outreach ministries to meet the mission field or create new in-house ministries to reach out. Case 44 responded that “Instead of waiting for people to come to us, we want to become an important part of the community outside the walls of our church.” Case 60 shared that because of their programs in the neighborhood, they are well thought of in the community and they can leverage this good reputation to continue to grow as a healthy multiethnic church. Case 44 explained that to continue to grow as a diverse congregation, they are “developing outreach events specific to diverse communities in the neighborhood.”

Following are some of the community outreach programs that churches have mentioned they are doing to meet the needs of their community. Case 25 shared that they are involved in missions and ministries that are “important to each ethnic group.” Case 4 provided a community garden to their neighbors. Case 3 is near the US/Mexico border, so they work with organizations and some of their own programs to meet the community and its many refugees. Their current challenge is how to reach out effectively to a community that seems to be affected by poverty, drugs and crime. Two of the churches (Cases 41 and 45) mentioned that they have feeding programs that reach a massive number of people in the community, the result of which was that they began to “[reflect] more accurately the racial/ethnic make up of the community” (Case 45). Through these programs, these churches are trying to build a bridge to introduce them to Christ and to the life of the church. And Cases 37 and 39 also echo that through outreach programs, they try to be “proactively working on connecting with individuals in our neighborhoods” and utilize these programs to bring people to Christ and to the churches.

Summary of Major Findings

Based on the survey responses, the major findings for planting, transitioning to, and growing a multiethnic church are as follows. There were common elements in the findings for all three research questions, such as the need for vision, diverse leadership, hospitality, relevant worship, and an outward focus. Nevertheless, there were also other elements and concerns specific to each research question and its corresponding situation (i.e., planting a new multiethnic church, transitioning an existing church, and sustaining and growing a multiethnic church).

Major Findings for Planting a Multiethnic Church

1. The majority of the new churches in the survey had a **clear vision** to be multiethnic, embracing ethnic diversity. They focused intensely on the vision, aligning everything to it, and making sure they did not drift from it.
2. To reach an ethnically diverse audience, these churches modeled their vision by ensuring they had **ethnic diversity in leadership** at all levels.
3. These churches practiced **radical hospitality** through love, acceptance, and a welcoming attitude toward newcomers. When guests experienced this genuine welcome, they felt excited to become part of the body.
4. To become multiethnic, these churches made sure they planted themselves in a good **location** within a diverse community.
5. These churches used **community outreach** to build relationships and connect people to God and to the church.
6. Though there was no single style of music they all used, these churches were intentional to have **worship** that is relevant and speaks to the diversity in their audiences both in the music and in the rest of the service.

Major Findings for Transitioning to a Multiethnic Church

1. Many of these churches were motivated to become multiethnic because of the **diverse and changing community** where they are located. In most cases, they faced neighborhoods that are becoming more colorful with the influx of new ethnicities and the departure of many of those that were formerly dominant.
2. Due to the changing community, many churches had begun to decline in their original membership demographics and felt a sense of great **urgency** to adapt to the change. They realized clearly that the only way to survive and thrive was to embrace the growing diversity in the community, and this urgency was key in overcoming the many obstacles to change.
3. In order to become multiethnic, most churches engaged in careful **strategic planning** to discern how to reach their diverse mission fields. Those that did not expressed that they wished they had done so and would if they could go back and begin the process again..
4. Once they had gone through the discernment process, the **vision** of becoming a multiethnic church gave them direction and alignment to move forward.
5. The **commitment** of the existing members to the vision made the transition possible. Many of the churches were able to transition successfully because of those who stayed in the community and the church, even in the midst of the changing demographics in the neighborhood and the drastic changes that were necessary to adapt to the new diversity.
6. The transition could not have been possible without the competent **leadership** of the clergy and the laity. Together they set the tone for transition and encouraged the rest of the members to follow the vision.

7. Just like the new churches, they were intentional about placing **diverse leadership** in all roles and on the stage in order to send the message to visitors of different ethnicities that they have a place in the church.
8. The **inclusiveness** of the congregation was manifested through a strong culture of openness and acceptance, allowing people to feel accepted and welcomed.
9. The new guests that came into the churches were warmly **welcomed** through actions of intentional **hospitality**.
10. In order to celebrate diversity and to be inclusive of all the members, the **worship services** were designed to speak to the diverse members of the congregation.
11. To transition and become multiethnic, reflecting the community, most of the churches engaged in **community outreach** or intentional efforts to reach out to the community, to meet the needs of the community, and to use these ministries as a bridge to share the gospel and connect people to the life of the church.
12. As they ministered to ethnically diverse people, misunderstandings and conflicts arose. However, some congregations share how they were equipped and prepared to **overcome conflicts and cultural differences** and continue to live out the vision of being a multiethnic church.
13. Several churches shared that **financial stability** was important. Transitioning to a multiethnic congregation can bring financial challenges for various reasons. Whether it was through being a debt-free congregation or through external funding, having sufficient financial resources made the transition more feasible.

Major Findings for Continuing to Grow as a Multiethnic Church

1. As churches continue to pursue their vision of reaching a diverse audience, they are intentionally maintaining or even increasing the **diversity of their leadership** team and those who serve on the stage on Sunday.
2. Many churches continue to insist that the values of **openness, inclusivity, and acceptance** be lived out as part of their culture.
3. It is important for these churches that as they embrace the increasing diversity of the community, they **celebrate and understand the different cultures** in order to thrive as a multiethnic church.
4. Many are working on maintaining, improving, or creating new **worship** that celebrates diversity and that speaks to the mission field.
5. Churches are working to improve their **hospitality** in all areas, making sure to invite new people, welcome all people, and help guests connect to the body of Christ.
6. In order to be a multiethnic church that embraces the diversity of the mission field, the churches continue working on being an **outward-focused** church, being aware of the needs of the community, meeting them where they are, and connecting them to the church.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Major Findings

This study was conducted with the purpose of finding out the key characteristics and strategies used by the churches that have already gone through the process of planting and transitioning and are currently growing as multiethnic churches in the United Methodist Church connection. The purpose of the study was to help United Methodist Churches that have the desire to plant, transition to, and grow as multiethnic congregations with the major findings from this research to aid in their efforts. The research data was gathered through online and paper surveys, and a qualitative ground-theory analysis approach was used to let the findings emerge from the responses of 50 churches to the open-ended survey questions.

Though there were major findings pertaining to each of the research areas of planting, transitioning, and growing a multiethnic church, interestingly, across all these cases, common threads emerged about which elements and strategies were necessary for planting, transitioning, or growing multiethnic churches. In this chapter, I will discuss the major findings about key characteristics and elements that seem to be necessary or found in common in all three research areas. In addition, I will address some of the findings that are unique to each of the research areas, whether planting, transitioning, or growing multiethnic churches. Through the discussion, I will also tie the findings together with what has already been written in the literature on this topic.

Diverse Leadership

Whether it was a church planted as a multiethnic church, a homogeneous church that transitioned to become a multiethnic church, or either type of church as they continue to work on growing as a multiethnic church, many responders from all three cases said that they are working to ensure that there is diversity represented in all aspects of leadership in the church, from the senior pastor down through staff, committees, teams, or boards. “Diversity of leadership communicates that the church is serious about sharing power with all ethnic groups in the church” (McIntosh and McMahan 189). More importantly, great attention was put into ensuring diverse leadership presence on Sunday worship experience from the person preaching, participating or leading in worship, to those who are greeting at the door to show the diversity that the churches are trying to reach. “The visibility of pastors and worship leaders communicates a great deal about the church’s values” (McIntosh & McMahan 189). Having diverse leaders in visible positions demonstrates the vision of the church and communicates to the guests that the church is multiethnic and that there is a place for them. Practicing diversity in leadership that is visible but also even down to the less visible positions is a statement about where the congregation is headed and what they value. This diversity of leadership gives people a sense of welcome, belonging, and part in the work of reaching the ethnic diversity of the community.

Hospitality and a Culture/DNA of Openness, Inclusiveness, and Acceptance

In all three research areas, churches agreed that intentional work on hospitality is crucial in establishing and expanding a multiethnic church, so that all ethnicities feel that they are welcomed and accepted. The entire congregation must catch the culture of

authentic hospitality and of openness, inclusiveness, and acceptance. For this to occur, there was great intentionality from the leadership to teach, model, and encourage hospitality in their congregation. Often, a diverse hospitality team was created to show hospitality to those who entered the building of these multiethnic churches. Moreover, hospitality efforts often went beyond the Sunday welcome to inviting people of the community outside the church, welcoming them, following up on those persons, and connecting them to the body of Christ. More importantly, all across the board, many churches witnessed hospitality flowing out of their strong values of inclusiveness, openness, and acceptance, which was very clearly the value of most of the churches, showing that genuine hospitality and welcome has become part of their DNA and culture. In the book *Being the Church in a Multi-ethnic Community*, Gary L. McIntosh and Alan McMahan confirm the experience of these churches from their own research as well:

The way churches welcome newcomers is an important issue for all churches, but it is huge in the multi-ethnic church... if it does not provide a hospitable atmosphere, guests will be greatly disappointed and perhaps never make another effort to attend. Hospitality must be expressed through the greeting practices, music, foods, worship styles, comments, expressions of welcome, and people of the church. Hospitality in multi-ethnic churches goes way beyond a handshake as one walks in the door. Welcoming the stranger in a multi-ethnic church includes the entire church package—what the guest sees, hears, feels, smells, and senses in the experience of attendance. It begins in the parking lot, but continues into the weeks following. Church leaders must think through the entire welcoming process and procedures in a multi-ethnic church. The promise of acceptance and inclusiveness must be met, or the church will not survive being multi-ethnic. (p. 192)

Hospitality that flows out of authentic openness, inclusiveness, and acceptance is essential to embracing diversity. Even in a homogenous church, hospitality is one of the keys to ensuring the return of a guest. I remember visiting one of the churches with which I work as part of the Healthy Church Initiative consultation team. One of their mystery worshippers shared that even though the worship experience was as good as going to a concert, this person would not return because the pre-service and post-service hospitality was not present. Hospitality is even more crucial in ethnic diverse settings. Having grown up in an ethnically diverse school and background, I have seen the strong value of hospitality that is extended even to strangers in many non-western, non-Anglo cultures. Thus, if hospitality is lacking in a multiethnic church, it definitely would not be a place guests would want to return. Jim Ozier and Fiona Haworth in the recent book, *Clip In: Risking Hospitality in Your Church*, encourage all churches to ask the following questions of themselves to improve their hospitality:

How are we conveying to our guests that they are *highly anticipated*?

How are we demonstrating to our guests that they are *eagerly awaited*?

How are we convincing our guests that they are *exceedingly loved*?

(original emphasis; 22)

Worship Experience

Again, all new churches, transitioned churches, and growing churches have shared that they are intentional about creating worship services that speak to the ethnic diversity of their communities. There was really no agreement across these churches on the type of music to use. Instead, these churches spoke about creating a worship experience that is inclusive and speaks to their particular demographic and community, above any particular style. In line with the first common finding of diversity in

leadership, these churches also mentioned the importance of involving different ethnic persons to participate in different areas of worship, either in the reading of the Scripture, praying, leading worship, or participating in the hospitality team. Several churches say they incorporate different languages in worship, inclusive visuals, elements celebrating different cultures, or multicultural worship in ways they believe would speak to the diverse cultures in the audience. Though there could be many different ways to approach multiethnic worship, the majority sought to provide worship that is inclusive and multicultural in its nature, to bring ethnic diversity to worshipping God together. Stryker in *Multiracial Church Dynamics* agrees with these churches that “[v]ariety in worship communicates acceptance, respect and welcome to the people” (67).

Community Outreach and Outward Focus

The success of many if not most multiethnic churches comes from their being outwardly focused, rather than inwardly focused. Most of these churches saw the mission field that was changing and transitioning with ethnically diverse people who need to be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ and positioned themselves to reach them either through church planting or by changing the way they have been doing ministry (transitioning). Across the board, there was the same sense that they needed to be churches that reach their communities, meeting the needs of their immediate neighbors, and bridging between this outreach and their churches to connect people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus told the disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19), these churches understand that their role is to go to their mission fields, their communities, where the diverse ethnic people are, and build relationships rather than following the attractional model of simply offering a

welcome and an open door at the church and then waiting for the people to come to them. When they carry a strong vision to reach the ethnic diversity of the community, congregations cannot just sit in their pews and wait for the people to come and join them. Simply being in a multiethnic neighborhood is not going to do a church any good. Churches need to go out to their communities and learn about them. What are the needs of the community? What are people doing to help meet those needs? Where are things falling through the cracks? Where can the church step up to help? Through being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, relationships are built, and through those relationships the gospel of Jesus Christ can be shared, so that people can come to the body of Christ where they can grow and become disciples of Jesus Christ.

The outreach ministries that the churches in this study used to reach their communities were either programs that they created to meet specific needs in the community or partnerships with existing organizations that were already doing work in the community. Because of the nature of the survey and the responses, I could not fully determine the degree to which the churches were leveraging these outreach programs to connect people successfully with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the church. However, it was evident that they were at least making an attempt, through these outreach ministries, to share the gospel with their ethnically diverse neighbors and connect them to the churches. They understood that they must be outward-focused churches, reaching out to their communities, in order to be true to their multiethnic church vision. In his book *The Post-Black & Post-White Church*, Efrem Smith shares his experience about when his congregation became a missional church that was outward focused and

serving the community, and how this process was a catalyst for bringing the people of the community to the church:

When I was at the Sanctuary Covenant Church, I was privileged to see this kind of fruit in the form of changed lives. We started by getting out and taking the time to identify the needs in our community, and I tried not to let a Sunday go by without reminding the congregation that North Minneapolis was our community. The community thus became our focus and our mission field we started a monthly event, Love Minneapolis, when we went into the community and served. Sometimes that meant bringing food to homeless people. Other times it meant picking up garbage or washing gang signs off the walls of a local business. We adopted schools in order to work with reading and doing math at grade level. We ran a workforce development initiative for adults in a community center. New families began to attend our Sunday morning worship. They came to church because we were meeting needs, and they sensed that we cared for them. (62)

Location in a Diverse Community

Both the multiethnic church plants and also the churches that have transitioned to become multiethnic attributed their church becoming multiethnic to the diversity of their surrounding communities. “It seems almost too obvious to point out, but a multi-ethnic will only arise from a multi-ethnic community. Church leaders may have a passion for multi-ethnic ministry, but without being in the right community it is not likely to happen” (McIntosh and McMahan 173). For new churches, either with the vision to locate themselves strategically in an ethnically diverse mission field or simply faced with the demographics of the location in which they were to plant, through analysis they have come to the conclusion that the multiethnic model would be appropriate to reach that particular mission field. In the case of transitioned churches, in almost all cases the diversity came to them instead. Many times they found themselves

as homogeneous churches in changing neighborhoods with growing diversity, and failing at first to reflect the new makeup of the community. They came to be motivated to transition to multiethnic congregations either as part of their existing outwardly focused efforts or due to the decline of their original membership caused from being too inwardly focused. Research done by Gary L. McIntosh confirms that if a church is located in an ethnically diverse neighborhood, it is important to be a church that can embrace the diversity, and if planting a multiethnic church, it must locate itself in an ethnically diverse mission field:

Research Gary conducted over the last decade with over one thousand church visitors discovered that 91 percent lived within twenty miles of the church they attended. This ministry area is predictable wherever churches are located, that is, cities or rural areas... Thus, 90 percent of churches in the United States should focus on designing ministry to reach those within a twenty-minute or twenty-miles drive from their place of worship. If the community is highly diverse, the church may have the opportunity to become multi-ethnic. But if the community is homogeneous, the church should focus on reaching the mono-ethnic peoples who reside there. Jesus set the agenda in the Great Commission, but it must be played out in the real context of our backyards. (190)

Clear Vision

Both the planted churches and the transitioned churches spoke of having a clear vision. In the book *Taking Your Church to the Next Level*, Gary L. McIntosh talks about the life cycle of the church and how, whether it is for a new church or an existing one that is starting a new life cycle of renewal, one of the characteristics of this emerging phase that most strongly predicts its success is the presence of a clear mission and vision. Furthermore, he goes on to say, “Rarely... will a new church survive without a central driving mission and a vision that empower the church and its leaders to move

into the future. Together the mission and vision become the fuel that drives the church forward” (38). Aubrey Malphurs in her book, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*, shares about the importance of vision and what it can do: “A good vision is compelling. The right people want to be part of it, and it serves to motivate these people. The ministry’s vision inspires them to partner with what the ministry is convinced God wants it to do. A compelling vision moves people out of the pews and into the community and, most important, gives birth to ministry” (101). For planted churches, the vision of reaching the ethnically diverse neighbors was front and center in everything they did. From the start, people joining the new church knew what their church was going to be; the planters made sure there was no doubt. These churches all seem to agree that vision was communicated frequently to the point that there could be no misunderstanding of what these churches were going to be, affecting the way they did ministry and lived out their vision. Thus, being inclusive churches toward diversity was established as part of the DNA and culture of the new church before any other kind of culture could have taken root.

For the transitioned churches, it seems that more effort was necessary to put the vision in front of the existing members and to get their buy-in. Being older congregations that felt comfortable with their traditions and the way they have always been doing things, they often took a lot more convincing and intentional effort to create a new culture. First, in order to have the vision that they had to become multiethnic, embracing the ethnic diversity of their communities, the churches had to go through some sort of forward-thinking strategic planning to discern that the multiethnic church model was the way to go for them to reach their communities. In many cases, a crisis of

decline had to create the necessary urgency to overcome the resistance to change. Once the vision was laid before the congregations, the churches had to make sure that the leadership bought into the vision wholeheartedly, and then the rest of the congregation also had to get on board with the vision. In a few cases, this was not done sufficiently, and the transitioned church suffered greatly as a number of the original members left. On the flip side, several of the churches share that they were able to go through the tough process of transition due to the loyal commitment of the people who focused on the vision, their churches, and the changing neighborhoods in spite of uncomfortable change.

Urgency

A characteristic unique to the transitioned church was what led these churches to decide to transition to become multiethnic. As mentioned in the previous section about vision, in many cases the element that overcame resistance to change was the urgency of realizing the reality of the changing community and how failing to reflect their changing community was causing the church to age and decline. They realized that if they did not change or do something about the way they approached ministry, they were doomed to a speedy decline and death as a local church body. Out of this urgency and desperation to survive, the churches repositioned themselves to reach their ethnically diverse community and became multiethnic churches. In *Renovate or Die*, Bob Farr and Kay Kotan point out the conditions that must exist for any kind of transformation of a church: “sense of urgency, a vision, and a grasp of present reality, all with a mix of hope for the future” (9). They go on to say that because many are in denial of their present reality, “a sense of urgency has to be created” (10) in order for

the church to make the transition and thrive once again with the new vision. For these churches, given their present reality, they came to understand that they were in a desperate situation and with that urgency they began to act to change their situation, becoming multiethnic churches that embrace their immediate ethnically diverse community.

Effective and Committed Leadership of Both Clergy and Laity

Effective leadership is necessary in all three research areas. However, good pastoral and lay leadership was mentioned most often by the transitioned churches as playing a crucial role for success in becoming multiethnic. Much of the literature examines the competency of the pastor who is either leading the planting of or transitioning the church to a multiethnic church and how that impacts the success of these implementations. For example, Stryker mentions that transformational leadership would make the transition or transformation easier and smoother (52). However, in the survey interviews, instead of the leadership being focused on the clergy alone, there was a common thread about how the leadership of the clergy and the laity together helped the churches gain traction and get the rest of the people to be on board to move forward together to achieve the goal of bringing change and transitioning to multiethnic churches. Stryker does concur elsewhere that “[t]he church that is moving from uniracial to multiracial or even starting anew will call for a lay and clergy team approach” (58). Moreover, McIntosh and McMahan support this, saying that “a critical mass of existing attendees and lay leaders must support the vision of the multi-ethnic church... Some pastors may have the vision for a multi-ethnic church, but without the support of leaders and congregants, it is not likely to happen” (173). Effective

leadership will go a long way toward bringing the rest of the church to get on board with the vision.

Preparation for Cultural Differences and Conflicts

Interestingly, only the transitioned churches spoke about handling conflicts that arose from cultural differences. Perhaps this is because transitioned churches had to overcome expectations built up due to the way things been done before, or there had been a set culture of the church that had to adjust or change when different ethnic groups and different cultures and ways of thinking caused conflicts to arise. Many of them attributed their success to the fact that even though there were cultural differences that caused tension, they were prepared to handle them or overcome them because they received training on dealing with these kinds of conflicts. Others expressed that they wish they had been trained and equipped ahead of time, showing that this is an area about which the congregation needs to be informed and prepared as they begin embracing the mission field that may be different from the current ethnicity and culture. Even in a monoethnic churches there are bound to be conflicts; however, bringing cultural differences into play will increase the likelihood of conflicts even more. McIntosh and McMahan encourage churches to be proactive about this:

Classes, seminars and personalized coaching should be focused on equipping pastors and lay ministry leaders in terms of how to understand the context of ministry, including the tools and perspective for learning about the people groups that make up the populations in the ministry area... [Moreover], leaders of multi-ethnic churches need training to preemptively head off conflict resolution skills, as well as stewarding conflict on a corporate level. Special attention should be given to understanding how cultural patterns relate to conflict resolution as well. (187)

Financial Stability

Ministering to multiethnic communities often also has an implication that the ministry will be socioeconomically diverse as well. Many of these churches shared that reaching out to the ethnic diversity of the community meant reaching out to those who are less privileged and less wealthy than their previous homogenous demographic. This also meant that even though they were reaching many more people than before, their revenue did not initially improve or even had to decline. In some cases, more money was spent on making ministry happen than was coming in through their new members. Some of the churches shared that what made their transition possible was that at least they did not have any debt on the building to worry about. Others had support from outside sources such as the district, the conference, or other organizations to allow them to do ministry and still pay the bills. In the book *Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, DeYmaz and Harry Li similarly share their experience of financial dilemma associated with doing multiethnic church ministry: “Perhaps the greatest challenge I face in coming to the church was in trusting God for my financial provision. In many cases, those attending ethnically diverse congregations are economically diverse as well. Consequently, I suspect, you too will be challenged at points to trust God to come through for you financially, in meeting your personal needs and the needs of the church you are seeking to lead” (DeYmaz & Li, 62-63).

Celebrating and Understanding Different Cultures

In order to continue to thrive as multiethnic congregations, several churches have shared that they are working on celebrating different cultures of their community through special events or even as part of worship. These events seem to help each other

know and understand each other's cultures and at the same time celebrate the different cultural heritages. Furthermore, these churches have mentioned that they are educating their members on understanding different cultures, raising their cultural competencies and awareness, so that they can grow in harmony and unity as a single congregation with diverse ethnicities coexisting and loving each other. DeYmaz and Li in *Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church* also agree:

To build a healthy multi-ethnic church, we must commit ourselves to the pursuit of cross-cultural competence, whether that means becoming proficient in the idiosyncrasies of language or learning the ins and outs of traditions different from our own. Once acquired, cross-cultural competence allows us to interact in a more informed and effective way with others of various ethnic or economic backgrounds. In many ways, cross-cultural competence is more caught than taught. (48)

To become a multiethnic church, there needs to be a growing awareness and understanding of different cultures. These churches know about the cultural differences but learn how to work with others despite the differences and even celebrate the differences and values that each culture brings to the table.

Implications of the Findings

Multiethnic churches are necessary especially in diverse and changing neighborhoods. Although not mentioned much by the churches that participated in the survey, the new generation may need to see more diversity in church in order to recognize the church as relevant. Children growing up in many of the urban and suburban areas are experiencing interaction with diverse ethnicities as a norm. When churches remain homogeneous despite the changing community and social norms, they risk being seen as obsolete and irrelevant. Moreover, the mandate of the church is to be

missional, and to see the community in which God has placed them as a mission field, whether by planting a new church or by refocusing existing churches outward once again. If the church is to be outward focused and missional and is to make disciples of all nations in diverse neighborhoods, it is necessary for them to embrace diversity and become multiethnic.

Multiethnic churches can be created either by planting new multiethnic churches, or by transitioning homogenous churches to multiethnic through focused vision and ongoing change, through models such as a church restart, or through the merger of churches of different ethnicities. It was evident in the survey that some churches had used merger as the means to become multiethnic. This is confirmed in the literature: “While the concept of a church merger is nothing new... [it] is a viable way to expedite the blending of ethnicities in a single congregation. Yes, such a merger, when rightly conceived and executed, will be beneficial to both churches” (DeYmaz and Li 111). Continuing to discuss starting a multiethnic church through a merger, they paint a picture of the exciting possibilities but also of the challenges and failures that can easily occur if the merger is not approached carefully:

As with any merger, there are steps of faith that must be taken by everyone involved. Should you pursue such a merger, it is essential that you take the time to build authentic relationships of transparency and trust between the key leaders of each congregation and together begin to pursue a measure of cross-cultural competence prior to your formal enjoinment. Solid relationships of trust and open communication between leaders on the front end will greatly reduce the risk of your merger failing down the road. In addition, churches pursuing this path should commit to their agreements in writing to avoid any miscommunication or confusion about future intentions and plans. (112-113)

Some elements for planting and transitioning to a multiethnic church in the United Methodist Church have implications that do not exist in other denominations. For example, the polity of appointment, apportionment, ordination process, and even our Wesleyan theology are going to play a role in multiethnic church planting and transitioning in ways different from other denominations. The pastor's appointment being dependent on the cabinet's decision shows that the conference and the district need to be strategic in the way they place pastors. Questions to ask include:

- Are appointments made according to the ethnic match of the mission field?
- Are pastors being culturally trained and have the cultural competency they need?
- Do our churches understand the mission field through strategic analysis and demographic studies and have the strategic planning to reach their diverse communities?
- What resources will we make available to help churches?
- Where is funding necessary to do ministry, since reaching multiethnic mission fields may also mean reaching those who are less established economically?
- Do any churches need to stay as mission churches, rather than become apportionment-paying charter churches?

The conference is the top tier that sets culture for the local churches, so judicatory leaders need to be intentional in strategic analysis, planning, training, and providing resources to make planting and transitioning of multiethnic churches possible and to help them to thrive.

When planting a new multiethnic church, planning and strategic analysis of the community and the model, including the budget, is even more critical than with planting a homogeneous church. Some of the churches have shared that the initial strategic analysis and planning process was critical to developing a proper plan and moving to fulfill it. Some have also mentioned that they wished they had been more strategic up front rather than simply desiring to plant or transition to multiethnic churches and somehow hoping to get there or figuring it out as they went. In his book *Against the Wind*, J. Don George shares how strategic planning was part of their transition and how it should be part of any group that wants to plant or become a multiethnic church:

If a church has been too white, too old, and too male-dominated, the default mode will always cause the leaders to drift back to old habits. Strategic planning drives a stake in the ground: God is leading us to go in a different direction. Now let's see how we're going to get there. Good planning helps us to connected and stay connected to God's heart.

People may have looked at Calvary for several years after God spoke to me in 1995 about diversity and wondered if I had a plan to move forward. I did. God was shaping it in my mind and heart almost every day. Part of the plan was to move our church in a gradual but decisive shift in the way we think, feel, and act. Embracing diversity took painstaking efforts in strategic planning, and we've seen God at work in every step. (218-219)

Finally, continuing to grow as a multiethnic church will be a challenge if a church loses its vision and gets caught up in its status quo or even lets its vision get stuck in time. Multiethnic churches that have been planted and transitioned need to continue the best practices that got these multiethnic churches off the ground and stay true to the vision, realigning to it while also readjusting to constantly changing realities.

At the same time, they must be alert and aware of the constant pace of change in the neighborhood, especially as newer generations come of age and new neighbors come in and not get too comfortable even in what worked in the past to reach a diverse audience. They must continually keep track of the pulse of the community and adjust to ensure they are reaching the new members of the community and not be content with reaching just a few of them. J. Don George encourages his readers to “develop an utter disdain for the status quo” (225). He continues,

Many pastors see a few black or Hispanic faces in their congregations on Sunday morning, and they assume they’re reaching out to these cultures. They may be doing a great job of connecting cross-culturally, but they may be doing nothing at all. We need to gauge the effectiveness of our cultural awareness and outreach by the comparison of our church demographics with community demographics. In 1995, Calvary was 98 percent white. Today, we’re a clear reflection of Irving and the surrounding community: 30 percent white, 30 percent black, 30 percent Hispanic and 10 percent Asian. (225-226)

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this research was to discover key characteristics and strategies that can help United Methodist churches transition from homogeneous to multiethnic, that can help new church plants start as multiethnic churches, and that can help multiethnic churches continue to grow and thrive in their ethnic diversity. It was done through surveys of leaders of churches that had been planted as multiethnic churches or had transitioned to become multiethnic. Efforts were put into removing the bias of the researcher. However, this being a qualitative exploratory project, total elimination of partiality is impossible. I bring my life experience and work experience to this project, for better or worse; hopefully, mostly for better.

One limitation of this research may be that not all of the participants in the survey were a direct part of the planting or transitioning. Most of the survey participants were pastors, and many were part of the launch or transition. However, many were the second, third, or even later pastors from the time of launch or transition, and had inherited churches that was already multiethnic. In these cases, I asked them to write about everything they knew or could find out about the history of the plant or transition or to ask another person who was present at the time. Even so, their answers would not likely be as deep or authoritative as the answers of those who had been through the process. The information they have given me might have their own partiality or biases put into it as well.

Another limitation to this study has been the lack of opportunity to have the survey participants confirm the compiled findings. Since this was done via online or paper surveys, whatever they shared on the survey was basically all I had to work with. Due to the short amount of time and the large number of participants, I did not get a chance to call them for further clarification or to confirm with them if my interpretation of their response rings true to them. However, I was able to generalize by cross checking surveys for common themes that arose in each research area. Even if one or two churches might not have agreed with my interpretation of their specific comments, it would not likely change the overall findings.

Unexpected Observations

The first unexpected observation was that the conference often had a great impact in helping the churches become multiethnic. In some of the cases, the church received the vision to become multiethnic through the strategic analysis of the

conference. In related cases, some churches became multiethnic after the conference appointed a cross-cultural pastor, usually with the intent to diversify the congregation and better reach the particular neighborhood. Many received help, either for planting or transitioning, through conference funding. Some benefited from the conference's offering of cross-cultural, cultural competency and/or conflict resolution training that helped the success of the integration of cultures. In these various ways, the support or initiative of the conference was critical to many churches.

On the other side of conference involvement, one minor observation was also made about churches' frustration toward the conference or the denomination regarding their financial situation. In particular, it is sometimes a financial struggle to support their pastor at the salary level mandated by the conference when the target audience was multiethnic but also at the same time socioeconomically diverse or challenged. A little more flexibility on pastor salaries would perhaps allow the church to do more ministry to reach their target audience. Others shared that although they want to see ordained clergy arise from their community, but due to the lack of education in their community, it is hard to see anyone go through the UM ordination process to become pastors.

The second unexpected observation is that when I first started the research, I only expected to find churches that had started as multiethnic from the beginning or transitioned from being homogenous to becoming multiethnic. Though I may have heard or read about such cases, it did not occur to me that a merger could be a way to create a multiethnic church. Thus, it was a bit of a surprise to find several occurrences throughout the United Methodist connection of two or more ethnically homogeneous

churches (of different ethnicities) that came together to create a new, single multiethnic church.

The third unanticipated observation, though not really surprising, is that many of the surveyed multiethnic churches strive to be inclusive in all dimensions. Their inclusivity does not simply consist of embracing ethnic diversity. Several of them mentioned how they are open to *all*, including homosexual individuals and even couples.

Finally, though many surveyed churches are reaching the different groups in their diverse communities, I read repeatedly from churches about their desire and struggle to reach, in particular, the Hispanics in their communities. Churches highlighted the language barrier as one of the biggest challenges to meeting their needs, ministering to them, and integrating them into the life of the church.

Recommendations for Further Study

While this study discovered many key characteristics for planting, transitioning, and growing multiethnic churches, it was focused mainly on finding major elements that are necessary in the creation of the multiethnic church and in sustaining it, more than the how-to of achieving the key characteristics discovered in this study. Even though many of these elements are necessary for beginning and continuing multiethnic churches, it would be beneficial to study what worked and did not work in implementing each of these elements in different contexts of the United Methodist church and what different resources (e.g., books, trainings, workshops, documented processes and so on) churches have used that have been helpful. For example, it would be helpful not just to know that churches should use community outreach and then

bridge people to the gospel but also what specific methods churches are using to do this work.

I would like to encourage any further work to go deeper into researching each of these elements. Topics that could benefit from further in-depth study could include the following questions:

- What are the different cultural competency trainings that have worked in the Methodist context?
- What resources are out there for cultural and general conflict resolution, and how effective has each one been in different situations?
- What are the different ways to implement diverse leadership in a church?
- How do you go about getting the buy-in from the leadership and the congregation for this kind of change?
- How do you encourage people to be outward-focused? What are kinds of outreach ministries have worked for different ethnicities, and how are churches bridging these events to the life of the church?
- What different strategic planning methods have been used and worked?

Furthermore, it would be compelling to study the different methods or strategies that conferences have used to plant multiethnic churches, to see what has worked and what has not worked and learn from their successes and failures.

Last but not least, it would be beneficial to pursue further study on the role of the Holy Spirit and of prayer in the establishment and continuation of multiethnic churches. It was surprising that there was hardly any mention of the Holy Spirit and prayer in planting, transitioning, and growing multiethnic churches. It perhaps could be

due to the way the research questions were designed, leading the participants to give more business-like strategic answers rather than talking about the spiritual aspects. Regardless, I believe that as Psalm 127:1 states, even with great and wonderful strategies “unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain.”

Postscript

As the work on the dissertation process began, my classmates and I were encouraged to explore areas in the church that break our hearts and about which we feel passionate. As I prayed and discerned what God was putting on my heart, I was convinced that churches need to reflect God’s kingdom in the area of ethnic diversity, especially in those communities and mission fields that are ethnically diverse. I asked, when our neighbors are of diverse ethnicities and the church is called to make disciples of all nations, why are there mostly white churches in the UM, other than a handful of ethnic churches? As I began the research and went on tours of unique ministries with the Beeson DMin program, I witnessed several churches that were multiethnic by intention, being faithful to God’s call to reach all nations and peoples. I gained conviction through those visits that it is possible to plant, transition to, and grow a multiethnic church. As I researched further, I discovered several UM churches that have pursued this vision. In fact, I was pleasantly surprised to see this many UM churches striving to be multiethnic, so I decided to focus the research on these churches. Through this project, they shared their wisdom and experience as multiethnic churches, and the things I have been able to glean from their responses are now being shared with others who want to do the same. I am so thankful for those who have

contributed their experiences, so that others can follow in their footsteps and live out the kingdom vision of ethnic diversity.

Currently, God has blessed me with a position in a center of the conference that plants new churches and helps existing churches to revitalize. It is my desire that through this work God will use this project to share the vision and the tools with others who are in the right context and have the right opportunities either to plant or transition to a multiethnic church. My desire is that this study will contribute toward the growth of the multiethnic church movement in the United Methodist Church and beyond. Furthermore, through this movement, I pray that churches will experience the kingdom of God lived out here on earth through worship and shared life with ethnic diversity.

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER TO POTENTIAL SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The following cover letter accompanied the paper survey sent to all churches:

Dear Pastor,

What if more congregations in the United Methodist Church reached *all* the diverse people in their communities? Imagine all the ethnicities of each neighborhood worshipping together here on earth, as we will in heaven, where all nations and languages will come together before God!



As a D.Min. student, I have chosen to research multi-ethnic churches for my dissertation. I also currently work as part of the UMC church planting and renewal movement (as Associate Director of New Church Development and Congregational Transformation in the North Texas Conference). My research is directly related to my work of helping churches change.

UMC data shows that your church has significant diversity. I want to study churches like yours to understand how they were able to become ethnically diverse. The goal is to provide resources and answers to the growing multi-ethnic church movement among the UMC churches, especially those in ethnically diverse mission fields. Your church's experience is a vital resource to those who desire to be part of this movement.

I ask you or a leader who knows the church's multi-ethnic history to spare a small amount of your precious time to fill out a survey. As you share your story and experiences, you will help increase the number and success of other multi-ethnic churches in the UMC.



Thank you very much!



Gloria Young-eun Fowler



It's easy! Please take the survey online at

www.surveymonkey.com/s/MultiEthnicChurch

If you prefer to submit your response by mail, I have enclosed a paper version for your convenience. It may appear long, but you will only need to fill out certain sections. Please return it in the enclosed return envelope, or scan and email to [redacted].

To meet research deadlines, I would greatly appreciate your response **by September 2**, although I may still accept some responses in the first week of September.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY COMPLETED BY PARTICIPANTS

As noted before, most churches responded online. Following is the paper version.

UMC Multi-ethnic Church Survey

This survey will provide critical data for a research project on multi-ethnic churches in the UMC. Your response will help guide UMC churches that wish to reflect the ethnic diversity of their communities. We appreciate your time and thoughtful contribution!

This survey is intended to be filled out by the pastor or leader of the church, who is most familiar with the history of the diversity in your church. If you are successor or a second pastor, please fill out the information to the best of your knowledge.

If your church has more than one congregation (satellite campus, daughter church, church-within-a-church, multi-congregational model, etc.), please consider only the most diverse congregation in your church as you answer this survey. Preferably, forward this survey to the leader of that congregation, or the person most familiar with that congregation.

Thank you in advance for your time and your thoughtful responses!

If at any time you have questions about this survey or how to fill it out, please contact Gloria Fowler, gloria@ , 972- . You may also fill it out online: www.surveymonkey.com/s/MultiEthnicChurch

Q1. What is your name and position, and the name and address of your church?

Your Name & Title:	
Church Name:	
Address:	
City/Town:	
State:	
ZIP:	
Email Address:	
Phone Number:	

Q2. What is the ethnic makeup of your church?

Important: If you have more than one congregation (satellite campus, daughter church, church-within-a-church, multi-congregational model, etc.), consider only the most diverse congregation while answering this question.

Estimating/rounding is fine, but please make sure the numbers add to 100%.

Asian (East Asian)		%	Comments:
Asian (Indian)		%	
African-American / Black		%	
Caucasian / White		%	
Hispanic / Latino		%	
Native American / First Nations		%	
Pacific Islander		%	
Multi-Racial / Mixed		%	
Other / Not Listed		%	
Total (should be 100%)		%	

Q3. What model(s) do you use for your church services (check all that apply)?

Important: If you have more than one congregation (satellite campus, daughter church, church-within-a-church, multi-congregational model, etc.), consider only the most diverse congregation while answering this question. Check as many as apply.

- ☐ Service(s) in one language, with all ethnicities together (mono-lingual, multi-ethnic, joint services)
- ☐ Service(s) in one language, but with translation (multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, joint services)
- ☐ Multiple services, for different ethnic groups, but all in the same language (mono-lingual, multi-ethnic, separate services)
- ☐ Multiple services, in different languages (multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, separate services)
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Q4. Do these ethnic groups worship together more than 50% of the time?

Important: If you have more than one congregation (satellite campus, daughter church, church-within-a-church, multi-congregational model, etc.), consider only the most diverse congregation while answering this question.

- ☐ Yes. All ethnic groups worship together more than 50% of the time
- ☐ No. These groups worship separately, and/or worship together less than 50% of the time

If Yes, proceed to the next question, Q5. If No, please skip to Q18 on Page 4.

Q5. What is the ethnic makeup of the community in which your church is located?

Estimating/rounding is fine, but please make sure the numbers add to 100%.

Asian (East Asian)	%	Comments:
Asian (Indian)	%	
African-American / Black	%	
Caucasian / White	%	
Hispanic / Latino	%	
Native American / First Nations	%	
Pacific Islander	%	
Multi-Racial / Mixed	%	
Other / Not Listed	%	
Total (should be 100%)	%	

Q6. For how many years has your church been a diverse congregation?

Estimating/rounding is OK, but the more accurate, the better.

Years:

Q7. Is your church a:

- ☐ Transitioned Church (from homogeneous to a diverse congregation)
If so, please proceed to Q8 on Page 3.
- ☐ Multi-Ethnic or Multi-Cultural Church Plant (diverse from the beginning)
If so, please skip Q8-Q12, and proceed to Q13 on Page 3.

If Your Church Transitioned to a Multi-Ethnic Congregation

If you have more than one congregation (satellite campus, daughter church, church-within-a-church, multi-congregational model, etc.), consider only the most diverse congregation while answering the questions below.

Questions? Please contact Gloria Fowler, gloria@ , 972- .

Q8. Are you:

- ☐ The pastor in charge during the transition to a multi-ethnic church
- ☐ The second pastor/leader after the transition
- ☐ The third or later pastor/leader after the transition

The following questions are open-ended. Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper, in as much detail as possible. Your responses will provide the most critical information needed for this research project.

If you were not part of the transition, please try to find someone who was involved to help you answer. If this is not possible, answer to the best of your historical knowledge of the transition.

Q9. How did your church transition to be a diverse (multi-ethnic or multi-cultural) congregation?

Q10. What 3-5 key elements helped this church successfully transition to be a diverse congregation?

Q11. What are some things you would do differently?

Q12. What are you doing to continue to grow as a diverse congregation?

Once you are done with this section, please skip the next section and proceed to the last page.

If Your Church Began as a Multi-Ethnic Congregation

If you have more than one congregation (satellite campus, daughter church, church-within-a-church, multi-congregational model, etc.), consider only the most diverse congregation while answering the questions below.

Questions? Please contact Gloria Fowler, gloria@ , 972- .

Q13. Are you:

- ☐ The founding pastor or planter of this church
- ☐ The second pastor/leader of this church (successor to the founder)
- ☐ The third or later pastor/leader of this church

The following questions are open-ended. Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper, in as much detail as possible. Your responses will provide the most critical information needed for this research project.

If you were not part of planting the church, please try to find someone who was involved to help you answer. If this is not possible, answer to the best of your historical knowledge of the church's launch.

Q14. What key steps did you take to launch this church as a multi-ethnic or multi-cultural congregation?

Q15. What 3-5 key elements helped this church plant succeed as a multi-ethnic congregation?

Q16. What are some things you would do differently?

Q17. What are you doing to continue to grow as a diverse congregation?

You are almost finished with the survey. Thank you for your time and attention to provide this valuable information!

As a token of thanks, I would like to provide you with the results of this research, if you are interested.

Q18. Would you like to receive the results of our research when it is finished?

If so, please provide your email address:

Q19. May I contact you for clarification or elaboration on your responses?

- ☐ Yes, you may call or email me for further clarification
- ☐ No, please do not contact me with further questions

If Yes, please make sure I have your correct contact information on Page 1.

Thank you so much!

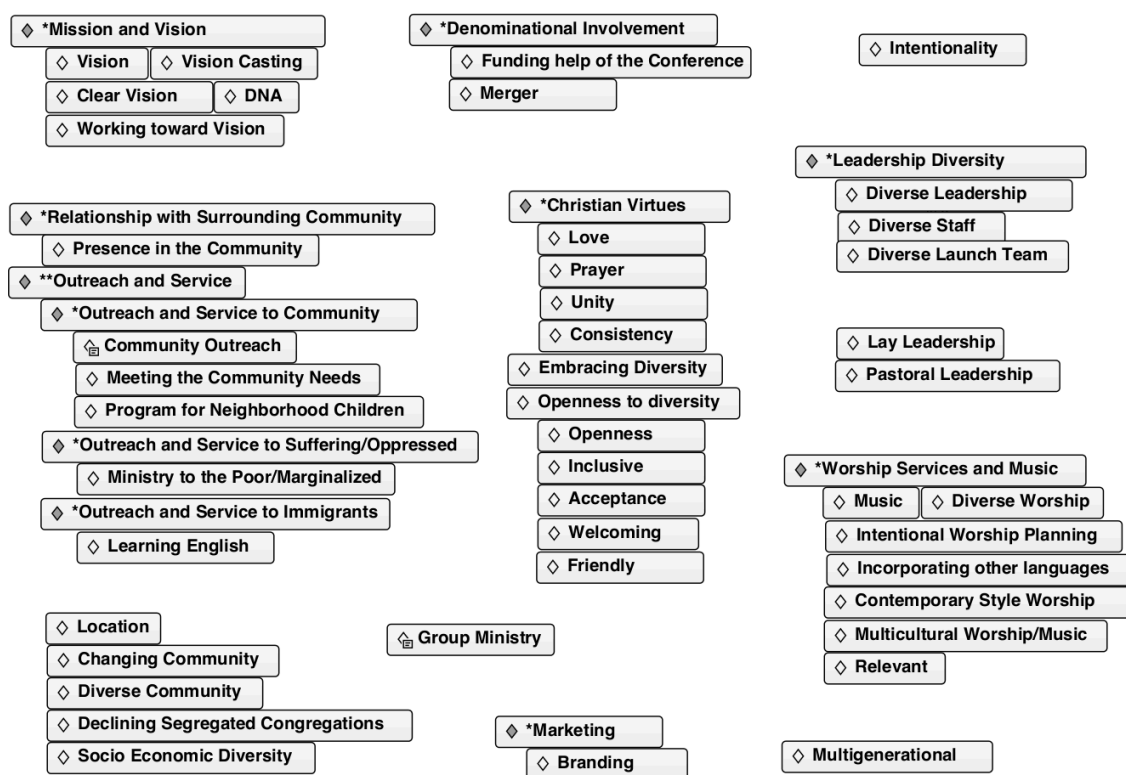
Gloria Fowler

APPENDIX C

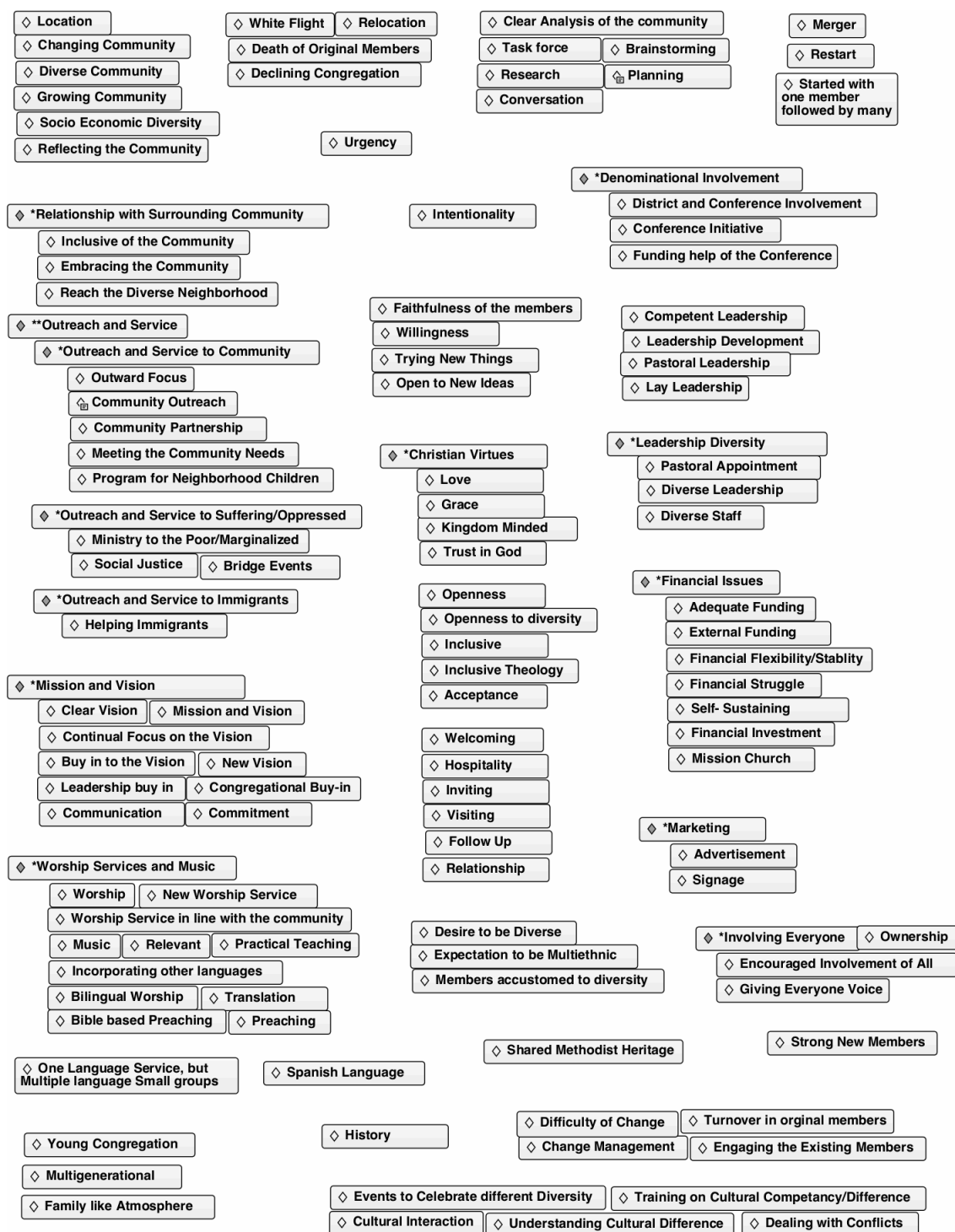
CODE CLUSTERS FROM ATLAS.TI

During the analysis phase, I selected important quotes from the survey responses and assigned them each a code in ATLAS.ti, a software program for this kind of research. The codes were then clustered or organized on a diagram, with codes from a similar theme close together. Neither the coding process nor the clustering were done perfectly, but the process served well to identify the main themes that emerged.

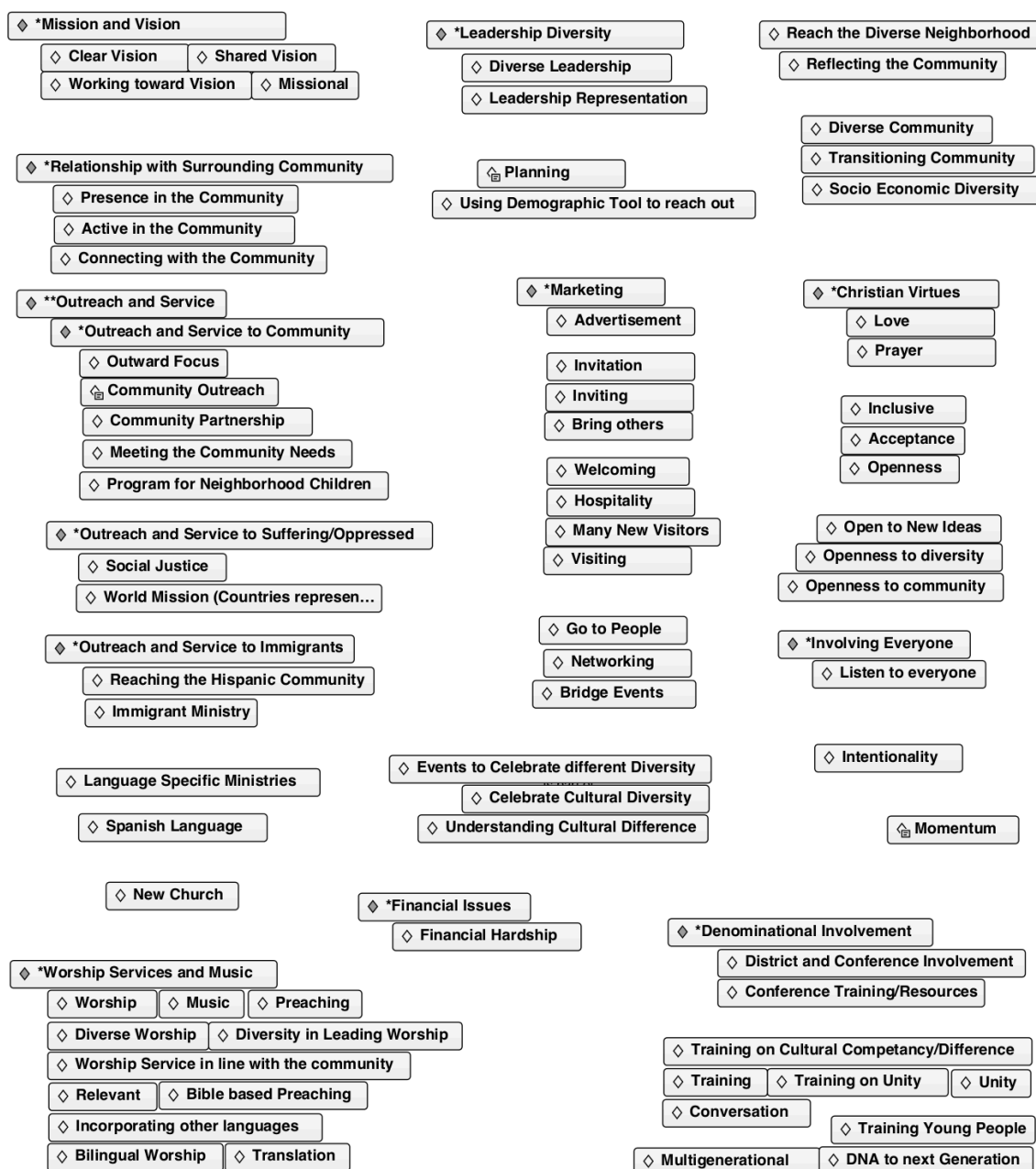
Following are the codes and clusters that came from analyzing responses to questions Q14–Q16 on the survey, for church plants only:



Following are the codes and clusters that came from analyzing responses to questions Q9–Q11 on the survey, for church transitions only:



Following are the codes and clusters that came from analyzing responses to questions Q12 and Q17 on the survey, for both church plants and church transitions:



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