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Creating Cross-cultural Christian Community: An Instrumental Case Study

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Creating Cross-cultural Christian Community:

An Instrumental Case Study

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

By

Louis Porter II

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May 2012

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

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May 2012

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This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of two men who “fought the good fight”

My father,

Leroy L. Porter

and

My father-in-law,

Louis E. McMillan

Abstract

Creating Cross-cultural Christian Community:

An Instrumental Case Study

Issues of race and race relations continue to plague this nation, well into the 21st Century. Multicultural churches may offer some guidelines for healing. Sanctuary Covenant Church of Minneapolis, established in 2003 by an African American pastor, continues to operate as a multicultural church. With an attendance that exceeds 500 people each Sunday, it represents one of the larger multicultural congregations in the area as well as in the nation. Yet, Sanctuary remains in the minority because fewer than 6 percent of the churches in the United States are multicultural. In this qualitative case study I sought to understand how the church came into being and continued to operate as a multicultural church. A recently expanding wealth of literature on the multicultural church served as preparation for this research. In addition to interviewing 19 leaders and members of the church, the case study considered artifacts and supporting documents, an institutional survey as well as observation of the congregation during worship. Ultimately, Sanctuary's commitment to the vision of a multicultural church and members' willingness to do the work necessary to make that vision a reality are what allow this institution to continue operating as a multicultural church.

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Chapter One

The Segregated Hour

In their now-seminal research, Emerson and Smith (2001) found that racism continues to plague churches of the United States and is indeed fostered by those who identify as Christians. Often quoted, Dr. Martin Luther King said that 11 o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in this country. This holds true more than 40 years since he made the statement, with fewer than six percent of the nation's churches being multicultural (DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey, & Kim, 2003). Although more recent research, such as the latest phase of the National Congregations Study (2007) shows an increase in immigrant membership at predominantly white churches, this nation's Christian racial divide endures.

Intentions Not Enough

Those institutions attempting to address this racial divide through churches with a multicultural membership often do so with the best of intentions and find themselves struggling to overcome the oppressive conditions that ultimately hurt members of both the so-called majority and minority groups. Yet understanding religious congregations provides insight into race relations in the United States (Emerson & Woo, 2006). Most people in this country participate in or visit a church and these congregations play a vital, multi-dimensional role in our society (Emerson & Woo, 2006). At 55 percent of the population, the United States had the highest religious membership of every other nation in the study, *Voluntary Association Membership in Fifteen Countries* (Curtiss, Grabb, & Baer, 1992). Many of those studying the multicultural church have said it holds great potential for healing the racial divide in this nation. In the essay, "Culture and Identity,"

Yamada and Guardiola-Saenz (2009) summed up the need for Christians to embrace diversity:

Cultural diversity is an integral part of who we are. Learning to appreciate its richness can help us overcome our biases, our racism and our discrimination so that we can see our interdependency with others. We are formed in light of others who have preceded us. Devaluing or seeking to destroy cultural diversity hinders and limits our understanding of the world and of the Word. Valuing diversity and the richness that it brings makes us stronger as people and allows us to discover and respect the otherness in ourselves as well (p. 12).

The late writer and scholar Derrick Bell, a leader in critical race theory, admitted to a “decades-tardy realization” that combating racism takes more than desire or even the law. Once, when Bell was giving a speech, an older black man shouted to him, “Professor, black folk can’t get free until white folks get smart” (p. 328). The United States will be able to tackle racism, Bell said, when whites become enlightened and realize white privilege and the economic advantages it brings. The multicultural church can be a place for white people to gain this enlightenment through a shared faith and effort to be in true community.

Jesus Called for Unity

The potential power of the Christian church to spur racial healing has been increasingly realized in recent years. Derwin Gray, a former professional football player and now a pastor, noticed the segregation of churches after he became a Christian (Pico, 2011). In 2010, Gray founded the multiethnic Transformation Church in Indian Land,

South Carolina. The next year, he explained the inspiration for his church, “In John 17, Jesus says the world will know my Father sent me by your unity” (Pico, 2011).

John 17: 20-23 states:

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (The Peoples’ Bible)

Like Gray, biblical direction provides the major motivation for my work around Reconciliation – and planted the seed for this case study.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this particular study is to gain insight into the multicultural church, adding to the body of knowledge about the institution. I examined and sought to understand the process by which Sanctuary Covenant Church in Minneapolis became a thriving multicultural church. This will offer insight that could potentially be used by other congregations striving to do the same.

Research Question

The primary research question for this study is: What were the actions taken by this multicultural church that allowed it to come together and remain functioning as such for several years? This leads to other questions: What were the challenges faced along the way and how did the membership meet or fail to meet those challenges? What did members and leadership do in

an effort to overcome these challenges? If organizers had to identify one action in particular that allowed them to function and to grow as a multicultural church, what would that be?

Inspiration

The inspiration for this work is deeply personal. As an African American, indeed as a resident of the United States, my life has been inevitably touched by racism. As a person seeking to follow the example of Christ, I have a faith that is strong and has found strength and support to fight the tribulations of the world through the church and its teachings. From an early age, I was involved in the church and made the decision to formally join the United Methodist Church as a teen. The church was a place for spiritual, personal and community growth. While some teens and young adults strayed from the church, I remained involved. When I left for college and began my career, one of the first things I did in a new location was to find a church home.

Most of these churches were predominantly African American when I was a young adult. It was not until more recent years that I affiliated with a multicultural church. Now, as a member of a multicultural church, I have seen its challenges and rewards firsthand. While there are opportunities for transcending historical divides and building relationships across cultures, a lot of hard work is necessary to do so. I have discovered that in addition to the ever-looming specter of racism, differing communication styles, preferences, food, music, indeed, *culture* can make this work difficult. But I truly believe it is vital and necessary to make the effort. Multicultural churches hold within them the power to be a key player in the nation's progress towards overcoming racist practices.

Further Influence

Another influence on my choice of topic was the experience of teaching at an Evangelical Christian college facing its own struggles with racism as it tried to be an institution that meets the needs of a somewhat diverse student body. That college appeared to me to exhibit a dual personality when it came to issues of race and racism. On one hand there were numerous policies and efforts aimed at diversity, including the very creation of my position as director of multicultural affairs. On the other hand, there was a looming avoidance and disdain for discussions about diversity and equality. Students, staff and faculty alike could be heard complaining when the topic came up in formal or informal forums. A chorus of “why do we have to talk about *this* again?” could be heard.

But the emotions expressed by my young adult students should not have been surprising. Colleagues and I have shared that discussions around race and ethnicity are among the most volatile in just about any setting. Spring (2006) notes that such discussions are *inherently* emotional because emotions are “embedded in the very concept of culture” (p. 8). Historical events, such as war and domination, including the forced migration and enslavement of African people, are remembered and influence behavior (Spring). What I observed in my students could best be described as anger by the students of color and guilt or denial by the white students. This was never more apparent than ever during a spring break trip designed to help students better understand the Civil Rights movement. Students, staff and faculty went to Southern cities where the movement was most profound. We visited museums, historical sites and landmarks, welling up a range of emotions for the students involved. The most apparent and common was sadness that brought many students to tears as the atrocities of slavery and its aftermath became more real for participants. One young man, a white student sitting beside a monument to white

supremacy in Birmingham, shared that he wondered what role his own ancestors played in injustices against black people. Other students as well seemed to experience very personal reactions to their new understandings of this chapter in history. Indeed, a person can be influenced by “imagined memories” that did not occur in their lifetime, but were studied in the educational system or observed through the media (Spring, 2006, p. 9).

Biblical Background

Emotions, however, are only indicators of the need for racial healing. As a Christian, I believe that perhaps the greatest reason of all for people in Christian congregations to work for racial unity can be found in the Bible. Conferences, workshops, as well as material centered on diversity and the church make references to particular biblical verses. These include:

Galatians 3:28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (English Standard Version)

Acts 17: 26-28: And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some poets have said, ‘For we are indeed your offspring.’ (English Standard Version)

1 Corinthians 12: 12-30: For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free –

and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. (English Standard Version)

I believe these verses represent only some of the most *apparently* multicultural directives in the Bible. In recent years, there has been a call to see the Bible from a multicultural perspective. Some contemporary theologians have said that people studying the Bible can overlook the historical and social placement of the writers and actors and a good portion of the message can be lost. (Branson & Martinez, 2011) Moreover, in this nation, the Bible has usually been read through a white, male lens; but now, there is a call to give minority voices their space as well, so that all can be heard. (Branson & Martinez, 2011) Using what is known as critical contextualization (Hiebert, 1985) allows readers to more objectively see the gospel in a cultural setting other than one's own and to understand that viewing the Bible through a single lens limits and distorts the message.

America's Original Sin

Racism has been called America's original sin. I agree with the literature which states that multicultural churches stand poised to be at the forefront of addressing this, provided they have discovered ways to heal from the inside out. Emerson (2006) illustrates the potential power of congregations when he points out that places of worship outnumber all McDonald's, Wendy's Subways, Burger Kings and Pizza Huts combined. Indeed, with varying degrees of involvement, more than one hundred million United States residents are involved in religious congregations, and congregations play a major role in people's lives including the designated location for milestones such as the recognition of newborns, marriages and funeral services. "Religious congregations are vital to understanding U.S. life and certainly U.S. race relations. If we want to understand race relations, one place we must look is inside multiracial congregations" (p. 8).

The Case

This case study looked at Sanctuary Covenant Church of Minneapolis, and the process it went through to reach its current status as an active multicultural church.

My research examines how this church relates to the current state of emerging multicultural churches in the country and determines what can be learned from this specific examination.

For purposes of this dissertation, a congregation was considered multiracial when a single racial group did not constitute 80 percent or more of its membership. This now standard measurement is based on research (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987) which indicates that a group of 20 percent or more creates a critical mass that can influence an entire organization, and move beyond tokenism.

Denominational Influence

It was important to look at Sanctuary through the lens of its denomination, the Evangelical Covenant Church. One Sanctuary staff member said he thinks that denomination's culture helps Sanctuary in its pursuit of a multicultural congregation. He characterizes it as "a healthy dynamic of different people." Tenets include the importance that people feel honored, respected, valued and heard. The denomination prefers affirmation over requirements, a positive approach rather than a negative approach, he said, adding, "It's working."

Indeed, on the Evangelical Covenant Church web site under the heading of identity, the denomination proclaims, "The Evangelical Covenant Church is a rapidly growing multiethnic denomination in the United States and Canada with ministries on five continents of the world. Founded in 1885 by Swedish immigrants, the ECC values the Bible as the word of God, the gift of God's grace and even-deepening spiritual life that comes through a faith with Jesus Christ, the importance of extending God's love and compassion to a hurting world, and the strength that comes from unity within diversity".

Definitions

Studies and discussions of diversity and racism are rich with a variety of terms used in different ways, potentially causing confusion. For example, there are numerous definitions of racism, including the one used by the Anti-Defamation League (Sheared, et al., 2010) which identified racism as the “belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person’s social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics” (p. 334). Others use the so-called motivational definition, “the infliction of unequal consideration, motivated by the desire to dominate, based on race alone” (Schmid, 1996, p. 31). The late educator Asa Hilliard (1992) as cited in DiAngelo (2010) said racism “encompasses economic, political, social and culture structures, actions and beliefs that systematize and perpetuate unequal distribution of privileges, resources and power between whites and people of color, with whites the beneficiaries of that unequal distribution” (p. 7). Writer Audre Lorde (1981) defined racism as “the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance, manifest and implied” (p. 7). The recurring themes of perceived *superiority and dominance* are key to identifying racism as it applies to this research.

African American is a term that has many definitions as well. Historian Ira Berlin (2010) lists commonalities such as a history of enslavement, freedom after the Civil War, broken promises of Reconstruction, disfranchisement, segregation and the ongoing struggle for equality as factors that define African American. Berlin adds, however, that the newer immigrants from Africa, with their own particular experiences, are widening the definition of African American.

The term multicultural began in the 1960s in Canada. (Given, 2008) It has come to have three uses:

1. to describe a demographic reality
2. to refer to state and institutional policies designed to manage or respond to demographic diversity
3. to designate an ideal that brings together commitment to include all members of a society in the affairs of that entity, to recognize the importance of group identities, and to work for social justice in all spheres of activity (p. 530).

Multicultural research, then, investigates the range of phenomena associated with the three definitions of the term multicultural. Of particular note in the realm of qualitative research have been discussions about ensuring research includes voices and perspectives reflecting the range of diversity within the community, examining existing research paradigms and epistemologies to uncover the ways in which these are inherently exclusionary, and considering how research ethics need to be modified to accommodate a multicultural reality (Given, 2008).

It is the previously mentioned third definition that best fits this research, as I attempted to understand Sanctuary and its efforts to be inclusive.

Finally, it should be noted that the terms multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial are used throughout the literature and while sociologists do not consider them synonymous, “those in the pews often use them as if they were” (Garces-Foley, 2007, p. 211). For purposes of this case study, I referred to Sanctuary as an example of the multicultural church.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The last ten years have seen an increase in the number of books and articles about the multicultural church, along with a growing number of multicultural churches to be examined. But the push for diverse churches goes very far back, as noted by Michael Emerson, in the January 2008 issue of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. Emerson observed that the civil rights leader W.E.B. DuBois often spoke out about racial divisions in churches and that when he attended church as an adult, he sought integrated churches. Indeed, Emerson noted, DuBois stated that racially segregated churches “legitimated racial division by strengthening the conflation of whiteness with godliness” (p. 1).

Early Diversity

The earliest publication Emerson was able to find in a literature search of modern racially or ethnically diverse congregations was a 1947 article, *The Emergence of the Interracial Church* in the journal *Social Action* that noted the beginning of congregations such as the one DuBois attended. In 1958, Howard University Professor Howard Thurman published *Footprints of a Dream*, a book about the integrated Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco, where he served as pastor for almost a decade. Then, in the late 1960s, an academic article looked at the ways blacks and whites coexisted in an integrated church. Not much was examined or written, Emerson notes, before 1990, while at least 10 social science articles appeared in the 1990s. Then, in the years between 2000 and 2008, at least 42 social science articles have appeared (Emerson, 2008).

Racism and Religion

In 1998, nearly half of the nation's congregations included only one racial group, and 12 percent of congregations had only a small amount of racial diversity (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008). Some observers believe this growing, yet relatively small number of multicultural churches represents a larger failure. "Because white and black evangelicals are such a large percentage of American society, racial alienation will continue to exist in America as long as the racial animosity remains high within the evangelical subculture," (p. 93) George Yancey states in the autumn 1998 issue of *Christian Scholar's Review*. Writer Jim Wallis in the summer 2007 issue of *Crosscurrents* calls for the faith community to lead the way in beginning to dismantle the nation's history of racism. "The church must, of course, get its own house in order," (p. 202) according to Wallis in his essay, *America's Original Sin: The Legacy of Racism*. Churches, in general, are still carrying the baggage of racism and segregation and must work to be both spiritual and social communities that work to remove racial barriers and reveal "the possibilities of a different American future" (p. 202). Such an endeavor would mean answering a call to dismantle the system of racism churches had a hand in creating.

History provides some insight. Various denominations that began in the 19th or early 20th centuries mirrored the focus on race common to that time (Kidd, 2006):

Religious movements arising in the 19th or early 20th century bore the imprint, sometimes perhaps unconsciously, of that era's peculiar concerns and fascinations, among which racialism ranked prominently. Moreover, it should also be remembered that racialism as at that time as often as not a supposedly neutral or disinterested line of analysis in history and the human sciences, and it did not always take the form of an overt prejudice. (p. 203)

Carter (2008) concurs with this connection between religion and the evolution of race. “That politics is one whereby ‘the people’ marks out its identity by articulating itself no longer within the consciousness of and as an appendage to the will of the sovereign king but in binary relationship to some other people that it is not” (p. 80).

An Unexpected Link

Indeed, there may even be connection between the values that support a person’s devotion to his or her religious faith and racism (Hall, Matz, & Wood, 2010). Some research suggests that social-cognitive motives for being religious might also motivate racism. (Hall et al.,2010). Paradoxically, while religion can create prejudice – which can be an expression of racism – religion can also dismantle that very prejudice. People who are inclined to apply the principles of their spiritual lives to their daily lives are more likely to work against prejudice. Indeed, the desire and tendency to consistently live one’s faith can counter prejudice (Allport, 1966).

Research released in 1986 (Batson, Fink, Schoenrade, Futz, & Pych) showed that an intrinsic religious orientation, when it is an end in itself, did cause people to show less racial prejudice when the prejudice is overt but not when that prejudice is covert. That is, the subjects were less inclined to demonstrate prejudice when they perceived that their behavior would be observed. Researchers observed the behavior of 44 white undergraduate students interested religion in two situations, one that allowed them to have an excuse for their choice whether to sit next to a black person and another that did not provide an excuse. Those subjects who were able to hide behind an excuse for avoiding sitting next to a black person (the “covert” group) tended to do so while those without the protection of an excuse (the “overt” group) usually did not. Several weeks prior to the testing, subjects had filled out questionnaires that determined their

religious orientations. People with an intrinsic orientation toward religion view their faith as something practiced as a matter of course in everyday life, a sense of personal conviction. These were the subjects whose behavior was more prejudicial when they thought they were able to be covert. But those persons with the quest orientation toward religion, that is, related to the ongoing process of looking for meaning in their own lives, demonstrated behavior that was less prejudicial, even when they thought their behavior was covert. The authors concluded that the evidence suggests that people who see religion through the quest orientation are not as inclined to prejudice as those who view religion through the intrinsic orientation. They concede, however, that theirs represents early research and more study is needed.

But a subsequent study of religious orientation, social norms and prejudice, (Griffin, Gorsuch, & Davis, 1987) found that there was no singular relationship between religious orientation and prejudice. Rather, the study showed that religious and social norms must be considered. In this study, researchers looked at behavior when prejudice against a particular group was perceived as acceptable and was not socially undesirable. Seventh-Day Adventists on the Caribbean island of St. Croix responded to a religious orientation measure and a measure of prejudice against Rastafarians and found that members of this church were more prejudiced against Rastafarians than the general population.

Theories for Success

One theory is that the successful multicultural churches possess three qualities that allow members of different racial and ethnic heritages to feel a sense of belonging (Marti, 2009). The racism and prejudice so prevalent in the United States become secondary when these conditions exist. They include: affinity with the congregation, identity reorientation and ethnic

transcendence. The markers for multicultural church success were derived from two extensive case studies. Affinity occurs between members of the church when there are shared interests that bring them together and provide a foundation for further interaction. This allows for people to come together in “social clusters” based on interests other than race or ethnicity, such as the arts. Identity reorientation occurs when the members’ concept of self *as a member of the congregational community* is based more on a shared identity that is created within the church. For example, at one of the churches studied, members became part of what was known as an “entrepreneurial missionary.” Members were encouraged to seek out non-believers in various aspects of their lives, such as work, home and school (Marti, 2009). Ethnic transcendence is realized when a member’s shared religious identity supersedes aspects of ethnic affiliation. At both of the churches studied, religious identity, was consistently viewed above ethnic identity (Marti, 2009).

Pitt (2010), however, offered that ethnic transcendence is not really facilitated by churches, but are places for black people who have already done so. He notes numerous articles and books that show historically white churches making what he calls “cosmetic changes” to their worship, music and leadership to attract nonwhites. Meanwhile, the churches continue to be geared toward the dominant white culture. The author calls for scholars to seek proof of religions’ ability to promote transcending – moving beyond a place of focus or importance – ethnicity for white church members. Furthermore, Pitt expressed a desire to see literature that encourages white congregants to join culturally black churches or remain in historically white congregations that have become multiracial. Pitt further called for research on churches led by black pastors who have attracted white congregants.

“Fluid Ethnicity”

In another article that ran in the winter 2008 issue of *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, author Marti posed an additional indicator of success for multicultural churches: the sociological concept known as “fluid ethnicity.” Although a person’s ethnicity was once thought to be permanent, scholars now increasingly recognize that people have the ability to change their own ethnic identities by coming together around common mutual interests (Marti, 2008).

Ethnicity becomes “contingent, volitional, and negotiated,” Marti (p. 12) notes. Multicultural churches play out fluid ethnicity when other elements of social status are stressed rather than ethnicity. Leaders within the multicultural church draw on the multiple layers of its members’ social identity to encourage participating in the congregation’s various ongoing ministries, according to Marti (2008). Indeed, Marti (2008) argues that the distinguishing accomplishment of multiracial churches is that they cultivate a religious identity that is inclusive and supersedes ethnic identity. His research showed that using formal and informal mechanisms, forming relationships with the congregation and being active in the congregation allowed churches to move towards a new identity centered on new interests. Therefore, the collaborative work of, say, the choir or the food-shelf becomes more important than the ethnic or racial identity of the persons making up those groups.

Aversive Racism

This coming together around Christian belief and purpose as a means for building multicultural unity appears in the literature of multicultural churches quite often. It relates to other research that looks at aversive racism – the more subtle and unintentional form of bias that is more prevalent in contemporary times than blatant racism – and the common In-group Identity Model, which has been found to counter that form of racism (Gaertner & Dovidio,

2005). This research showed that when people come together around an organization or goals, their incidents of aversive racism are reduced. In short, the social forces and social identity that foster aversive racism and its “us” and “them” mindset can more often be redirected as “we” (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005).

Strategic Ethnicity

Another theory discovered in the literature related to successful multicultural churches is “strategic ethnicity.” In a study of the Los Angeles Church of Christ, one researcher argued that this large multicultural church builds community through a shared identity that includes the public framing and stating of goals, its religious organizational structure and resources and the experiences of its members (Stanczak, 2006). What churches such as this one do is adopt a collective multiracial, multi-ethnic identity. Church leaders set the stage for successful integration and growth and a “reciprocal legitimacy” when religious authority provides approval for integrating the community while that integration, in turn, confers a legitimacy back to the religious claims and demands of the church (Stanczak, 2006). What is examined here is Los Angeles Church of Christ’s ability to create a place where racial and ethnic identities are negotiated and recast both by individuals and the congregation. This does not mean that race is not acknowledged through particular ministries and groups. Quite to the contrary, strategic ethnicity uses racial and cultural resources of members for organizational participation and interpersonal interaction. Yet, those racially and culturally based subsets of the church do not prevent the creation of newly negotiated identities for members. Perpetuating the church grounded in its diversity and increasing the membership is the “purposeful goal” (Stanczak, 2006).

Intentionality

Indeed, a congregation's intentions matter when it comes to understanding racial inclusion (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008). Those denominations that confront their histories of segregation are more likely to be successful in diversity efforts, according to a study conducted in 1984. Other indicators may be programming efforts and mission statements (DeYoung et al., 2003; Yancey 2003). Dougherty and Huyser pointed to the Antioch Bible Church near Seattle, Washington, with a mission statement that emphasizes the church's intentions: "Our mission is to glorify God by equipping God's people of all ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of our church, community and world" (p. 27). Words, of course, must be followed with action. Programming through education and outreach that promotes "awareness, learning and contact across cultures" (p. 27) correlates with higher rates of internal diversity for congregations, no matter what the religious tradition (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008). The authors also point out the importance that worship itself plays in multicultural congregations. Words sung and spoken that include various cultural traditions of the members are essential, particularly the music, their research noted, because of the multidimensional power that music holds.

Their analysis of the 1998 National Congregations Study allowed Dougherty and Huyser (2008) to generalize to assess both internal and external characteristics related to racial diversity in congregations. Drawing conclusions from that study, they determined that racial diversity tends to be higher in congregations with programming around racial reconciliation that was led by clergy of different race than most participating churches more charismatic and social, larger in size and more recently established. Moreover, a religious tradition "outside the Protestant

Establishment” also seemed to correlate with greater diversity. Increased racial diversity appeared in congregations with racially mixed communities, urban areas, communities of higher socioeconomic status, and communities with higher mobility of residents and the Eastern and Western regions of the United States (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008).

An Anti-racist Initiative

Increasingly, churches – and those who study and advise them – have recognized the need to address the Christian church’s own issues of diversity and racism. Since the early 1990s, The Minnesota Council of Churches adopted an anti-racist initiative, a response to the changing demographics of the state's houses of worship (Schoen, 1998). An organizational statement on the initiative explains its approach:

A strategy of organizing is at the center of the MCARI (Minnesota Collaborative Anti-Racism Initiative) efforts. Experience indicates that racism cannot be trained away. What is required is a process that organizes systemic and institutional transformation. Key to this is a trained institutional team that has developed an analysis of racism that is relevant to community and systemic transformation. This, in turn, shapes a strategic change process that involves the entire institution in the journey of transformation. (Schoen, 1998, p. 7)

The term transformation is used three times in that brief paragraph, indicating the importance of change into something new and different. This creation of something new and different came up overwhelmingly as the extensive body of writing about race and religion was reviewed. The concept that churches seeking to embrace people of different cultures must, on both spiritual and behavioral levels, put aside the old ways and embrace a new creation if they are to be successful is a recurring theme.

The Minnesota Council of Churches uses principles of institutional change that were developed by the Rev. Joseph Barndt, a pastor and writer (Schoen, 1998). In summary, those principles stipulate:

- Organizing for systemic change is essential.
- Addressing racism is essential; the New Testament is a model for anti-racist multicultural community.
- Members are accountable for change. It's an inside job.
- An effective model for change must be tailor-made to the institution.
- Trained, equipped, leadership teams is the strategy to be used.
- Institutional transformation requires long-range planning. A 30-year vision frames the current year's goals.
- The church is not alone; community and societal change are part of this effort with accountability to the communities of color that racism oppresses.

George Yancey (2003) presented his own principles for building multicultural churches in *One Body One Spirit*. They include inclusive worship, diverse leadership, an overarching goal (beyond being multicultural), intentionality, personal skills, location and adaptability.

A Long Way to Go

In *The Elusive Dream*, Korie Edwards (2008) argued that many interracial churches have a long way to go before they truly embrace all members. Her examination of one church combined with national survey data showed that such churches often continue to operate under norms set by whites, with black members adapting in an effort to make them feel comfortable. This further supports the necessity to adopt a third or new approach to church to emerge if a multicultural congregation is to meet the needs of the total membership.

The Rev. Vermon Pierre (2010), in his paper, *Understanding and Assessing the Multicultural Church*, stated that the solution lies in members not overly focusing on their multiculturalism but instead connecting around their love for Christ. A commitment to Christ as the common link helps the multicultural church avoid a number of potential pitfalls, according to Pierre, who added that those dangers include cultural assimilation or cultural and ethnic group rivalry.

Those concerns were echoed in *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace* by Eric H.F. Law (2000) when the author recounted narratives of churches that have been able to meet the needs of their multicultural congregations. One church had been transformed in ways that even its own members did not understand:

As I told these stories, Law recalled, I realized that these congregations not only created plans but that their plans were expressions of their experience of grace while they were going through the inclusion process. There was an internal transformation that took place when they emerged from the grace margin. This transformation came from their experiences of God's grace as they struggled to reveal themselves and to listen to others and to God. (p. 20)

Evangelical Perspective

Guidelines and good intentions notwithstanding, Emerson and Smith (2001) pointed out that one vocal group within the religious community, Evangelicals, might indeed serve to preserve the nation's racial chasm and many deny actual racial problems. Like other Christians, Evangelicals typically fail to understand the complexity of racism in this country and that the views and overall thinking within their churches actually perpetuate racism, the authors argued.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature on multicultural churches is extremely varied, taking us from historical underpinnings of racism and the church to the definite connections between the two. Wide, also, is the research that offers suggestions for building the multicultural church. Marti (2009) provided a formula that included affinity with the congregation, identity reorientation and ethnic transcendence. Pitt (2010), however, said that churches did not really facilitate transcendence but provided places for black people who have already done so. Marti (2008) posed also the concept of “fluid ethnicity,” whereby ethnic identity is “contingent, volitional and negotiated,” (p. 12) Strategic ethnicity was another tool discovered in the literature, building community in the multicultural church through framing and stating of goals, organizational structure and resources and experiences of the members (Stanczak, 2006). Dougherty & Huyser (2008) stressed the importance of being intentional and directly confronting their histories of segregation. In Minnesota, the state’s Council of Churches called for transformation to occur through an organized system (Schoen, 1998). Yancey (2003) presented seven principles for a successful multicultural church while Pierre (2010) said the solution lies in connecting around a love for Christ. Law (2000) said transformation comes from experiencing God’s grace. Emerson and Smith (2001) said Evangelicals might serve to protect the nation’s racial divide.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

Overview of Case Study

I used the case study of Sanctuary Covenant Church of Minneapolis to understand the larger issues of the multicultural Christian church, making this an instrumental case study. That is, I had a question, a need for general understanding in which insight was gained by studying a particular case (Stake, 1995). As a research method, the case study can provide information helpful to those working in an area to develop expertise and offers the essential context-dependent knowledge necessary for matters dealing with the human dimension (Flyvbjerg, 2007). Creswell (1998) pointed out that it is important to have contextual material available as well as in-depth information on the case. Observation and study of artifacts preceded a series of 18 interviews, the key aspect of the data collection. Church leaders and members who made up the case were willing participants in the study.

Data collection

Participant selection. Participants for this study were recommended by the co-pastors who were serving on an interim basis, the Rev. Cecilia Williams and the Rev. Kevin Farmer. They sent out an e-mail to a racially diverse group of members that they thought would be open to being interviewed, introducing me and my proposed research and then I followed up contacting those same members via e-mail. Later, when more participants were needed, I asked the existing participants for recommendations and also asked Farmer to send out another appeal. That appeal was to African American members in particular because more white members had responded to the initial request. Anyone who agreed to be interviewed and was able to carve out a time was interviewed. Of the 19 people interviewed for this case study, seven were white, nine were

black, one was Asian, one was Latino and one was Native American-Dutch. Seven of those interviewed were staff and of those seven, three were senior leaders. To protect confidentiality and so that members would be comfortable speaking freely, I used pseudonyms.

Interviewing. Using structured conversation to obtain information in the social sciences is not new, although the conversation was often a prelude to questionnaires or experiments (Kvale, 1996). But in recent decades, interviewing has become an increasingly accepted research method in its own right with the social science community (Kvale). In this case, I wanted to hear pieces of the members' stories around becoming a part of a multicultural church and the interview was the best method for capturing that. As with all case studies, this one is bound by time, with extensive material from multiple sources essential for the deep understanding sought. Indeed, the case study, which has its origin in the social sciences, may very well lend itself to ascertaining a greater understanding of the multicultural church.

However, as a researcher, I was intentionally mindful of the challenges faced such as picking the proper case to investigate, the need for a rationale for selecting a case, the limits of one (or even several) cases, possible problems in getting sufficient information and proper boundaries such as time, events and processes (Creswell, 1998).

Note-taking was used during interviews to avoid the time absorbed by transcription. Audio recordings were used primarily for back-up to, a "safety measure" to make certain key points were not missed and for the accuracy of direct quotes. My personal ability to take accurate, quick notes – honed through years as a journalist – was most beneficial. Participants in the study were leaders and members of the church. In particular, those who played a key role in the establishment of the church were interviewed for history and background. Collection of artifacts and interviews were the main methods to be used. Although I had a list of questions to

be addressed when interviewing organizers, leaders and members of the church, I purposefully left the interviews somewhat open-ended because participants were then able to provide a rich free flow of information (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I did not ask every member every question, but used the questions as a jumping off point and guide for the conversation. Moreover, each interview sought to bring forth the unique narrative experienced by various subjects, in accordance with the nature of qualitative research (Stake, 1995). My list of questions appears later in this section. As previously mentioned, the number of questions asked varied depending upon the circumstances of the members interviewed. Those who were longtime members or in leadership positions were typically asked more questions. Another factor was how much those being interviewed needed to be drawn out. In addition to the interviews, the centerpiece of my research, I looked through church documents and attended a half-dozen Sunday morning church services.

The 19 interviews were done over a period of seven months and generally lasted about an hour. Interviews were conducted at church offices, restaurants, coffee shops and the members' homes or offices, depending upon their preference. Below is the list of questions used for each interview, though, in some cases the questions below led to other follow-up questions.

Questions for members.

1. What steps did Sanctuary take toward becoming the church it is today?
2. What actions contributed to the church's ability to continue operating?
3. As a leader, what message did you most want to get over to your forming membership?

(This question was for members in leadership roles).

4. What does it mean for you to be a multicultural church?
5. What holds you together as a multicultural community?

6. What are your current struggles?
7. What was important to you as you established this church?
8. Of the things listed in your church's organizational strategic plan, which did you act upon the most?
9. Which portions of the plan fell through/did not materialize?
10. What are the key needs of your members and how are you meeting them?
11. How are you intentional about being a multicultural church?
12. What have you had to give up to be in relationship as a multicultural/multiethnic/reconciling church?
13. What are the ways you bring a diversity of cultures into the worship service?
14. What is your measurement of a "good" multicultural church?

Data Analysis

Once I collected information from interviews, my primary sources of research, I analyzed the information and broke it into smaller and more manageable pieces, reflecting upon the information and conceptualizing the notes. Moreover, throughout the data collection process, it was important to take careful notes about my own observations and thoughts, which led to further insight as the research process continued. Then, the integration phase of analysis called for review and reflection (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In analyzing the interviews, I ultimately looked for themes that comprised Sanctuary's foundation. I counted the number of times different members stated the same idea. When I heard the same idea at least three times, it became a theme.

The differences in qualitative and quantitative research are most striking in naturalistic case research during analysis (Stake, 1995). Taken to its extreme, this dichotomy could be

compared to the difference between an artist and a scientist and the pulling apart process for those two approaches begin to look very dissimilar because of inherent differences. In this instance, I am analyzed a variety of things, documents, Sunday service, interviews, but they are intentionally not all given the same amount of time or attention. The interviews carried the heaviest weight. Furthermore, because the pastor's vision for the church played such a key role, his interview is of particular importance.

Bias Possibilities

Efrem Smith was previously an associate pastor at my church, Park Ave. United Methodist, but this was before I became a member. I know many members of his congregation, and a colleague who is a longtime member paved the way for me to meet with Rev. Smith. But these are only minor connections and are, at best, acquaintances rather than deep relationships and therefore posed less of a threat to my ability to take a fair view of the church's process towards becoming and maintaining a multicultural congregation. This is where my background in journalism kicked in. As I went about doing this work, I was always conscious to actively work at being fair. If a question came to mind or if I wondered whether a statement was relevant and should be used, I asked myself, "What would I do if I did not know the person or the institution?" "Am I being careful not to let the fact that I genuinely like this person and this institution get in the way of being fair in my questions and in my writing?"

Possible sensitive areas included a fear that my research could somehow do harm to the congregation. That is, by exposing some problems and shortcomings, the work could potentially increase tensions. For this, I focused on my role as researcher and my duty to report finding as accurately as possible. Certainly hiding a perceived problem or

shortcoming would not have been helpful. What adults do with the information is up to them.

Another area of concern was my own personal biases. As a middle-aged African American, I have experienced my share of racism and discrimination. As a researcher, however, I am compelled to recognize and manage my own biases. Moreover, I am coming to this research with some preconceived notions about the multicultural church in general and this one in particular. For example, I believe that some people seek a multicultural church because they want to “do the right thing” or because it is rather fashionable or hip to do so. However, when faced with the challenges involved in being a multicultural church, some are not willing to make a long-term commitment. A preconceived notion about this church, Sanctuary, is that its existence is the result of a popular and influential leader. Now that the founding pastor is no longer at the helm, thanks to a promotion to the equivalent of a bishop in the Covenant denomination, Sanctuary may be in danger. These are the types of thoughts and beliefs that had to be managed and kept in check as I went about my research. At the same time, I have come to realize that bias can be positive, too. Since I was open and honest about my respect for Sanctuary and its members, people may have been more willing to be open with me as well. In some cases I think, a willingness to be interviewed and a comfort in the interview were byproducts of the positive energy members received from me. The longer the process went on, the more people seemed to be open to the interview and interviews became increasingly comfortable as members became accustomed to me.

Research Limitations

As with any research, this work had limitations. The case study does offer only one example of a multicultural church; more comprehensive studies gleaned from the literature can provide greater variables on many levels. Another limitation is the restriction of time. The main

portion of my work took about one year and one could argue that a complete and thorough portrait of an institution as complex as a multicultural church takes longer to achieve. Moreover, an argument could be made for the more intense testing and validation processes inherent to quantitative research before drawing conclusions about the multicultural church or any entity. While qualitative research offers more opportunities for reflection, quantitative research is able to use complex statistical techniques (Brannen, 2004). In essence, one cannot generalize to larger populations from a single case study.

Chapter Four

Research Findings

Background

History. Sanctuary Evangelical Covenant Church, the site for this case study, began on Super Bowl Sunday in 2003, when Efrem and Donecia Smith met with a few dozen people in a basement for a party. They began to share their dream focused on reconciliation in North Minneapolis. It was a time of sharing food and stories and, as the church web site attests, “Sanctuary began to grow rapidly” (Smith, 1994.) Today, Sanctuary boasts about 500 members with worship services held in the auditorium of Anwatin Middle School. In its development plan, Sanctuary describes itself as “an urban, Christ-centered, holistic and multiethnic church.” Founding Pastor Efrem Smith declared in the development plan that the vision of the church was shown to him through “His Word and through much prayer” (p. 1). In the church’s Statement of Need, Smith cites the trend of growing churches to move to the suburbs, while urban places of worship are “commuter churches.” Clearly, Smith and many of the church’s early members were looking to fill that void when the church began.

The Statement of Need presents Sanctuary’s core values statement:

The core values of sanctuary will include being a force of evangelism in the city through holistic outreach, providing a worship experience which is multiethnic and relevant, equipping people to live a life of intimacy with God, empowering people to be kingdom laborers, and actively engaging in spiritual warfare against injustice and strongholds which keep people and communities from being whole. (p. 3)

There were moments when the founding pastor himself was awed by the community he helped to build (Smith, 2010):

I look up at the larger group of multiethnic people and I say to myself, ‘How did this happen?’ and also, ‘Thank You, Lord, for the opportunity to be part of this!’ I’m experiencing the gift of sitting at the well and drinking the living water of reconciliation. (p. 107)

Sanctuary has been able to remain functioning as a multicultural church in spite of Smith’s departure to become a superintendent for the Covenant denomination in Oakland, California. I looked at the reasons the church has been able to continue operating as a multicultural church.

Members surveyed. An emphasis on diversity emerged in a 2010 survey conducted by Sanctuary leadership that asked participants to respond to six ranked-choice and two open-ended questions. Within each of the ranked choice questions, respondents were given five options to prioritize in order of importance. When asked the most important thing about the church, “multi-ethnicity and reconciliation” was first “emphasis on faith” was second and “mission to North Minneapolis” was third. A total of 232 people participated in the survey. On another question, “Mission and vision” was ranked first in order of importance, with “music and preaching” coming second and “service opportunities” ranking third. Connecting people, providing more discipleship and engaging people ranked first, second and third, respectively, when members noted areas that needed improvement.

Smith’s goal. As he began this journey, Smith, an African American who attended a predominantly white college and seminary, wanted to have an impact, to be innovative enough to have a broader influence. “It’s not just about you; but also about engaging the surrounding

community,” he said during an interview. That commitment to community comes out in Sanctuary’s subsequently formed Community Development Corporation. Smith was determined to engage across racial lines, he was committed to reaching out. He knew the possible pitfalls, such as falling into a culture of conflict avoidance known as “Minnesota Nice”. Smith said he had to deconstruct that tendency to avoid conflict because conflict is inevitable in a multicultural church.

Yet, the hardest thing for him in the church’s ministerial life was when people left. He longed to resolve those issues that caused some members to leave. At the center of the church’s organization was reconciliation as a spiritual discipline. That is, Smith explained, going beyond racial unity to harmony with God. Another issue for Smith was not realizing the vision of a truly multicultural staff. Although there were definitely blacks and whites on staff, other cultures were not represented, Smith said.

One early success, however, was Hip Hop Sunday, which quickly became very popular. Third Sundays were dedicated to Hip Hop, the urban and youthfully expressively music, with roots in the African American and Latino neighborhoods of New York that Smith himself appreciated. As attendance reached its peak, as many as 1,000 people were present on Hip Hop Sunday. Other Sundays, members were in the 700s or 800s during Smith’s time at Sanctuary. an indicator of success was seeing people becoming Christians, Smith said. He asked himself: “If we closed tomorrow would the community miss the engagement of community for the Kingdom purpose? Are lives being transformed?” In order to understand Sanctuary, it is essential to understand its founder’s ideas, reasons and vision as he was establishing and leading the church. Below is an interview I had with Smith at the onset of this research.

Interview with Founding Pastor, the Rev. Efrem Smith, June 10, 2011

Louis: What has allowed Sanctuary to continue operating as a multicultural church?

Efrem: There has to be a continued commitment to teaching and preaching. Every year we did a preaching series on reconciliation, reminding us why we are doing this. You also have to continue to engage the surrounding community. You must be able to engage the community around reconciliation. Even communities we say are black, there are others living in that community. People who drive in to work, it's multicultural. We have to work on having multicultural staff and leadership.

Louis: What was the message most wanted to get over, in early years?

Efrem: We had to simultaneously engage the community of North Minneapolis and also be innovative enough, on some level, to influence the broader church in America. I really wanted people to understand that this church is not just about you. It's about engaging the surrounding community, which is North Minneapolis. It's also about, we have an opportunity to be a model to influence the broader church in America. It's a sense of what we're doing is bigger than just us.

Louis: So that people will see your church and want to emulate it?

Efrem: That the way we would engage in each others' lives across culture and ethnicity and race, the way that we would bear one another's burdens and labor together in community, that the word would get out about that. People would want to come see, how they are doing that.

Louis: That can be a challenge for a mono-cultural church. What are some the additional challenges for a multicultural church?

Efrem: In a multiethnic church it's so easy to want to throw in the towel. There is a culture of conflict avoidance in Minnesota. There's what they call Minnesota Nice. A multicultural church

deconstructs a culture of Minnesota Nice, a culture of passive-aggressiveness, a culture of conflict avoidance. One of the things that is difficult is that when conflict comes, it's easy for people to want to retreat to the black church. We had some people who did that (return to mostly segregated churches) blacks and whites. But people were willing to endure at times, intense conflict, those were the ones I was convinced really wanted to be a part of a multiethnic church for the right reasons.

Louis: What do you believe was your lowest point as you were starting the church?

Efrem: When people would leave over something that I thought could be resolved if they would have stuck it out. People would leave over something that was said. For example, if one Sunday I said something along the lines of, 'Rush Limbaugh is not very helpful when it comes to reconciliation.' This would cause a disagreement with a white person. Instead of going to lunch to talk it through, they would send me a long nasty letter and leave. It is tough to convince people to work through anger and defensiveness.

Louis: What were the guiding principles for you and the members as you established Sanctuary?

Efrem: Definitely, reconciliation as a spiritual discipline was one of our guiding principles. I think it took a while before we could name it as that. Reconciliation is not just about racial unity; it's really a spiritual discipline. There are broader dimensions to what it means to be a reconciler. We were going to be rooted in the Word.

Louis: Can you say more about reconciliation being really spiritual?

Efrem: In Evangelicalism, which I am part of, spiritual disciplines are presented by Evangelicals as things you do to deepen your relationship with God. The reason some areas of Evangelicalism have not embraced reconciliation is that it's been presented mainly as a tool, a vehicle to right the relationship between human beings of different races. So then, it seems more social than it is

spiritual. I don't always think Christians see righting human relationships as a spiritual exercise. I think they see it as the right thing to do. So, reconciliation gets presented as something social, but if you really consider II Corinthians Chapter 5, before Paul talks about being ambassadors of reconciliation in the world, the first thing that Paul is dealing with is how we're reconciled to God. So, if reconciliation begins with Christ dealing with the chasm between man and God, well, then reconciliation is a spiritual discipline, because without reconciliation, we're not in harmony with God. We're not in right relationship with God. So, reconciliation *first* is about repairing the breach, the chasm between God and me. So to be a reconciler ought to show up in the things I'm doing on a regular basis, to live into that intimacy that I have access to, through Christ. So, now, the relationship then, that you and I have as two brothers, that ought to be an overflow of my relationship with God. If reconciliation is an overflow of the relationship between human beings is an overflow of the reconciling relationship I have with God, then both of those are spiritual. I see reconciliation all through Scripture, First John, Second John, Galatians. I think another guiding principle is that we were going to be actively engaged in North Minneapolis. We were going to be a multiethnic church, but we were committed to being missional in a predominantly African American community. So, there are always tensions with that. We were going to be a multicultural church, but we were going to be relevant to reach a predominantly African American community. We were always wrestling with that. I know there were times when people accused us, saying, 'You said you were going to be multiethnic, Efrem, but you're really a black church'. I didn't have a problem and didn't think I was contradicting myself with us being multiethnic and having a mostly-black flavor to our church.

Louis: Is there something that you had planned but didn't materialize for Sanctuary?

Efrem: One of the things that didn't materialize while I was there was that our staff didn't truly become multicultural beyond black and white. That didn't happen under my time there. When I left our staff was basically a black and white staff. Now, we had some of that our Elder Board, our Elder was multicultural, our lay membership was multicultural, but our pastoral staff and our ministry leadership staff didn't become that.

Louis: What are some the ways you bring diversity into the worship experience?

Efrem: One was by having Hip Hop Sunday. I mean, by creating a worship experience once a month that was a Hip Hop worship experience. As a matter of fact, that was the most multicultural worship experience that we had in any given month. It was the largest attended. We averaged 1,000 people on third Sundays and we averaged anywhere from 700 to 850 on other Sundays. Our Easter Sundays didn't top our Hip Hop Sundays.

Louis: Were their complaints from the older members?

Efrem: Some, but most of the complaints were not, 'Let's not have Hip Hop Sunday,' but, 'Can't we turn the sound system down, a little bit?' Or, 'I can't understand what they're saying. Okay, I see them up there, it's good to see the babies up there doing something for the Lord, but what is he saying?' But, when they saw how many young people and young adults were coming to Christ, they stopped complaining. I'll never forget one of the older ladies in the church coming up to me and saying, 'I was not feeling, ain't those the kind of words y'all use? I wasn't feeling Hip Hop Sunday, but when I saw those young men...' One Sunday we had young men they were at the altar and they were putting their gang colors down, they were taking their doo-rags off, called, coming to Christ. And she said, 'If that's what Hip Hop Sunday does, we need top keep doing this'. And this is what I have always known. Older people will always argue against contemporary worship, unless they see people coming to Christ. I think that's one of the reasons

in the white church and in the mainline church it's hard to get older folks to accept contemporary worship. There are no altar calls. Let's take the United Methodist Church, for instance. A United Methodist Church is in the city and the majority of the people are in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and you start introducing a contemporary worship service. They're going to get mad and fight it, because all they can see is, 'You're taking away my music, you're taking my liturgy'. But if you have an altar call and they see lives being transformed, the power of salvation replaces the loss of liturgy. It's one of the things I still don't understand today. All these mainline churches that come out of the revival movement, and there's all these lost people, and through our liberal theology, we don't believe in altar calls anymore. Even the black church, instead of calling it an altar call, they'll say the doors of the church are open. So, it comes across like it's more about joining our church than it is about coming to Christ. I never made a pitch for people to join the church. I mean, we made announcements, put stuff in the bulletin, 'If you want to be a member you sign up after church and classes start in three weeks.' I never, hardly at all, asked for people to join church, but every Sunday we had an altar call for you to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Louis: The last thing I want to ask you today is what is the measure of a good multicultural church?

Efrem: If they closed tomorrow, would the community miss them? Is the church engaging your community so that lives are transformed? One of the things I was honored by, Jackie Cherryhomes who used to be the president of the City Council in Minneapolis, on my last Sunday, she went up to some of the board members at Sanctuary and said, "I know Pastor Efrem is leaving, but we can't afford to lose this church in North Minneapolis. We need your church." So to me, that meant a lot to me to know that Sanctuary is going to outlive Efrem Smith's tenure

as senior pastor. So that's the true test. If you stopped existing tomorrow, you'd be missed. In too many cases, we have too many multicultural churches where that is not the case.

Unfortunately, many of our multicultural churches are 75 people or less, they're 100 people or less. They are off the radar screen. If they closed tomorrow, a few people would be sad. But not that many people would know.

Louis: I want to ask a follow-up. Smaller churches whether multicultural or not, the impression they give is that they are smaller and more intimate. Their people know each other and are more involved in each others' lives because they are smaller. Is that a myth or is that the case?

Efrem: Yes, but I think you can be a larger church and still create small groups and community groups and still have that dynamic, to a degree. But you're right. Don't get me wrong, I am not anti the smaller church. I just think that smaller church needs to be so involved in the community that if they closed, people would notice.

Foundational Themes

Sanctuary is certainly not closed and continues to hold services at Anwatin Middle School Auditorium, with offices at another location. Entering auditorium on Sunday morning for service at Sanctuary can strike the traditional Protestant Christian church-goer as different indeed. Gone are the old trappings of pews and crosses. Instead, the auditorium has bright banners and a very strong sound system. The praise team leads songs that are contemporary and modern Gospel. People are casually dressed, relaxed and – for the most part – obviously excited to be there. The person delivering the message, whoever is filling in for the founding pastor who has left, is likely to match the exuberance of those seated in the auditorium. I interviewed 19 of those members to further discover what made Sanctuary a functioning multicultural church.

During those interviews, five main themes emerged that form the foundation for Sanctuary.

They are:

- Commitment to the vision of a multicultural church
- Intentionality
- Reflecting the Kingdom of God
- Hip Hop focus, its appeal to youth
- Willingness to give up comfort

Commitment to the vision of a multicultural church. Of all that was shared about Sanctuary during this study, from both the founding pastor and the members interviewed, commitment to the vision was the most pervasive theme and actually supports the other main themes. (So that members would feel comfortable speaking freely and to protect their privacy, I used pseudonyms). Joseph, a black man, was quite clear when he discussed his church:

We're about reconciling the people of the city to God and to one another, a sneak preview of heaven where all different races, all different people groups are going to come together and worship together in eternity. Praise and worship may not be the way I'm accustomed to praise and worship; it may differ. Another chief component of the vision is our commitment to North Minneapolis and the individuals, the least of these, and to give them a voice and empower them so that they can have all the benefits of life.

Esther – who has one black parent and another who is white – is as passionate about her church as Joseph and shared that she often finds herself part of discussions about multiculturalism. “I live and breathe reconciliation,” she said, adding that “staying the course” as a church committed to reconciliation is the key to being successful. Particularly in a

multicultural church, it is important to be able to hear divergent points of view, surrender some comfort and accept “living in tension,” she said. Indeed, a core group of active and involved members dedicated to Sanctuary’s original vision stands at its center, Esther added. Alex, who is white, stressed that the commitment to a multicultural vision meant being prepared to do some of the personal work around reconciliation. “It’s not just about being cordial, it’s about being involved in people’s lives and what’s going on in their lives, being reconciled with other people as well as with yourself,” he said. “We have to be transparent and not just gloss over things.”

James, a black member, concurred, saying that being part of a multicultural church means working through the challenges of communicating with people who see life differently. “It means being reconciled to God and to one another,” he said. “It can be messy and sometimes it hurts.”

Founding Pastor Efreem Smith expressed his vision of a multicultural church clearly in Sanctuary’s establishment documents, in his memoir and later in interviews for this case study. Indeed, the theme most often heard when talking to Smith and Sanctuary members about the church is a commitment to the vision of being a multicultural/multiracial/reconciling church. It was this idea, both simple and yet complex, that stands at the core of the church’s founding and continuance. Members had various ways of sharing their own commitment to the vision of a multicultural church. They spoke about a belief that racial unity was the way God intended the church to function. Living out their commitment is not always easy and members interviewed were clear that it requires personal and interpersonal work. Along the way, they said, some fellow members chose not to continue and moved to other congregations. In certain instances, they had returned to their previous church homes. But their sense of commitment endures and supports the other foundational themes on which the church stands.

Intentionality. “We want to serve the world,” said Maggie. “It takes intentionality to make a church where a variety of people feel welcome.” Church leaders have to pay attention so that the greeters, people who collect the offering, worship leaders and musicians are diverse, said Maggie, who is of mixed-race heritage. Sanctuary is multicultural at its core, she said, adding that the church’s lay leadership and Elder Board are racially mixed. She and her husband, who is from Africa, have built relationships with people from various cultural backgrounds. “When we first started coming to Sanctuary it took more of an effort to build those relationships, but not anymore,” she said.

In the early days, Joshua, who is a member of the church’s Elder Board, witnessed a variety of other churches coming together to support the vision of Sanctuary. Those churches provided financial support and people who were looking to join a congregation that was intentional about being multicultural. As the years have passed, leadership has purposefully held off on buying a building, choosing instead to meet in rented facilities, usually at a school. “We don’t rely on a building,” Joshua said. “*We* make the church.”

Michael, who is white, expressed a similar view on the human dimension, “You *create* community. The test is, are the numbers stored in your cell phone a mix of diverse people? At your birthday party, is there diversity? That shows who you really are, outside of who you rub shoulders with at church. That’s a dream; I think we are a long way from that.” Other members interviewed said that getting people to participate in events during the week continues to be a battle for the church, although intentionally diverse meals and small group activities have had mixed results.

Michael said those things that hold the church together have shifted since the dynamic founding pastor left. At the onset, people were drawn to Smith, his preaching and leadership.

Now people come because of the ongoing vision and purpose of the church, he said. Michael added that the church was at a crossroads, grappling with the departure of the founding pastor because many people had such an affinity for the founder. “We’re asking a lot of questions, ‘Is Hip Hop essential, or was it an Efrem Smith thing? How do you serve? Are we predominantly African American? Who should our next pastor be?’” Whatever direction the church takes, Michael, like others interviewed, said Sanctuary must continue to be intentional about its vision and mission.

Indeed, Sanctuary members expressed a variety of concerns about the future and sometimes disagreed on their progress towards building true multicultural community. Yet, most interviewed said intentionality is essential to its pursuit. That intentionality was stressed by the founding pastor and is embraced by the members who remain. The period during which this research was conducted was transitional for Sanctuary and questions surfaced from members about next steps. As observed, those questions generally had to do with ways the church would operate in the future. While looking forward, some looked back and reflected on members who chose to leave Sanctuary, citing two main reasons that they observed for people doing so: the departure of the founding pastor or discomfort with the multicultural church. In some cases, members said people left Sanctuary and returned to their previous churches.

Reflecting the Kingdom of God. A Sanctuary employee said the church is called to represent fellowship with the Kingdom of God, where diverse members are committed to learning from one another, demonstrating humility and forgiving their fellow members. That phrase, “reflecting the Kingdom of God” is the second mantra that comes up frequently when members discuss their church. “We’ve always been committed to being multicultural, reflecting what The Kingdom is going to look like,” said Ruth, who is black. That commitment is evident

in the music, the message and even styles of praying, she said. Sanctuary is inclusive on many levels, she added, “We’re all at different places with our (Christian) walk.” That means the church must have a variety of study groups, organizations and other small groups. Moreover, Sanctuary must be able to meet the many varied needs of singles and married people as well as people of all ages. For Ruth, being part of Sanctuary also means being in community with people who come from different backgrounds and may have different values.

The Kingdom of God is synonymous with the Kingdom of Heaven and appears frequently in both the old and new testaments of the Bible. Although there is disagreement among theologians as to whether the Kingdom refers to the believers of today or those of the future, many hold the view that it stands for both (Stein, 1996).

There are no official records of the church’s racial demographics, but leaders estimate it at just under 50-50 black and white members, with other people of color comprising a relatively small remaining percentage. Some members said the next natural step for Sanctuary would be to focus its recruitment efforts on other communities of color, moving beyond the church being predominantly black and white. Perhaps it’s time to reach out to the Hmong and Latino communities that are increasing their numbers in the North Minneapolis area, said Michael, a white member.

An old adage states that all types of people will be in heaven, so it behooves Christians to learn to share in community with those who do not look like them if they plan on going there. Indeed, the phrase, “a glimpse of heaven” came up often when I interviewed Sanctuary members. They frequently shared that the Kingdom of God’s Children included all races – a clear message that churches should do the same. Their effort to create and sustain a multicultural church was following God’s will, members said. At present, the church is predominantly

comprised of black and white people and some members said they hope to bring in other ethnic groups in the future. There have been efforts to be as inclusive as possible with lay leadership, but the paid staff and ministerial leadership remain mostly black and white. This, too, is a reality some members said they hope to change going forward.

Hip Hop, its appeal to youth. Samantha recalled her church gaining notoriety because the pastor embraced Hip Hop, the beat-driven, spoken-word, music and style that originated in New York among black and Latino youth. “We were considered the Hip-Hop church. Third Sunday was Hip-Hop Sunday,” said Samantha, a black member of Sanctuary. “It was ironic that some people did not come on Hip Hop Sunday because they did not like that, but Hip-Hop was the highest attendance out of the month. About 700 and at one point we had practically 1,000 people and it was a fire hazard. That was another reason we looked at going to two services and Pastor Efrem said we have to keep doing Hip Hop because we were bringing in young people.”

Michael, a white member, shared his views on Hip Hop, “Hip hop is new but comes out of a fusion of a lot of different cultures and it’s becoming international. It speaks to oppressed people. Urban youth are drawn to it because it shows a glimpse of the world that is much more real than what their parents and their families are showing to them.”

Todd has had some trouble adjusting to the music at Sanctuary. In particular, all the repetition of some of the modern music, including Hip Hop, bothered him. What made it worthwhile, however, was his then-teen son’s response to the music. “Our oldest son had always gone to church with the family, but going to Sanctuary, with the Hip Hop influence, he really just blossomed,” Todd, who is white, recalled. “So, by the time he got to college he was really involved in campus ministry. Both of our sons developed a lot of friends who didn’t look like them.”

Sanctuary's founding pastor was adamant that Hip Hop be a critical part of Sanctuary's culture. Now a man in his 40s, Efrem Smith had grown up with Hip Hop and knew firsthand its power to capture and hold the attention of young people. While some members interviewed expressed their concerns about the genre, most said that when blended with the Christian spirit, Hip Hop was an effective tool for attracting younger members. This type of music had its beginnings in the black and Latino communities, but is embraced cross-culturally these days.

Willingness to give up comfort. Samantha grew up in a traditional black Baptist church and as a young adult was drawn into a more Pentecostal congregation. Growing up, she recalled being almost taught not to trust people of other races. Yet, it was a desire for something different that brought her to Sanctuary. "I had come from a church where I was burnt out, so I kind of wanted to hide at Sanctuary; I ended up getting on the prayer team," she recalled. Around her third or fourth year at Sanctuary, Pastor Efrem asked Samantha to take on some leadership, to be a member of the church's Design Team. There have been, of course, necessary personal adjustments along the way. For example, someone on a church team would make a comment to Samantha about having fried chicken during an event. Although thinking it was meant to be harmless, she wondered about the member's intent. "As an African American, I'm thinking, 'okay, why are you saying that?' All black people don't like chicken. Maybe the white person doesn't realize that making a statement like that can be offensive."

Another challenge members face is that the median age is about 27, she said, adding that many of the people attending were not accustomed to attending formal church services. That can be both good and bad she added. "The good part is, you can help shape the direction that you want the believers, to be disciples and grow. The flip side is, sometimes they do things that are inappropriate." What she deemed inappropriate was behavior such as coming to church in shorts

and flip-flops or bringing coffee and snacks into the service. “This is not a show, this is a worship experience,” she recalled thinking. But even Samantha was happy to see the number of youth and young adults who attended each third Sunday of the month, when Hip Hop music was featured. “Pastor Efreem said we have to keep doing Hip Hop because we are bringing in young people and not just black kids; it was across cultures.”

Todd agreed that the biggest sacrifice necessary for belonging to a multicultural church was loss of comfort. “You have to give up some traditions, some parts of familiar worship,” he said. “If we don’t have a choir every single Sunday that bothers some people.”

Small groups can be another challenge, Todd said because it is then that individuals must really face differences. At Sanctuary, some groups continue to have all or mostly all one racial group, he said. Once, he attended a church meeting designed for residents within its predominantly black North Minneapolis neighborhood and found that most attendees there were white. “Sanctuary has a lot of members who are white people who relocated to North Minneapolis and black members who, maybe grew up in North Minneapolis, but were successful enough to move out of North Minneapolis,” Todd stated. “If we are not intentional, then what we’ll have is Sunday morning that looks really diverse, but other groups and relationships that aren’t.” Todd shared another experience of a program he led that gave away bikes that had been donated to the church for its children. Basically because it was easy to do, Todd said he repaired the bikes and let the children have them without requiring them to earn the bikes. A black woman member chastised him as a “naïve, white do-gooder” because, she said, children would not value the bikes.

Yes, being a Sanctuary member can mean getting out of one’s comfort zone in a variety of ways. Members shared that they have had to endure small and large adjustments, ranging

from nontraditional types of music during worship to comments from people of different backgrounds that stung. Even when detailing a litany of awkward cross-cultural situations, most members indicated this discomfort was a price they were willing to pay and that their desire to continue with their diverse congregation was strong. One cannot speak with this congregation's members for long without hearing what I have called Sanctuary's Foundational Themes. Indeed, they are the reasons the church is able to continue operating as a multicultural church. Now, let's look at another aspect of Sanctuary, those areas where members expressed some disappointment.

Unmet Goals

When members speak of aspirations not yet achieved for their church, two main concerns emerge: participation beyond Sunday morning and diversity beyond black and white. Getting members to participate in activities during the week is not peculiar to the multicultural church, particularly in recent years, when modern families find themselves stretched to the limit with work, school, and personal obligations. But members interviewed conceded that for Sanctuary to reach its goal of truly reflecting the Kingdom, a variety of different ethnic groups will need to be increased among their ranks. Ultimately, some said, it will come down to interpersonal relationships and whether the people with whom members interact come from a variety of backgrounds and that those interactions are not only on Sunday mornings. There have been some initial steps in getting other groups involved, such as inviting ethnically diverse preachers to deliver guest sermons and incorporating music from other cultures into the worship service.

Findings Summary

It was no surprise that members concerns centered on diversity and those surveyed responded with multi-ethnicity and reconciliation ranking as a first priority. A sense of commitment to the vision of a multicultural church was the prevailing theme during interviews with members and the founding pastor as well. For Sanctuary, everything goes back to members' collective commitment to the vision of a multicultural church theme, with the other themes resting on that. Talking with members revealed it is this commitment which allows them to be willing to do the work necessary to create a congregation reflecting the Kingdom and to be intentional in that pursuit, to use the slightly controversial power of Hip Hop to attract younger members and to work through situations that are sometimes uncomfortable. I want to emphasize that transcending ethnicity, accomplished at Sanctuary and referenced in other portions of this study, does not mean that ethnicity disappears or is hidden nor is self-identity sacrificed; rather, it means that race and ethnicity cease to serve as barriers to pursuit of a common goal. Conversely, members shared that they are still striving to get people involved beyond Sunday morning and to significantly expand diversity beyond black and white members.

Chapter Five

Reflections

Revisiting the Literature

Throughout the process of researching and writing this case study, I continued to look over the literature previously reviewed and to find new literature on the multicultural church. At this point, I will revisit some of the literature that relates most to Sanctuary. Marti (2009) said that multicultural churches must have three qualities that allow members of different races and ethnicities to feel a sense of belonging. Those qualities are affinity with the congregation, identity reorientation and ethnic transcendence. An integral part of this theory is that congregation members' shared religious identity takes precedence over ethnicity. In interviews with Sanctuary members, common goals and aspirations for the church came up much more frequently and received more emphasis than ethnic identity, making this a theory that seems to play out at Sanctuary. Other research by Marti (2008) and Stanczak (2006) supports the view that common goals tend to carry more weight than ethnicity in multicultural churches.

Conversely, Pitt (2010) argued that transcending ethnicity is not really caused by churches, but that multicultural churches are places for black people who have already done so. Sanctuary, however, founded by an African American pastor and embracing a strong African American aesthetic, runs counter to the churches Pitt criticizes. Those were white churches that, Pitt said, made only "cosmetic changes" to their worship, music and leadership. Indeed, uniting around a Christian identity is frequently mentioned in the literature of the multicultural church. Coming together around an organization or goals has been found to counter aversive racism, a comparatively subtle form of bias that is more prevalent in contemporary times (Gaertner &

Dovido, 2005). This seems to be the case for Sanctuary because, although there were a few complaints of what could be described as aversive racism, members were much more focused on their unity around the vision of a multicultural church.

Once again: Intentionality. Both in the literature and in the opinions expressed by Sanctuary members, intentionality was stressed. Those churches that openly state their goals around issues of diversity in mission statements and other materials and then follow it up with education and outreach are more likely to be successful as multicultural congregations (Doughtery & Huyser, 2008). So, it is the combination of both stating *and* doing that is critical in multicultural churches. That intentionality based on a commitment to the vision is one of the reasons for Sanctuary's ability to continue operating as a multicultural church. Sanctuary has been able to accomplish what Pitt (2010) called for: a church with a black leader and admittedly heavy dose of black culture that attracts both white and black congregants. This was a part of the reason I chose to research Sanctuary, a multicultural church that is rare because its founder is black, embraces multiculturalism while retaining much of its black culture and attracts whites as well as blacks.

Another look at additional themes. McNeil (2008) concurred with Smith on the necessity for churches to reflect the Kingdom of God and the connection between reconciliation and evangelism. Another connection for the two is the need for churches to actively bring people to Christ through traditional means such as altar calls. McNeil shared a "strong spiritual sense" to give an altar call during a Christian conference at which she was speaking. She spoke from John 4, the popular text known as "The Woman at the Well" and explained her belief in the necessity for building bridges in a multiethnic world. "These principles are based on the paradigm of Jesus' meeting with the woman at the well. Until that night, I had never combined them in an

evangelistic message with a call to racial reconciliation” (p. 15). McNeil goes on to say that evangelism and reconciliation are “two sides of the same coin” supported by the Bible, demographics and global evidence (p. 16).

The church’s commitment to the vision of a multicultural church – a major part of its identity – is strong. Considering Sanctuary against Margaret Wheatley’s (1999) research of groups that are self-organizing may offer some insight: “When an organization knows who it is, what its strengths are, and what it is trying to accomplish, it can respond intelligently to changes from its environment” (p. 85). It is the presence of a clear identity that helps the organization survive when changes to the environment occur, coupled with increased freedom in the way it responds. (Wheatley) This true sense of identity comes through clearly when conducting research or speaking with members about Sanctuary.

Throughout the literature on multicultural churches, worship style is mentioned. Dougherty & Huyser (2008) noted the importance of words spoken and music sung needs to include traditions of the members. Indeed, as the most profound ritual of the church worship must represent multiple groups if all members are to feel welcomed (Dougherty & Huyser). In Sanctuary’s appeal to youth, indeed youth of different cultures, Hip Hop music has been insisted upon by the founding pastor and continues to be a mainstay of the church. Some members noted their initial discomfort with the genre, but added that they came to respect its value in attracting young people to their church.

It is members’ willingness to give up comfort, the last foundational theme to be reconsidered here, that many people shared during interviews. They spoke of comments, incidents and situations that forced them to stretch. Often, an attitude that allows for personal guards and barriers to drop is essential for the transformation people joining multicultural

churches must undergo. This may be the reason the Minnesota Council of Churches adopted an anti-racist initiative that used the term transformation three times in the one paragraph of its organizational statement. (Schoen, 1998) Sanctuary is part of a growing movement of multicultural churches that are being increasingly studied, so much so that there are now categories for them.

Classifying Sanctuary

Emerson & Woo (2006) would classify Sanctuary as a “Niche Charter” (p. 59) church because it began as a multicultural church with a mission of reconciling different races. The authors’ system of models identifies three things that drive multicultural churches: mission, resource calculation and external authority/structure. The authors further divide the congregations by their sources of diversification and congregational type. For those multicultural churches with mission as the primary impetus, they set up proximity and culture/purpose as their sources of diversification. Finally, the writers’ congregational types for mission-driven multicultural churches are: neighborhood embracing, neighborhood charter, niche embracing and niche charter, with Sanctuary clearly falling into the niche charter category. Reconciliation is undoubtedly a main driver for the church.

“Assessing” Sanctuary

Although Yancey (2003) offers an instrument by which to measure churches, I believe that it is like most instruments: helpful but not definitive. The chart below looks at Sanctuary through seven principles, with the church achieving four of those seven principles.

<i>Principle</i>	<i>As demonstrated at Sanctuary</i>	<i>Currently meeting principle on a consistent basis?</i>
Inclusive worship	Efforts are made to include a variety of worship styles, with urban, African American worship and music being the most dominant. Third Sundays focused on Hip Hop culture.	No
Diverse leadership	Founding pastor is African American, as are former interim pastors and new pastor; leadership among laity is diverse.	No
Overarching goal (beyond being multiracial)	Church is committed to improving lives of residents in its North Minneapolis community.	Yes
Intentionality	Members and leaders emphasized importance of being intentional in their efforts to make multicultural focus work	Yes
Personal skills (of pastor)	Members interviewed cited founding pastor’s skills. Second senior pastor recently selected.	Yes
Location (access to different races)	North Minneapolis, although predominantly African American, provides some access to different races.	Yes
Adaptability (to new racial groups)	Members’ views mixed on their collective ability to adapt to other races; efforts ongoing.	No

While the meanings of most of these principles are straightforward, when Yancey mentions adaptability, he is referring to the particular challenges leaders of multicultural churches face around blending cultures together and preparing to adapt to the new issues that are certain to arise. Yancey calls for members who have been in the church longer to learn about the cultures of the newer members coming into the church (p.69).

Although the seven principles are helpful, a church cannot be summed up so easily. Just as standardized test scores are unable to completely measure a student's success, a template for measuring multicultural churches is not the final word on any multicultural church. Assessing an entity as complex as a multicultural church requires more than a rating of seven factors. It is necessary to look at the whole picture and consider each church both individually and along with others. As I grappled with explaining my generally positive evaluation of Sanctuary in spite of its assessment against Yancey's seven factors, I ran across Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. (Wheatley, 1999) In brief, that principle, borrowed from physics, states that we can measure either location or movement, but never the two at the same time. Yet, assessing both properties is necessary to attain a true measurement. Therefore, a truly effective system of measuring the universe is impossible. The same can be said of Sanctuary, which must be considered from both single organization and group perspectives. In addition to Yancey's chart, consider what Sanctuary has accomplished thus far: In nine years, Sanctuary has developed a steady membership, strong outreach and lasting community ties. In less than a decade, Sanctuary has become an example of the multicultural church in the area and throughout the nation, accomplishments few multicultural churches can claim. The church's founding pastor was promoted to the equivalent of a bishop in the Evangelical Covenant denomination to which it belongs. Members interviewed expressed a sense of accomplishment mixed with much work yet to be done. After more than a year of research, I agree. While some would argue that a church predominated by two major ethnic groups is more biracial than multiracial, it is important remember, this case study is using the system developed by researchers that considers a church multiracial when no one group represents 80 percent or more of the membership. This is the

standard now used by many scholars and observers of multiracial churches. By that measurement, Sanctuary is certainly multiracial. Moreover, I would offer that because of this country's history of enslaving black people and its aftermath, uniting white and black people is the toughest and most necessary hurdle. And since the wounds are so deep, healing between these two groups stands to carry the greatest effect. Even so, Sanctuary's biggest challenge will be to increase its membership with additional ethnic groups beyond the black and white members who currently comprise most of the membership. In the end, I concur with those members interviewed who expressed a need to increase the church's diversity.

A possible future study could look at those members who left Sanctuary, ascertaining their reasons. Remaining members who were interviewed expressed perceptions that those who left returned to previous churches or single-ethnic congregations in a desire to seek comfort.

Implications for Organization Development

Biblical reconciliation in general and this case study of Sanctuary in particular hold potential, not only for other multicultural churches, but for the field of organization development as well. As the organization development field seeks new solutions in employee relations, team-building and diversity, there are some lessons to be learned from places such as Sanctuary. The church's themes of commitment to a shared vision, intentionality in achieving that vision and willingness to give up comfort in pursuit of the vision have been used in other arenas and merit further consideration. What lessons might leaders learn from looking at the ways Sanctuary went about addressing those themes? It might be helpful to talk with members about the ways in which they relate. "What is most noteworthy about the multicultural church is not the mere presence of diversity within its walls, but the interaction between those inside" (Garces-Foley, 2007, p. 207). The question of how churches become multicultural appeals to ministers and social scientists

alike. Moreover, Garces- Foley asserts that the growth of multicultural churches reflects changes in the larger society. Indeed, social scientists have long known that the United States is becoming increasingly diverse. As this trend continues, the need to look at a wider variety of working models and seek ways to adapt them becomes stronger each year. Organization development professionals would do well to look at the strides made by multicultural churches in building diverse communities. Sanctuary's model of intentionally organizing around a core vision could be transferred to other types of organizations, with the themes adjusted to meet particular needs and values. Indeed, the field itself is values-driven, increasingly becoming more so, and borrowing methods and approaches from a multicultural church such as Sanctuary is appropriate.

Lessons for Other Congregations

Certainly other multicultural churches, particularly those in their early stages, can learn from Sanctuary. Serious thought and planning was put into the church during its preliminary and early stages and continues. Leadership and members realize that the multicultural church does not simply *happen* and their thoughtfulness followed by action shows through. Most of all, a commitment to the vision of a multicultural church – articulated by its founder and embedded into the consciousness of its members – stands as Sanctuary's defining characteristic that other multicultural churches should consider. Conversations with Sanctuary organizers and leaders to share knowledge as well as reviewing documents, as I did, could prove helpful to other multicultural churches. At a time when many multicultural churches do not manage to last or increase their numbers, Sanctuary has been able to do both.

Recommendations for Further Research

Now that the founding pastor is gone and a new pastor has been selected, Sanctuary is most certainly into its next phase. As expressed earlier in this study, many questions about the church's future exist, most notably, "What will happen to Sanctuary now that Pastor Efrem is gone?" In the coming years, it would be interesting for a researcher to revisit Sanctuary to see which directions to the new leader and members choose and if Sanctuary will remain true to its original vision. Another area for study surfaced during this work as well. Many members interviewed referred to building interpersonal relationships across cultures with varying degrees of self-reported success. A further study that gets at the nature and depth of interpersonal cross-cultural relationships among Sanctuary members would provide further insight into the church's ability to build true cross-cultural community.

Conclusion

As I end this work, Sanctuary is at a new phase, with a new pastor just selected. Already, my research is dated, but I feel it is a reflection of a very particular place and time for this congregation. When I began this dissertation, I had naively no idea there would be so many delays, rough spots and setbacks. Now I realize that they were all part of the process and, in a large way, a part of the learning. The old adage that everything takes longer than planned held true. In addition to the process and paperwork of mounting a dissertation, there were the meetings, first with the founding pastor, Efrem Smith, and then with the interim leadership and finally individual members. In between meetings, weeks would pass and it would be difficult to connect with the interim leadership. I am certain that the decision of the founding pastor to accept a promotion within the Covenant church, which made him the equivalent of a bishop and moved him to California, was part of the reason for the time it took to connect.

And with the busy nature of people's lives, it sometimes took several tries to capture particular members for the hour or two an interview takes. Then, there seemed to be reluctance on the part of African American members to be interviewed. Perhaps it was my outsider status or the African American community's longtime distrust of research. And it is no wonder. African Americans have historically been victimized by research, the most notable case being the Tuskegee Experiment. In that study, begun in the 1930s and continuing until the 1970s, rural Southern African American males were not told they had contracted syphilis and were not treated so that they could be observed. This unethical treatment continues to be cited as a reason many African Americans do not trust research. Yet, in part because I am African American, I found the seeming reluctance to be interviewed disheartening. In retrospect, some of the people being approached for interviews may not have been aware that the researcher was black. If nothing else, this thinking about race and the factor it played in the research process points to the significance race continues to play. Interestingly, that fits with the very nature of this study. In the end, I proceeded, making phone calls, following up, until I reached a balance between black and white members interviewed.

When I selected this congregation as the site for my research, I sensed there was something powerful happening there. At the end of this journey, I now believe that this congregation, with the challenges all multicultural congregations face, is making a real difference in bridging the racial divide and is one of the places others can look to as a working example of the multicultural church. Yes, this church, this movement, these brothers and sisters, will always have my prayers, my respect and my support for their work to provide a "glimpse of heaven on Earth."

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Appendices

Appendix A Sanctuary Community Development Corporation Planning Document

Appendix B Sanctuary Pastor Search, First Thoughts on Survey Results

THE SANCTUARY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Vision Statement

"We envision a community with stable families, educated young people, developed skills and abilities, economic empowerment, and strong moral values."

Purpose Statement

"To equip and empower the people of the city by engaging the issues, barriers, and challenges which affect them."

Long-term Strategic Initiatives:

Youth Development ♦Prevention and Intervention

♦Skills and Abilities Development ♦Educational
Enrichment and Support ♦Advocacy

Family Services

♦Basic Needs Support
♦Health Care
♦Empowerment and Values Development
♦Advocacy

Community Building ♦Economic
Development

* Organizing
♦Capacity Building
♦Collaboration

General Operations ♦Funding
Development

* Staff and Volunteer Development
♦Program Development
♦Communications and Marketing

Strategic Focus Areas:

♦Board Development
* Staff Development
♦Organizational Development
♦Program Development

Next Steps:

♦Contract Capacity Builders
♦Secure Initial Investors and Supporter

Then the righteous will answer Him saying, 'Lord when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?

And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Matthew 25:31-40 (NASB)

By serving the poor, the sick, and the outcast it is as if we are serving the Lord. Our worship is a service to the Lord, and so is our dealing with the issues surrounding the poor, sick, and incarcerated. In this vain there isn't much separation between service and worship. The church is called to this compassionate and holistic work. These words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew are apart of a larger theme in the Bible that calls out for justice for the poor and oppressed. We see this in the Gospel of Luke when Jesus begins His earthly ministry by standing in the synagogue and reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah in what we call today the Old Testament of the Bible.

"And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." Luke 4:17-

19

By quoting the Old Testament in describing the purpose of His ministry, Jesus also shows us that addressing the issues of the poor, sick, and oppressed is a God-agenda that is proclaimed throughout the Bible. You can't read the Bible and not be challenged by a call of justice for the poor and oppressed. The church must live out the holistic call of the Gospel which includes salvation and liberation. The Gospel is not just about life in heaven, but new life for the poor and oppressed on earth. The church is called Biblically, to develop models of ministry which reach beyond it walls and immediate congregation and lead to the holistic transformation of its surrounding community.

God, the Bible, and Youth

I believe God yearns to interact with young people. God is in the business of using young people to do incredible things in the world. There are so many stories in the Bible that show us how true this statement is. At the end of Moses life, the baton of leadership is handed to a young person named, Joshua. In the opening chapters of the book written in his name in the Old Testament he is given the call to be a strong and courageous leader. Though he is young he leads his people into the promise land with weapons of shouts, praises, marching, and the sounds of trumpets. God is in the business of using young people as revolutionary leaders!

Consider the story of young David in the 17th chapter of 1st Samuel. There was this Giant named Goliath

who brought fear and terror upon David's people. The adults who were trained in warfare with their swords and shields were afraid to deal with the Giant and yet David with no sword and no shield, only a slingshot and some stones took out the giant

and brought about victory. God is in the business of using ordinary young people to do extra-ordinary things!

What about King Josiah who is mentioned in the 22nd chapter of 2nd Kings? He becomes king at 8 years old and even though his father and grandfather before him were evil kings, he broke this curse in his generation by being a king who followed God. He called his people to reverence the commands of God once again. He made the Word of God as it was known at that point and time a priority for the people he was in charge of leading. God is in the business of using children to do incredible things in the world!

".. .and a little child will lead them." Isaiah 11:6 (NIV)

Have you ever really looked at the Book of Esther in the Old Testament? This is the story of a girl whom God raises up to become a Queen. I'm not talking about some homecoming Queen on a float in the middle of a football stadium waving to the crowd. I'm talking about a Queen who brought political, social, and spiritual change to her land and people. She risked her life in approaching the King to lift her people out from the status of second-class citizenship. And, this happened in spite of the fact that her biological mother or father didn't raise her. God is in the business of taking what we would call today a foster girl and develops her into a Queen of destiny!

Consider for a moment the Book of Jeremiah. In the first chapter of the book God sets the tone of love and calling on the life of this young man named Jeremiah. God tells him that before he was formed in his mothers' womb God knew him. God also lets him know that there is calling upon his life to be a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah responds by telling God that he is only a child (as if God didn't already know that!). But God responds by telling him that the words placed in his mouth will not be his own, but from God and that the same God that puts words in his mouth will rescue him in the time of trouble., God is in the business of taking kids who are scared, shy, and intimidated, to go public with their gifts and gives them the ability to speak boldly to political, religious, and other authority figures and leaders of their time.

And then there's a young man in the New Testament named Timothy. His mother was a believer, but his dad wasn't and yet only having one parent of the faith didn't serve as an obstacle for him becoming a leader in church planting and development. His mentor Paul saw something in Timothy maybe even beyond what Timothy saw in himself. God is in the business of using young people as leaders within the church. In Timothy's situation he had a human mentor that saw him through the eyes of God. When it comes to young people God goes way beyond just Sunday school, Confirmation, and weekly clubs full of icebreaker games, pizza, and soda. God sees youth and even little children through different eyes.

For the church to see young people through the eyes of God, they must realize that in the Bible there is a theology of God and youth. Paul understood this in 1 Timothy as he wrote these words to the young person whom he mentored

"Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you." 1 Timothy 4:12-14 NIV

I don't believe that God's view of young people is just limited to the young people already in the church. With this in mind the church must develop initiatives, programs, and services which reach out to youth within its surrounding community. When you take into account the issues, barriers, and challenges which young people face today, it makes it very clear that for the church to raise up young heroes for God like we read about in the Bible, there is a need for a holistic youth development model.

Community Development

Today, when we see what are considered successful churches, the focus tends to be on how beautiful the church building is, how well the pastor preaches, or how many people are in attendance on Sunday morning. In the second chapter of the Book of Acts we see somewhat of a different blueprint for successful church which lifts up the importance of community.

"And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved." Acts 2:42-47

Within this text we see more than just a church based on today's, Americanized view of success. We see people in community learning together, eating together, building unity, developing a system of economics, as well as experiencing powerful transformation. As we read the Book of Acts, we see this movement go beyond just the Jewish community to include the Gentiles as well. After all, at the end of

the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus calls the disciples to make other disciples within all nations. The good news of the Gospel transforms not only individual lives, but leads to community transformation.

You can look to the Old Testament and see a theology of community development as well. In the Book of Nehemiah we read a story that centers on the rebuilding of a broken city. In the Book of Jonah, Jonah is called to go and preach a message of transformation to a wicked city called Nineveh.

God's plan of reconciliation is not one of just individual lives being transformed, but of nations as well, that God's will would, "be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The church is called to more than beautiful buildings, large congregations, and good preaching. The church must make community development an integral part of its mission.

PART 2: Mission and Vision

From the above theological foundation comes the vision for the development of a community development corporation which will first and foremost function in connection with The Sanctuary Covenant Church to bring holistic transformation to North Minneapolis as well as equip other churches and faith-based organizations to bring similar transformation to their surrounding communities. This initiative also will serve as a way to unify suburban and urban churches around holistic community development especially in high risk communities of the Twin Cities. Developing collaborative partnerships beyond the faith community to business, education, and political institutions for a broader approach to successful community development will be a priority as well.

The following are proposed vision and purpose statements-

Vision Statement "We envision neighborhoods in North Minneapolis with stable families, educated young people, developed skills and abilities, economic empowerment, and strong moral values."

Purpose Statement "To equip and empower the people of the city by engaging the issues, barriers, and,

challenges which affect them."

PART 3: - Strategic Initiatives

Based on the theology given in Part 1 of this document, come the following strategic initiatives-

Youth Development (Prevention and Intervention) ♦Skills and Abilities Development ♦Educational Enrichment and Support ♦Advocacy

Program/Service Ideas: "Hip-Hop Academy" "Mentoring/Tutoring Program" "Youth Business Enterprise"

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Family Services

◆Healthcare

◆Basic Needs Support

◆Job Training

◆Advocacy

Program/Service Ideas: "Healthcare Clime" "Health Disparities Initiative" "Career Development Initiative"

Community Building ◆Economic Development ◆Organizing ◆Capacity Building ◆Collaboration

Program/Service Ideas: "Business Development Initiative" "Voter Registration Drives"

SCC Pastoral Search First Thoughts Survey Results

Introduction

Pastor Efrem Smith announced in mid-January 2010 that he had been nominated to become the superintendent of the Southwest Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Consequently, he will

step down as senior pastor of Sanctuary covenant Church prior to assuming his new responsibilities. A pastoral search committee was chosen by the Sanctuary membership following the announcement of his nomination. To support the beginning of this process, an online survey was created to gather first thoughts and impressions from Sanctuary congregants.

The survey was conducted between March-7 and April 3 of 2010. Participants were asked to respond to six ranked-choice questions and two open-ended questions. Within each ranked choice question, respondents were given five choices and asked to pick in order the three that were most important. Appendix A lists the questions and possible responses.

The survey's results have been compiled into this document. The results for the ranked-choice questions are presented in a series of charts, and all of the responses to the open-ended questions have been supplied. Although the charts have been organized to highlight what respondents value most, very little additional interpretation has been provided. Further interpretation should be approached with caution for several reasons. The most important is that this survey was posted on the church's public website and was open to public participation. The pattern of responses and the content of the open-ended responses would indicate that all respondents are familiar with the Sanctuary and have a stake in the churches future, however.

This survey will provide valuable insight into what Sanctuary congregants are thinking, but it cannot be considered as representative of the membership or entire congregation's viewpoint. Survey participation was voluntary, and those who chose to participate could have a systematically different perspective than those who did not participate.

Results

The following charts represent the responses of 232 survey participants. Neither church membership nor regular church attendance was a prerequisite for participation. Respondents were not required to provide demographic information.

Results for each of the six ranked choice question are presented in a separate chart. Within each chart, response categories are sorted from right to left on the total number of times that the answer was chosen. For example, 198 people considered Mission and vision to be the first, second, or third most important reason they attend the Sanctuary. For most of the questions, the category with the most overall responses also happened to be the category that was chosen most often as "most important" for that question. The one exception is that the under the question "The most important thing to me about our church is its...", the response category "Multi-ethnic identity and commitment to reconciliation ministry was most frequently considered to be of first importance, but "Emphasis on both my inner heart work and my outward expression of faith" received more first, second and third than any other response category. than any other response category.

Figure 3

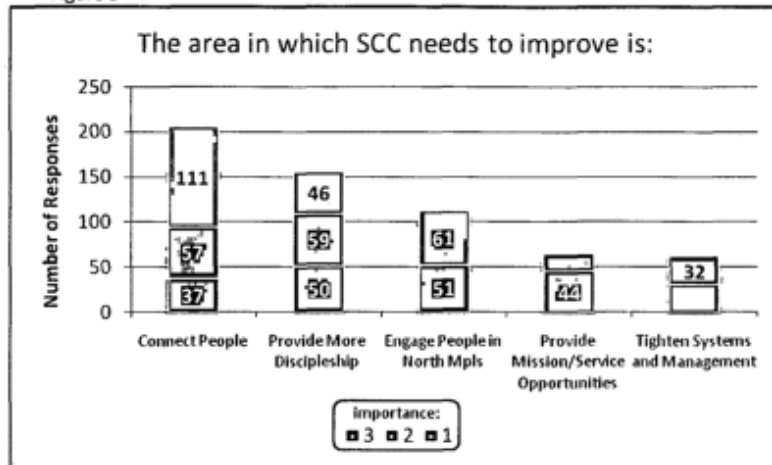


Figure 4

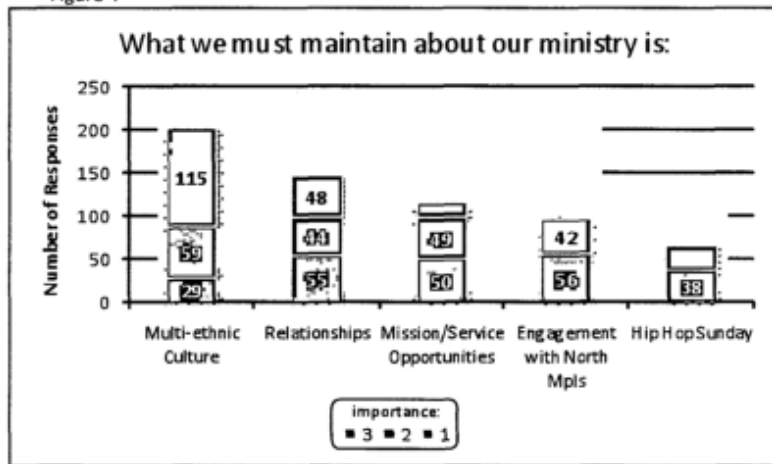
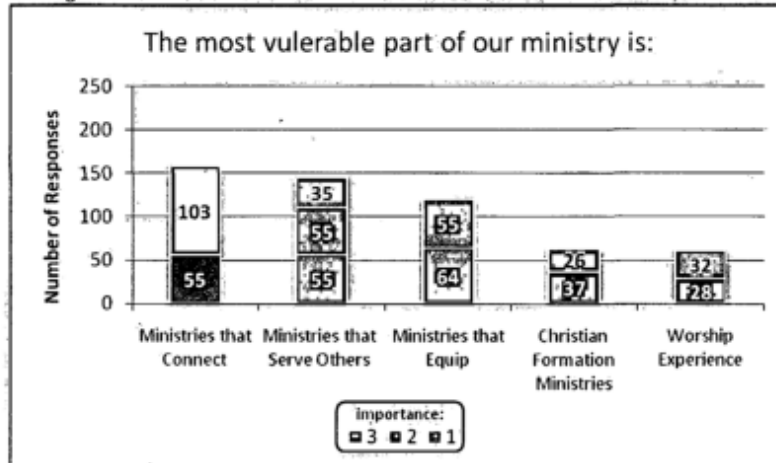


Figure 5



Figure 6



Appendix A: Ranked-Choice Survey Questions and Response Categories

I attend Sanctuary Covenant Church because:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe in the mission and vision of the church My multi-ethnic family "fits" here Dynamic music and relevant preaching Exciting mission and service opportunities Effective discipleship and spiritual formation (Royal Hood, Mosaic, Young Adult, men, women, etc.)
The most important thing to me about our church is its:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission to North Minneapolis Multi-ethnic identity and commitment to reconciliation ministry Discipleship opportunities Opportunities to use my gifts and work in my passions Emphasis on both my inner heart work and my outward expression of faith Be able to establish connections with North Minneapolis culture and leadership
Our next senior pastor must:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model a deep and rich spiritual experience and life Gifted in Preaching and Teaching that will meet the needs of the congregation both for service and personal growth Be able to take SCC to the next level (of mission/service engagement, leadership development, individual spiritual growth) Be experienced in leading multi-ethnic, reconciling teams and communities
The area in which Sanctuary Covenant Church needs to improve is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting people to each other Getting more people engaged in making a difference in North Minneapolis Offering more discipleship/spiritual growth opportunities Offering more mission and service opportunities locally and globally Developing systems and tightening management practices
The most exciting thing about our ministry that we must maintain is:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hip hop Sunday Engagement with North Minneapolis Multi-ethnic culture Mission and service opportunities Relationships with each other
The most vulnerable part of our ministry is:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our experience of worship Ministries that help our congregation feel connected and cared for Ministries that serve others and share the gospel Ministries that equip our congregation to know where and how they can serve at SCC and beyond Christian Formation Ministries