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The Unity Process and Its Effectiveness in Decreasing Cross-Cultural Divisions in Society Due to Racism

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY
BETHEL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE UNITY PROCESS AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN DECREASING CROSS-CULTURAL DIVISIONS IN SOCIETY DUE TO RACISM

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

BY
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ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
MAY 2020
CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .......................................................................................................................... 4

GLOSSARY .................................................................................................................................. 5

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................. 7

CHAPTER ONE CULTURAL DIVISIVENESS AMONG CHRISTIANS IN METROPOLITAN DALLAS ....................................................................................................................... 8
  The Current State of the Dallas Metropolitan Area .............................................................. 8
  Development of The Unity Process ..................................................................................... 9
  The Unity Process as a Case Study ..................................................................................... 11
  Assumptions ......................................................................................................................... 11
  The Unity Process and Reconciliation, Unity and Diversity .............................................. 13
  The Context of Dallas .......................................................................................................... 14
  Importance of The Unity Process ...................................................................................... 14

CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE THEMES OF UNITY, DIVERSITY AND RECONCILIATION .................................................................................. 17
  Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 17
  Unity .................................................................................................................................... 18
  Diversity ............................................................................................................................... 22
  Reconciliation ...................................................................................................................... 25

CHAPTER THREE: WRITINGS ON FORMATION, RECONCILIATION, UNITY AND DIVERSITY ................................................................................................................................. 29
  Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 29
  Formation: A Prerequisite for Reconciliation .................................................................... 31
  Reconciliation ....................................................................................................................... 36
  Unity and Diversity .............................................................................................................. 45
  Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 50

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CASE STUDY OF THE UNITY PROCESS ............................................. 53
  Qualitative Research Methods .......................................................................................... 54
  Research Instruments and Data Collection ....................................................................... 54
  Participants ......................................................................................................................... 59

CHAPTER FIVE: THE UNITY PROCESS ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS .................................. 61
  Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 61
  Pre-Surveys ......................................................................................................................... 61
  Post-Surveys ........................................................................................................................ 63
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unity Process Materials</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATION OF THE UNITY PROCESS</strong></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Research Process</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Findings</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions from the Research</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER SEVEN: REFLECTION ON THE UNITY PROCESS</strong></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Future Research</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX A:</strong></td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Pre-Survey</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX B:</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Post Survey</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX C:</strong></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Interview Guide</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX D:</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Genogram</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX E:</strong></td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American History</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX F:</strong></td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unity Process Factsheet</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIBLIOGRAPHY</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Pre-Survey Formation (N=8) ................................................................. 62
Table 5.2 Pre-Survey Formation (N=8) ................................................................. 62
Table 5.3 Pre-Survey Discussions/Experiences (N=8) ........................................... 63
Table 5.4 Pre-Survey Discussions/Experiences (N=8) ........................................... 63
Table 5.5 Post-Survey Formation (N=8) ............................................................... 64
Table 5.6 Post-Survey Formation (N=8) ............................................................... 64
Table 5.7 Post-Survey Discussions/Experiences (N=8) ......................................... 64
Table 5.8 Post-Survey Discussions/Experiences (N=8) ......................................... 65
Table 5.9 Post-Survey Overall Experience (N=8) .................................................. 65
Table 5.10 Post-Survey Overall Experience (N=8) .................................................. 66
Table 5.11 Interview Responses Q2-Q7 (N=9) ....................................................... 69
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>An integrated system of beliefs, of values, of customs, and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs. Cultures bind a society together and give it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity.¹ Culture can include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and other traits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Diversity encompasses the inclusion of a variety of cultures. Paul addresses the subject of diversity in several places but particularly in Romans 12:3-8². He promotes unity in diversity and how God intends for bodies of believers to have many members, each with different gifts so that through our collective efforts we might do the work of Christ in the world with great humility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
<td>For the purposes of this thesis project report, reconciliation refers simultaneously to racial reconciliation and reconciliation of all humanity. Reconciliation involves acknowledging sin, seeking forgiveness and atonement, restoration and reunification, resulting in a state of unity and harmony. The point of reconciliation is to reunite humanity with God, thereby uniting all humans with one another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Paul prescribes unity and diversity for the local church in his letter to the Ephesians, where his theme is “the unity of the church for the sake of the Gospel.”³ A united community is an inclusive community exemplifying the love of Christ where all are welcomed and valued and all share life together through the covenantal relationship of the triune God. Through this shared common life, Christians are to be a holy people, promoting purity and righteousness that befits the people of God. However, a unified community is not composed of individuals who are uniform but</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


² Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version (Colorado Springs, CO: International Bible Society, 1984).

allows for and even encourages diversity of thought and action emanating from the foundation of a united relationship with Christ.
ABSTRACT

This thesis project report dealt with determining the usefulness of The Unity Process as a tool in combatting the racial divisions in the Dallas metropolitan area. The case study qualitative method was used for this assessment. The research identified the background information and the context of the divisions and then the framework for the research. Research tools included pre- and post-surveys and interviews with the participants. The entire nine-session process was observed followed by the researcher comparing the results of the research with the materials from The Unity Process and presenting the findings. The analysis presented followed the order of the components of The Unity Process: formation, discussion and experience. The data was then compared to stated outcomes of The Unity Process from its literature. The three major findings from the research begin with the participants and the reality of the systemic nature of racism becoming apparent as well as the lived realities of minorities in America. From this awareness and understanding, participants were then able to engage openly and honestly with others from different races and cultures. Finally, participants felt more competent and willing to engage and be active advocates for minorities in America. Thus, they are not only aware of the need for racial healing and unity but also are equipped to help usher in this healing. The researcher believes that in order to combat the centuries long systemic racism in the United States, practitioners must begin with heart-level change and its subsequent transformation.
CHAPTER ONE
CULTURAL DIVISIVENESS AMONG CHRISTIANS IN METROPOLITAN DALLAS

The Current State of the Dallas Metropolitan Area

The problem this project addressed was the lack of a tool to address cultural divisiveness among Christians in the metropolitan area of Dallas, Texas. The project involved looking at The Unity Process as a viable tool for tackling this dilemma. In response to this problem, the researcher (a) explored the Pauline epistles for themes of unity, diversity, and reconciliation; (b) reviewed current literature on formation as a prerequisite to reconciliation, unity, and diversity; and (d) assessed the application of the process, the receptiveness of participants to the process, and the practicality of The Unity Process model.

The divisions in society have been steadily becoming more visible since Barack Obama was elected president. “The racism of the present is at once a less stark and absolute variety than its predecessor, but it still severely disfigures American culture and the body politic.” 4 Another tragedy arises due to Christians who are increasingly silent. At this point, it will take a multifaceted approach to turn the tide on this escalating problem. Many of the speakers at the National Facing Race Conference held immediately after the election of Donald Trump spoke on this issue. From the various speakers, conference attendees were able to identify three main foci towards this aim. First, all

people of color must unite with other disenfranchised groups in a concerted effort for justice and unity. Marginalized groups (such as members of the LGBTQ community, women, Muslims and people of other faith traditions, the poor and disenfranchised) need to fight together and not only for their group. A win in any area is a win for all. Second, Whites who are champions of the cause must be fully participatory; that is, just as engaged as people of color, just as vocal, and just as persistent in every sphere of their lives. Disenfranchised people do not have the option to participate at a reduced level when circumstances are tough or when they are tired, so neither should white allies. Third, minority groups must strategize for confrontation at the policy level, economic level, religious level, and social level simultaneously. The need to work together is evident and imperative.

**Development of The Unity Process**

The Unity Process was a tool developed by the researcher to help combat the divisiveness in the Dallas metropolitan area. It was believed that building healthy cross-cultural relationships would result in transformation of individuals’ hearts and minds and reduce some of the racism, enmity and hate prevalent in society. The Unity Process serves to undergird social justice advocates, unifying workers, and peace builders—by bringing diverse people together to build the skills needed to have healthy conversations about race, to build and strengthen relationships across cultures, and to seek reconciliation and unity. The goal is to equip people participating in social justice rallies and equity protests and then encourage them to have conversations about race with their family members, friends, church members, and others who do not understand or do not want to understand how critical the work is and why they should think differently about
other groups. From this foundation, people will be better able to engage cross-culturally in conversation and experiences building relationships and collective peace building.

The curriculum of The Unity Process has three components. In the formation component, Formation, has participants looking inward to discover their own stereotypes and biases so they can begin to work on them. Three two-hour sessions are devoted to this component with various activities to help them delve inward. Activities include completing a racial genogram, completing forms on how diverse their life is, who they would be reluctant to engage, among others. In the next component, Discussion, participants spend either two or three two-hour sessions in learning how to have healthy conversations around race. They learn about active listening, listening non-judgmentally, asking questions to seek understanding, and others. In the final component, Experience, participants learn how to have those difficult conversations with family, friends and church members. They also practice by leading the group in a discussion of the topic of their choice. The participants leave the process ready to engage others and build relationships across cultures.

People do not have to hold the same beliefs to be in relationship and work together. Everyone should be united around the belief that all lives matter and, in particular, black lives matter in a country that systematically communicates the opposite message. Because they are human (and especially because Christians believe that all are created in the image of God), all people are worthy of dignity and respect. Psalm 139 and 1 Timothy 2:1 teach that all people are important to God, not just a few. He crafted his creations and wants all to experience his love.
The Unity Process as a Case Study

This thesis project report was a case study of The Unity Process in the Dallas metropolitan area. The study analyzed the process and components as presented to a diverse group. The timeline began in April 2019 and ended in December 2019. The group was comprised of seven people and included one White male, five Whites, an African American, and a woman of mixed race and ethnicity, African American and Costa Rican. All participants were in the middle class socioeconomically and of the Christian faith.

Assumptions

Methodological Assumptions

The case study method used in this research provided great practical insight and examples of The Unity Process. To better understand The Unity Process a comprehensive analysis of how it works was investigated in the study of a diverse group and by looking at their literature. “The next half century marks key points in continuing trends—the U.S. will become a plurality nation, where the non-Hispanic white population remains the largest single group, but no group is in the majority.” As minority populations continue to grow, multicultural and intercultural communities will increase due to geographical movement in and out of neighborhoods. Therefore, it was crucial to observe how The Unity Process was used as a resource and teaching tool for others. The case study method with the comprehensive analysis is the best study to see if The Unity Process will be useful to the churches in these neighborhoods.

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Theoretical Assumptions

The researcher assumed that many communities are diverse or are becoming diverse due to globalization, immigration to the United States, and the changing demographics of Dallas and its neighborhoods. Advances in technology, transportation, and communication contribute to the increasing globalization of the world. People can now more readily relocate across the world than in the past. Also, with the continued presence of wars, terrorism, and oppressive dictators, immigrants continue to flock to the United States to escape adversity in their own countries and live new lives. The advances that give rise to globalization and the influx of immigrants contribute to the changing demographics of cities across the United States, including Dallas.

People naturally gravitate toward like-minded people and those with whom they share culture and ethnicity. Because of this theoretical assumption, developing, encouraging, and unifying diverse communities must be intentional. Even if a community is not diverse it should be involved in some form of outreach to or interaction with diverse people groups. In all instances, it is beneficial for community members to be equipped for and involved in the processes of creating unity in diversity.

Another assumption is that when the researcher speaks of unifying the community, she refers to the process of integrating cultures so that equity and not equality is commonplace. They are two distinct strategies. Equality means everyone gets exactly the same input or resource without regard to individual differences. Equity means everyone gets the same quality of input or resource. The integration of cultures requires awareness of the larger society and the systems in place that oppress and discriminate against various cultural groups and diminish their equity. As individuals from those
marginalized groups join diverse communities, the actions of the leaders must work to bring equity to all.

*Thematic Assumptions*

The concept of unity in diversity is a biblical challenge and assumption for all Christians. Therefore, the quest for unity in diversity should be important to all communities, especially Christians. It can take the form of partnering with other congregations who are different from one’s own to work together in the community. It can mean combining life groups to meet and interact and share their lives together. It can also involve having a diverse congregation that worships and works together for the building of the kingdom. These are only a few examples; unity in diversity should be accomplished in each congregation in some fashion. Paul teaches about it in several passages. In Romans 12, we are one body with many parts, so we should interact with other believers. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, the body and its many parts, is how God wanted it, so each part should do its work with no division in the body. In Ephesians 4:4-16 Paul describes how believers should strive to preserve unity in the Spirit and help one another to mature in Christ so that “from him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (vs. 16).

*The Unity Process and Reconciliation, Unity and Diversity*

This study assessed the effectiveness of The Unity Process as a tool in combatting divisiveness among Christians in Dallas communities. The researcher examined the Pauline epistles that deal with unity, diversity, and reconciliation as the first subproblem to establish a foundation. The second subproblem focused on the current literature
pertaining to formation as a prerequisite for reconciliation, unity, and diversity. The third subproblem assessed the effectiveness and accessibility of The Unity Process and whether it is a practical tool for addressing the problem of cultural divisions in the metropolitan area of Dallas.

The Context of Dallas

A growing number of neighborhoods are changing so that old, established, homogenous neighborhoods are being reborn as diverse neighborhoods. Others are shifting from predominantly one race to another race. People are usually not informed, prepared, or equipped to handle these changes in a manner that honors Christ. Hateful rhetoric is seen and heard all around our country. Reflecting on the history of the church and how it has handled change, diversity and unity, we see the church has adopted many disappointing models and actions of the secular world.

The researcher examined The Unity Process to ascertain how it works and whether it offers a viable solution for unity. Neighborhoods are constantly changing and transforming and churches must be equipped to be intentional in bringing about unity amid diversity. Christians need to be prepared and equipped to deal with these realities so that people are not hurt and do not become disillusioned with the church or with God.

Importance of The Unity Process

The exploration of this case study revealed useful techniques and conversations that can be used by other communities and their leaders to help unify the body of believers. Communities that experience change for any reason but especially due to societal population changes might be helped by this study. The researcher hopes that with this information churches and denominations can become proactive in educating and
informing their leaders, their communities, and their members about unity and diversity so that we can be more successful and gracious through the process of coming together.

Importance of The Unity Process for the Researcher

The researcher has a passion for diversity and reconciliation leading to unity and for helping leaders and members go through the process of unifying themselves and others. She has been personally involved in two diverse congregations; one was intentional about being diverse and encouraging unity and the other became diverse due to demographic changes in the neighborhood but did not achieve unity in diversity. The intentional church created opportunities for conversation, experiential learning activities, and reconciliation and was able to maintain diversity, unity, and harmony. The other congregation was unable to maintain diversity.

The researcher has pursued graduate-level work in this area, obtaining a Master of Arts degree in Global and Contextual Studies and a Certificate in Spiritual and Personal Formation from Bethel Seminary. She traveled with a delegation to South Africa to learn from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and how it contributed to efforts to unify a country that was previously divided. The reconciliation process in South Africa provides a great learning experience and offers a model that can be adapted and used by churches or individuals seeking to bring people together to resolve conflicts and disputes.

The researcher completed a Peace Ambassador program through the Shift Network that included students from around the world and of various faiths. Outside of the formal education system, she has read and studied extensively about reconciliation with guidance from several authors in the area.

The researcher’s professional career includes work with several faith-based nonprofit organizations, training them, working with diverse individuals, and advocating
for “the least of these” and their communities. The combination of work, ministry, and educational experiences have sufficiently prepared the researcher to work with diverse congregations and help them cultivate unity. God has given the researcher a passion for unifying believers and others from diverse backgrounds, and the researcher has been called and prepared through life experiences and education towards this endeavor.

*Importance of The Unity Process for Immediate Ministry Context*

Like many other cities, the city of Dallas has made the headlines because of its protests, hate-filled language, and discord among various groups. It is a highly diverse city, and like many others, it will become even more diverse. Therefore, it is more important than ever that its people seek to turn the tide on discord and begin to build relationships, moving from discord to harmony and unity. Change will continue to be mirrored in Dallas’s communities because society and consequently neighborhoods are constantly changing.

*Importance of The Unity Process for the Church at Large*

Christians are to be one body united in Christ but transforming communities often do not mirror the unified body of Christ. One thing stood out during our recent presidential election. It is evident that while on the surface it appeared that diverse cultural groups were coming together, they were not. There was no depth to the relationships. Even among the minority groups, there was only surface integration with one another. At the National Facing Race conference immediately following the elections, the participants were strongly encouraged to put aside any differences, join forces, and begin to work together. This research sought to provide information and tools for those interested in unifying the body of Christ.
CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE THEMES OF UNITY, DIVERSITY AND RECONCILIATION

Introduction

The biblical and theological foundations of this thesis project report are Paul’s writings about unity, diversity, and reconciliation. He writes on unity from his ministry to the Gentiles. Paul desired all those who believed in Christ to be united as one community. Next his teachings about diversity are analyzed and finally the “ministry of reconciliation” and all that it entails from Paul’s perspective complete the chapter. Paul not only knew what Jesus required but also carried out a ministry that helped to unite people from different cultures.

From the beginning, God’s intention was unity even within the diversity of all of creation—animals, plants, sky, earth, waters, and humans. “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity” (Psalm 133) Humans were meant to be a united community devoted to and in covenant with God. Jesus’ words are also informative for present-day readers. John recorded the following prayer for all believers:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23)
This complete unity of believers was to offer a witness for the world to know Jesus and through Jesus God. At a minimum, Scripture teaches believers to be unified with, connected to, and in relationship with other believers.

**Unity**

Jesus set the standard for unity and diversity which Paul then shared in several of his letters, compelling the readers to unity as a collective endeavor. Unity is obtained through faith and belief in Christ. Amid diversity, unity is still to be maintained because it is diverse people working together in peace and harmony who model Christ in the world. In his letter to the Romans and especially in 3:21-26, Paul speaks of the justification of all believers after talking about the sinfulness of humanity. He lets the Romans know that justification is not just for the Israelites but for all those who believe. Paul wrote about the doctrine of justification as a critical component of the faith and what it means to be a Christian. Lutheran and other Protestant theologians agree that those who believe are justified by their faith, adding the distinction that they are declared righteous.

In presenting the doctrine of God’s free grace, Paul asserts that there is none righteous and all need justification. In his letter to the Ephesians, he talks about the occurrence of a new creation (Eph. 2:11-22).

The result is “one new person,” a new ethnicity called Christian. Christ established peace between groups where enmity existed previously and created a new group that is different from and better than the previous two. Verse 16 confirms this exegete. The verb translated “reconcile” meant to restore to a former state/relation or some form of restitution. In other words, the multicultural Christian Church is what God intended from the start. The creation of the Christian community is a theological process (to God) with soteriological consequences (through the Cross). It is a
sacrament, a symbol, of the peace that should exist in the entire human community.  

Diane Kessler wrote that Paul also informs the Romans about the model of one body with many parts all working together as a metaphor of the unity of believers (Rom. 12). “Christ has made us His own, and he is not divided.” Kessler encompasses this message in her language of living in a way honoring to Christ. Living this way can only be accomplished by patterning one’s life the way Paul described in Romans 1-11. In living a spirit-filled life, Paul offers encouragement. “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, live in harmony with one another, and live at peace with everyone” should be emphasized as a reminder for believers today. Paul adds to the body and members metaphor he uses in Romans and Corinthians that “each member belongs to all the others” (Rom. 12:5). “The world repeatedly builds new barriers, and we are charged with taking them down. The church responds to the question ‘Who is my neighbor?’ with the astonishing answer that even my enemy is my brother or sister in the sight of God.” Our interdependence and our mutuality demand that peace and harmony be afforded to all, or the collective of humanity will suffer.

“The Antioch congregation was the crowning jewel of the early church’s ministry, which extended from Palestine into Africa, Asia and Europe.” They lived together, shared as they had and as was needed, worshiped together, and sought to share the gospel

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8 Kessler, 82.

message with nonbelievers. This describes the unity that Paul encouraged and worked toward. According to Mark DeYmaz,

Christ envisions the multi-ethnic church on the night before he dies (John 17:20-23) so that the world will know God’s love and believe. Luke describes the model at Antioch (Acts 11:19-26; 13:1ff.), the first mega, missional and multi-ethnic community of faith and the most influential church in the New Testament. Paul prescribes unity and diversity for the local church in his letter to the Ephesians, where his theme is “the unity of the church for the sake of the Gospel.”

Unity is not an option for those who follow Christ, and yet believers continually see division and strife in churches and pain inflicted due to disregard for embracing diversity. “Jesus spent most of his life in a region that included people from a wide range of cultures, social classes, religions, and languages. Jesus himself probably spoke three languages: Aramaic, Koine Greek, and Hebrew.” He came to us from the unity of the Trinity to bring unity, along with our salvation. Christ’s coming also brought the model of the interconnectedness of the Trinity as an example for us. In his words to the Ephesians, Paul speaks to this unity.

Christian Jewish perspective in that being within the Israeli community is the religious goal. These socio-political phrases denoted the Gentiles’ previous exclusion from the covenant community… The Gentiles were previously spiritually and theologically disenfranchised from Yahweh and the elect community. Now they are within that community.

Those who did believe were to be part of the believing community. So, at the very least, believers should treat fellow believers differently. However, God’s people are called to do even more than this.

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10 DeYmaz, 1.

11 DeYoung, Reconciliation, 53.

12 Slater, 68.
“The Church in Corinth was a very mixed group, with several differing views and practices which put considerable strains on their common life. Therefore, Paul attempts to encourage a sense of cooperation and unity amongst a group of people that were struggling with their differences.”¹³ Paul uses the metaphor of one body with many members to argue that everyone, regardless of specific giftedness, is indispensable to the whole. Paul lets them know that one Spirit inspires all of them and that the spiritual gifts are for the “common good” (1 Cor. 12:7). Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner write about the passage in 1 Corinthians 12:

the main emphasis of the chapter, then, turns out to be the oneness of the Christian community based on the oneness of the God/Lord/Spirit who establishes and serves as the patron of the community (in implied contradistinction to divisions, or at least lack of unity, that might be expected to exist among pagans pursuing diverse blessings from different patron gods/idsols, each presumed to offer different benefits/gifts to its followers).¹⁴

Again, Scripture shows that Paul offers guidance on how communities should act and be. Paul uses the metaphor of the body for the church. “Through baptism, Jews and Gentiles are reconciled into the one body of Christ. The interplay of gifts and diversity of the manifestation of unity are possible, thanks to the Holy Spirit present in the community.”¹⁵ Youngju Kwon, in 1 Corinthians 12, believes that Paul writes about diversity in the body.

The right understanding of God is Paul’s fundamental theological underpinning for reshaping the Corinthians’ imagination and behavior in

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ways of encouraging them to pursue the unity of the community. Again, the diversity of spiritual gifts is not the main issue for Paul, but part of the result of the gracious distribution by the triune God, who exemplifies such unity (vv. 4-6; “the same Spirit—the same Lord—the same God”).

“Unity and diversity are not just interconnected but they are complementary as well,” according to Kwon. “Paul further elaborates on the body metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12:21-26. Whereas he stresses diversity (many members) as a crucial element of unity (one body) in 12:14-20, he now introduces another important element of unity: the interrelationship of different members.” Believers are to be countercultural. Where others would exclude, believers are to embrace. Where there are division and strife, believers are to bring healing, peace, and unity.

**Diversity**

Diversity and unity are a part of the common good but take intentional effort on the part of believers. In Scripture, it is evident that diverse believers have been around since the Israelites had “foreigners” in their midst, throughout the Bible and up to the present day as part of the community of God. The Willowbank paper, a joint project of missiologists from around the world, demonstrates that “the heart of every culture is a ‘religion’ of some kind.” When followers of Christ approach nonbelievers, they should be aware of the biblical models and precedents for the unity of God’s covenant community and the diversity they embody. God has always embraced and welcomed others who honor and worship him, including those from diverse contexts. “According to

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17 Kwon, 84.

Ephesians, Christianity forges a new socio-religious identity that also destroys old barriers and prejudices. It does not advocate forsaking one’s national identity but affirming one’s Christian identity as a social locator.”  

Paul offers guidance on diversity that is useful for those seeking the common good or common purpose. He warns the Corinthians to “guard against disunity, and to rather be united in the common purpose” (1 Cor. 1:10-17). In these writings on unity, he also puts forth the idea of diversity as part and parcel of unity. The presence of diversity requires more diligence in bringing about unity. “Paul’s unity is not uniformity that bars any kinds of different expressions, but the unity in which different members coexist harmoniously.” In his writings about the “one body, many members” metaphor, all of Paul’s followers are encouraged to work together. Each believer is to use his gifting or skill set to work in the body for the common purpose. “Paul’s point is simply to show that there are varieties of gifts. He does not explain or comment at any length on the gifts, except those that were causing problems in Corinth.” This passage discusses problems with diversity of gifts, but problems might also exist with all types of diversity and not just gifting. It is in the unified church’s diversity that the church and individual believers are strongest if each person embraces the others and the gifts that they bring.

Paul begins by sharing how he has been accepted by the other apostles and he also points out that “God does not show favoritism” (Gal. 2:6). The other apostles accepted Paul because they saw the grace that had been given to him. Being able to see Christ in

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19 Slater, 67.

20 Mshanga, 148.

21 Kwon, 84.

22 Ciampa and Rosner, 574.
others and accept them as fellow believers and then as brothers and sisters in Christ is the goal. Paul and the other apostles devised a plan of action so that all could operate in their purpose—Paul to the Gentiles and the apostles to the circumcised. This passage emphasizes acceptance, acknowledgment, and action. The other apostles accepted Paul as a fellow servant of Christ; no other requirements were necessary. The apostles and Paul acknowledged where and whom they had been called to serve—Paul the Gentiles and the apostles the circumcised. It would not have been ideal for the apostles to attempt to witness to the Gentiles, as they did not have the background and were not equipped for ministry to the Gentiles. Paul was uniquely qualified for ministry to the Gentiles given his history and Roman citizenship. Having agreed upon how they could each work towards the common purpose and having created a plan, they acted. They began to do the work they had each been uniquely called to do in order to serve in common purpose—bringing about unity amid the diversity of the community of God.

Paul writes differently about the body of believers and the various gifts people receive. He concludes by saying that believers are gifted “so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12-13). In other words, diversity helps to show Christ to the world. The assumption in this passage is that the diverse gifts will work together harmoniously. “Diverse gifts can coexist rather than compete” (1 Cor. 12:14-20) and “different members rejoice and grieve together” (1 Cor. 12:26).

Paul frequently refers to the distinctions between Jew and Gentile. “Those pairs (Jew and Gentile) express the two basic distinctions that separated people in that
culture—race/religion and social status.”23 This same logic must be applied to all current distinctions to foster recognition that even though the number of distinctions has increased, all those who believe are still one in Christ. Within this “new community of faith is a ‘holy temple,’ thus, the temple is no longer a building but in a people, the Christian people. This explains why people must be holy and pure.”24

Reconciliation

God began the process of reconciling humanity to Him and through his Son it was completed (2 Cor. 5:18). In looking at the unity of the Trinity along with the existence of diversity in the early community of God and in the early church, believers today can use this belief on unity as the foundation for discussion about reconciliation. “The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a re-creation event that restored us to God’s original intention of a united human family built on just and healthy relationships.”25 Christ’s reconciling work is a foundation and a model for believers today. Paul writes about the ministry of reconciliation believers are to share throughout their lives.

Reconciliation with God, however, implies reconciliation among God’s people (cf. Eph. 2:16), something Paul later calls “your mending” or restoration (Eph. 2:9, 11). There is a close connection between “new creation” (Eph. 2:17) and “reconciliation;” both are cosmic and end-time blessings, and both impact humans, to be accepted and given expression now.26

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23 Ciampa and Rosner, 595.

24 Slater, 78.


God began the work, but his children are to continue the work of reconciling all of humanity to God and to each other.

Clearly, reconciliation does not entail glossing over sin or ignoring it for the sake of maintaining harmony. Paul confronts it directly and forcefully. So forcefully in the letter of tears that it temporarily deepened the breach in his relationship with the Corinthians and prompted this letter to mend any hurt feelings. But Paul knows that there can be no real reconciliation without acknowledgment of sinful behavior and repentance for it.27

For American society, acknowledging societal and political sins is where the process has unraveled. Therefore, it has not been possible to accomplish the next step of repentance and American Christians are not able to move forward toward peace and harmony. While in the reconciliation process our death will not be a literal death, there are ideas and beliefs that people need to die to in order to repair the divisions humanity has created, including racism, sexism, ageism, and many other systems that devalue and demean people based on negative valuations. Miroslav Volf used the terms “inclusion” and “embrace” to talk about bringing humanity together through reconciliation into unity. Volf suggested that “every church must be open to all other churches.”28 Only a part of the kingdom is known by each person (1 Cor. 13:9), and as believers come together this collective knowledge enlarges the individual parts that are known. Each person’s own formation work helps her or him to be vulnerable, humble, and open to the work of inclusion, embracing, and even reconciliation.

The “self-humbling of Christ began in his mind. ‘He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped’ (Phil. 2:6). This is recognition of the infinite worth of human beings and of the privilege of serving them—sacrifice and service.


Although Jesus identified himself completely with humanity, he did not lose his own identity.\(^\text{29}\)

Formation, inclusion, and embracing lay a solid foundation for the reconciliation process and are indeed integral to making reconciliation possible. Each believer is called to the ministry of reconciliation and just as God sent Christ to reconcile believers back to God, believers are to do likewise for others.

Reconciliation is God’s initiative, restoring a broken world to God’s intentions by reconciling ‘to himself all things’ through Christ (Col. 1:19) including the relationship between people and God, between people and with God’s created earth. Christians participate with God’s mission by being transformed into ambassadors of reconciliation.\(^\text{30}\)

Paul lets the Ephesians and all believers know that Christ made the two groups one and destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility (Eph. 2:14). For believers especially there should be no barriers or hostility. Agreement may not always exist, but this should not prohibit individuals from working in a manner that honors Christ. Being reconciled with one another means that barriers and hostility have been eradicated. When this is practiced, the way of Christ has been chosen.

Paul goes on to say that, because of Christ’s reconciling work, the Ephesians were no longer foreigners and strangers but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of his household (Eph. 2:19). All believers are interconnected in Christ, which compels relationship building with others—the “including” and “embracing” that Volf suggested. These terms resonate with diversity, unity, and reconciliation for when one includes

\(^{29}\) Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, “LAUSANNE OCCASIONAL PAPER 2: The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture.”

\(^{30}\) Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, “LAUSANNE OCCASIONAL PAPER 2: The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture.”
others one allows diversity, and when one embraces others unity exists, which means one has worked to become reconciled with all of one’s brothers and sisters in Christ.

Paul’s epistles are held in high esteem by many churches, denominations, and individual believers, yet, far too many believers are on the side of excluding, pushing away, and devaluing others. “Both one and all are stressed with one occurring three times and all occurring twice. There is spiritual solidarity that exists between believers because they all have experienced the same (one) Spirit and entered the same (one) body.”31

Paul’s epistles encourage the practice of unity, diversity and reconciliation so well because they come from the work he has been doing and that he was called to with the Gentiles. He sought to create a unified community of believers who all welcomed, included, and embraced one another, accepting each other’s giftings as part of the communal effort toward the common good.

31 Ciampa and Rosner, 593.
CHAPTER THREE: WRITINGS ON FORMATION, RECONCILIATION, UNITY AND DIVERSITY

Introduction

Reconciliation is included in The Unity Process but while it is part of the foundation for the process, it is not the center or anchor. The current situation in the United States demands that believers be more broadly focused in not only reconciling with others but in the building of relationships. These relationships must have a depth to them that transforms hearts and minds about who should be welcomed and embraced. The Unity Process, while it includes reconciliation, seeks to go further and incorporates several components to build bridges across cultures. The literature review focused on formation as a prerequisite for reconciliation, the reconciliation process, and unity and diversity. It was the belief of the researcher that to fully address societal problems in Dallas and around the world, particularly with regard to race, believers first need to be able to have healthy conversations about race in a diverse group, while fully aware of their own biases and prejudices. Doing this helps to build relationships across cultures and usher in a more unified community.

There has been an increase in Christian writings about diverse congregations and their challenges and divisions as well as other forms of division including sexism, ageism, economic status, sexual identification, and others. The literature review also revealed the importance of formation as a pre-requisite to reconciliation; that is, having skills and a toolbox for working with diverse people. The work towards unity must be intentional and must begin with formation; that is, skills and toolbox. Otherwise, unity
will be difficult to maintain. Authors use different terms when they write about developing and preparing believers for Christian service and Christlike living, including “formation” and “discipleship.” The goal is the same—to live out Christ daily, both individually and corporately. Merely having a relationship with Christ cannot be assumed to be enough to help bring unity back to the body.

The processes of reconciliation and inner formation impact believers’ abilities to maintain unity in diversity and relationship building across cultures. Instituting the reconciliation process and inner formation activities in believers’ daily lives will help to maintain the tools and skills needed for intentionality. Authors who write about reconciliation, including DeYoung, Emerson, and Smith, agree that before or during the early stages of the reconciliation process, formation tools and activities should be used to work on each person’s internal reconciliation to God, and as a body of believers. Michael Emerson and Christian Smith break down racism and racialization in American society to help explain how racism has become institutionalized and how certain conduct on the part of the church have made things worse.\(^{32}\) They use such terms as telling the story, repenting, and forgiveness in talking about reconciliation. All of these are hard to do at best and extremely difficult at worst unless the inner formation work has been done. It is from the vantage point of a reformed and reconciled relationship with Christ that believers are better positioned to aid and engage the reconciliation process with others and bring unity to the diverse body.

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Formation: A Prerequisite for Reconciliation

Individuals

Formation activities and processes should be focused on the individual as well as the collective body of believers. According to John Ackerman,

Spiritual formation is the process whereby we grow in our ability to pay attention, the way we help form what God is doing. It involves all the ways we are being formed in the image of Christ in our inner life and outer ministry. Spiritual formation is the congregation growing in its ability to learn from God, to grow toward becoming a community like the Trinity.33

The topic of discipleship or formation is the focus of Alan and Debra Hirsch’s book *Untamed: Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship*, examining the individual first and then the body of believers. Both individuals and the body must constantly work on their relationship with Christ, their inner core, for the sake of the gospel. Each person’s inner core must be Christ-focused before any ministry is attempted, especially in the work of reconciliation and diversity.34 Developing the core in each believer, discipling, and formation work all refer to the intentional furthering of a relationship with Christ. It is out of this relationship with Christ that all ministry happens and as this relationship with Christ deepens, lives are transformed into Christlikeness. As Ackerman puts it, “Forming is the beginning and transforming is the goal—the goal is that Christ, and not our egos, be at the center of our lives.”35 Hirsch and Hirsch have much to offer about this thinking. Believers also “come to know ultimate reality … by the

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35 Ackerman, 19.
establishment of a personal relationship between God and man. To know God this way requires a passionate concern and the application of one’s whole personality existentially.\textsuperscript{36} The church must disciple believers so that they can have a greater “capacity to lovingly embody and transmit the life of Jesus through the lives of his followers.”\textsuperscript{37}

On human strength and ability alone, believers are incapable of developing fully into who they have been called to be and walking fully in their purpose. The work of discipleship begins with loving God. “Discipleship means loving God first and foremost and loving everything else in the light of that love. It actually frees us to experience his world in a far more profound and fulfilling way.”\textsuperscript{38} This releasing or freeing helps in transformation, the releasing and acquiring of those things identified along the way.

Cynthia S. W. Crysdale comments on the use of formation.

The idea of formation is to use all the influences of culture—all the structures and institutions—to help people understand themselves and their world, to adjust to both without excessive stress, and to come to the point where they can contribute their own talents, insights, and gifts to the community. Transformation, on the other hand, involves the complete and utter reversal of all that is considered good and perfect. Transformation leads to the dissolution of all that one ordinarily values. The death of the old and ordinary self leads to the birth of the whole self-healed, renewed, and restored, both in its communal and personal dimensions.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} Hirsch, and Hirsch, 65.

\textsuperscript{37} Hirsch and Hirsch, 13.

\textsuperscript{38} Hirsch and Hirsch, 75.

Transformation and developing a true sense of identity in Christ “requires two essential
directions in relationships: one with God and the other with people.”
Added to that is
“knowing we are loved by God and others.” These two very communal relationships,
God and others, become the launching pad for living out Christian lives and actions in
diversity and unity.

“Being and acting belong together – our identity and our sense of purpose are
inextricably linked.” A believer’s actions emanate from the thinking of a broken
follower of Christ in a sinful world. Roland Allen suggests that believers must “live the
Christian life in that state and social order in which the Christians find themselves.”
Whether a new convert or mature believer, when entering new neighborhoods and new
worship settings, one must apply this guideline: be light in a dark world. With the mind
of Christ, one can begin to not only change themselves but also the church. Alan Hirsch
and Dave Ferguson argue that “change must come from deep inside the paradigm;
anything less will simply be external and cosmetic.” The work of discipleship reaches
deep within an individual so that they can then reach out and make the changes that need
to be implemented for paradigm level change. Scholars support the idea that working on
the core leads to inner transformation, which leads to the work of transformation in others

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40 Hirsch and Hirsch, 183.
41 Hirsch and Hirsch, 189.
42 Hirsch and Hirsch, 183.
43 Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It*
(Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), 151.
44 Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, *On the Verge: A Journey into the Apostolic Future of the
Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 57.
and the environment and creates opportunities for spontaneous voluntary expression.

Spontaneous voluntary expression is beautifully described in the words of Allen:

Christian experience is always a secret; and the man who speaks of it to another always pays him a subtle compliment when he entrusts him with his secret of life … The expression of his experience intensifies it; it renews it; it repeats it; it enlightens it. In speaking of it he goes through it again; in setting it before another he sets it before himself in a new light. He gets a deeper sense of its reality and power and meaning. In speaking of it he pledges himself to the conduct and life which it involves. He proclaims himself bound by it, and every time that his speech produces an effect upon another, that effect reacts upon himself, making his hold upon his truth surer and stronger.  

Churches

Ministries can produce this same effect in believers individually as well as corporately. Intentionality is the key and results from infusing teaching programs, small groups, and every church program with the necessary skills and toolboxes as appropriate.

It is about bringing people closer to Jesus and teaching them his ways. It is about loving people and exposing them to the grace and wonder of God’s heart, helping them see and experience the values of the kingdom and calling forth those values that may lie dormant in their own hearts and lives. It is about letting the beauty of Jesus and his kingdom come through.

When this is done, not only the body of believers but also the communities and neighborhoods in which churches reside will be enhanced. Brian McLaren advises that “identity formation—and reformation—takes time and can’t be forced or pushed.”  

Communities and neighborhoods will change as their members and churches change and transform. Hirsch and Ferguson write about the future of the church and how it needs to

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45 Allen, 11.


become apostolic and reproducing, claiming that the church is on the “verge” of something new. They argue that “the reason why discipleship is such a critical key to ‘Verge’ church thinking is because movements grow only in proportion to their capacity to make disciples—followers of the living Messiah” and “leadership is directly proportional to discipleship.”

According to Hirsch and Ferguson, a type of discipleship is needed that “goes on to transform the whole system we call church and organization” if churches are to be successful at bringing people from diverse backgrounds together in unity and harmony. Discipleship or formation has become misplaced and lost in too many churches. Over time church leaders have created a “domesticated civil religion which no longer challenges and transforms society but rather is co-opted by it.” The church has allowed the rules of society to become the rules of the church and permitted the structure and hierarchy of society to transform the structure and hierarchy of the church. The current operations of denominations reveal these transformations. Allen refers to this when he talks about “fatal inversion” or beginning with the national church and then going down to the local church. In this fatal inversion, the denominational leadership is at the top and local churches are required to do certain things as a practice of the denomination to remain within the realm of the denomination. Even within denominations and churches believers have forgotten that “He comes to us in our degradation and offers us not a law,

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48 Hirsch and Ferguson, 128-129.
49 Hirsch and Ferguson, 112.
50 Hirsch and Ferguson, 130.
51 Allen, 30.
but His grace.” Believers are unskilled in extending grace, even to fellow believers.

Work in this area of the lives of believers individually, churchwide, and denominationally would enhance the lives of all, believers and nonbelievers alike.

In every case, however, the learning of individuals, groups, and the congregation as a whole are interrelated. Their spiritual formation is not the sole responsibility of clergy, an adult education group, or a spirituality task force. Rather, it is the responsibility of all the congregation’s leaders to help individuals learn to pay attention to God.

Individually and collectively believers must be intentional about furthering their relationship with Christ as a prerequisite or foundation for any type of service or ministry. It must also be acknowledged that this is an ongoing endeavor that continually informs the lives, behaviors, and convictions of believers, especially in the hard task of reconciliation.

**Reconciliation**

This thesis project report has benefited from the writings of other scholars, particularly in the area of reconciliation. There is a plethora of writing about reconciliation and a myriad of ways and models to achieve it. Given the current state of society and churches, the reconciliation process is needed in any manner deemed appropriate for the context.

**Need for Reconciliation**

William Barclay’s translation of 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 captures the implications of the metaphorical understanding of reconciliation where God makes friends of his human adversaries. And the whole process is due to the action of God, who through Christ turned our enmity to himself.

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52 Allen, 69.

53 Ackerman, 109.
into friendship and who gave us the task of helping others to accept that friendship. The fact is that God was acting in Christ to turn the world’s enmity to himself into friendship. He was not holding people’s sins against them. Thus, he placed upon us the privilege of talking to people who are hostile to him and offer his friendship. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors. It is as if God was making his appeal to you through us. As the representatives of Christ, we appeal to you to accept the offer of friendship that God is making to you.\textsuperscript{54}

Just as God restored believers to him through Christ, believers are to help others in the process and decline to hold people’s sins against them, helping them to also be reconciled to Christ. From this state of reconciliation with Christ, believers can begin to be reconciled with others. Battle agrees that “the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a re-creation event that restored us to God’s original intention of a united and reconciled human family built on just and healthy relationships.”\textsuperscript{55} Current society is not united, reconciled, nor built on just and healthy relationships. Christians, those in relationship with Christ, need to follow the model of Christ. “As God identified with us, so ought we identify with others.”\textsuperscript{56} Believers also have to “change the paradigm by reconceiving the primary frameworks, conversations, and metaphors of how we see ourselves as God’s people given our current diverse context.”\textsuperscript{57} They must work out of their relationship with Christ because they are human and subject to sin. John Burke reminds us that all are imperfect people and that it is imperfect people who change the


\textsuperscript{56} Hirsch and Hirsch, 236.

\textsuperscript{57} Hirsch and Ferguson, 85.
world. He calls believers to look at Christ’s encounters with imperfect people and, through real-life stories, challenges believers to see those around them in a new light, through the lens and love of Christ.

In seeking to make themselves more Christ-like, believers must be intentional and passionate about seeking this relationship and utilizing resources to help them on the journey. In their precursor to On the Verge, Alan and Debra Hirsch look at discipleship and how believers need to follow the model of the “untamed” Jesus. They offer a resource for those interested in an untamed, Jesus-filled life with information about the church, humans as image-bearers of God, family life, culture, and sexuality. The suggested practices at the end of each chapter can guide the avid seeker to more Christlike living.

The task of a believer is not just an individual one but a collective one as well. As the body of believers, they are called to create community in a loving Christlike way. The authors of United by Faith tackle the existing and overarching problem of lack of desegregation among churches. They look at the issue from a biblical, theological, and historical perspective, recalling various historical successes in uniting believers and close with a foundation for a theology suited to sustaining diverse congregations. Vitalis Mshanga writes as follows about this issue:

Even if today Eucharistic sharing is not always possible, the divided churches express the catholicity of the Church when they pray for one


another, share resources, assist one another in times of need, make
decisions together, work together for justice, reconciliation, and peace,
hold one another accountable to the discipleship inherent in baptism, and
maintain dialogue in the face of differences, refusing to say “I have no
need of you.” (1 Cor. 12:21)\(^\text{61}\)

While they write mainly from a missional perspective, Michael Frost and Alan
Hirsch provide a resource for churches by issuing a call to renewal.\(^\text{62}\) In this text, they are
striving to renew the missions area with a call to discipleship because of the way
members have drifted away in the past few decades. “Re-Jesus” to them is the refounding
of the church on the author and founder of the faith, Jesus Christ. The church today has
become complacent and does not follow the model of Jesus’ radical nature. The church
needs to have a relationship with Christ, active love for him and not just a passive belief.
Hirsch partners with Ferguson to address the continued decline of Christianity and what
can be done to address it.\(^\text{63}\) They suggest that what is needed is an apostolic, reproducing
movement where every individual is living a mission-sent life. Hirsch and Ferguson call
the current changes in churches an “apostolic movement” because they resemble the
changes of the New Testament and other great missional movements. They tell stories of
leaders who are forerunners and share their insights for helping others to become more
involved. The need is great, but there are several models and processes that can be used.

*Process of Reconciliation*

There are different views about where reconciliation should start, who should start
it, and how it should be viewed. “Paul describes reconciliation through the lens of those

\(^{61}\) Mshanga, 158.

\(^{62}\) Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *Re-Jesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church* (Peabody,

\(^{63}\) Hirsch and Ferguson, 18.
redeemed. ‘If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come’ (2 Cor. 5:17). But modern reconciliatory practices begin with the victim and the situation of violence and suffering that has victimized him or her.”64 Despite the beginning point, the process can involve several things. Michael Battle believes that Christians can practice reconciliation in the world during war, violence and chaos with five steps.65 The steps begin with contrition and confession, an internal preparation that then moves outward to repentance, forgiveness, and renewal. That is, it begins with formation, our inner development and preparation. Battle recognizes four different types of reconciliation models. The communal-justice model has a goal of immediate justice for all of creation while the individual-justice model has a goal of personal holiness. The communal-peace model has a goal of restoration of full communion with God while the individual-peace model has a goal of personal peace.66

DeYoung describes what is essential for actually engaging in the process of reconciliation: taking responsibility, seeking forgiveness, repairing the wrong, healing the soul, and creating a new way of relating.67 These essentials are also found in “the six Ps” described by Hirsch and Hirsch: presence, proximity, powerlessness, provenience, passion, and proclamation. While they are writing to and from a missional ministry focus, the information is useful given the divisions everywhere in our society. Powerlessness, one of the Ps, involves humility and self-denial which “are inseparable from the Christian

64 Laurie Brink, “From Wrongdoer to New Creation: Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians,” Interpretation 71, no. 3 (2017), 299.

65 Battle, 41-46.

66 Battle, 21.

67 DeYoung, United, 87-111.
life.” At a time when United States society is discussing whether to build a wall on the southern border, Christians must recognize the effect of a wall on our relationships. Paul writes that Christ “is our peace: in his flesh, he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph. 2:13-16). Reconciliation processes help to eradicate hostility and connect with others regardless of differences.

With more connections between people, believers will become even more passionate about helping others to heal, reconcile, and seek justice.

As disciples we need to ensure we have incorporated a theology of redemptive suffering into our understanding of God, for this helps make sense of what we ourselves, or others, may experience. A sense of empathy or compassion for the other … implies a certain intimacy with the people you are trying to reach. We begin to feel their stories, their lives, their pains. Our hearts and compassion are thereby activated.

Believers need to encourage others to tell their stories and enjoy hearing people’s stories, as it will be a witness to the larger society and will remind everyone of the various ways that God is at work. Hirsch and Hirsch suggest that this is done as believers connect with people and become more focused on building relationships and connecting at the heart and soul level. When this is done, hearts and ministries will change. Paul “went from persecuting Jewish Christians for including people from other ethnic groups in their faith communities to becoming the leader of the movement for unity among people of all nations.” The ultimate result of reconciliation is the restoration of relationships.

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69 Battle, 204.
70 Hirsch and Hirsch, 246.
71 Battle, 204.
restoration of humanity—victim and wrongdoer alike—is the center of the reconciliation process.”

Issues to Consider

Reconciliation began with Christ reconciling people back to God with His death, resurrection, and ascension. Having been reconciled with God, believers are then to reconcile with others and help others to become reconciled. Figure 3.1 shows the multilayered areas for reconciliation processes that develop from what McLaren suggests in his discussion of reorganizing “organized religion.” The most intimate of the four groups, “Person to Person,” would include everything from one-on-one between individuals to one-on-one between families. The next layer, “Community to Community,” would include collective individuals and families who may or may not be from different diversity and cultural categories. The third layer, “Group to Group,” would be divided between an Inner Group and Outer Group. Inner Group would include congregations internal in denominations, faith, and other groups that are multi-located that may have divisions within that need to be addressed. For example, an Inner Group could be a Black United Methodist Church and a White United Methodist Church. Both are United Methodist Congregations but have distinct ways of being and doing. Outer Group would include those of different denominations and faiths and other groups that want to engage across divides, such as a Baptist congregation seeking to work with an Islamic congregation. The last layer, “Government to Government,” would include larger societies and local, national, and international governments. This would be the least

72 Barclay, 299.

73 McLaren, 100-300.
intimate but is certainly still needed as evidenced by history and current affairs (e.g.,
Tutsis and Hutus, Israelis and Palestinians, and Russia and Ukraine).

**Figure 1. Levels of Reconciliation**

The success of reconciliation in each of these venues will have impact and
repercussions in the other areas; therefore, according to McLaren dialogue, partnership,
and harmony (shalom) are important and key ingredients for reconciliation processes. If
one strives for the first three (dialogue, partnership, and harmony), reconciliation will be
much easier and more forthcoming. If one only focuses on reconciliation without much
emphasis on the other ingredients, the road to reconciliation and its process will be
difficult to complete and shalom will be less likely to occur.

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75 McLaren. 100-300.
“True reconciliation is neither quick nor painless, particularly in areas of protracted and deep conflict.” Volf contends that if the healing word of the gospel is to be heard today, Christian theology must find ways of speaking that address the hatred of the other. Returning to the New Testament emphasis of salvation as reconciliation, Volf proposes the idea of embrace as a theological response to the problem of exclusion. As believers learn to embrace the “other” they will begin to feel God’s embrace around them both. Paul’s injunction to the Romans also addresses this: “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you” (Rom. 15:7).

Believers should recognize that not everyone will be coming from the same position, nor will they be in the same place as others. “The vast majority, 85 percent, of people in the church will be changed by acting their way into a new way of thinking.” So it is not critical that everyone gets it before a church can move forward. Hirsch and Ferguson argue that what is critical is that “change must come from deep inside the paradigm; anything less will simply be external and cosmetic.” Therefore believers need discipling utilizing the skills and toolbox to help them reach deep within. This explains why views and attitudes pertaining to race in the United States have not changed over the years. The church must engage more in incarnational practices.

76 Brink, 299.
77 Volf, 1996.
78 Hirsch and Ferguson, 175.
79 Hirsch and Ferguson, 57.
“Incarnational practice means being present, patient, humble, and respecting the humanity of people and people groups—their culture, their dignity, their current location in their journey toward God and incarnational mission demands that the church be constantly adapting to suit the context.” Hirsch and Ferguson are saying that by consistently engaging in reconciliation practices individuals and churches can be more incarnational. In their specific context, they must ascertain the need for reconciliation and then determine what type of process would be most amenable for that context. Furthermore, looking at the issues to consider before starting the process will cut down on unnecessary mistakes and missteps. Having done these things, the individual and the church will be ready and prepared to usher in and maintain unity amid diversity.

**Unity and Diversity**

The literature consulted revealed two key practices for becoming a truly missional community: knowing and having the character of a community and knowing and having the actions of a community. Combining these two components is essential for propelling the church forward. The community of believers should seek to be a blessing both to the immediate surrounding community and to the larger society. Therefore, believers need to be aware of how the community operates, the composition of the community, and the ethos of the community—its shared goals and beliefs.

*Character of the Community*

The word “community” comes from *communitas* which “captures the idea of the enhanced forms of community that emerges from the context of a shared ordeal, a

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80 Hirsch and Ferguson, 161.
common task, an organizational challenge, even danger.”\textsuperscript{81} From this shared bond, Hirsch and Ferguson suggest that believers can be more effective and productive as members discover and use gifts and talents for the common good. All seek to live out their Christian unity in fellowship and love.

Writers in Christian communities often look to Paul when seeking scriptures about unity amid diversity. In Galatians “Paul warns the Christian community to shun all social divisions because as elected heirs of Abraham’s offspring all belong to Christ.”\textsuperscript{82} Vitalis Mshanga says that it is also interesting to note that after Saul’s conversion “Paul did not become a founder of a new religious sect, but he considered himself as belonging to the universal Church under the apostles of the Lord. [Paul warns the Corinthians to] guard against disunity, and to rather be united in the common purpose (1 Cor. 1:10-17).”\textsuperscript{83} Hirsch and Tim Catchim point to Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, which talks about unity and its effects on the maturing and transforming church.

Truly we are better together than we are apart. Therefore, we must seriously strive for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of true peace (Ephesians 4:3), recognizing that we are very different and that Jesus intended that we should be (Ephesians 4:7-11) and so become the mature and transformative church that lives under the rule of Jesus (Ephesians 4:12-16).\textsuperscript{84} Mshanga notes that Paul also writes about this picture and character of the believers and the church. “Paul’s vision for the unity of a Christian community is marked by two

\begin{list}{\textsuperscript{81}}{\usecounter{list81}}
\item Hirsch and Ferguson, 138.
\item Mshanga, 156.
\item Mshanga, 148.
\end{list}
perspectives, namely, a call to maintain unity inside the Christian community (\textit{unitas ad intra}), and at the same time openness for the conversion of Gentiles (\textit{unitas ad extra})."\textsuperscript{85}

Examples in Scripture are included to inform readers about where God stands regarding unity. The first counsel was about diversity in unity where “the decision of the Council was a confirmation that God makes no distinction and has no partiality and that he saves whomever he pleases (Rom. 12:11-16).”\textsuperscript{86} Scripture can be used to understand God, Christ, and the role of the church. “Paul suggests that Christology prevails over Ecclesiology. This implies, amongst other things, that before understanding the church, one has to know Christ the founder and the head of the church.”\textsuperscript{87}

Mshanga suggests that believers must be careful not to focus more on doctrine than practice: “Doctrine is good, but only as a guide to the right experience of God. And make no mistake, doctrines of God can intrude into the actual God relationship.”\textsuperscript{88} A believer’s faith is to be constantly lived out in community, thereby honoring this God relationship. Believers must see one another as partners in the work of God, serving, working, supporting, and praying while being, doing, and living Christ. “Diversity is as integral to first-century Christianity as unity … [and there was] a diverse expression of the same Christian faith” evident in the New Testament.\textsuperscript{89}

“Christianity is designed to be a people’s liberation movement, a social force, a viral idea passing from person to person through the medium of gospel and discipleship,

\textsuperscript{85} Mshanga, 146-147.
\textsuperscript{86} Mshanga, 147.
\textsuperscript{87} Mshanga, 154.
\textsuperscript{88} Hirsch and Hirsch, 89.
\textsuperscript{89} Mshanga, 147.
creating gospel communities in its wake.”90 The character of believers in community living out their faith and utilizing their gifts and talents will enhance and transform neighborhoods, cultures, and society. Believers can begin to act from this foundation.

**Action of the Community**

“Paul’s unity is not uniformity that bars any kinds of different expressions, but the unity in which different members coexist harmoniously.”91 Kwon believes that from such a vantage point, the Christian community will be best able to shine the light of Christ in their community and society. “Without multiple perspectives … we cannot develop an accurate view of the challenges and opportunities in front of us.”92 Believers’ acts should not be limited to organized activities and events. Their daily lives should be their ministry. Hirsch and Ferguson agree that “everyone in a movement, and not just the so-called religious professionals, must be activated and play a vital role in extending Jesus’ mission on earth.”93 Every believer has been called to a higher purpose. Believers must not only equip, prepare, and support fellow members but may also need to open doors of opportunity and create relationships that allow creativity and flexibility for ministry. “If missional defines our being sent out into the world, then incarnational must define the way in which we engage the world.”94 Believers forget that the Holy Spirit works through all believers new and mature, all classes, all races and nationalities. The Spirit propagates the faith, not humanity. It is through the continual retelling of Christ’s entrance into the

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90 Hirsch and Ferguson, 32.
91 Kwon, 84.
92 Hirsch and Catchim, 55.
93 Hirsch and Ferguson, 73.
94 Hirsch and Ferguson, 234.
lives of believers that expansion is encouraged. It is through all these things that believers are encouraged, replenished, and fortified for the work. It is not critical that everyone gets it before they can move forward. They only need to be open and willing to allow the Spirit to do the rest.

Diversity and unity are an integral part of shalom, which is an inner completeness, wholeness, and tranquility. McLaren talks about how to strive for shalom in the kingdom of God, writing that believers can encourage one another in working towards shalom and enlighten others about their experiences. He maintains that shalom encompasses dialogue, partnership, and harmony within congregations, across denominations, and across faith traditions and other groups. These are believers’ missional challenges, the three streams that emanate from McLaren’s writing of the kingdom of God that often are not places for implementation of conversation and relationship. When looking for groups to partner within the process, believers should look to these streams, interacting across faith traditions, across denominations, and across the congregation. Dialogue means seeking to understand the other’s perspective and allowing it to transform one’s life. Partnership means working together to take care of everyone, a joint participating in the kingdom of God. It also means an issuing forth of harmony for all. People should be able to invite “others on a shared journey to and through God to the neighbor, the other, the enemy—and, we might add, to all living creatures and the creation that sustains them.” It is important for dialogue, partnership, and harmony to exist in each stream

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95 McLaren, 223-253.
96 McLaren, 223-238.
97 McLaren, 239-253.
and will likely involve different people working in each stream simultaneously to bring shalom and reconciliation to the world. The degree to which we see more dialogue, partnership, and harmony will be the degree to which we see more unity among Christians and throughout the world.

Embracing others and cultivating unity has its basis in the unity of the Trinity. God desired to be reconciled with believers and Christ accomplished it through the power of the Spirit. If believers are to be reconciled with one another and exhibit unity, then according to Volf “the inscriptions of hatred must be carefully erased and the threads of violence gently removed.”99 Believers must remember that “we, the others— we, the enemies—are embraced by the divine persons who love us with the same love with which they love each other and therefore make space for us within their own eternal embrace.”100 From this remembrance, believers are compelled to make space for “the other” and embrace them just as believers are embraced by God.

**Conclusion**

More American churches are multiracial, but still less so than the neighborhoods surrounding them. A Baylor University study found the percentage of multiracial congregations in the United States nearly doubled. From 1998 to 2012, the most recent year for which data is available, multiracial churches grew from 6 percent to 12 percent of all U.S. congregations. Multiracial congregations are places of worship in which less than 80 percent of the congregants are of the same race or ethnicity. About 1 in 5 American congregants attend a multiracial congregation, climbing to 18 percent in 2012 from 13 percent in 1998.

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98 McLaren, 258.

99 Volf, 111.

100 Volf, 129.
Catholic churches are the most likely to be multiracial, with about 1 in 4. But Protestant churches are growing more so.\textsuperscript{101}

These numbers vary slightly depending on the source, but the reality is that American society and churches are changing and becoming more diverse. As the researcher prepared to research The Unity Process and its effectiveness in decreasing the divisions in society because it is undergirded by the reconciliation process, it proved useful to focus the literature review. The literature consulted was helpful in exploring formation and the skills and tools individuals and churches need before, during, and after engaging in diverse settings. “You cannot be a people of conquest if you’re unwilling to enter the battle.”\textsuperscript{102} It could also be said that believers cannot be a people of love if they are unwilling to enter into Jesus’ love. They cannot be a people of faith if they are unwilling to enter into the hope of God. They cannot be a people of reconciliation if they are unwilling to enter into relationship with others who are different.

Literature on the topic of reconciliation emphasized the need for reconciliation, the various processes of reconciliation, and issues to be considered when delving into the subject of reconciliation. McManus argues that everyone is to be involved in reconciliation.

Every follower of Christ has the prime directive of representing Him on this earth. We are all called to be His witnesses. We are all commissioned to make disciples. We are all given the assignment of serving as His ambassadors of reconciliation. We are all commanded to love not only


God, but also our neighbors as ourselves. We are all mandated to follow
His example by serving others even as Christ has served us.\textsuperscript{103}

Lastly, the literature review examined the combined topics of unity and diversity.
The character and action of diverse communities are driven by their relationship with
Christ, the skills and tools mentioned earlier, and a reconciled relationship with God.
“Nothing matters to God more than relationships. Having a good relationship with God
results in having good relationships with others”\textsuperscript{104} According to McManus, it is in
relationship with those who are different that one can see in new ways and change their
actions accordingly. “It is easy to make decisions that are objective and rational when
you’re not personally involved. When you become connected at a heart level, your base
of information changes.”\textsuperscript{105} For those whose foundation comes from Christ, they are in
relationship with Christ and demonstrate Christlike character and actions.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{103} McManus, 161-162.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{104} McManus, 116.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{105} McManus, 246.}
CHAPTER FOUR: THE CASE STUDY OF THE UNITY PROCESS

The researcher designed this project to study The Unity Process and its effectiveness as a practical tool for addressing the problem of cultural divisions in the metropolitan area of Dallas. The case study was a qualitative method of research and was best suited for studying The Unity Process as it works toward heart-level change and transformation. According to Leedy and Ormrod, the purpose of qualitative research is to “describe and explain, to explore and interpret, and to build theory.”

The researcher has sought to describe and explain The Unity Process through an exploration of its documents and process. Then the researcher interpreted and theorized by utilizing and analyzing the surveys, interviews and field notes of the researcher. John W. Creswell says,

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system [a case] or multiple bounded systems [cases] over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information [e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports], and reports a case description and case-based themes.

Thus, this case study included some of the sources mentioned. The research instruments included surveys, interviews, and field notes. A description of The Unity Process was developed notating relevant themes and providing an

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assessment of its viability as a solution to the divisiveness in the Dallas area. As Leedy and Ormrod stated, “A case study may be especially suitable for learning more about a little known or a poorly understood situation.”\textsuperscript{108} The Unity Process is a new, innovative process that should be examined for its effectiveness and value for us today.

**Qualitative Research Methods**

The purposes served by this case study were to describe The Unity Process, to verify or test “the validity of certain claims,”\textsuperscript{109} and to judge the effectiveness of The Unity Process. Leedy and Ormrod list another purpose of qualitative research that does not align with this case study as it is about a phenomenon study. The design of this case study is considered an intrinsic case study in that the “focus is on the case itself because the case presents an unusual or unique situation,”\textsuperscript{110} a unique response to a situation in this case.

**Research Instruments and Data Collection**

The instruments used in this research included surveys, interviews, and field notes from the researcher. There were a pre-survey and post-survey, one on one interviews and notes taken throughout the process.

*Surveys*

The participants were given a survey before starting the process and another after completing the process. Leedy and Ormrod define surveys as a tool involved in

\textsuperscript{108} Leedy and Ormrod, 137.

\textsuperscript{109} Leedy and Ormrod, 134-135.

\textsuperscript{110} Creswell, 74.
“acquiring information about one or more groups of people by asking them questions and tabulating their answers.”\textsuperscript{111} Surveys were a good option for this study, according to Statistics Solution. They state that “one of the main advantages of pre-test/post-test designs is that the associated repeated-measures statistical analyses tend to be more powerful, and require considerably smaller sample sizes than other types of analyses.”\textsuperscript{112} Although this study dealt with surveys, not tests, the same reasoning applies. Also, the pre- and post-surveys were given to a small number of participants (eight). The surveys asked questions about their participation in The Unity Process. Participants were also questioned about their understanding, level of engagement and type of engagement with other races before and after the process.

The pre-survey contained demographic information, including name, race or ethnic group, age, and gender. The remaining portion of the pre-survey was a variety of questions in the design of the Likert scale.\textsuperscript{113} The post-survey contained the same demographic information, additional Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions. (Appendices A and B). At the initial meeting, the participants were each given the pre-survey and consent form to complete on paper. The distribution of the pre-survey was a part of the welcoming and orienting for the participants. Because the process began almost immediately, it was important for the participants to complete the pre-survey before any exposure to The Unity Process.

\textsuperscript{111} Leedy and Ormrod, 183.


The post-survey was distributed at the end of the last meeting. Throughout the process, participants were equipped and encouraged to be authentic within themselves and with others. The participants thus felt at ease in being authentic in their responses to the post-survey. Participants were previously advised about the post-survey and encouraged to bring any materials from previous sessions that would help them complete the post-survey.

*Interviews*

After the completion of the process, along with the post-survey, the researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with each participant. In their research comparing focus groups and interviews, Greg Guest and his colleagues found the following:

In one set of studies, individual interviews were 18 times more likely to raise socially sensitive discussion topics than focus groups. Similarly, in another set researchers found that participants provided similar responses in groups and individual interviews for moderately sensitive topics but generally shared more on very sensitive topics in interviews.\(^{114}\)

The Unity Process involves the personal and social questioning and engaging of its participants. So, the use of interviews as part of the research for this project was warranted. The researcher used an interview guide for all the interviews. The interviews were semi-structured\(^{115}\) in that the researcher had the guide with questions offering some structure, but the questions were open-ended, allowing some flexibility for the researcher to probe further. The interviews add even more in-depth narrative to the data presented by the pre- and post-surveys. The interviews provided an opportunity for greater depth in


\(^{115}\) Leedy and Ormrod, 147.
understanding the participant’s experience. Interviews provide a good description of the participants and their capacity to build relationships across cultures as a result of participating in The Unity Process. All the interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed for analysis. These and other steps were followed as posed by Leedy and Ormrod for doing a productive interview. Interviewees included the entire research group of eight as well as one previous participant in The Unity Process. A suitable location was selected for the interviews. The research group participants were interviewed at their meeting location and the prior participants were interviewed at the location of their choice. As a participant/observer, the researcher developed rapport, a level of trust, and vulnerability. This relationship encouraged the participants to be ready to share honestly about their experience and growth.

The interviews consisted of experiential questions about the entire process as well as their reactions during the process. A copy of the interview guide is in Appendix C. The interviews also sought to ascertain participants’ beliefs about races, cultures as well as participants’ past and future experiences in these situations. The interviewer questioned participants about possible future actions and potential group involvement. After all the research items were completed, the data from the pre-surveys, post-surveys, and the interviews were inserted into charts and themes identified. In addition, the researcher kept field notes.

116 Leedy and Ormrod, 147.

117 Leedy and Ormrod, 147-149.
Field Notes

The process and the participants were observed throughout, noting individual attitudes and interactions of the participants. The researcher, as participant-observer, observed these things but also participated in the discussions and activities. The researcher noted the actions, demeanors, and responses of the participants throughout the process. Michael D. Fetters and Ellen B. Rubinstein believe that “observations can offer important qualitative insights and provide a mechanism for documenting behaviors, events, and unexpected occurrences.” They also state that understanding behavior is “the most compelling reason for observations.” Given that the purpose of The Unity Process is to change the thinking and behaviors of the participants, then observations were indicated as one of the research tools. The researcher’s observations and notes were analyzed along with the other data. Then all the documents of The Unity Process were reviewed and assessed (Appendix D and E). Again, the researcher looked at the process, the materials used, the time frame, the ground rules, and the diversity of the participants. These instruments assisted with the analysis of the data collected while looking for recurrent themes and confirmations of The Unity Process as a viable tool. The design of the data instruments was intentional in ascertaining key areas: exposure and awareness, how races are viewed, discussions about race, engaging cross-culturally and participants’

118 Creswell, 130.


120 Fetters and Rubinstein, 555.
overall experience of The Unity Process. Thus, the researcher used these key terms as
guiding points in sorting responses and developing themes.

Participants

Diverse participants were recruited for The Unity Process and the venues for
recruiting participants were also diverse, including churches, organizations, civic groups,
and schools. Participants elected to participate in the process after hearing about what
would be required and the desired outcomes. The number of case study participants were
identified (Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). The current participants received the pre-survey,
post-survey, and were observed and interviewed.

<p>| Table 4.1 Gender (N=8)         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Participants</th>
<th>Previous Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Table 4.2 Ethnicity (N=8)     |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Participants</th>
<th>Previous Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Table 4.3 Age (N=8)         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher also interviewed one previous participant of The Unity Process to
record his or her experiences, growth, and current state after having participated in the
process. Previous participants are also shown in tables 4.1 and 4.2. Data cannot be
provided on age for this group because prior participants were not asked to disclose their
ages.

All the participants lived in the Dallas metropolitan area and identified themselves
as middle-class. Some of the participants knew each other and two couples participated.
There were demonstrably more women than men and only one of the men was not there
with a spouse. All participants were Christians but only some had previous exposure to other races and cultures. The ages of participants ranged from 30 to 80 years. The researcher estimated that the previous participants were at least forty years old. All but one of the participants were either African American or White; the exception was mixed-race, an African American/Costa Rican female who identified more as African American. The lack of other racial categories does not disqualify the data as diverse because of the continued prevalence of issues between African Americans and Whites. According to a Pew research done this year, “More than 150 years after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States, most U.S. adults say the legacy of slavery continues to have an impact on the position of black people in American society today.”\(^{121}\)

The use of the case study to examine the process was implemented and the research instruments were examined. The surveys, interviews, and field notes were discussed, including how they were used and analyzed. An analysis was provided of the participants on their demographics, recruitment, and experiences. The results of all the analyses will be shared in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER FIVE: THE UNITY PROCESS ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

While the previous chapter focused on the method used for obtaining the data, this chapter focused on the presentation of the results of the data collected from the pre-survey, post-survey and interviews. First the researcher presented the pre-survey data in two sections: those examining awareness and views around race and those considering their current status before the discussions and skill-building activities. Next the post-survey looked at those examining awareness and views around race after completing The Unity Process and those considering their status since the discussions and skill-building activities to determine any changes or growth. Then the researcher presented themes based on the examination of the transcribed interview responses of the research group participants and one previous participant of The Unity Process. The materials on The Unity Process were compared with the data to determine if the data supports the claims of The Unity Process.

Pre-Surveys

Both the surveys addressed the formation growth of the participants before and after the discussions and skill-building components of the process. The review of the data obtained also followed the components. The formation data from the pre-surveys (Table 5.1) revealed the awareness and views around race for the participants. All but one of the participants (87.5%) had only limited exposure to other races. The one remaining
participant (12.5%) expressed complete exposure because of her father’s military service. Their family lived all over the United States and even around the world.

Regarding participant’s awareness on how society viewed the various races, about two-thirds (62.5%) had previously had only limited exposure while more than a third (37.5%) expressed feeling completely aware. (Table 5.2) There was different reporting when it involved how society viewed their race as opposed to how the participants viewed their race. Even though most respondents had limited awareness of other races, most of the participants agreed that other races were viewed negatively. Most participants moderately or favorably viewed other races. Collectively, there was a group of willing participants with limited exposure and awareness, yet an open view of others. The implementation of The Unity Process had fertile soil to work with in helping to combat the divisions in our society.

\textit{Table 5.1 Pre-Survey Formation (N=8)}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure and Awareness</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Somewhat (87.5%)</th>
<th>Completely (12.5%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Exposure to Other Races</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware How Your Race Viewed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of Other Races</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Table 5.2 Pre-Survey Formation (N=8)}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Races Viewed</th>
<th>Negatively</th>
<th>Moderately (75.0%)</th>
<th>Favorably (25.0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Race Viewed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How You View Your Race</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Other Races Viewed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How You View Other Races</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second part of data from the pre-surveys dealt with the frequency, comfort, ability and type of engagement the participants had before the process. Participants engaged in significant conversations with family, friends, and fellow church members (Table 5.3). Those two categories yielded discussions daily, monthly and weekly for most of the participants (62.5%). The outlier was the one person (12.5%) who had no
discussions with church members because they were not part of a church and two people (25%) who only engaged in discussions with people of other races either never or only two to three times a year. All participants expressed comfort in engaging with others but only one felt capable of engaging with others intimately (12.5%) and around issues of race (12.5%) (Table 5.4). None of the participants had taken any diversity training before the process, yet all expressed being culturally engaged. Further enlightenment on the pre- and post-surveys were noted in the results of the interviews.

Table 5.3 Pre-Survey Discussions/Experiences (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Survey – Discussions/Experiences</th>
<th>Never/2-3x/Yr.</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk Race with Family/Friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk Race with Church Members</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk Race with Other Races</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 Pre-Survey Discussions/Experiences (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Survey – Discussions/Experiences</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Engaging Others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Engage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Engaging</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Engaging Issues</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Diversity Training</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Culturally Engaged</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are You Culturally Engaged</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-Surveys

It was evident from the post-surveys that some growth and development occurred as a result of participation in The Unity Process. Similar questions from the pre-survey were asked in the post-survey to ascertain any change of thinking by the participants. For instance, in the formation pre-survey results (Table 5.3), the results on the awareness of how race is viewed for the participants experienced very little change as did how participants viewed their own race in the post-survey (Table 5.5). Participants expressed
more knowledge of how other races are viewed, although their view of other races remained in the moderately and favorably categories.

Table 5.5 Post-Survey Formation (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure and Awareness</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware How Your Race Viewed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of Other Races</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6 Post-Survey Formation (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Races Viewed</th>
<th>Negatively</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Favorably</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Race Viewed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How You View Your Race</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Other Races Viewed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How You View Other Races</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next part of the post-surveys focused on the results after the participants have completed the discussion and skill-building portion of the process (Table 5.6). Conversations with family and friends increased from nearly all (87.5%) moving to weekly discussions except for one (12.5%) (Table 5.7). The conversations with church members decreased because the not applicable number increased from one (12.5%) to three (37.5%). Discussions with people of other races also slightly decreased in that one person, (12.5%) indicated a move from weekly to monthly. Looking at their sense of comfort and ability to engage with others, the participants expressed improvement, moving from somewhat to completely (Table 5.8). Subsequently, the level of engagement moved from general to intimate.

Table 5.7 Post-Survey Discussions/Experiences (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Never/2-3x/Yr.</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk Race with Family/Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk Race with Church Members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk Race with Other Races</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.8 Post-Survey Discussions/Experiences (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Survey Discussions/Experiences</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Engaging Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Engage</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Engaging</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Engaging Issues</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Diversity Training</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Culturally Engaged</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are You Culturally Engaged</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final part of the post-survey contained questions that were not on the pre-survey that dealt with the overall process and the benefit to participants (Tables 5.9 and 5.10). For the overall process, all participants (100%) would recommend the process to others and all (100%) believed that all races and cultural groups present felt included (Table 5.9). All participants were pleased with the facilitator; half (50%) were extremely pleased and the other half (50%) were generally pleased. Most participants (75%) believed the facilitator was extremely competent while the other two (25%) selected generally competent. Regarding the structure of the sessions and the handling of any difficult situations, the participants were split. Some selected generally and others extremely favorable towards the structure and handling of any situations.

Table 5.9 Post-Survey Overall Experience (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Survey Overall Experience</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommend Process</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleased with Facilitator</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator Competent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of Sessions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situations Handled</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Groups Included</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the questions regarding the benefit of the process to the participants their responses were more diverse (Table 5.10). One participant (12.5%) believed the process was only slightly beneficial and two others (25%) thought it was likely beneficial. The
rest of the participants (62.5%) believed it was extremely beneficial. The other diverse category was whether the process was helpful. ‘Beneficial’ refers to an act that has a positive effect and ‘helpful’ refers to a willingness to assist. Two participants (25%) believed it was slightly helpful. One (12.5%) believed it was likely helpful and yet another (12.5%) believed it was more likely helpful. The remaining four participants (50%) believed it was extremely helpful. Less diverse responses came from the categories of being more willing to learn and grown and the overall experience. Six of the participants (75%) answered that they were extremely more willing to learn and grow while two (25%) answered they were more likely. All participants (100%) were satisfied with the overall experience of The Unity Process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Survey Overall Experience</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>More Likely</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process Beneficial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Willing to Learn and Grow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Helpful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Experience</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interviews**

Six of the interviews were conducted at least a month after The Unity Process had been completed and in the same meeting space. Two participants did not attend the last meeting. Their interviews were held elsewhere. The responses from the interview questions can be found in Table 5.11. A few themes were identified from the interviews; an increased willingness to listen, interact and advocate for people of color, greater understanding and knowledge of the oppression of people of color, and more competence in initiating and having cross-cultural conversations around race. The interviews also tracked with the components of The Unity Process; formation or looking inward,
discussions for information and sharing and, experiences and skill-building activities for growth and practice. From the first interview question, these responses described the experience of the participants going through The Unity Process and these responses also connected with the themes of deepening, equipping, openness, eye-opening experiences, building a foundation, and preparation for the journey. These were a highlight to the rest of the questions and their integration with the themes.

The first recurring theme from the interviews was the increased willingness to listen, interact and advocate for people of color. As participants were engaged in looking at their development and orientation to people of other races, they became more aware of the plight of people of color and how different those experiences were from their own. One participant stated, “It’s interesting, how we discussed in class, how so many White people don’t have those experiences, which goes back to listening. While people of color would say, you only want two or three experiences?” (Interviewee 4, White female).

Participants stated that the formation activities that helped them to become more willing and open were the timeline, genogram and family tree. These activities focused on helping to create awareness of the different lived experiences of various people groups. These activities were only successful because of the vulnerability of the African Americans who were present and who were willing to share their and their families’ experiences openly and honestly. An example follows:

The first experience was when I was called a ‘nigger’ at the age of four by a later high school classmate. We were playing outside together as we always did because he lived diagonally across the street. My mom welcomed him in at lunchtime, something she always did with whoever I was playing. As we were waiting for her to serve our hot dogs, we were just talking and I clearly remember this sentence so vividly, ‘My dad said that no niggers can ever come into our house.’ The only reason I knew it meant something was because my mom paused for so long and my hot
dog was already on the fork. I could not understand why she could not continue what she was doing but I knew something about that word bothered her. Later, I asked her what it meant, and she told me, ‘nothing, don’t worry about it.’

So, the second tier, which also formulated the rest of my life experiences based on racism, was when I asked my grandmother what the word meant, a week or month later, when I was at her house. She asked me immediately who said that to me, did my parents know and she, of course, was upset that my mother was there and heard it and wanted to know what her response was. I told her she told me it didn’t mean anything. My grandmother informed me that it had a very nasty meaning and I remember her saying that it was like being called an old dirty dog in the street. So, at four years old, that let me know for the rest of my life, people thought I was less than them. And there was nothing I had done in playing with him that would lead him to justifiably feeling that I was an old dirty dog in the street. So, those two experiences have colored my life from that point forward and led to the foundation of me knowing that who I am was not what I thought I was in other people’s eyes. (Interviewee 8, African American female)

The impact on the White participants from this depth of sharing was eye-opening. One White participant replied, “I really liked the leaves and family tree exercise. It wasn’t so much listening to people’s stories as having the added component of seeing what White trees look like and African American trees look like. That was a visual for me on where things stand in our country” (Interviewee 3, White female).

The discussion component of The Unity Process addressed the second theme from the interviews, greater understanding and knowledge of the oppression of people of color. Some participants realized that you could know something ideologically, but it does not necessarily penetrate your lived reality. One participant spoke about “the institutional ways black people would describe experiencing racism and prejudice, even today, and how it’s still prevalent” (Interviewee 4, White female). The discussions focused around educating and informing participants as well as providing a counter-narrative built on belonging and inclusion. The perception change occurred even for the participants of
color. “The assumptions I had made and some of the myths were knocked down. It gave me the opportunity to turn my negative feelings around and be reminded of what I realized when I went to Germany – that people are people and we’re all the same” (Interviewee 7, African American/Costa Rican female). Even sharing by the researcher was beneficial. One participant stated, “The most defining moment was when you, Pam, shared about your experiences of not being seen and how it affected you. I was blown away” (Interviewee 9, White female).

Table 5.11 Interview Responses Q2-Q7 (N=9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Responses</th>
<th>Defining Experiences Occurred</th>
<th>Participant Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early years through elementary school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior high and high school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adulthood and recently</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unity Process Defining Experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline, Genogram and Family Tree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability of African Americans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and Candid Conversations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs and Willingness Changed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Understanding and More Compassionate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Subconscious Thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Listening</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-Cultural Interaction Pre-Process</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some and Fairly Good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Much and Surface Contact</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Lot and Some Depth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-Cultural Interaction Post-Process</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Out and Desiring to Connect</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Amount but More Intense and Growing Intimacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion and Intentionality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-Cultural Interaction Future Plans</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness and Variety of Experiences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an Advocate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include Others and Become a Refrigerator Buddy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with the formation activities, the discussion topics helped participants to gain a greater understanding of the lives of people of color. One participant “developed a greater understanding of the extreme hardships and just how many roadblocks we have built into society and how far afield it is when people say, we all just need to work harder. And like
now, when I hear people say, ‘I don’t see color,’ I just want to strangle them. Where before, I thought that was a positive way to think” (Interviewee 5, White female). For the people of color who participated, they were able to gain a greater understanding of the lives of White people. “My willingness is much more positive. I want to maintain and establish more relationships with people outside of my race, whereas I had put up a protective layer for a while. It definitely, substantially, put me back on the right track” (Interviewee 7, African American/Costa Rican female).

The experience component of The Unity Process addressed the third and final theme from the interviews of creating more competence in initiating and having cross-cultural conversations around race. The last part of The Unity Process allowed each participant to lead the group in discussion around a topic that each participant selected. Engaging in this helped them to be able to initiate and maintain conversations with others in a healthy and helpful manner. One participant stated that because of The Unity Process she has “interacted more and with greater depth cross-culturally. Intentionally having deeper discussions with those doing service work together in the United Methodist Church” (Interviewee 9, White female). This desire can also stem from knowing that others want to engage. Another participant stated that she realized that “people of color are willing to develop a relationship with you if you are open, candid and willing to learn and hear about someone else’s experiences” (Interviewee 5, White female). The people of color who participated also expressed an increase. “The Unity Process has increased my desire to maintain and increase my cross-cultural interactions. I love the goal of creating a refrigerator buddy. So, I have personally said that I want to meet that goal. I have some friendships that are almost there and probably one that is there. I honestly would not have
been open to it had I not gone through The Unity Process” (Interviewee 8, African American female). A refrigerator buddy expresses a depth to relationships where either party can feel free to go into the refrigerator of the other without asking when at their house. All process participants are encouraged to develop this depth of relationship with those of different races and cultures.

The research all led to the proposed beliefs of the researcher and positively answered the question of the viability of The Unity Process in eliminating the divisiveness in the Dallas metropolitan area.

**The Unity Process Materials**

This section examined the intended outcomes of The Unity Process and assessed its alignment with the research outcomes. The examination included looking at the purpose, the components and then the outcomes of The Unity Process (Appendix F). From this comparison of outcomes, the researcher was informed about the validity of The Unity Process as a viable tool in combatting the divisiveness in the Dallas area.

As stated in the literature, The Unity Process brings diverse individuals together in a spirit of unity, reconciling them with God, self and others, thereby producing a more peaceful, healthy and justice-filled community. The staff aims to accomplish this purpose through a nine-session program of study. The participants were apprised of this during the recruitment process and at the first session. Participants were also warned to expect some level of discomfort and to feel free to express this if they needed to and assistance would be provided. Another thing that happened during the first session was the participants collectively decided how often they would meet, the time frame and the meeting location. They met every three weeks, for two hours each session, in the evening at a community center that was central to where they all lived. This first session not only
relayed pertinent information but began the process of coming together. Subsequent sessions followed the order of the written process, formation, discussion and experience. Throughout the process, participants were working towards reconciling with others and being more welcoming and inclusive towards others.

*Formation*

Formation work was the preparatory part of the process. Participants were led through several activities of looking inward to ascertain their own biases, stereotypes and preconceived ideas about others. According to the literature of The Unity Process, this preparatory self-reflection informed participants on being more cognizant of their views, beliefs and experiences yet opened them to the viewpoint of others. The facilitator reminded participants at several different occasions that knowing their subconscious thoughts and beliefs will keep them from unintentionally inflicting harm on others while trying to reach out to them. In the United States, because racism has been embedded into the structure for so long, all people are socialized on a racist frame. Joe R. Feagin writes, “We see that the socially inherited racial frame is a comprehensive orienting structure, a ‘tool kit’ that whites and others have long used to understand, interpret, and act in social settings.”

The survey questions focused on formation work were questions one through seven on the pre-survey and eight through thirteen on the post-survey. There was definite movement around awareness and realization of the views of their race for six participants (75%). Two non-white participants (25%) did not have any change in their awareness or

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realization of the views of their race. Only three (37.5%) participants moved in a positive direction in their awareness of and the views of other races. This small percentage of movement would be expected since formation work is geared toward looking at one’s contexts and experiences. The inner formation work will not necessarily enhance growth in their views and interactions with others. The section on growth following the discussions would reveal movement in a positive direction.

**Discussion/Experience**

The survey questions focused on discussions and experiences were questions eight through sixteen on the pre-survey and fourteen through twenty-two on the post-survey. The discussions and experiences, according to The Unity Process literature, were to allow participants to share their views and hear the views of others. It also provided them experiential learning in being more open, understanding and ready to model more inclusive relationships.

Most participants had discussions with family, friends and church members either weekly or monthly before the process. The discussions portion did not change very much. The significant change came in the engaging and experiential segments. Participants expressed more comfort engaging others completely and, in their ability, to engage others, as suggested by the factsheet. With the most significant change occurring in the level of engagement, moving from somewhat to completely. Complete or intimate engagement will lead to more inclusive relationships, according to the factsheet. An interesting point is that all this was accomplished through their participation in The Unity Process and without the benefit of any diversity training.
CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATION OF THE UNITY PROCESS

As the final part of the analysis, this chapter identified the strengths and weaknesses of The Unity Process, the overall findings and how the findings connect with the biblical, theological and related literature discussed previously. It also identified the strengths and weaknesses of the research project. For The Unity Process, the strengths were listed along with researcher recommendations. This analysis led to the final chapter of reflection and looking to the future.

Strengths

Three strengths and subsequent recommendations were noted of The Unity Process by the researcher during the study. The first strength was the size of the group. The group was small enough that it created an atmosphere of trust and togetherness and it was large enough to get varying perspectives from the participants. For example, two of the White females were parents of African American children but one was in her late twenties and the other in her early fifties. The combined trust and togetherness with varying perspectives yielded fruitful conversations and an impactful experience. The recommendation from this strength was always to have smaller sized groups of ten to twelve people, which may mean having multiple groups going on at the same time.

The second strength was the variety of learning activities and experiences. The sessions were not just lecture-style but were creative, necessitating the hands-on aspect of learning for internal and outward growth as well as practice. Activities varied from handouts to be completed and reflected upon, watching and listening to video and audio
clips, doing racial and spiritual genograms, discussions around a variety of topics and others. The range of activities was intended to generate learning through three of the five senses: visual, hearing, and tactile. The recommendation from this strength was to develop and maintain a listing of resources for the groups and provide some instructions and best practices. In the documents for The Unity Process, the organization plans to provide facilitator training as the program grows. Those trained facilitators would have access to resources, instructions, and best practices to ensure the continued success of all future groups.

The third strength was the structure of the process. One of the interview responses spoke of the slow and steady movement of the process contributing to the success. Starting the process with inner formation served a dual purpose. It helped participants determine their own beliefs and biases while helping them to learn about the beliefs and biases of others. This learning led to the beginning of openness and understanding of all participants. Then a seamless transition could occur from the formation to the discussions, a natural progression from inward to outward to other-ward. The recommendation was not to rush the process yet maintain the structure of the process. The nine-session process was broken down into three sessions for formation, two to three sessions for discussion and the remaining for participants to practice leading the group in conversation. All responses from the interviews stated the impact on their thinking and beliefs from all three components. Allowing time for all three while maintaining the structure is critical.

The recommendation from this strength was to have trained facilitators who will maintain the structure of the process. The facilitator training should include how to
handle someone who is not tracking with the rest of the group. There would also need to be resources for this as well. The documents from The Unity Process state that after people have completed The Unity Process, they can stay engaged cross-culturally by attending diverse events created, supported or attended by the organization. These events are also useful for those who are not ready for a variety of reasons to enter the process. These events could also be a resource for facilitators.

**Weaknesses**

Even with a good program such as The Unity Process, one must always be critical and address any deficiencies. Three weaknesses were also identified by the researcher during the process. These weaknesses were presented along with researcher recommendations. The first weakness was the limited diversity of the group. While there was some diversity, there could have been more African American people, more people from other races, more men, and more people from other marginalized and oppressed groups. There is a challenge in recruiting other minority groups to engage in such a process, but as relationships continue to develop, this difficulty should be minimized. As the program expands, the racial and cultural composition will grow as well. The first recommendation from this weakness was to engage in more recruiting, networking and exposure in the Dallas area, so people understand the importance of the process. The second was to connect with minority organizations more. The documents from The Unity Process indicate these are steps that have been proposed for moving forward.

The second weakness was too many of the participants already knew each other. Occasionally a husband and wife will sign up for a group jointly. A husband and wife signed up for the research group plus five people already knew each other. While the process was still impactful for them and the other participants, it left one participant
feeling alone and somewhat isolated. The recommendation from this weakness was to keep at a minimum the number of people who are already connected. The initial plan was to have two groups for the research but some of the people had to withdraw. The researcher needed to combine the remaining participants into one group. Facilitators should be made aware of the possibility of this and be prepared to handle the situation.

The third weakness was the organization of the materials from the process. Two interviewees commented on this. “I had a hard time keeping up with the various materials and a notebook would have been helpful” (Interviewee 1, White female). Each session involved reflection and interaction from the learning activity or experience. Participants were given handouts at the beginning of each session for their use and for taking notes. The recommendation from this weakness was to create a binder for participants to insert each session’s material. For the facilitators, a binder manual could be developed with reminders of best practices and space for them to add the activities they use. Facilitators could then have a binder for each group they facilitate. Having a binder for each group will help with recordkeeping and knowing the materials used for each group. The organization is already prepared to develop and provide these binders for facilitators and participants.

**Evaluation of Research Process**

The research design was strong in a couple of ways. The first is the following of the participants before, during and after the research assisted with greater knowledge of the researcher by each participant. Greater knowledge helped participants to be more open, honest and engaging doing the surveys and in the interviews. The recommendation from this strength is always to maintain the integrity of the project for better responses and results. Another strength is that the entire Unity Process occurred and it was not
rushed even though time constraints were exhibiting some pressure for the researcher. So, the authentic experience was presented and not an abbreviated version for the research. The same recommendation as mentioned before will suffice here. The integrity must be maintained.

The last two strengths deal with the research tools utilized for this project. The pre- and post-survey were good tools to use for this project given the small size of the research group. “One of the main advantages of pre-test and post-test designs is that the associated repeated-measures statistical analyses tend to be more powerful, and thus require considerably smaller sample sizes, than other types of analyses.” Also, because it was a small group, the researcher was able to build trust and rapport with the participants. One of the six suggestions in conducting a productive interview, includes the building of rapport. Leedy and Ormrod mention this again in another discussion about interviews. “Participants in a qualitative interview may feel as if they’re simply engaging in a friendly chat with the researcher, who is typically someone they’ve come to know and trust.” These tools allowed for producing the best data from the participants and inform about the use of The Unity Process. The recommendation for both of these strengths is to consider what type of research is needed along with what tools and ensure that the ones selected fit the project.

This project also contains some weaknesses in the research design area. The first weakness was the small number of participants included in this study. Because of the small number of participants, the results can be informative but cannot be definitive. The

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123 Statistics Solutions, “Considerations for Data Collection in Pre-Test/Post-Test Designs.”

124 Leedy and Ormrod, 184.
researcher is prohibited from drawing generalizations from such a small group. The recommendation is for more research to be done on this subject that includes a larger number of participants. Given the small number of participants, the limited diversity follows as the next weakness. The assumption is that with an increase of participants there will be greater diversity. The recommendation is for researchers to be sure there is significant diversity present based upon the problem being addressed. Greater diversity would yield the diversity of perspectives even within the same racial group. Leedy and Ormrod offer suggestions on the size of the groups. “Generally speaking, then, the larger the population, the smaller the percentage (but not the smaller the number) one needs to get a representative sample.”

Overall Findings

Researcher Perspective

Exposing people to how their thinking and beliefs have been formed opens the door to understanding and appreciating others. Through the pre- and post-surveys, overall there was positive movement in awareness, knowledge of how races are viewed, discussions within their immediate context and with outsiders and cultural engagement and experiences. Most participants found the process extremely beneficial and helpful. Because of their participation in The Unity Process, they are more willing to learn and grow about other beliefs and experiences.

The formation component helped participants to ascertain their biases and stereotypes. After hearing from other participants, their views began to change. Some of the White participants began to see that not everyone has a positive view of the White

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125 Leedy and Ormrod, 207.
race and they were able to hear some of the reasons. Participants became more open and receptive to hearing from one another. For many, their defining experience in The Unity Process came during the formation component. The family leaves activity helped participants see the stark difference between the depth of the family trees for White people versus the lack of depth for African Americans. The reality of the results of racism became quite apparent.

The discussion component was primed for more intimate sharing. Participants now felt a greater need to listen and understand more about the plight of minorities in comparison to their own. Initially, the researcher could feel a sense of hesitancy about sharing truthfully and candidly. However, after seeing and hearing the encouraging responses to continue to share openly from one’s perspective, all participants became more relaxed and excited about the process. At the end of the discussion component, participants were ready to seek out those who are of different races or cultural groups and to engage them in conversation. Participants wanted to connect with others and now understood the importance of doing so.

The experience component allowed participants to practice leading a group in having healthy conversations around race with the topic of their choice. They had learned as participants by doing and now they were able to put it into action. The beliefs and thinking of participants had been changed and now they were willing to help others challenge their thinking and beliefs. They were also ready to be an advocate for minorities and felt equipped to do so.

The Unity Process was not purported to be the only way to end all our societal woes but it can significantly impact and eradicate the divisiveness in the Dallas
metropolitan area. The researcher saw The Unity Process as the necessary beginning point because racism is so entrenched and is often based on people’s beliefs of others. If The Unity Process can change people’s beliefs, then transformation can begin.

**Benefits and Challenges**

Some of the benefits and challenges of The Unity Process have been identified in the strengths and weaknesses section. For Christian ministry, The Unity Process produced some other benefits and challenges. All the benefits listed have to do with the unifying properties of The Unity Process.

**Benefits**

The first benefit was the greater unifying of members in existing multicultural churches. Multicultural churches can experience greater intimacy among members by having them participate in The Unity Process. Members will learn to be more open and vulnerable not only with fellow members but also with guests and other potential new members. For churches seeking to unite with other churches to become multicultural, the relationship-building aspect of The Unity Process can be an engaging tool as they try to create a multicultural church. Even if churches are not uniting with other churches to become multicultural, but mainly seek to become multicultural because of their location, The Unity Process will be a benefit in helping them to engage in the community and develop relationships.

The second benefit was intra-faith unification or unifying across Christian denominations. We can see more denominations in relationships across race in churches, districts and all levels of the denominations. The Unity Process can provide direction, experiential learning and support for those denominations and churches seeking to come together, build relationships and be more unified. The discussion component of The
Unity Process was useful in helping to talk openly and reflect honestly from each person’s perspective. This openness and honesty help to really see the issue from all sides and then develop a comprehensive solution. This part of The Unity Process could be valuable to Christian denominations of all races and cultures.

The last benefit is inter-faith unification or unifying across faiths. Because other faiths have places where their beliefs become different from the Christian faith, Christians will significantly benefit from The Unity Process in the areas of becoming vulnerable, listening and seeking to understand other faiths’ beliefs and thinking. The most pressing issue in building relationships is the vulnerability and understanding of one another. Too often, Christians believe their views are correct and close themselves off to listening to others. The Unity Process helps participants to listen to understand the other person’s perspective. When people can understand, then they can engage.

**Challenges**

Listening to understand is a challenge for everyone. One of the three challenges for The Unity Process is listening and understanding on the part of the leadership of the church. Many American churches are based on a hierarchical structure that requires the leadership’s support and modeling for something to be embraced by the members. So, for The Unity Process to be implemented in a church, the pastor and leadership team must be among the first participants. Then, they must encourage and support members as they participate and engage. Last, the leadership must empower lay leaders to continue the maintenance and proliferation of The Unity Process and engagement in cross-cultural interactions.
The second challenge for implementing The Unity Process is maintaining the structure and integrity of the process. The process is thought-provoking about our core beliefs and will create some stress for participants as they address their biases and stereotypes and hear about the lives of others. The challenge will be for churches not to modify the process to make it more palatable. That negates the process. The design of the process is intentional for eliciting deep-held beliefs and challenging their legitimacy. Trained facilitators can guide participants through these steps.

The last challenge is ensuring that trained facilitators are used and that they follow the manual of The Unity Process. It would be easy to have an inhouse facilitator go over the basics with another member but in doing so, the new facilitator will not have received all the training that they need to facilitate a group successfully. Just as crucial as a trained facilitator is up-to-date training materials and facilitator manuals. Because of the busyness of churches, they will need to ensure that the proper steps are being taken, proper facilitators are being used and proper materials are being shared.

**Conclusions from the Research**

Keeping these challenges in mind, a church can successfully reproduce The Unity Process and help bring peace and healing to their church and community. As the results of this research have shown, The Unity Process is a valuable ministry tool. The Unity Process is vital for unifying the global body of believers and all of humanity. The responses to the last interview question prove useful in the analysis of the research considering the previous chapters on biblical, theological, and secular literature. One of the responses addressed the slow movement of the process adding to its value. “Maybe because it’s slow and steady is why it’s able to produce such great results” (Interviewee 9, White female). As mentioned in the discussion around formation, the result of
formation should be relationship with God and relationships with others. These individuals who participated in The Unity Process, now feel “that it has been effective as a tool in having those conversations about what is considered a sensitive subject by most people in America. It has empowered the people who go through the process to begin those conversations outside of the room” (Interviewee 1, White male). Formation or discipleship should be for individuals as well as the community of believers. This participant will be ready to have those conversations, as he now feels empowered. McLaren reminds us of this.

You can’t maintain hostility against ‘the other’ without also withdrawing from the father who loves both you and the other as beloved children. If you maintain hostility against the other, you stop acting like a son in the same family. You leave your true identity as a son and start playing the part of a slave. When you cut off the other, you’re breaking God’s heart. God wants you to join God in loving the other as part of one family.126

As these conversations occur, it will begin the spread of The Unity Process to the community and bringing everyone into God’s family.

Reconciliation was occurring throughout the process even though the language of reconciliation was not used. The formal reconciliation process involves telling the story, repentance, forgiveness and restorative justice. “Reconciliation in a Christian context is rooted in our very faith. It is a response to our having been reconciled to God.”127 Christians “received a new center that both transformed and reinforced the old (center).”128

\[126\] McLaren, 162.
\[127\] Brink, 300.
\[128\] Volf, 71.
The actions of Jesus and the writings of Paul highlight the importance of believers’ unifying actions. Through these actions of formation and reconciliation, the character and action of a community are developed. Formation helps believers to become reconciled and the ministry of reconciliation helps the church to be united amidst diversity. DeYoung writes extensively on reconciliation’s impact on the believer and on the church. The apostle Paul’s “personal life transformation witnessed to the reconciling power of God operating through the abiding presence of a resurrected Jesus Christ.” A variety of tools can be used in the formation, reconciliation and unifying of the body. “It was an amazing experience. I brought my daughter one time and she cannot stop talking about it. I think it is an experience that would extend to all ages. I think on the surface when people say, ‘What can talking about it do’ and they think talking about it is not enough, I feel that it is the perfect starting point. I believe The Unity Process shows you that you must get into conversations; you must speak the same language of unity. The Unity Process connects our different quirks.” (Interviewee 7, African American/Costa Rican female)

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129 DeYoung, *The Power of Reconciliation*, 204.
CHAPTER SEVEN: REFLECTION ON THE UNITY PROCESS

Personal Growth

Formation

The Unity Process and this research jointly assist with my connection to God personally and in ministry and with my engagement with others. This assistance came chiefly through formation but also through my academic growth and my desire to continue the work of God. Because a third of The Unity Process is taking participants through the formation process, the researcher was also engaged in formation. The formation process is not a one-sided endeavor. When leading people through the process, the facilitator is going through it as well. The searching within to discover beliefs and values that are implicit was crucial to the process and in connecting with God and others. The Unity Process as a tool helps not only the participants but also the facilitator. As I facilitate each group, I go through the entire process with the participants. With each group bringing a new set of diverse individuals, each one is different. My learning and engaging experiences are different. I am expanded in who I am as a believer who is connected to God and my capacity to listen, engage, learn and extend grace, humility and encouragement to others.

Even when doing the research for additional formation activities, I am interacting with the materials and trying them out on myself. This continued exposure for my spiritual self means I am always reflecting and seeking the pruning in my life that formation activities accomplish. It is important for all participants to be aware of their
held biases and stereotypes but it is extremely so for the facilitator. The facilitator often needs to model for the others how to consciously, intentionally and graciously interact with others considering their inward struggles. More importantly, is the researcher modeling how to be vulnerable and honest in a group and help participants see how change occurs when this happens. A key part of the research is discussing with others doing similar work and learning about their formation as well as motivating and encouraging tools and techniques.

_Academic_

Academically, I have been stretched and challenged to learn how to portray The Unity Process utilizing qualitative research methods. It has impacted my strategizing and my writing. This study enhanced my ability to locate written resources, to collect, analyze and display data and strategically think about all the issues that affect The Unity Process. Strategic thinking can help in rolling out the process to churches and other organizations in Dallas and around the world. Strategic thinking also involves knowing how to research and analyze so you have informed thinking that knows where the issue stands in relation to other issues. Future articles and research around The Unity Process may be required as the program grows and the numbers of participants grow. This research has prepared me for this and similar endeavors.

Writing up the research for a particular audience has informed my ability to share not only this project but any endeavor in a manner appropriate for the context. Whether sharing academically, in the pulpit, at conferences or other venues, I am better able to tailor the message and the format. My writing skills have been strengthened and I have new writing tools to assist in producing better context driven material.
Continue God’s Work

The Unity Process was developed in conversation with God, so I feel impassioned and emboldened to continue this work and spread The Unity Process all over the world, beginning in Dallas. The research has renewed my commitment and created a newfound excitement for spreading the process. I continue to make connections and inroads into areas and people groups for sharing The Unity Process. One of my strengths identified from the StrengthsFinder exercise here at Bethel is that of ‘Connectedness’ and it has proven invaluable in doing this work. I attend conferences, seminars, workshops, book groups and many other events to connect with others. I have also been a presenter at a lot of these same events. I seek to spread the message of The Unity Process and the importance of uniting all of humanity for the greater good. God has been blessing me, The Unity Process and all those who partner in this work. God has also opened and closed doors and sent the right people my way. The Unity Process has and will continue to be a journey of love and growth, peace, healing and reconciliation.

Possible Future Research

In doing this research, four things emerged for consideration as future research projects. The first one deals with the number of people leaving the church. There have been many studies done on this already. Has there been any dealing with dissatisfaction with the racial composition of churches and their lack of diversity? The younger generation appears to be more diverse in their friendships and it would be natural to want to attend church with your friends. Also, the elevated tensions due to racism and other

divisions in society have infiltrated the church and must be addressed to save our religious institutions. Some congregation members are divided in their views of race and a believer’s responsibilities considering all these issues. A study around this area might be useful in helping the church to move forward.

Another issue also involves the saving of our religious institutions and it could be considered part two of the previous suggestion. A study assessing whether church growth can be accomplished through healing, reconciliation and restoration of oppressed groups alongside their oppressors. So many churches are in needing of healing, reconciliation and restoration within the congregations and in their surrounding communities. Because of the divides previously mentioned, it would be good to know if oppressed people groups and the oppressor people groups are brought together would healing be able to occur. If this research proves successful, this will not only improve the church but create more multicultural churches and more communities that are healthier and united. Along with The Unity Process, this unification of the church would help bring believers together as well as create an atmosphere of belonging for those outside of the Christian faith.

A third research suggestion would be for The Unity Process research to be replicated with the ideal number of participants, more diversity and separating people who know each other already into different groups. The ideal number of participants in each group would be ten to twelve participants. Conducting the research with six to ten groups going through the process would increase the number of participants and the diversity. The diversity of the group could include people from different races and ethnicities, gender, age, sexual identity, socio-economic status and other cultural dividers. The more people can hear from the perspectives of diverse people, the more their lives
and understanding are expanded. Hence, the separating of people who already know each other is important. The researcher indicated that one participant felt uncomfortable and left out because several already knew each other, which could have impacted this person’s engaging.

The last suggestion for future research would be to determine if the results would be the same if this research were done in a different context. Different contexts could be with a church group, in a different geographic location or with younger people. Future plans for the organization include changing The Unity Process for use with high school and college aged youth. Some in this age range have attended some of the events of the organization and have asked about something for them and their peers. The end goal for these and this current research is to bring God’s people back together in peaceful, reconciled and united relationships with one another. If believers can accomplish these types of relationships, then we can help the rest of the world become healthy and whole.

As Paul writes in Ephesians 2:14-18:

> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.
APPENDIX A:

PARTICIPANT PRE-PROCESS SURVEY
Participant Pre-Survey

Participant

Full Name:

Last
First
M.I.

Voluntary Information

Racial or Ethnic Group

☐ American Indian/Alaskan  ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander  ☐ Black/African American

☐ Hispanic/Latino  ☐ White/Caucasian  ☐ Other ________________

Gender

☐ Female  ☐ Male

Age_______________________

Survey

Circle the best answer.

1. How exposed have you been to people of other cultures different from your own?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Completely

2. How aware are you of your race and how society views your race?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Completely

3. How is your race viewed?
   Negatively  Moderately  Favorably

4. How do you view your race?
   Negatively  Moderately  Favorably

5. How aware are you of other races and how society views other races?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Completely

6. How are other races viewed?
   Negatively  Moderately  Favorably

7. How do you view other races?
   Negatively  Moderately  Favorably
8. How often do you talk about race with your family and friends?
   Daily       Weekly       Monthly       A Couple of Times a Year       Never

9. How often do you talk about race with fellow church members?
   Daily       Weekly       Monthly       A Couple of Times a Year       Never

10. How often do you talk about race with people from a different race, culture or ethnicity?
    Daily       Weekly       Monthly       A Couple of Times a Year       Never

11. How comfortable are you in engaging others who are of a different race, culture or ethnicity?
    Not at all       Somewhat       Completely

12. Do you feel you are able to adequately engage someone from a different race, culture or ethnicity?
    Not at all       Somewhat       Completely

12b. If so, what is the level of engagement?
    Peripherally       Generally       Intimately

13. How comfortable are you in engaging others who are of a different race, culture or ethnicity on issues of race, racism, etc.?
    Not at all       Somewhat       Completely

14. Have you ever participated in any type of diversity training?
    Not at all       Somewhat       Completely

15. Do you understand what it means to be culturally engaged?
    Not at all       Somewhat       Completely

16. Do you consider yourself to be culturally engaged?
    Not at all       Somewhat       Completely

Thank you!
APPENDIX B:

PARTICIPANT POST-PROCESS SURVEY
Participant Post Survey

Participant

Full Name:

Last  First  M.I.

Voluntary Information

Racial or Ethnic Group
[ ] American Indian/Alaskan  [ ] Asian/Pacific Islander  [ ] Black/African American
[ ] Hispanic/Latino  [ ] White/Caucasian  [ ] Other

Gender
[ ] Female  [ ] Male

Age

Survey

Circle the best answer.

1. How likely are you to recommend this process to others?
   a. Not at all  b. Slightly  c. Likely  d. More Likely

2. Were you happy with the facilitator?
   a. Not at all  b. Slightly  c. Yes  d. Extremely

3. Do you feel the facilitator was competent?
   a. Not at all  b. Slightly  c. Yes  d. Extremely

4. Were you happy with the structure of the sessions?
   a. Not at all  b. Slightly  c. Yes  d. Extremely

5. If there were any problems or situations, how do you feel they were handled?
   a. Not at all  b. Poorly  c. Good  d. Extremely Well

6. Do you feel all cultural groups present felt included?
   a. Not at all  b. Slightly  c. Yes  d. Extremely

7. Do you feel the process was beneficial to you?
   a. Not at all  b. Slightly  c. Yes  d. Extremely

8. How aware are you of your race and how society views your race?
   Not at all  Somewhat  Completely

9. How is your race viewed?
   Negatively  Moderately  Favorably

10. How do you view your race?
11. How aware are you of other races and how society views other races?
   Not at all     Somewhat     Completely

12. How are other races viewed?
   Negatively     Moderately     Favorably

13. How do you view other races?
   Negatively     Moderately     Favorably

14. How often do you talk about race with your family and friends?
   Daily     Weekly     Monthly     A Couple of Times a Year     Never

15. How often do you talk about race with fellow church members?
   Daily     Weekly     Monthly     A Couple of Times a Year     Never

16. How often do you talk about race with people from a different race, culture or ethnicity?
   Daily     Weekly     Monthly     A Couple of Times a Year     Never

17. How comfortable are you in engaging others who are of a different race, culture or ethnicity?
   Not at all     Somewhat     Completely

18. Do you feel you are able to adequately engage someone from a different race, culture or ethnicity?
   Not at all     Somewhat     Completely

18b. If so, what is the level of engagement?
   Peripherally     Generally     Intimately

19. How comfortable are you in engaging others who are of a different race, culture or ethnicity on issues of race, racism, etc.?
   Not at all     Somewhat     Completely

20. Have you ever participated in any type of diversity training?
   Not at all     Somewhat     Completely

21. Do you understand what it means to be culturally engaged?
   Not at all     Somewhat     Completely

22. Do you consider yourself to be culturally engaged?
   Not at all     Somewhat     Completely

23. I am more willing to ‘stand’ in a place of openness and willingness to learn and understand about people who are different from me.
   a. Not at all     b. Slightly     c Yes     d. Extremely

24. The process has helped me in my interactions with others.
   a. Not at all     b. Slightly     c Yes     d. Extremely

25. Overall, how has your experience been while participating in The Unity Process?
   a. Dissatisfied with it     b. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied with it     c Satisfied with it

Write your responses.
1. What was the most difficult for you?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

2. The most important and powerful thing I learned was __________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

3. I will utilize this process and my experiences during it to _______________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C:

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW GUIDE
Participant Interview Guide

Introduction

My name is Pam Fields and I am a Doctor of Ministry Student at Bethel Seminary. For my thesis, I am conducting research on the feasibility of the Unity Process as a viable tool in addressing the divisiveness in our communities. Thank you for your participation in this interview. The interview will take about 30 minutes and includes 8 questions. For each question, please feel free to fully express your thoughts in each response. Is it ok if I record the interview, to help me with my notes later? What is said in the interview will be anonymous and confidential. Upon completion, your responses, along with the responses from other participants, will be coded and counted by the researcher to help ascertain the feasibility of the Unity Process as a viable tool in addressing the divisiveness in our communities.

Guide

1. What word(s) would you use to describe your experience of The Unity Project?
2. Describe 2-3 defining experiences (both positive and/or negative) in your life that developed your beliefs about races and cultures?
3. Did you have any defining experiences while going through the Unity Process?
4. How have your beliefs about people of other races and your willingness to interact with them changed as a result of going through the Unity Process? If your beliefs about other races and your willingness have not changed, why do you think that is?
5. Describe the amount and type of cross-cultural interaction you have had prior to the Unity Process.
6. Describe the amount and type of cross-cultural interaction you currently have, since participating in the Unity Process.
7. Regarding your cross-cultural interaction, how has the Unity Process impacted any future plans of developing relationships across cultures and being an advocate for people of color?
8. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your experience with the Unity Process?
APPENDIX D:

RACIAL GENOGRAM
Racial Genogram

On the bottom of your page draw a family tree. In your lifetime & thus interaction, who is at the roots of your family? You may draw both sides of your family. Include relational title (Great-Grandfather, Aunt, 1st Cousin, Etc.) and how people in your family influenced your racial upbringing & therefore understanding.

Reflection: How would those in your family whom you have influenced describe your impact on their racial understanding?

Racial Genogram, part 2
Draw a tree with at least 3 generations—at least 2 above yours—each generation will be represented by a branch. To include both sides of your family, you may use one side of the tree for one parent. Think about the family members who were most influential on your racial formation. Draw leaves on the branches to represent family members and add their names & how they are related to you. Use the following coloring system for each leaf:

   a. Green—family members who instilled positive memories in your racial formation—ones that you can GO with in your life & humanely treat others.
   b. Yellow—family members who instilled memories in your racial formation that were conflicting with their actions/words. You need to YIELD to analyze these patterns in your racial formation to ensure if you go with them you will be able to humanely treat others.
   c. Red—family members who instilled negative memories in your racial formation—ones that you need to STOP repeating as you will not humanely treat others if you continue to reenact them.
   d. On the back, write a synopsis of the racial memory you associate with each family member based on the color leaf you used to represent him/her. Include your age when the memory occurred.
   e. Be prepared to share. Remember our norms. The truth is safe here.

Reflection
What were your most critical memories in your racial formation?
Prior to now, have you ever thought about how these racial influences impacted you?
Once prompted, answer the questions at the bottom of the back page.
Overall, were your racial influences more positive/negative?
Which side of the family imparted positivity into the formation of your racial perceptions?
Considering your colored leaves, how do you perceive those family members now?
The false dominant narrative in America teaches us that Whites are good, pure, the, “salt of the earth,” Savior to uncivilized savages, the reason this country is great, “the Greatest Generation,” etc. In contrast, it teaches us that people of color are bad, untrustworthy, animals, unequal, unworthy, savages, criminal, lustful, evil, uncivil, lazy, entitled, etc. When actual American history is analyzed, this is not true. The false narrative has robbed Whites of their ability to be flawed humans because they are portrayed as superhumans, who embody ALL that is right with this country [and this world]. In contrast, it robs people of color of their ability to be humans, who are allowed to feel a range of emotions, are unjudged when they make mistakes, or are seen as individuals.

Can you inhumanely treat people and still be a good person? Why/not?

For the red leaves in your family, what conversation would you be willing to have about the racial memories they created for you?

Now think of those generations beneath you as you answer these questions.
1. How have you influenced the racial formation of them?
2. If they completed a family tree with you on it, what color leaf would they use for you?
3. If you know your leaf would be yellow/green for generations beneath you, what conversations can you have now to rectify your influence?

“If each and every one of us has the capacity to be an oppressor. I want to encourage each and every one of us to interrogate how we might be an oppressor and how we might be able to become liberators for ourselves and for each other.”—Laverne Cox

1. What are areas you have to be intentional about not to oppress others?
2. Hopefully completing the racial genogram helped liberate you. What are other ways you can liberate yourself?
3. What are areas you can immediately liberate others?

Share your responses and personal reflection.
APPENDIX E:

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY
African American History
APPENDIX F:

THE UNITY PROCESS FACTSHEET
The Unity Process Factsheet

The Unity Process brings diverse individuals together in a spirit of unity, reconciling them with God, self and others thereby producing a more peaceful, healthy and justice-filled community.

The Audience
The Unity Process welcomes individuals and groups that are diverse in culture and ethnicity to join us in discussing culture, ethnicity, prejudice, discrimination and racism. Groups can arise from churches, communities of faith from all belief systems, community groups, or any other group who wants to engage others to become more unified.

Examples: Individuals
- Churches, Temples, Synagogues
- Civic and Community Groups
- Sororities and Fraternities
- Non-profit Organizations

The Process
The process has several components of increasing interaction. All components should be engaged at some point and will probably be reengaged throughout the process. If some participants have not had much exposure in diverse cultures and interaction beyond the periphery, it would be best to at least begin in this order: Formation, Discussion, Experience, and Reconciliation.

The Components
Formation
Participants will do some preparatory work looking inward to ascertain their own biases, stereotypes and preconceived ideas about others. The preparatory self-reflection informs participants on being more cognizant of their own experiences yet open to the viewpoint of others.

Discussion
Participants share thoughts on the particular topics and activities from their own perspective; followed by reflection from each participant. Again, the group will meet several times for discussions until it is determined they are ready to move forward.

Experience
Having had multiple sessions together working through the other components, the participants should be more connected, open, understanding and ready to model more inclusive relationships. Shared activities, whether planned or impromptu, present opportunities for not only modeling but also interaction among participants, their families and friends leading to seeing others as individuals.

Reconciliation
Throughout the process, participants will be working towards reconciling with others and being more welcoming and inclusive towards others.

**The Expectations**
Participants should expect some level of discomfort in the process, depending upon their previous experiences interacting with those different from them. Participants should expect to spend 9 sessions going through the process. Participants should develop more long-term relationships with other participants.

**The Outcomes**
Participants will shed some stereotypes and see others as God sees them. Participants will be willing to work toward developing more harmonious communities. Participants will be more open, welcoming and inclusive towards others within groups and the community.
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