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BETHEL UNIVERSITY
BETHEL SEMINARY ST. PAUL

EMPOWERING CONGREGATIONS TO MOVE FROM SIMPLE
HOSPITALITY TO CELEBRATION OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY
WITHIN THEIR CHURCHES

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE
IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP FOR TEAM
AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

BY
STEPHEN GIBSON
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
MAY, 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While it goes without saying, I would like to thank God for everything pertaining to this project. He gave me the idea. He motivated me to do it and He gave me the ability to see it through to completion. Without His grace and empowerment I would not have accomplished this project. I am not naturally very academic and am fully aware of His sovereign empowerment each step of the way.

I would further like to thank both Calvary Church and Wellspring Church. Both churches were incredibly supportive of this project. Both supported it financially and both gave me the ability to take time from my work duties to work on it. Both the board members and the staff of Calvary have been very gracious to helping me with this project. I especially appreciate the elders who trusted me and allowed me the resources and support to work on this project. A special thanks is due to the staff at Calvary who believed in the vision and worked hard to support it. Without their willingness to implement the various initiatives this project would not have succeeded. Also, a special thanks is due to the department heads and pastors who worked hard in the last minutes of the deadlines to help me get the data I needed. I am especially grateful for Josh Mateer and the comradery we experienced doing this degree program together.

The Wellspring elders are to be thanked and appreciated for allowing me to take time off to work on this project. Their encouragement and support to finish this thesis and degree was invaluable in motivating me and also giving me the time to do it. I would also like to thank Joy Gillette, my Administrative Assistant at Calvary and Jon Gamble, my

Ministry Assistant at Wellspring for the many ways they protected my time and assisted me in various ways, making this project a success.

Dr. Parolini and Tim McIntosh were my readers and both did a fantastic job of pushing me without exacerbating me. I am so thankful for Dr. Parolini's support and encouragement even at times when I felt like giving up. Her willingness to speak with me over the phone when needed and her willingness to adjust her time in response to my needs not only helped me practically with the paper but spoke volumes to me regarding her dedication and belief in what I was doing. Dr. Parolini was a fantastic advisor for whom I am very thankful.

I would also like to mention my appreciation for Dr. Irving and the other seminary faculty who turned my view of leadership on its head. I will forever be thankful for how God used their teachings to help me become a godlier leader who seeks to emulate Jesus in serving those I lead. I would also like to thank them for not simply teaching me but seeking to also get to know me. They were all very approachable, available and made me feel genuinely cared about.

A special thanks to my children who willingly sacrificed much of their dad's time, allowing him to work on this project. They were so supportive and encouraging. I have the best kids ever!

Lastly, I would like to express my deep love and appreciation to my wife. When she married me she would never have believed I would still be in school 21 years later. Her encouragement and belief in me is never ending. She is truly God's gift to me. Thanks, Kathy, for believing in me and supporting me in my efforts towards finishing this project and this degree.

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GLOSSARY

Best Practices: methods commonly found among secular organizations to be most effective in pursuit of ethnic diversity.

Celebrating Diversity: The act by which a church embraces the idea that all ethnicities have God-given, culturally distinct characteristics. It rests on the belief that God desires the local church to integrate into the fabric of the church's DNA.

Embracing Diversity: Used interchangeably with the terminology "celebrating diversity" whereby a church embraces the belief that all ethnicities have God-given culturally distinct characteristics of which God desires their preservation and desires the local church to integrate into the fabric of the church's DNA.

Hospitable/Hospitality: The idea that those of a white culture should welcome those of different ethnicities to join the church. This term does not denote a need to embrace cultural differences in such a manner that it changes the church culture.

Multi-cultural/Multi-ethnic: Interchangeable terms referring to a community of people made up of different ethnic backgrounds enjoying each other's cultural distinct characteristics in the daily life of the community.

White Churches: Churches predominantly made up of white people and that predominately represents a white culture.

White Culture: a culture that is found in America and is common among the majority of white people. It is noticeably distinct from Hispanic, African, Black, Asian, and other cultures.

ABSTRACT

Most white churches that find themselves in a community that is increasingly becoming non-white have a hard time pursuing the changes needed to help themselves reflect the diversity in its community. It has been the researcher's experience that they simply do not understand the difference between simply being hospitable and being a church that celebrates diversity.

The intent of this project was to help Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, become more ethnically diverse. Studies have found that if an organization pursues the celebration of diversity it can become more ethnically diverse. The researcher's goal was to help Calvary move from simply welcoming those of non-white ethnicity to embracing their culture and seeking to integrate them and their culture into the life of the church (i.e., celebration of diversity). For a church to celebrate diversity in this manner takes intentionality and preparation. It was the goal of this researcher to help Calvary make such a change.

The researcher found that there is no agreed upon set of best practices that have been identified for a church desiring to pursue diversity. Thus, the researcher looked to the best practices of secular organizations that have successfully become ethnically diverse. The researcher found that while there are various initiatives that businesses have implemented to pursue diversity, primarily they can all fit into one of these four categories: (1) having the leadership of an organization on board with the diversity

initiative as well as modeling and championing it themselves, (2) casting the vision across the organization, (3) tying the success of their overall mission with the success of becoming ethnically diverse, and (4) creating a well-designed plan for practical implementation.

The primary goal of the project was to help Calvary become more diverse. The primary research question the field study sought to answer was, “Are the best practices of secular organizations transferable and effective for a large church pursuing diversity?” To answer this question, the researcher assisted Calvary in creating initiatives that represent each of the four best practices. Two years after the initiatives were implemented, the researcher went back to Calvary to identify whether or not the church had grown in ethnic diversity. The researcher found that Calvary had indeed become more ethnically diverse through the implementation of the initiatives that represent the four best practices of secular organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Charles Foster dedicates his book *Embracing Diversity* “To congregations that challenge conventions of homogeneity to live into the Pentecost vision of multicultural and interracial solidarity praising the God who created and redeems us all.”¹ Foster’s “Pentecost vision” refers to Acts 2 in which the multi-ethnic church in Jerusalem was birthed in a one-day evangelistic meeting that was made up of people from many distant countries: “Parthian, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arab” (vs. 9-11).² Foster’s point is that since its inauguration God designed His church to be diverse. Therefore, it can be assumed that He desires all local churches today to strive to reflect diversity whenever possible. As with the first church, only God can empower a local church to become diverse. However, it takes willing individuals courageous enough to fight against the “conventions of homogeneity.”

Foster’s vision for local churches to become multi-racial seems to have been shared by Martin Luther King, Jr. In one of his most often quoted statements he said, “It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o’clock on

¹ Charles R. Foster, *Embracing Diversity: Leadership in Multicultural Congregations* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1997), iii.

² Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2011).

Sunday morning.”³ That Martin Luther King found it “appalling” seems to demonstrate that he too believed churches should represent ethnic diversity when possible.

Unfortunately, while there has been such a long history of wise leaders calling churches to pursue diversity, little progress has been made. In a study conducted by sociologist Michael Emerson, only eight percent of U.S. churches can legitimately consider themselves multi-racial.⁴ There is no known study that has been undertaken to identify the percentage of American churches that exist within a multi-racial setting. But Emerson’s logical assumption is that more than eight percent of churches have some level of ethnic diversity within their community.

Stanley Hauerwas explains that communities have a difficult time becoming multi-racial because historically the manner in which groups of people deal with others different from themselves is “to make them as much like us as possible or to make them live apart.”⁵ Hauerwas’s point is that it is not easy for communities to include those different from themselves into their community and celebrate their differences in such a way that their community reflects the manner in which other cultures do things. To do so creates a new community and thus a community must be intentional about recreating itself in such a manner that it reflects diversity in how it functions and operates.

Many large churches have a difficult time intentionally pursuing diversity in this way and thus fail to become multi-racial churches. While in general, large white

³ James C. Klagge, “The Most Segregated Hour in America?” accessed February 14, 2014, <http://www.phil.vt.edu/JKlagge/ConductorChurch.htm>.

⁴ Emerson, Michael O., and Karen Chai Kim. 2003. “Multiracial Congregations: An Analysis of Their Development and a Typology,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Vol 42. (June 2003): 217.

⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, *Suffering Presence: Theological Reflections on Medicine, the Mentally Handicapped, and the Church* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 213.

evangelical churches do a good job of being hospitable to non-white people, simply being hospitable will not create an atmosphere conducive to becoming multi-racial. This thesis project sought to discover how white churches can go beyond mere hospitality.

CHAPTER ONE: PROBLEM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Statement of the Problem

The problem this project addressed was the inability or unwillingness of most large, predominantly white churches to celebrate non-white ethnic diversity by moving from a simple offering of hospitality to a thorough integration of distinct cultural characteristics. In response to this problem the researcher (a) reviewed biblical and theological literature revealing God's heart behind the celebration of diversity, (b) reviewed relevant literature dealing with the integration of minorities into predominantly white cultures, (c) identified best practices of organizations that will assist predominantly white churches in moving from simply being hospitable to celebrating the distinct cultural differences of minorities through their inclusion into the life of the church, (d) tested the majority of these principles at Calvary Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan by implementing them within the organization, (e) interviewed minority groups both before the implementation process and after, and (f) reviewed the effectiveness of implementing these best practices over two years later.

Delimitations of the Problem

The field research was limited to Calvary Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Further, the research was limited to organizations whose constituency is primarily white and who have successfully transitioned from a lack of mirroring the diversity in their greater community to reflecting the greater community's various ethnic groups within their organization.

The goal of the research was to identify common best practices among organizations that have successfully pursued becoming multi-racial. Thus, the research was solely focused on helping churches move from being simply hospitable to celebrating ethnic diversity. This means embracing cultural differences and the ethnically different people themselves through the adoption of those cultural differences into the programs and functions of the church. Examples were identified and included in this paper.

Assumptions

There are a number of assumptions with which the researcher approached his research. The first assumption was that God created cultural diversity and enjoys its preservation. The second assumption was that all ethnic cultures are equally good and equally valued by God. Of course, the researcher is not referring to any cultural norms that represent what Scripture would deem as sinful behaviors or attitudes. However, in regard to such things as musical style, dress, and language, the assumption of the researcher is that these differences are valued by God who enjoys such diversity. The third assumption was that God is displeased when people groups segregate themselves from other ethnicities either intentionally or unintentionally. This is particularly true when this segregation is solely due to cultural and ethnic differences. The fourth assumption was that there is a direct correlation between the degree to which a church celebrates diversity and the extent to which it becomes diverse. The fifth assumption was that the Bible is inspired by God to instruct people in the manner in which they should live out their personal lives as well as how they should live in regard to others. The sixth assumption was that while there are certainly differences between a church and a secular

business, both represent a group of people committed to accomplishing a mission. Thus, the best practices of secular organizations toward becoming communities that celebrate diversity are transferable to the local church.

Subproblems

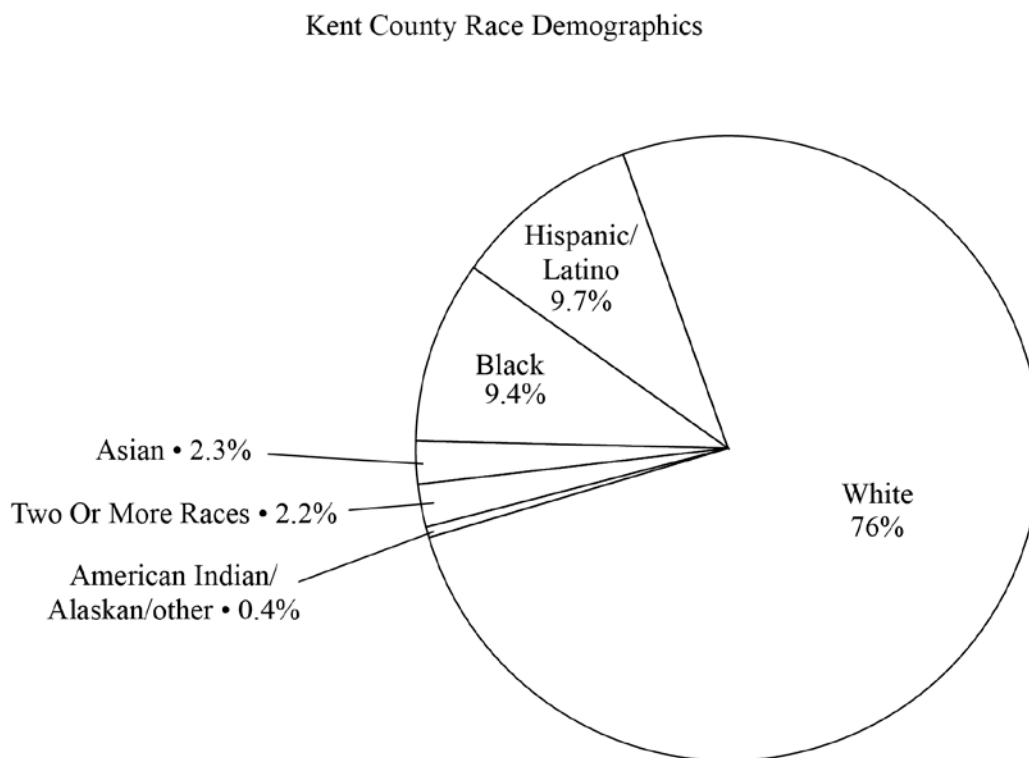
In an effort to address the main research problem, the researcher addressed a number of subproblems. The first subproblem addressed was to gain an understanding of the biblical and theological principles applicable to the local church in its pursuit of ethnic diversity. The second subproblem was to understand what current research literature reveals regarding the best practices of forging a multi-cultural community within an organization. The third subproblem was to identify transferable principles that helped these organizations grow in diversity.

Setting of the Project

Calvary Church is a nondenominational, evangelical Protestant church. It averages around 3600 people in attendance on Sunday morning. Since its beginning in 1929, Calvary Church has had very few non-white members or attenders. However, over the past ten years, Calvary has become more diverse. While the leadership is pleased that Calvary is becoming more diverse, no intentional effort is being made to become more diverse. The senior pastor refers to himself as “Arab.” The reason for this is that both his mom and dad’s descendants are from non-Jewish, Middle Eastern countries. Both he and the researcher, the Executive Pastor, are convinced that God desires all churches to actively pursue becoming more diverse, particularly when their greater community is diverse. This seems especially true of Calvary Church, a church within the city limits of Grand Rapids and within ten miles of downtown. In 2010, Calvary Church was 95.5

percent white, one percent American Indian, one percent Black, one percent Hispanic, one percent other and zero percent Asian and did not reflect Grand Rapid's population, which is only 76 percent white.¹

Figure 1.1 Kent Country Race Demographics



SOURCE: 2010 US Census (<http://cridata.org/GeoProfile.aspx?type=4&loc=26081>)

As are most mega-churches, Calvary Church is a regional church, drawing people from all over the city. This distinguishes it from a neighborhood church, in which the constituency lives in close proximity to the church. Thus, Calvary should more closely reflect the diverse ethnicity of the greater Grand Rapids area.

¹ Community Research Institute, "2010 Demographics" under Community Profiles, Kent County, MI, <http://cridata.org/GeoProfile.aspx?type=4&loc=2608>. (accessed January 7, 2016).

There has been some effort made to identify and respond to the distinct needs that minority people experience as they integrate into Calvary's predominantly white culture. However, this effort has had little intentionality and little has been done to recognize the various cultural preferences of these minority groups in the life of the church. As with most similar churches, Calvary does well with being hospitable to people of diverse ethnicities. Yet it does not do well with celebrating their cultural differences. The people of Calvary are very friendly and even welcome non-white individuals to be involved in the various church programs and ministries. However, the invitation is to "become one of us" and to do things the way the white culture does them. It is not an invitation to help white members do things differently. Therefore, the church does not reflect the integration of other cultures.

In his popular book *Beyond Race and Gender*, R. Roosevelt Thomas says the determining factor of organizations that successfully become healthy multi-cultural workplaces as opposed to those that do not is the ability to transition from a "come be like us" mentality to a realization that the burden of change must be on the culture of the organization rather than the people. This means embracing ethnically different people through the adoption of those cultural differences into the programs and functions of the church.²

The senior pastor and board of elders agree that in order to become more diverse the daily functions and programs of Calvary Church need to move toward the recognition and inclusion of the differences of cultures. However, even though the leadership agrees to this in theory, the elders and deacons get nervous and fear that Calvary will become a

² R. Roosevelt Thomas, *Beyond Race and Gender: Unleashing the Power of Your Total Work Force by Managing Diversity* (New York, NY: American Management Association, 1991), 7-8.

different church when suggestions are made to move in this new direction. The researcher has found that this nervousness reflects the general feelings of the staff and congregation about the experience of change. The anxiety relates to a lack of vision of the God-honoring benefits of celebrating diverse ways of carrying out ministry and of having a diverse congregation. Therefore, though unintentional, the current *modus operandi* of Calvary is that minorities are to integrate themselves into the established, predominantly white culture. This approach is the opposite of celebrating differences through the reflection of distinct cultural nuances.

Calvary, like so many other churches, has had its share of difficulty over music style preferences. Several years ago, Senior Pastor Jim Samra preached a sermon in which he argued that the ability to worship with music styles outside of one's preference is a sign of spiritual maturity. He went on to say that Christians should be able to enjoy it when others are experiencing a music style that connects them with God, even if the particular song or style being played is not among their favorites. Pastor Samra did a good job of connecting his argument with the truths of Scripture. The church's response was amazingly positive. In fact, the majority of people who were bickering over the music style changed their minds and began finding joy in the fact that others were able to better worship God. The researcher mentions this to demonstrate that Calvary Church is made up of people who sincerely want to do what is right. Further, they believe that the Bible is completely true. Therefore, the most effective means towards communicating to the leaders, staff and congregational members of Calvary is through Scripture. Thus, showing the people of Calvary that Scripture presents God's desire for Calvary Church to move from simple hospitality to celebrating diversity will be most effective.

The Importance of the Project

The Importance of the Project to the Researcher

The researcher's passion for this topic is due in part to his experiences growing up. The researcher grew up in a mostly white community. However, he had many friends from various ethnic backgrounds. The researcher's impression is that God has always given him friends who were from non-white ethnicities. For instance, during all four years of undergraduate schooling, his roommate was a young man by the name of Michiyoshi, "Mitch" from Tokyo, Japan, who remains one of the researcher's best friends today.

The researcher remembers many times when growing up through grade school and even into college that his ethnically diverse friends would be made fun of or even physically hurt due to their ethnic differences. He remembers one black friend being beaten up by kids in a bathroom while they voiced multiple racial slurs. The researcher remembers an Asian friend being made fun of because his eyes looked different from non-Asian eyes. Thinking about these instances still hurts the researcher a bit. He loved these friends and hates that they had to deal with such racism and lack of acceptance.

The researcher served as the Executive Pastor of this large church and had the responsibility of implementing changes in areas that the church identifies as less than God-honoring. Therefore, he personally feels responsible to do everything he can to make sure Calvary Church's non-white constituencies feel honored and respected. He wants to make sure that they are treated the way God's Word reveals that they should be treated. Part of treating them honorably is to allow them to become as integral a part of this church body as the white members feel themselves to be. This means that the church has

to allow itself to be impacted by their culture. It ultimately means becoming a different church.

The Importance of the Project to the Immediate Ministry Context

The researcher would like to think that inside the church there would not be prejudices, but he has found that this is not the case. In 1999, Calvary Church hired an African American pastor, Marvin, the only African American pastor in the history of Calvary Church. While he is no longer on staff with Calvary, the researcher interviewed Pastor Marvin about his experience while at Calvary. Pastor Marvin discussed the awkwardness of coming to Calvary and being the only African American staff member and one of the few African American congregational members. He said that when he first came to Calvary 30 or so different white families invited him to dinner. He spoke about how he and his family enjoyed the evenings greatly and how friendly these families were to them. However, he said that when he would see these families at church, they were no longer very warm. They would acknowledge his family but the friendliness that they demonstrated while in their homes was not present on Sunday morning. The researcher is sure this was not an isolated instance and it personally hurts him to think that this goes on at the church he serves.

In another instance the researcher was having lunch with several African Americans. All of them were in their 50s or older. The researcher asked them how Calvary could come alongside them and help minister to them better. Everyone agreed that they did not want anything to become different at Calvary. They expressed how they loved things the way they were. They explained that this was the reason they had chosen Calvary as their church. The researcher then asked them how many of their grown

children came to Calvary. The answer was “none.” They said, “That is a very different question. If you want our kids to come, there are many things that would have to be changed.” These 50 year-olds said that they stayed at Calvary primarily for the preaching of the Word. They said the things that would bother the younger generations are not impediments for them. In other words, having to look past many things is worth being able to come and hear the message clearly taught in the manner that Calvary pastors teach.

The researcher then asked them to tell him what some of those things were that would bother the younger generations. They replied with many examples of things that would have to change, all of them being things related to the African American culture. One of those was in regard to the children’s ministry always picturing Jesus as white. Another, was never seeing black people on the stage during Sunday morning services. In other words, they were communicating to the researcher that their kids were not interested in coming to a church that did not value their culture enough to include it in the DNA of the church.

Hearing this motivated the researcher to help Calvary change. Since the senior pastor was in agreement, it seemed like the prime opportunity. Therefore, it is the goal of this project to provide the researcher’s church with the necessary information to lead and guide it toward change.

The Importance of the Project to the Church at Large

When a church is in a multi-racial community and does not seek to become a multi-racial congregation, it simply cannot be pleasing to God. There is no hint in Scripture that churches should congregate based upon common ethnicity. In fact, as this

project has shown, Scripture requires a church to break down walls of segregation and pursue greater diversity when at all possible.

It is the researcher's desire that this project will serve to help other churches that want to become more diverse. It is the researcher's belief that the majority of evangelical church leaders throughout the world would pursue diversity once they realize that it is God's desire for them to do so. Thus, the first benefit this project will bring is a greater awareness of the heart of God in this matter.

The second hope the researcher has is that this project will serve to educate evangelical church leaders on how to properly and effectively pursue diversity. Even churches that desire to pursue diversity need to know the best practices to do so. Many of the best practices identified in this project are not common sense. It is the researcher's hope that the project will not only convince church leaders of the need to pursue diversity but will also give them the necessary tools to do so in a God-honoring manner.

The third hope the researcher has for this project is that it will serve to help other congregations become spiritually mature. When a church pursues diversity by celebrating it, people cannot help but become more spiritually mature in the process. It makes people grow more spiritually mature to work together to accomplish a difficult vision like breaking down walls of segregation. As just one example of this maturation, people learn to experience worship more deeply and less selfishly when they worship through the cultural approaches of other ethnic groups.

Data and Methodology

Nature of the Research

This research project employed qualitative research with case study research method as the primary model used. The primary research tools used were personal interviews, anonymous surveys, observational field notes and organizational documents.

Project Overview

The first step in the research process was to gain an understanding of the biblical and theological principles applicable to the local church in pursuing ethnic diversity. This process was accomplished through reviewing related theological and doctrinal material. Since evangelical churches consider it their number one goal to follow the teachings of Scripture, identifying what the Bible has to say about God's desire for both the universal church as well as the local church in regard to ethnic diversity was of prime importance. While such biblical and theological studies have been undertaken before, the hope is that the researcher was able to collate the biblical evidence and present the theological truth in a more useful and helpful manner that will assist in the goal of educating church leaders regarding the importance God places on the local church in pursuing diversity when at all possible.

The second step in the research process was to review the current literature within three areas of concentration: (a) general best practices regarding the development of a multi-ethnic organization, (b) leadership development focused on becoming a multi-ethnic organization, and (c) general educational material focused on the educational needs of the congregation and staff. The data needed was truth derived from extra-

biblical scholarly literature that utilized acceptable standards of research and dealt with the best practices employed by organizations forging multi-cultural community.

The third step was to identify the distinct feelings, experiences and opinions of a large part of Calvary's minority congregational members. The researcher did this by selecting some of the key minority congregational members to interview while sending anonymous surveys to others. The researcher conducted personal and group interviews of church leaders, as well as interviews of other church staff and congregational members. He followed up these interviews with anonymous surveys of key congregational members. Finally, he recorded and analyzed observations made during site visits. The purpose of the interviews and surveys was to identify the nature of their experiences as a minority of Calvary Church. The researcher wanted to understand the experiences before, during and after Calvary's efforts at diversity, with the ultimate goal of identifying what went well in the process as well as what did not. This helped him identify the needs and desires of minorities regarding future initiatives that pursue the celebration of diversity.

The fifth step was to organize and analyze the data produced through the literature review, the interviews, the surveys and the other findings identified during the onsite visits in a cohesive and logical manner. The sixth step was to identify what the research reveals as the best practices to implement when a church desires to move from simply being hospitable to its non-white constituency to celebrating diversity. The seventh was to give each of the eight departments in Calvary Church goals to accomplish within their individual ministries that would better celebrate ethnic diversity. These things reflect the best practices as identified by this project.

The eighth and final step was to re-interview the minorities after two years of implementing these steps. The purpose of the interviews was to identify the effectiveness of the implementation process and to identify what worked and what did not.

The entire data was collected, analyzed, synthesized and organized in a manner that allowed for the researcher to gain insights that will be useful to large churches in their attempts to move from simply being hospitable to non-white constituencies to celebrating the richness of diversity. The researcher wants Calvary and other churches to become congregations that exemplify the Apostle John's eschatological vision of people from every tribe, tongue and nation worshiping God together. As this project has shown, when a church effectively pursues the celebration of diversity it pleases God through obedience to His will and it experiences greater corporate and individual spiritual maturity.

CHAPTER TWO: GOD’S DESIRE FOR DIVERSITY

God’s Desire for Diversity

In His Universal Church

Scripture demonstrates God’s desire to have His universal Church made up of people from every nation and every ethnic background. This is seen in various places throughout Scripture. For example, the Christian’s commission is to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18). John’s vision assures that this commission will be successfully accomplished, in which he sees people too numerous to count, “from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9). These examples show two important things. First, they show that God desires His bride the Church to be ethnically diverse. They also show that God provides for the church to become ethnically diverse, assuring that it conforms to His desire.

John Walvoord expressed his deep conviction that national identity will be preserved throughout eternity:

It is an error, however, to assume that national identity will be lost in eternity. Just as there will be individual identity, so also there will be racial identity, and individuals will inevitably carry throughout eternity an identification related to some extent to their place in the history of the world.¹

¹ John F. Walvoord, *The Nations in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 169-170.

Thomas Figart agrees that this could be a possibility. He points to several scriptures that support Walvoord's statement.² The first is 1 Corinthians 13:12, in which Paul writes, "Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." Figart's point here is that this verse seems to indicate that in heaven people will look the same to others and be recognized by others just as they are recognized here on earth; that is, introductions will not have to be made, as brothers and sisters will recognize each other from their associations with them on earth. John substantiates this when Jesus' glorified body is said to still have the visible nail prints in his hand (John 20:27). Figart points to this as further possible evidence that the glorified bodies of the saints will still look the same and thus retain their earthly ethnic physical characteristics.

Luke also seems to indicate that people will maintain their earthly physical characteristics in heaven (Luke 16:19-31). In this story a poor man named Lazarus has died and is "by Abraham's side." A rich man who knew Lazarus while on earth but ignored his needs also died and experienced torment in Hades. The rich man was able to see Lazarus by Abraham's side and asked Abraham to let Lazarus bring him water (16:23-24). Abraham denied his request. The rich man then asked Abraham to allow Lazarus to go and warn his five brothers "so they will not also come to this place of torment." The rich man reasoned that "if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent." Two aspects of this story assume physical characteristics are retained after death. The first is that the rich man recognizes Lazarus. The second is that the rich man assumes that his brothers will also recognize Lazarus. For the brothers to recognize that a dead person has risen from the dead, they would have needed to know the person and

² Thomas O. Figart, *A Biblical Perspective on the Race Problem* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1973), 150.

known that he had died. The rich man then assumes that his brothers would indeed recognize Lazarus as he recognized Lazarus.

The point in all of these scriptural examples is not to argue that a person will maintain his or her earthly national or racial identity but that it seems that a person's glorified body maintains his or her earthly characteristics. This in turn seems to indicate that God not only created ethnic differences but He also seems to have planned the eternal preservation of those ethnic differences at some level. That is, God designed people to look, act and think differently from each other. These differences that reflect God's design for each person, at least at some level, will be maintained throughout eternity.

Orlando Espin points to the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 as the consummate proof text of God's deep desire for His universal church to be ethnically diverse. In this passage, the Jerusalem church's elders and the apostles meet to discuss a dispute that had arisen among various leaders within the early churches. The debate was regarding whether or not the Gentile believers had to adhere to the Jewish law—particularly that of circumcision—to be considered a follower of Christ. Paul and Barnabas argued that cultural differences and customs had nothing to do with being a follower of Christ nor did they have any ramifications for membership in the universal church of Christ. Espin writes, "Faith and baptism open the doors to the ecclesial communion, and not passports, colors of skins, or places of birth."³ To Espin, God designed the church to be culturally diverse and the church could not even consider itself a universal organization "without

³ Orlando O. Espin, "A Multicultural Church: Theological Reflections from Below," in *The Multicultural Church: A New Landscape in U.S. Theologies*, ed. William Cenkner (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 54.

the variety of human groups, languages and cultures that jointly are the one people of God.”⁴ The very nature of God’s universal church is one of diversity, and without it there would be no universal church.

Part of the reason Christ came was to liberate humanity so that people could live out their calling to be the kind of individuals God created them to be. This is seen in Paul’s writing, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17-18). Paul here is referring to the freedom individuals have in Christ to be who they are designed to be and the freedom they have to grow in spiritual maturity in both relationship with God and others.

Various ethnic differences are a very real part of how a person is made in the image of God. As people grow in spiritual maturity, they grow in their ability to live in freedom—freedom from hiding who they are as individuals from God and from others. This is why the identification of diversity in heaven will be a very real part of the perfected future state. No longer will sin be present to keep people divided over their ethnic diversity and cultural differences. Yet people do not need to wait for heaven to begin experiencing this freedom for, as Paul states it, people are currently “being transformed into his image with ever increasingly glory” (2 Cor. 3:18). A natural implication of Paul’s statement is that as people grow in their own spiritual maturity, they grow in two related ways. First, they grow in their ability to be unashamed of their God-designed uniqueness. Second, they grow in their ability to fully embrace the uniqueness

⁴ Espin, 54.

of others. This allows them to experience the freedom there is in Christ to have “unveiled faces.”

Scripture clearly indicates that God has always planned His universal church to be made up of ethnically diverse people. That He desires this diversity to continue through eternity seems equally clear in God’s Word. Faith in Christ is the entry point into the Body of Christ for all people. As people grow in their own spiritual maturity they grow in their ability to experience intimate communion with both God and with each other in spite of their differences. Each person can experience being “no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people. ... being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (Eph. 2:19, 22). While faith in Christ is solely what unifies people and provides access into His Body, the church, each local church body benefits greatly when it too can experience ethnic diversity within its community.

In the Local Church

The researcher interviewed Pastor Marvin Williams, the Senior Teaching Pastor of Trinity Church in Lansing, Michigan, concerning the positive spiritual implications of ethnic diversity for a local church.⁵ Trinity Church is a multi-racial church with a leadership team dedicated to pursuing ethnic diversity. When asked why being ethnically diverse was such a value at Trinity, Williams stated, “You’re not sinning if you are not a diverse church, but you are stronger if you are and more complete.”⁶ Here he is referring to his belief that the very nature of diversity provides a breeding ground for individuals to spiritually mature and therefore spiritually grow as a body. Because God desires each of

⁵ Williams, interview by author, Grand Rapids, MI, November 30, 2012.

⁶ Williams, interview.

His congregations to mature spiritually in Christ-likeness, Williams believes that when at all possible, every local church should pursue ethnic diversity. Pastor Williams's sentiment regarding God's desire that the local church reflect diversity is shared by many others in church leadership today.

Charles Foster argues that churches do well when they strive to reflect the diversity that God desires. The birth of God's church was multi-cultural, and contemporary churches should be too. Foster bases his idea on Luke's description in Acts 2. Luke was careful to show how God intentionally established the universal church—the physical manifestation of the Body of Christ—as ethnically diverse. Luke's intentional naming of the various and multiple ethnicities of this first church seems to demonstrate the importance of this diversity. It speaks to the idea that every church established afterward ought to be diverse when possible.

Nowhere does Scripture even hint that a person benefits from being part of a local church that is comprised primarily of people of the same ethnicity. In fact, Scripture seems to present the multi-ethnic congregation as the ideal scenario. One reason for this seems to be the benefits people experience in their own spiritual maturation process. Another reason is the glory that God gets when His people are worshiping and growing in unity despite their differences.

Unity

Jim Samra, Senior Pastor of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, MI, provides strong Scriptural evidence that God does indeed desire His local church to be ethnically diverse. Samra points to Paul's language that the local church is the "Body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27). He believes Paul's use of this imagery is evidence that God also desires

the local church to reflect ethnic diversity. He points out that Paul emphasizes that polar-opposite people groups like Jews and Greeks or slaves or freemen can still be part of the same community. He quotes Paul, “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor. 12:12-13). Samra then asks, “Where did God intend people of different ethnic backgrounds (Jew and Greek) ... to come together?” His answer is, “The local church.”⁷ Samra’s point is that just as God desires ethnic diversity within His universal Church, He also desires that each congregation reflect diversity to the greatest extent possible.

The greatest extent possible, according to William Campbell, is nothing short of worshipping together in unity. Campbell argues that Christ’s finished work has made it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to worship in perfect unity despite their ethnic differences. Campbell points to Paul’s statement that Christ “himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14).⁸ This idea is nothing new. People from various Christian denominations have long recognized the reality of this accomplishment through the passion of Christ. Over 50 years ago, the World Council of Churches stated it perfectly.

People of different languages, cultures, and social classes belong to the one Church of Jesus Christ. Nowhere do we find any Scriptural basis for segregation of Christians on grounds of race or culture. Many still build a wall between the inner and outer courts of their sanctuaries just as the

⁷ James George Samra, *The Gift of Church: How God Designed the Local Church to Meet Our Needs as Christians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2010), 51.

⁸ W. S. Campbell, “Unity and Diversity in the Church: Transformed Identities and the Peace of Christ in Ephesians,” *Irish Biblical Studies* no. 1 (2006): 9-16.

Jews did in their temple, but boundaries which divide people outside of Christ vanish when they come together in Christ.⁹

There is no room for Christ's church, His Body, to be divided over any issue, much less over ethnic differences. The church should be "one." Unfortunately, decades later the church is still in dire need of appropriately responding to this truth.

Alan Johnson and Robert Webber point to Paul's emphasis on the "oneness of the body."¹⁰ Paul wrote,

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many (1 Cor. 12: 12-14).

Johnson and Webber state, "Christ is present in the oneness of the body as each diverse part is honored in its unique contribution to the whole."¹¹ Five times in this passage alone the word "one" is used in relation to the manner in which the church should worship and function. The very fact that the cross itself stands for reconciliation between God and humanity predicates that unity is absolutely essential between all brothers and sisters in Christ.

Diversity

In his work *From Antioch to Jerusalem*, Jerome Crowe shows that the churches in both those cities were made up of very socially diverse individuals. His study shows that the churches were made up of rich and poor, slaves and slave owners, married and single

⁹ *Christians and Race Relations in Southern Africa* (General Conference: World Council of Churches, 1964), 6.

¹⁰ Alan F. Johnson and Robert Webber, *What Christians Believe: A Biblical and Historical Summary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 341.

¹¹ Johnson and Webber, 341.

individuals, government officials as well as skilled and unskilled workers.¹² Crowe's point is that the church should naturally breed diversity and should in no way reflect the segregation in the world in regard to social status or ethnicity.

The researcher is fully aware that churches in more rural areas or areas with a more homogeneous population will not have the opportunities to pursue ethnic diversity to the same degree. In these cases, a church should pursue diversity beyond simple ethnic diversity in such ways as reaching out to those in society who have special needs, reaching out to the older population if the congregation is primarily young (and vice-versa), and seeking to become a church with different socio-economic representation. This paper is primarily focusing on ethnic diversity, since ethnic diversity seems to be the most difficult for churches to achieve. But becoming a diverse church does not simply stop with ethnic diversity.

In their book *Reconciling All Things*, Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice point out that when diverse groups of Christians are worshiping together in unity, they are actually pointing to a "reality beyond itself"¹³ and simultaneously proclaiming "a future that is not seen."¹⁴ The "reality beyond itself" is the reality that diverse people are worshipping God in heaven now. The "future that is not seen" refers to the fact that one day those still living on earth will join in that diverse worship experience.

William Campbell also argues that, while God desires that diverse groups join together in unity, He also desires that each group remains diverse and that the diversity

¹² Jerome Crowe, *From Jerusalem to Antioch: The Gospel across Cultures* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), 139-141.

¹³ Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice, *Reconciling all Things: A Christian Vision for Justice, Peace and Healing* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 113-114.

¹⁴ Katongole and Rice, 113-114.

should not be diminished but rather celebrated and embraced. Campbell bases this argument on Paul's statement, "Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him." (1 Cor. 7:20)¹⁵ Here, Paul's primary example of this is circumcision. Jewish boys were circumcised in accordance with the Jewish law. As a general practice, the Gentiles did not circumcise. In Acts 15 the Jerusalem elders had already decided that whether a person was circumcised or not had nothing to do with the status of his or her relationship with Christ or with each other in the church. Here, Paul reaffirms this idea and encourages people not to pursue changes in their ethnic or cultural characteristics that have no bearing on a person's pursuit of God.

Andy Goodliff agrees and takes it even further, saying, "We must develop ways in which we can affirm, include and celebrate the diversity of God's people."¹⁶ Goodliff's statement reflects the logical conclusion that if God enjoys it when diverse groups of people can worship Him and experience community together in unity, then He must enjoy it when those differences are preserved. Without the preservation of differences, diversity dies to homogeneity. Thus, an ethnically diverse church must be intentional to embrace the diversity and seek ways for individuals to live out their diversity in the life of the church.

This research has revealed that God created His people to be diverse. Therefore, He enjoys it that not all people are the same nor act the same. He likes the fact that people have cultural and sociological differences. Further, He likes it when people worship Him out of those same differences.

¹⁵ Campbell, 4.

¹⁶ A. Goodliff, "Celebrating Diversity: Towards an Inclusive Church," *The Baptist Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2009): 26.

In his book *Embracing Diversity*, Charles Foster uses the word “embrace” to denote “the interplay of differentiation and intimacy in human communities.”¹⁷ This means that when a person demonstrates love for another person different from him or herself by opening the door to relationship, the first person is not simply tolerating the second person’s differences. Rather, the first person actually embraces the other’s differences. Foster further argues that part of embracing diversity is to integrate the various nuances of diversity within the DNA of the church. For example, a church should select songs and styles of songs that represent the various ethnic cultures within its congregation. When a church does this, it embraces diversity. It does not embrace diversity when it has various ethnicities within its congregation but only picks music that represents the dominant culture group’s style of music. Likewise, when a church segregates its congregation based upon cultural differences, it does not allow its congregational members the opportunity to embrace each other in their differences.

Curtis DeYoung tells of an Indian church in South Africa that desired to reach out to its community’s black South Africans. After realizing the many differences in culture and worship style, the church initially decided to hold two services: one for the Indians, in an Indian style, and the other for black South Africans, in their cultural style. However, after hearing a sermon on how the early church moved from an ethnocentric congregation in Jerusalem to a multiethnic congregation in Antioch (Acts 2-13), the church leadership decided that God desired them to unite under the banner of one people worshiping God

¹⁷ Foster, 1.

together, even if this meant “incorporating Zulu musical styles into worship.”¹⁸ This paints a picture of the kind of unity and diversity that God desires.

Scripture is devoid of any indication that people should segregate themselves in worship around their individual preferences. In fact, Scripture indicates that God desires the type of worship expressed on earth to reflect the worship that is happening in heaven. Hebrews 9:23-24 refers to the earthly places of worship as “copies” of what is taking place in heaven. Likewise, in Revelation 7:9 John paints a picture of people “from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and before the Lamb” worshipping together in unity. To reflect this type of worship, churches must be courageous and follow in the footsteps of the church in South Africa that intentionally embraced diversity by refusing to let individual cultural tastes segregate God’s people.

Unity and Diversity

Scripture speaks often regarding the glory God receives when people of various differences come together in unity. The reason for this is because unity and love are intricately tied together. Unity can only be maintained when people maintain love for one another. This is why Paul writes to the Corinthians, “There should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Cor. 12:25-26). That is, when people are caring for one another out of love, divisiveness is avoided. This is why Paul says to love another person is “the most excellent way” (vs. 31). Jesus said, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). Therefore, God is glorified when His people demonstrate love for each other and

¹⁸ Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 10.

when they experience the unity that results. Loving others different from oneself can take more intentionality and effort. Thus, God is glorified when groups of people from differing backgrounds extend acceptance for one another and demonstrate to the world their love for each other.

Daniel Romero cautions that unity should not be sought after at the expense of diversity.¹⁹ When people with differing cultures come together, unity could immediately be experienced by finding commonalities between them. Romero is cautioning that sustainable unity must be based on each person learning to embrace the differences of others. For Romero it is important that the community does not ignore those differences or to try to downplay them for the sake of unity. Rather, the community should allow itself to experience them. Romero points to Paul's use of the body analogy in 1 Corinthians 12. He explains that differences are a gift of God and is a perfect example of unity among diversity.²⁰ Thus, for Romero, differences among people should be experienced within the community as this gives people the opportunity to enjoy unity in diversity.

David Bosch agrees and points out that when members of a community embrace each other's differences in such a way that those differences are experienced by the community, the community changes for the better.²¹ In making this point He refers to the passion of Christ stating,

¹⁹ Daniel F. Romero, "The Church's Struggle with Diversity," *International Review of Mission* 85, no. 337 (04/01, 1996): 191.

²⁰ Romero, 194.

²¹ David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), 167-168.

In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ a new age has dawned, in which Jew and Gentile are joined together without distinction in the one people of God ... And Christ's work of reconciliation does not bring two parties into the same room that they may settle their differences; it leads to a new kind of body in which human relations are being transformed.²²

This "new kind of body," Romero argues, is a celebration of differences and an embrace of differences by the community as opposed to a "melting pot" type community in which individual distinctives are lost through forceful conformity.²³

Don, a black member of Calvary Church, agrees, stating, "We do not want to change the culture but morph the culture naturally so it reflects and celebrates diversity." Don was referring to allowing the culture to change on its own instead of forcing the changes on people. As the church builds a culture of freeing people to express themselves naturally, the culture in turn will morph naturally. He said one example of this is the manner in which people praise. Don suggests that the church should not provide a formula for doing this. Rather, the church should make sure people are comfortable expressing their praise freely and in the manner they desire.²⁴ Don's comment is a perfect example of what both Romero and Bosch have argued. If a minority group is expected to simply come into a church and conform to the dominant culture's way of expressing worship, the dominant culture misses out on the opportunity to experience the beauty that unity among diversity breeds. When a church embraces diversity it allows for the expression of all cultures within the life of the church. In this way, a church allows itself to be changed.

²² Bosch, 170.

²³ Romero, 194-196.

²⁴ Don, interview by author, Grand Rapids, MI, September 30, 2012.

Intentionality

These arguments expose one of the main issues churches, including Calvary, face today. They say they want to welcome those of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. But what they really mean is that they want newcomers to come and be like them. They want the dominant, white culture and way of doing things to influence the newcomers as opposed to the other way around. The problem with this is that instead of celebrating diversity by learning from each other, churches tend to hold the dominant culture as the standard. In doing so, they so miss out on what people from other cultures have to offer.

Randy Woodley states, “Dominant cultures have always flaunted a notion of superiority, and find a ‘reasonable,’ sometimes ‘godly,’ rationale to support their claims and pardon their oppressive attitudes.”²⁵ Woodley points out that ethnocentricity, racism and cultural discrimination have been a problem in the church from its conception. It is much easier for people to want others to become like themselves as opposed to experiencing their differences and changing as a result. It is much easier to look for a reason why one’s culture’s way of doing things is better. It is much easier to then use that reason to manipulate others into changing to be like the dominant culture, as Hauerwas wrote: “to make them as much like us as possible or to make them live apart.”²⁶

Unfortunately, as Woodley has pointed out, churches have a long history of twisting Scripture and using the Bible to manipulate others, arguing that the dominant culture’s way of doing things is somehow godlier. But it is all done so that churches do not have to change themselves. Since the embrace of other cultures does not come

²⁵ Randy Woodley, *Living in Color: Embracing God's Passion for Ethnic Diversity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 103-104.

²⁶ Hauerwas, 213.

naturally, a church must be intentional in its pursuit of diversity. It must encourage its congregation toward experiencing the differences of others. It can become a better community as a result.

Miroslav Volf argues that there are two decisive actions people must take in order to be intentional about embracing others in their differences. The first is that people must make space in themselves for the other person and the second is that they must be committed to experiencing the other person in their otherness.²⁷ Volf's point is that people must not only be able to identify the differences of others, but also must be challenged to open themselves up to them. This means embracing the idea that these differences are valuable and are to be both preserved and enjoyed. Churches must educate and challenge their people to embrace each other in their differences in such a way that everyone is learning, growing and celebrating the beauty of God's diverse creation. Humans have a natural tendency to want everyone to be similar. God made people different because He likes people different. His Word also demonstrates that. He enjoys it when a local church does not squelch the differences by making everyone look and act the same. Rather, He enjoys it when people embraces the differences by reflecting those differences in the various operations of the church.

One way to move toward this vision is for churches to facilitate dialogue between ethnic groups. This can help people be intentional about making space in themselves for other people. It can help them be committed to experiencing the other person in their otherness. Embracing diversity requires that people learn from each other. People have different experiences and histories that are very valuable to others. Pastor Marvin

²⁷ Miroslav Volf, "God's Spirit and God's People in the Social and Cultural Upheavals in Europe", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 29, no. 2 (Spring, 1992): 230-248.

discussed the importance of making sure everyone has the freedom and opportunity to share from their diverse experiences.²⁸ Katongole and Rice write, “The task of recovering reconciliation as a Christian vision is also a recovery of real, overlooked stories in history. It means learning to listen to people who embody a unique journey and set of practices in a broken and divided world.”²⁹ Often the practices and cultures of minorities are not valued by the dominant ethnic group of the local church, and therefore, those representing minority groups are never given the opportunity to share. Thus, it seems necessary for any church desiring to embrace diversity to ask ethnic minorities their feelings, thoughts, experiences and desires in order for the church to begin the process of being a place that represents the diversity God’s Word says He loves.

It is not easy for communities to include those different from themselves and celebrate their differences. It is not easy to do this in such a way that the community comes to reflect the manner in which other cultures do things. To do so creates an entirely new community. Change is never easy and people do not naturally gravitate toward it. Thus a church must be intentional about recreating itself in such a way that its functioning or operations can reflect diversity. It must educate its people regarding the benefits of diversity. It must educate its people about what diversity looks like.

The Influence of Diversity in an Individual’s Spiritual Maturation Process

One of the benefits of diversity is its positive impact on an individual’s spiritual maturation process. As Calvary learned in its earlier conflicts over diverse music style preferences, people can become more spiritually mature the more they are in relationship

²⁸ Williams, interview by author, November 30, 2012.

²⁹ Katongole and Rice, 45-46.

with people from other cultural backgrounds. As more and more people of diverse ethnic backgrounds attend, more and more differences will be noticed in the congregation. The church's task is to encourage these differences and to have them reflected in the various worship elements of the services, as well as in its operational structures. To squelch these differences is to deny the beauty of diversity and to deny people the opportunity to mature.

Scripture portrays the maturation process as a process that happens when individuals endure and appropriately respond to issues of life that are difficult. Paul writes to the church in Rome,

We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us (Rom. 5:3-5).

Here Paul is saying that an individual matures spiritually when he or she appropriately pursues righteousness in the face of difficulty. Attempting to live in a manner that God desires is difficult. But enduring through it ultimately leads to love. This means love for others even in their "otherness." As a church pursues diversity, it will experience difficulty. Change is hard on people and thus produces a type of suffering. This suffering can allow individuals the opportunity to grow spiritually. As individuals grow in maturity, the church as a whole matures as well.

Paul specifically draws a correlation between an individual growing in spiritual maturity and appropriately responding to others different from oneself: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2-3). Paul then goes on to point out that each person is gifted differently and that each person uses his or her

giftedness in unity with and for the greater body, so that all “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

James Olson agrees that Ephesians 4 is directly related to diversity and the process of maturation. He writes,

As each member embraces his or her true identity as a citizen of the community, in humility determines to make the effort to live in unity, receives and recognizes the unique gifting he or she has in this diverse community, willingly submits to the God-given authority Christ has established in the community, and enthusiastically engages in the synergistic ministry of the community, each member will naturally develop and grow into maturity alongside of the entire community.³⁰

Both Paul and Olson point out that as people “make the effort to live in unity” with others different from themselves, they grow in maturity. Embracing others in their differences is not easy and creates a form of suffering. This suffering in turn provides the seedbed for maturity.

Jesus’ Hospitality with Sinners and Gentiles And Its Implications on the Local Church

The emulation of Jesus is the consummate mark of spiritual maturity for both an individual and for a church community. It follows that Christians and churches ought to imitate Jesus’ embrace of diversity.

Jesus and Hospitality

Jesus signaled His embrace of diversity when He said that His house shall be called “a house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17). He intended the church to consist of all nations. One primary way Jesus demonstrated this intent was His unique approach to hospitality. De Young points out that this was how Jesus’ ministry brought people to

³⁰ James Olson, “Building an Inter-Cultural Church” (DMin. Thesis Project, Bethel University, 2010), 41.

the understanding that His church was one of inclusivity.³¹ Jesus communicated through hospitality that there was no longer room for the Jewish separatist view.

Craig Blomberg argues that this inclusivity was Jesus' motivation from the beginning, as demonstrated by the way He broke all Jewish "table fellowship" rules.³² Blomberg surveys each instance in the Old Testament where dining played a major role. He finds that, regardless of the reason for the meal and without exception, there is no Old Testament instance where (1) God's people share a meal with their enemies, (2) God's people share a meal with an uninvited guest, or (3) faithful Israel seeks out the ritually or morally stigmatized of their society for inclusion in table fellowship. He goes on to investigate contrasting accounts of Jesus' hospitality. For instance, Jesus banqueted with the tax collector Levi (Mark 2:13-17). He commended the faith of the disreputable women during a meal at the home of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). He ate with the chief tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). He acknowledged that he is considered by some a glutton and drunkard and a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matt. 11:19). Jesus claimed that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom ahead of the Jewish leaders (Matt. 21:31, 32).

Jesus wanted any and all to join His church. He went to the highways and byways and without reservation invited absolutely anyone to come. Likewise, today, the local church should break the normative cultural molds. Instead of waiting for other ethnic groups to come on their own initiative, the local church should step out in faith and show Christ's love through invitation to fellowship. The church should be an example to

³¹ DeYoung, 18-19.

³² Craig Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2005), 32-64.

society of a place where people of various ethnic groups come together in unity under the banner of Christ. To become this way will require the church to operate radically differently than the majority of the world's social groups in which homogeneity is the norm.

What was so radical about Jesus was that He was hospitable to all. He was welcoming to all regardless of differences. Jesus never made a distinction. He demonstrated love to all and always welcomed anyone to dine with Him. Goodliff argues that the church must also reflect this type of inclusivity for all and thus must be intentional about developing a culture of hospitality. Goodliff writes, "If hospitality becomes the way we exist as the church, being inclusive becomes the way we exist as the church."³³ That is, as a church follows Jesus' example of inviting those of diverse ethnic backgrounds and providing hospitality to them, it will naturally grow diverse and diversity will be the new norm.

Luke Bretherton provides clarity as to what such hospitality looks like. "Christian hospitality is the call both to enter into relationship with, and accommodate, those who are different, and to take account of a wider context by identifying who is the vulnerable stranger."³⁴ "Vulnerable strangers" are not limited to those of ethnic minority. People with special needs, people with physical ailments, and even women can often find themselves in vulnerable situations. They can often be regarded as "strangers" due to their differences. Bretherton's definition of Christian hospitality fits the example Jesus

³³ Goodliff, 27.

³⁴ Luke Bretherton, "Tolerance, Education and Hospitality: A Theological Proposal," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 17 (2004), 100.

left of someone who was intentional about demonstrating love and acceptance to all but particularly to those who had found themselves on the fringe of society.

Bretherton's point is that Christian hospitality is not simply meeting the physical needs of an individual. It means to invite others into a relationship in which both parties experience life together. The life of Jesus provides an excellent example of what it looks like to invite people other than oneself into relationship.

Jesus and the Least of These

In His metaphor of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46), Jesus' explains that there will be a final judgment when He will separate those who helped meet the needs of "the least of these" (vs. 40) from those who ignored them. He says that the least of these are people who have found themselves in need of help from other more fortunate people. He gives the example of strangers needing clothes, food and water. Jesus said that those who meet the needs of such people actually did it to Him and that those who refused to meet the needs of people actually refused Him.

Jesus carries on the Old Testament tradition of considering the least of these. In the Old Testament, anyone who has found themselves marginalized by society and in need of protection and care was the least of these. Often there were three types of people that were mentioned in the Old Testament as being especially vulnerable. They are the widow, the orphan and the foreigner. Deuteronomy 24:17 says, "Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge." Deuteronomy 27:19 uses stronger language saying, "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless, or the widow." Minorities often find themselves as strangers in society and can easily become marginalized and neglected by the dominant culture.

Christine Pohl writes,

Vulnerable strangers in need of welcome are usually marginal to the society because they are detached from significant human relationships and social institutions; often they are overlooked and undervalued by people more centrally situated. The marginality of hosts is somewhat different; it most often involves a certain distance rather than detachment from the important social institutions. It may also involve a deliberate withdrawal from prevailing understanding of power, status, and possessions. Such hosts are often distinguished from the larger society by their practices, commitments, and distinctive ways of life.³⁵

Pohl is referring to the exact social dynamic that Calvary's former associate pastor, Marvin, experienced when first coming to Calvary. His black ethnicity provided him with a natural distancing from the dominant white culture.

This is the same dynamic that caused the early church's Hellenistic widows not to receive their fair share of the food distribution. Luke writes, "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food" (Acts 6:1). Luke goes on to record that the early church leaders appointed six men to manage the food distribution. This ensured that everyone got their fair share regardless of their culture of origin.

I. Howard Marshall points out that this conflict was a natural by-product of one group over-emphasizing the importance of its ethnicity. He points out that the majority of Hellenistic Jews were of Palestinian origin and had adopted the Greek language and many of the Hellenistic traditions.³⁶ As a result, they were marginalized by the Hebraic

³⁵ Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 105.

³⁶ I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1980), 126.

Jews who had a “strong sense of their Jewishness.”³⁷ Thus, the Hellenistic Jews were “overlooked and undervalued by people more centrally situated.”³⁸ Pohl’s statement expresses the old adage, “birds of a feather flock together.” People naturally gravitate to people like themselves. Thus, when people find themselves in a situation in which they are the minority, they can become vulnerable and more likely to not have their physical, emotional and relational needs met. A church must be especially intentional to provide care and hospitality to those of different ethnicities. It must be more intentional with other ethnicities than with those of the dominant group.

Jesus and the Samaritan Women

Hospitality to Jesus was not simply feeding a person. For Him, it meant inviting the other person into communion and experiencing each other at a significant emotional and spiritual level. This is the main point John is making when telling the story of Jesus’ interaction with the Samaritan woman (John 4).

Leon Morris points out that in those days the Jews despised the Samaritans and avoided them. Jews considered them spiritually unclean.³⁹ This was because Samaritans were mere “half-breeds,” the offspring of Assyrian invaders inter-marrying with Israelites after 745 B.C. when the Northern Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians.

Morris further points out that from an orthodox Jewish point of view, this woman had two other strikes against her. The second was that she was a woman and in this patriarchal society women were treated with less human dignity than were males. The

³⁷ Marshall, 126.

³⁸ Pohl, 105.

³⁹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 226.

third strike against her was that according to the text (vs. 18) she was a sexual sinner.⁴⁰ This makes it even more striking that Jesus asked her for water.

The woman herself is indeed surprised that a Jewish person would ask such a woman to give Him a drink for, in her words, “Jews do not associate with Samaritans” (John 4:9). Jesus replies that not only is He willing to take a drink from her, He is also willing to give her spiritual water that “will become in [her] a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (vs. 14). Morris points out that later in John’s gospel, Jesus clarifies that the “spring of living water” is actually the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit (7:39) and thus is offering the Samaritan women a new life of relationship with God.⁴¹ Paul enriches the theological layers of this idea when he explains that receiving the Holy Spirit also initiates baptism in the Body of Christ where “we are all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free” (1Cor. 12:13). Jesus was inviting her to become part of His church.

A close look at Jesus’ life provides a template for both individuals who seek to live like Christ did as well as for churches called to represent the Body of Christ to the world. Jesus demonstrated what it looks like to provide hospitality to all but especially what it looks like to pursue those who found themselves on the fringe of society, who were more vulnerable to not having their needs met by the dominant cultural group. Jesus’ life demonstrated His love for humanity and His desire to enter into relationship with people, regardless of their cultural and ethnic differences. Jesus loved all people.

⁴⁰ Morris, 225.

⁴¹ Morris, 230.

Love: The Characteristic of the New Community of God's People

Love Requires Unity

Paul wrote to the Galatians that they are “all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28). John Stott points out that Paul is not saying that individuals lose their individuality and that the characteristics that differentiate individuals from others are removed but rather “inequality before God is abolished. There is a new unity in Christ.”⁴² This new community of God does not allow for marginality of a group of people based on God-given ethnic differences. Here God's people are equal and equally share in the benefits of being part of God's reconciled people.

Jung Young Lee argues that in God's family love should become the dominating characteristic and therefore provide true unity among different types of people. Love, to Lee, is the medicine that heals the cancer of marginality. He writes,

Jesus Christ came to serve: service is his love. The centralists who use racism, sexism, or classism as their means of power to dominate people of color, women, and the poor want to be served rather than to serve. The more they are served by marginal people, the more they want power, to continue to dominate. . . . [The community] has to analyze centrality's power structure and target its resistance. Such movement should continue until centrality's dominance is gone. When it is, each becomes a servant to the other.⁴³

Having a group of people dominate based on their God-given differences is cancerous to unity and has no place in the Body of Christ. The church must be proactive in rooting out

⁴² John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 101-102.

⁴³ Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 154.

such prejudices so that it can reflect Scripture's portrayal of community. At times a church must take radical measures to ensure prejudice is not tolerated and that people are educated regarding its destructive nature. Jesus demonstrated a disdain for racial prejudice.

DeYoung writes that Jesus did not simply offer hospitality and kindness to the Samaritan woman.⁴⁴ He also waged a campaign against the prejudice the Jewish people had against the Samaritan people. This campaign included acts such as Jesus spending the night in the Samaritan villages (John 4:39-42), talking to both Samaritan men and women on multiple occasions (Luke 17:11-19; John 4:4-26, 39-42), and offering them spiritual healing (John 4:39-42) as well as physical healing (Luke 17:11-19).⁴⁵ DeYoung further explains that the most radical thing Jesus did to combat the Jewish prejudices against the Samaritans was to make a Samaritan the hero of the "Good Samaritan" parable. DeYoung argues that Jesus strategically picked a person the Jews thought was unclean to remind them that they were failing in their duty to be compassionate neighbors to those in need. DeYoung points out that "Jesus' story successfully changed the cultural image of the Samaritan from 'unclean' to 'good.'" He believes that local churches should feel the same responsibility to break down prejudices that plague congregations and the world.⁴⁶

When people place their faith in Christ, they are united to other brothers and sisters in the faith. While they do not lose their individuality, they become one with both Christ and each other. In Christ's church there is no room for prejudices. Jesus not only disdained it but also fought against it. Since Jesus fought against it, it follows that a

⁴⁴ DeYoung, 125.

⁴⁵ DeYoung, 125.

⁴⁶ DeYoung, 125-126.

church's ability to experience His presence and effectively build His kingdom is dependent on its ability to provide a community where love is experienced by all, regardless of ethnicity.

Love: A Prerequisite for God's Effectual Presence

In the preface of his book *Racial Equality in the Church*, Bruce Fong explains the birthing of his passionate interest in churches pursuing ethnic diversity.⁴⁷ He was raised in a predominantly Chinese church where the biblical doctrine of inter-racial worship was taught yet was not practically pursued. He increasingly realized the disparity between the theology churches teach regarding ethnic reconciliation and their lack of practicing it. Fong states "Theology must always pass the test of the practical if it is true to its nature as a study of God. That is, when theory is applied to the church the consequential effect on the Christians involved and the effect on the surrounding community the true Gospel of Christ is clearly proclaimed."⁴⁸ In other words, a church's refusal to practice its stated theological beliefs directly affects its ability to proclaim clearly and most effectively the gospel of Christ. Unless a church practices the truth it proclaims regarding the breaking down of racial barriers, it is not able to represent the fullness of the Body of Christ to the world.

David Rhoads goes one step further, naming this failure of racial reconciliation "hypocrisy." Rhoads argues that one of the fundamental emphases of the gospel of Matthew is to address "the human condition: blind hypocrisy."⁴⁹ He writes, "In Matthew,

⁴⁷ Bruce W. Fong, *Racial Equality in the Church: A Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle in Light of a Practical Theology Perspective* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1996), xiii-xiv.

⁴⁸ Fong, 112.

⁴⁹ David M. Rhoads, *The Challenge of Diversity: The Witness of Paul and the Gospels* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 84.

the word hypocrisy refers to deceptive appearances due to a double mindedness by which people are not consistent in their lives.”⁵⁰ He goes on to point out Matthew’s emphases regarding such imagery as the lamp under a basket (5:15), salt that has lost its ability to preserve (5:13), sheep who are inwardly wolves (7:15), and the blind leading the blind (23:24). Rhoads calls believers to a life that reflects what they say they believe so that they will have a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees and thereby “enter the kingdom of heaven” (5:20). Rhoads argues that Christian community cannot be based on uniformity and that when a church does not embrace it, “we may be going against the grain of God’s creative presence among us.”⁵¹ Thus, where Fong argues that a church that does not embrace diversity loses its full ability to be a witness, Rhoads argues that it may very well lose its ability to experience the presence of God.

John Koenig argues that when people reach out to others to extend love, they are right to expect that “the Holy Spirit will play a role.”⁵² He reminds readers of Jesus’ words: “those who receive you receive me, and those who receive me receive the One who sent me” (Matt. 10:40).⁵³ To both Rhoads and Koenig, showing love to others for whom one might not naturally have an affinity actually places believers in a position of experiencing the presence of God. Likewise, refusing to show love to others places Christians in a position of not experiencing the presence of God.

⁵⁰ Rhoads, 84.

⁵¹ Rhoads, 4.

⁵² John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 8.

⁵³ Koenig, 4.

The Book of Isaiah draws a correlation between God being present among His people and His people's response to those who have found themselves in vulnerable situations within society. God announced that His children had turned their backs to Him and were no longer pleasing Him or enjoying a relationship with Him as a child should experience with his father (Isa. 1:2-4). God then commands His children to wash their hands, which are stained with blood (1:15-16). He identifies the cause of the blood on their hands by commanding them to "learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow" (1:17). He then promised them to forgive their sins and bless them (1:18-19). Isaiah then records, in chapter two, a vision he saw of what would take place when God's people repent and "learn to do right." The vision included God establishing His temple. Isaiah described this temple as a place where God promises to be present with His people (2:3).

Thus, as Rhoads and Koenig have argued, neglecting to properly include those in a community who have found themselves marginalized does affect the ability or willingness of God to minister His presence in the church. People of different ethnicities often find themselves in such a situation and thus there is a correlation between our response to them and our ability to experience God in our churches.

Summary

Scripture clearly portrays God's desire that both His Universal Church and each of His local churches—when possible—reflect ethnic diversity. Further, Scripture communicates that He enjoys it when cultural differences are reflected in the various functions of the Christian community. That God loves diversity and its preservation is clear in not only Scripture but in the diversity of His creation. Jesus himself modeled

what it looks like for people to embrace others in their otherness and as a result demonstrated acceptance and love to all regardless of their differences. For a church to celebrate and embrace diversity is to facilitate the presence of God, to become witnesses to the world, to grow in its own maturity, and to ultimately become a community of love.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH MATERIAL

This chapter highlights the best practices a church should pursue to successfully embrace and celebrate diversity.

The Development of Multi-Ethnic Organizational Best Practices

Olson points out, “While there are generally consistent theological foundations undergirding the vision for building intercultural churches, there are not necessarily universally held principles or strategies for building these churches.”¹ He goes on to attribute this, at least in part, to “the relatively small number of churches which truly embody a multi-cultural community.”² This researcher has likewise found that best practices regarding successful church celebration of diversity have not been fully developed. However, this is not true in regard to non-church organizations that have been pursuing diversity much longer. Researchers of diversity in those organizations have gained a much better handle on what the best practices are.

Not unlike businesses and other secular organizations, the church is a community of people striving toward a goal and vision. So, in theory it is possible for a church to apply some of the same principles as non-church organizations. This argument is enhanced by Chapter Two’s findings that Scripture portrays love as the primary goal of any community and that it is impossible for love to truly be demonstrated unless people within a community or organization embrace the God-given differences of each other.

¹ Olson, 65.

² Ibid.

Therefore, regardless of why the community or organization exists, the pursuing of diversity is both necessary and will look similar in its efforts. While there are certainly differences between the local church and a business, they are similar in their common practice of drawing people together to pursue a common goal or vision; that is, all organizations require that people work in a united manner toward the attainment of goals. Working in a united way requires that each person embrace the differences of one another. This process will look the same regardless of the mission of the organization.

Because there has been no substantial research demonstrating best practices for a church's pursuit of diversity, this researcher needed to research non-church organizational best practices to discover their success, if any, in pursuing diversity. Identifying the best practices of non-church organizations that have implemented successful diversity programs will serve this research paper and any large church well. These organizations created environments marked by acceptance and love for all members, which in turn created unity. The church has much to learn from such organizations. Identifying the best means by which an organization, regardless of its stated mission, can pursue unity among its diverse people will provide transferable principles useful in a large church's attempts to become diverse.

Since President Kennedy first signed the Affirmative Action Law in 1961, government and non-government organizations have increasingly felt the need to be proactive in creating environments that both attract diversity and create a healthy work environment for diverse individuals to co-labor. Initially these efforts were primarily in regard to meeting legal, moral, and social obligations.³ This led to a managerial emphasis

³ Thomas, 17.

on what Taylor Cox Jr. of the University of Michigan referred to as “the moral imperative.”⁴ Organizations were primarily focused upon hiring ethnically diverse individuals with little attention to an organization’s need to create a culture that responded appropriately to the changes brought on by ethnic diversity.

As more and more organizations realized the change and therefore the challenges of ethnic diversity, it became clear that they needed to create environments proactively that both allowed for diversity and that maintained a healthy work environment for all. This need led to the writing of three important books. These books initiated the discussion regarding how both to create diversity and re-create the culture of the organization. Both goals needed to be pursued so that an organization could appropriately prepare for and respond to the inevitable changes it would face when becoming ethnically diverse.

The first book, *Workforce America!*, argued that a transition in corporate America needed to take place from organizations simply hiring for the sake of becoming diverse to realizing the benefits of diversity for their organizations.⁵ This means pursuing diversity in order to capitalize on the benefits that diverse individuals bring to the table. Its authors, Marilyn Loden and Judith Rosener, called managers and leaders of organizations to not simply respond to the need to become diverse, but rather capitalize on it by realizing its potential to be a “vital resource.” Loden and Rosener argued that organizations that embrace diversity would have a competitive advantage over homogeneous organizations

⁴ Taylor Cox, *Cultural Diversity in Organizations: Theory, Research, & Practice* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 1994), 11.

⁵ Marilyn Loden and Judy B. Rosener, *Workforce America!: Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource* (Homewood, IL: Business One Irwin, 1991), 26.

that employ only people with the same culture and therefore similar perspectives.⁶ This does appear to be the experience of organizations that have successfully become ethnically diverse. Further, the authors sought to give tools to organizations to overcome the challenges of integration in the work place.

The second book is *Managing Workforce 2000*, by David Jamieson and Julie O'Mara. Warren Bennis of the University of Southern California praised it as the first book written with the intent to help managers create a systematic approach to responding to the changes brought by becoming diverse.⁷ Jamieson and O'Mara coined the phrase "flex management," which calls for leaders of organizations to move from having a one-size-fits-all mentality to tailoring their management style, policies and procedures to respond to each individual in a manner that respects their culture and uniqueness. This requires leaders to learn the various cultures and differences of their followers.⁸

The third groundbreaking work was *Beyond Race and Gender* by R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr.⁹ Thomas gave a definition of "managing diversity" that would be adopted and become the standard definition. He wrote, "Managing diversity is a comprehensive managerial process for developing an environment that works for all employees."¹⁰ The previous mentality was focused on assimilation of the ethnically diverse people into white and predominantly male corporate America, in which the burden of assimilating was primarily placed on the new minority. Thomas's definition takes the burden off of

⁶ Loden and Rosener, 26.

⁷ David Jamieson and Julie O'Mara, *Managing Workforce 2000: Gaining the Diversity Advantage* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), xiii.

⁸ Jamieson and O'Mara, 35-41.

⁹ Thomas, 7-13.

¹⁰ Thomas, 10.

the person to assimilate and puts it on the organization to re-create itself culturally to reflect a healthy multicultural work environment.

Through these three books, “managing diversity” became the phrase to refer to organizations that attempt an organizational plan to pursue healthy and diverse places of business. Since these seminal works were written, scholarly studies have sought to identify the best practices among those organizations that have successfully built environments where diverse individuals have flourished in working together and striving for the success of their organization.

Many studies have been undertaken in an effort to identify common practices that lead to success in building healthy, ethnically diverse, workplace environments. Primarily, there are four best practices that seem to be common among organizations that have successfully become multi-ethnic. The first best practice is that leadership must become continual champions for the cause of diversity. This includes modeling it, becoming diverse among themselves and being held accountable for meeting benchmarks related to the organization’s diversity initiatives. The second is to cast a vision across the organization for becoming diverse. The third is to motivate the organization’s employees by demonstrating the beneficial nature of the vision’s success. The fourth is to create a plan that permeates the organization system-wide and that promotes diversity throughout the organization.

Championship by Leadership

For over 25 years Howard Ross has studied diversity and has helped many large organizations work toward becoming places of diversity.¹¹ In *Reinventing Diversity*, Ross

¹¹ Howard Ross, *Reinventing Diversity: Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose, and Performance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2011), xi.

argues for a direct correlation between an organization's success and its top leadership's commitment regarding the vision. He explains that the leadership must be on board with the vision of becoming an organization of diversity if the effort is to be successful.¹² Taylor Cox Jr. agrees and spends an entire chapter arguing that if the leadership of an organization is not on board, diversity initiatives will not be successful. He entitles the chapter "The First Requirement of Change."¹³ Cox cites companies such as Xerox, Corning, and Avon as leaders in embracing diversity. He says that their success was first and foremost due to having leaders that were committed to the vision.¹⁴ Cox believes that when it comes to diversity initiatives, "leadership cannot be delegated."¹⁵ It is crucial to the success of a company's holistic embrace of diversity to have leadership that champions it both verbally and in personal practice.

To get the leadership on board its effort toward celebrating diversity, an organization must start with the development of its leaders. Miller and Katz agree, stating,

Until senior executives are enrolled, the rest of the organization will not feel the safety or the urgency to follow. Senior executives and other leaders must understand why the inclusion breakthrough is mission critical and they must begin to develop the understandings and behaviors that engage and enroll others.¹⁶

Without question having leadership that buys into the vision is crucial to its success in any organization.

¹² Ross, 119.

¹³ Cox, Cultural Diversity, 31.

¹⁴ Cox, Cultural Diversity, 33-34.

¹⁵ Cox, Cultural Diversity, 36.

¹⁶ Frederick A. Miller and Judy H. Katz, *The Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Real Power of Diversity* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2002), 140.

Sondra Thiederman believes that it is crucial for a leader to understand the values of the non-white employees they lead.¹⁷ She writes, “Managers cannot accurately assess the needs and expectations of employees without first understanding their culturally specific values.” Elsie Cross and Margaret White agree, praising the manner in which IBM successfully works toward becoming a multi-ethnic organization.¹⁸ In an interview with IBM’s diversity initiative leader, Ted Childs, much credit for IBM’s success in forging a multi-cultural organization was given to its required management diversity training program. Childs explains that IBM requires all new managers to go through a diversity training program and also requires that each year all managers review the company’s vision toward being an ethnically diverse organization.¹⁹

Marlene Fine argues that, while efforts like IBM’s have been successful, simply training the current all-white leaders regarding the importance of diversity is not enough. Fine, in *Building Successful Multicultural Organizations*, argues that organizations must begin making the leadership itself diverse if the organization as a whole is going to embrace diversity.²⁰ Erick Hyatt, in his study on how Bethlehem Baptist Church (BBC) in downtown Minneapolis can best pursue diversity, also argued this point. He stated, “In order to better fulfill its mission and vision for ethnic diversity, I recommend that BBC be more proactive in using its rich resources to accept young ministers from ethnic

¹⁷ Sondra B. Thiederman, *Bridging Cultural Barriers for Corporate Success: How to Manage the Multicultural Work Force* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991), 82.

¹⁸ Elsie Y. Cross and Margaret Blackburn White, *The Diversity Factor: Capturing the Competitive Advantage of a Changing Workforce* (Chicago, IL: Irwin Professional Publisher, 1996), 215.

¹⁹ Cross and Blackburn, 227-228.

²⁰ Marlene Gail Fine, *Building Successful Multicultural Organizations: Challenges and Opportunities* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 1995), 175-176.

minorities who are willing to receive BBC's theological training."²¹ Hyatt's argument is that in order for Bethlehem Baptist Church to successfully pursue diversity among its congregation, it must pursue diversity within its leadership, specifically the pastoral staff. Studies suggest that Hyatt and Fine are right. Both the PepsiCo Company and the General Electric Company's experiences seem to back up their argument.

In a study of the success of the PepsiCo Company, John Fulkerson and Randall Schuller attribute much to the company's success with diversity to its commitment to leadership development.²² The PepsiCo Company is dedicated to hiring and training leaders within its organization who represents various ethnicities. Further, they are committed to developing these leaders in the context of diversity. That means that they bring many leaders together who represent various ethnicities, address their differences in cultures, and then engage in a process of simply brainstorming problems together. Fulkerson and Randall attribute PepsiCo's success to this process for creating a healthy, ethnically diverse culture.²³

In 1989, the then CEO of GE, Jack Welch, became concerned with the lack of non-white officers in his company. He decided to do something about it. He invited several African American employees to a meeting. These were people who showed promising abilities to grow into executive positions. Out of the meeting came the formulation of a group of GE employees whose goal it was to help non-white employees

²¹ Erick Hyatt, "A Race for the City: Pursuing Ethnically-Diverse and Community-Congruent Churches in American Cities" (PhD., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2012), 178.

²² John Fulkerson and Randall Schuller, "Managing Worldwide Diversity at Pepsi-Cola International," in *Diversity in the Workplace: Human Resources*, ed. Susan Jackson (New York: Guilford Press, 1992), 259-262.

²³Fulkerson and Schuller, 261.

climb the organizational ladder.²⁴ By 2008, there were twelve African American officers within the company and 34 more being mentored for various leadership positions within the company.²⁵

It seems clear that an organization's success in embracing diversity and becoming a healthy multicultural organization is in part determined by its leaders catching the vision and owning it for themselves. An organization must focus on educating the leaders regarding the importance and benefits of diversity. It is also crucial that an organization pursues becoming ethnically diverse within its leadership ranks. However, it is not only the leaders of an organization that needs to catch the vision for becoming diverse. Vision casting needs to permeate all levels and departments of the organization.

Vision Casting

Ross writes, "If one lesson has emerged during the time I have spent helping organizations achieve their missions it is that system-wide commitments are important."²⁶ Ross goes on to explain that in his experience there is a direct correlation between an organization's success toward becoming a healthy, diverse organization and the extent to which the organization successfully casts the vision across the organization.²⁷ That is, the vision must be cast to all departments and all employees in such a manner that everyone—regardless of his or her specific position in the

²⁴ Susan E. Reed, *The Diversity Index: The Alarming Truth about Diversity in Corporate America and What Can Be Done About It* (New York: AMACOM, 2011), 189-193.

²⁵ Reed, 197.

²⁶ Reed, 119.

²⁷ Reed, 119.

organization—understands and owns the vision. Thus, the education of all employees about the vision is a crucial part of an organization’s efforts toward embracing diversity.

Elizabeth Morrison and Joyce Herlihy studied American Express Travel’s success in embracing diversity. On the basis of their findings, they too state that among the most important ingredient of workplace diversity was offering a clear and consistent vision to all its employees.²⁸ They explain that the key to American Express Travel’s success is its ability to cast the vision through multiple channels and over time. This ensures that every employee received the message in multiple ways and multiple times.²⁹ This provided for a communication strategy that effectively reached throughout the organization.

Central to overcoming the hurdles of becoming a diverse organization is education throughout the organization. This education needs to focus on the need for everyone to embrace diversity as an organization. Yet simply casting the vision to the employees is not enough. Communication must go both ways. Marlene Fine writes,

Communication is central to creating and maintaining this kind of organizational culture: Employees and managers must communicate with each other. Management must be willing to listen to employees, to value what they say, and to respond seriously to employee concerns and ideas. Employees must take responsibility for communicating their concerns and ideas, rather than waiting passively for others to speak for them.³⁰

One-way communication can be counterproductive, leaving people feeling that the vision is being shoved down their throats and offering little room for buy-in on the employee’s part. There are many benefits of two-way communication. For

²⁸ Elizabeth Morrison and Joyce Herlihy, “Becoming the Best Place to Work: Managing Diversity at American Express Travel Related Services,” in *Diversity in the Workplace: Human Resources*, ed. Susan Jackson (New York: Guilford Press, 1992), 218.

²⁹ Morrison and Herlihy, 218.

³⁰ Fine, 163.

example, it allows people to ask questions and express their understanding of the vision in their own words. This not only helps them understand it better; it promotes employees discussing the vision among themselves in a more positive manner. People do not naturally enjoy being told to do something and expected to follow it just for the sake of following a superior. In order for the employees—regardless of whether those employees are in a business or church—to truly embrace the vision for themselves and believe that it is a worthy cause, they must be given time and opportunity to wrestle with it and to digest it through two way conversation.

Jessica Goodkind and Penni Foster-Fishman found this to be true through a Michigan State University study regarding the integration of 54 Hmong refugees into an American housing development. Regarding their findings they state, “The promotion of refugees’ well-being and integration depends upon how our communities value diversity and provide opportunities for meaningful involvement.”³¹ One of the determining factors of providing them with meaningful involvement, Goodking and Foster-Fishman argued, was providing them with a voice in the community.³² Simply creating and casting a vision from the top ranks is not enough. For people to feel valued and to catch the vision themselves, they must be given the ability to communicate their needs, thoughts and ideas in the vision creation and casting process.

³¹ Jessica R. Goodkind and Pennie G. Foster-Fishman, “Integrating Diversity and Fostering Interdependence: Ecological Lessons Learned about Refugee Participation in Multiethnic Communities,” *Journal of Community Psychology* 30, no. 4 (2002): 389.

³² Goodkind and Foster-Fishman, 404.

In a study of various ethnic cultures, Jeff Hale and Dail Fields explain that regardless of the culture, building an environment that gives people the opportunity to communicate their opinions, needs and ideas is crucial to a leader's success.³³ John Kotter, professor of Organizational Behavior at Harvard, considers the ability for people to have a voice in things that affect them to be a basic need shared by all people. He argues that in order for individuals to be motivated to follow a leader, they must be allowed to have two-way interaction with the leader regarding the vision.³⁴

Thus, among the most important ingredients of workplace diversity is offering a clear and consistent vision to all an organization's employees. Further, part of this vision casting must allow for two-way communication in order for the employees to both understand the vision and seek to own it for themselves. Being able to discuss and understand the vision is important for a person to gain motivation for the vision.

There is another important step an organization must make to help its employees gain motivation for the vision. It regards helping them see the beneficial nature of becoming an ethnically diverse organization.

Creating Employee Motivation for Pursuing Vision's Success

Tying Vision for Diversity to Vision for Organizational Success

In all the books and studies regarding an organization's best practices for pursuing diversity, one common thread is found: the need for motivating individuals. Any vision

³³ Jeff R. Hale and Dail L. Fields, "Exploring Servant Leadership Across Cultures: A Study of Followers in Ghana and the USA," *Leadership* 3, no. 4 (11, 2007): 398.

³⁴ John P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review* 68, no. 3 (May, 1990): 107-108.

that is created and cast must be done so in such a manner that motivates individuals to work toward its success. For individuals to own the vision of embracing diversity, they must be convinced that it is both attainable and beneficial. Giving people a voice is only one way studies have shown to help motivate people toward embracing diversity.

Another is demonstrating for them that their organization's success is dependent on it. A church's ultimate success in God's eyes depends on its willingness to embrace diversity and to celebrate the God-given differences within the congregation.

Roosevelt Thomas, Jr and Marjorie Woodruff say that an organization must go one step further than communicating the vision organization-wide. According to them, organizations with mature diversity initiatives connect their vision for being diverse directly to the success of their mission.³⁵ That is, an organization needs to be able to convince its employees that its success as an organization is directly related to its success in becoming a diverse organization. Thomas and Woodruff's reasoning fits well with motivating churches about diversity. More church members and employees will strive for diversity if they see diversity as directly tied to their understanding of success as a church. In other words, they will want to pursue diversity if they believe that they cannot be the church God desires them to be without embracing diversity. Thus, as Thomas and Woodruff say, an organization's success in meeting its goal for existing is tied directly to its ability to embrace diversity. This must be part of the organization's education and communication plan.

³⁵ R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr. and Marjorie I. Woodruff, *Building a House for Diversity: How a Fable about a Giraffe and Elephant Offers New Strategies for Today's Workforce* (New York: AMACOM, 1999), 214.

Thomas says that attaching an organization's future business success to its ability to embrace diversity gives the employees motivation to work through diversity challenges successfully. He writes, "Awareness of a compelling business motive makes diversity management relevant and worthwhile. It drives people and organizations through the tension and complexity of the process."³⁶

Laura Sabattini and Faye Crosby agree. They write,

By emphasizing the connections between organizational vitality and diversity, many companies are now recognizing the benefits of adopting an accountability and measurement framework so that they can keep track of workforce demographics, test the success of diversity initiatives already in place and update current practices accordingly.³⁷

Sabattini and Crosby's point is that it motivates employees to make an organization's diversity initiatives successful if they see them as crucial to the long-term viability of the company.

George Raduano, in his study on how Trinity Assembly of God Church in Lutherville, Maryland can best pursue diversity, makes the case that this idea is the same for the church. He begins by saying that churches must, "develop a sound theological basis for their specific visions."³⁸ Acknowledging that large evangelical churches believe that their goal is to pursue a biblical model of the church, Raduano reasons that a diverse church is a biblical one. Thus, convincing

³⁶ Thomas and Woodruff, 215.

³⁷ Laura Sabattini and Faye Crosby, "Overcoming Resistance: Structures and Attitudes," in *Diversity Resistance in Organizations*, ed. Kecia Thomas (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008), 283.

³⁸ George W. Raduano, "Creating a Biblically Functioning Community That Embraces Ethnic Diversity: Designing Pathways for Bringing Christians Together" (DMin. thesis, Assemblies of God Seminary, 2014), 6.

them that diversity is God's desire will in turn provide the motivation needed to become diverse.

Cox, a consultant who specializes in helping companies create organizational cultures that embrace diversity, agrees with these approaches. He was hired by the Alcoa Company after its expansive attempts toward becoming more diverse failed. Cox describes his findings as to why Alcoa was not finding success in its efforts. He argues that Alcoa did not educate its people on how becoming diverse would help them meet their corporate goals of enhancing organizational performance. The effort was unsuccessful in creating a vision that would be adopted by its employees.³⁹

In her book, *The Diversity Index*, Reed investigated several organizations which were successful in their diversity initiatives, as well as organizations which were not. She writes that the companies that were most successful avoided the trap of formulating a diversity vision statement separate from their organization's primary vision. She writes,

In companies with the most integrated leadership, the ethical belief in integration is intertwined with the business strategy. ... Companies must figure out the role that diversity and ethics will play in their core business strategy and intertwine the related concepts to create a vision for the company.⁴⁰

Moving an organization toward embracing diversity is a laborious process and thus it would make sense that the organization would need to include diversity in its mission statement.

Fredrick Miller and Judith Kat are consultants who have served hundreds of organizations for over 30 years. Together they wrote a book *Inclusion Breakthrough* in

³⁹ Taylor Cox, Jr., *Creating the Multicultural Organization: A Strategy for Capturing the Power of Diversity* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 11-16.

⁴⁰ Susan E. Reed, *The Diversity Index: the Alarming Truth about Diversity in Corporate America and what can be done about it*, 241.

which they offer case studies of actual organizations that have pursued diversity. They write about two unidentified, large regional banks that started diversity initiatives. While they were both equally committed to its success, one succeeded greatly and the other failed. The one that succeeded had tied its vision for becoming more diverse into its vision to succeed as an organization. The bank that did not succeed did not. Rather, it created a vision for being ethically better people.

Miller and Katz write, “The contrasting experiences of these two banks is a telling example of a strategy that succeeds when it is tied to a mission-critical imperative versus the losing strategy resulting from a strictly moral imperative for initiating and implementing a diversity strategy.”⁴¹ Miller and Katz argue that while a moral imperative can be motivational, it can never be as motivational as tying the success of the organization’s overall mission in with its celebration of diversity. Hyatt agrees and says that Bethlehem Baptist Church’s success in becoming diverse is contingent on its ability to marry its overall mission of “[spreading] a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ” with it becoming ethnically diverse within its walls.⁴²

In his study on diversity, Scott Page demonstrates that an organization’s ability to experience overall success is directly affected by it successfully becoming a healthy multi-cultural organization. His study showed that diversity can make stronger organizations in general. He explains that differing cultural experiences create different ways of processing information and they form differing perspectives. These differing

⁴¹ Miller and Katz, 24.

⁴² Hyatt, 27-33.

perspectives are what give individuals unique ideas and insights.⁴³ Page writes, “Diverse perspectives and heuristics improve problem solving. Diverse interpretations and predictive models lead to more accurate predictions. . . . As we saw, increasing diversity improves our collective performance at prediction. . . . And at problem solving.”⁴⁴ Page is saying that to the extent an organization embraces diversity and ties it in with its overall mission is to the extent that both becoming multi-cultural and experiencing overall success as an organization is affected. He argues that an organization has to pursue both simultaneously to be successful in both areas.

Martin Davidson, in his book *The End of Diversity as We Know It: Why Diversity Efforts Fail and How Leveraging Differences Can Succeed*, agrees with Page and yet takes it one step further. He argues that too much focus has been put on managing diversity through human resource initiatives. He states that simply tying the vision of embracing diversity into the vision of becoming a successful and sustaining organization is not enough and diminishes the organization’s focus. He agrees that it is strategic and important to focus on hiring practices and educational training. But by far the most important thing is to focus on leveraging the various ways people think and the various ideas that come from diversity. He believes that corporations should put their money where their mouth is and, if they truly believe that becoming a diverse organization is beneficial to the bottom-line, start focusing on empowering the diverse ideas to be implemented within the company.⁴⁵ He writes, “Leaders who leverage differences adopt

⁴³ Scott E. Page, *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 308-310.

⁴⁴ Page, 341.

⁴⁵ Martin N. Davidson, *The End of Diversity as We Know It: Why Diversity Efforts Fail and How Leveraging Difference Can Succeed* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2011), 4.

a mindset of leadership that emboldens them to re-envision everything they do.”⁴⁶ His point is if a company truly believes that diversity allows for better ideas and ways of doing things, as an organization becomes diverse it should simultaneously evaluate its business practices allowing for new and better ideas to emerge.

Davidson points to Proctor and Gamble as his poster child, showing how it has increased its bottom line and created new products by creating avenues whereby diverse ideas get shared throughout the company and are able to be considered.⁴⁷ Davidson argues that throughout an organization there needs to be an appreciation for the differences diverse people bring in regard to ideas and ways of viewing the world. He writes, “The evidence speaks clearly: diversity produces benefits. Cognitively diverse societies, cities, and teams perform better than more homogeneous ones.”⁴⁸ Davidson’s point is that organizations should realize that their organization will be stronger and overall better by embracing ethnic diversity.

Davidson goes to say that organizations need to change their ways of measuring success in diversity. Many count their diversity initiatives to be successes or failures by the number of minorities they employ and the number of minorities in higher levels of management. But Davidson says they should measure success or failure based on the extent to which the organization is “exploring differences,” leveraging diverse ideas, and allowing them to permeate throughout the organization.⁴⁹ That is to say, to Davidson,

⁴⁶ Davidson, “The End of Diversity: How Leaders Make Differences Really Matter,” *Leader to Leader* no. 64 (Spring, 2012): 51.

⁴⁷ Davidson, 1-3.

⁴⁸ Davidson, 299.

⁴⁹ Davidson, 4.

success in embracing diversity should be measured by how much people value the power of having diverse ideas and contributions and by the extent to which it has become part of how an organization goes about its daily operations.

Tying Vision for Diversity to Ethics

While the majority of studies and research have shown that it is motivating to tie a company's overall success to its success in becoming a multi-cultural organization, there are some who still argue for a need to focus on the ethical demand for diversity. While not disagreeing with those above, some researchers point to moral and ethical beliefs as a powerful motivating force that should be tapped in order to motivate individuals to pursue their organization's vision of embracing diversity.

In *Ethical Dimensions of Diversity* Willie Hopkins writes, "Research studies clearly support the conclusion that the ethical philosophies of leaders can have a major impact on the ethical behavior of their followers. ... Top managers must model their commitment to institutionalizing ethics in both work and deed."⁵⁰ Hopkins's point is that for an organization to successfully implement a diversity initiative, it must have leaders that truly believe that embracing diversity is an ethical mandate. Not only do they need to model it but, according to John Kotter, they must also articulate the organization's vision in a manner that stresses the values of the audience they are addressing.⁵¹ Kotter goes on to explain that tapping into the ethical side of a person's values "makes the work important."⁵² To Kotter, leaders must both believe that embracing diversity is an ethical

⁵⁰ Willie Edward Hopkins, *Ethical Dimensions of Diversity* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997), 104.

⁵¹ Kotter, 109.

⁵² Kotter, 109.

demand and must also tie it into the communication plan of the people they are leading in such a way that it taps into their ethical beliefs regarding ethnic diversity. The idea is that when people believe that their work has a higher purpose than simply gaining benefits for themselves, they become more motivated to work for the success of the organization's vision.

Other authors have also drawn the correlation between the ability to motivate employees and the ethics of multi-ethnicity in the organization. Anthony Carnevale and Susan Stone, for example, argue for an addition to the phrase "managing diversity." They recommend making it into "valuing and managing diversity." They write,

Valuing diversity involves going beyond the golden rule of treating others as you wish to be treated yourself. It invokes a higher behavior, one that is receiver-centered rather than self-centered. ... Valuing diversity involves treating others as they wish to be treated.⁵³

Carnevale and Stone's argument is that the motivation to manage well has to come from an innate belief that what is being managed has a higher purpose than simply the organization's bottom line.

Hopkins agrees, reasoning that key to communicating in an effective manner is tying the need to be diverse with ethics and social responsibility.⁵⁴ His argument is based on the belief that people genuinely want to do the right things. Tying the need for embracing diversity with ethics creates an emotional need within people that serves to provide them with a heart-felt motivation.

⁵³ Anthony Patrick Carnevale and Susan Carol Stone, *The American Mosaic: An In-Depth Report on the Advantage of Diversity in the U.S. Work Force* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 90.

⁵⁴ Hopkins, *Ethical Dimensions of Diversity*, 108-110.

While Randy Woodley agrees that people want to do the right thing, he cautions that one of the enemies of diversity is naiveté.⁵⁵ He argues that the way to break through the ethnocentrism that is rooted in culture and is transferred into the “corporate psyche” is through acknowledgment.⁵⁶ He believes that one of the major culprits causing ethnocentric mindsets is “our lack of exposure to people from other ethnic groups and cultures.”⁵⁷ Regarding this lack of exposure, Woodley states, “We can easily begin to view our own cultures or ethnicity as superior.”⁵⁸ Woodley believes that this is often integrated into people’s psyche without them even realizing it⁵⁹ and thus explains that people need to be reoriented through the ethical truth and beauty of “unity within diversity.”⁶⁰

Fumitaka Matsuoka states, “Only a full awareness of this disturbing reality leads to new insight.”⁶¹ The “disturbing reality” refers to the evil of cultural dominance within a society or organization. Matsuoka too believes that people must come to grips with the ethnical demands of integration and equality.⁶² The very nature of the inclusivity of the Gospel demands that individuals—regardless of the nature of their organization—understand how God created people diverse and that diversity is beautiful and necessary.

⁵⁵ Woodley, 102.

⁵⁶ Woodley, 104.

⁵⁷ Woodley, 102.

⁵⁸ Woodley, 102.

⁵⁹ Woodley, 103.

⁶⁰ Woodley, 109.

⁶¹ Fumitaka Matsuoka, *The Color of Faith: Building Community in a Multiracial Society* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1998), 95.

⁶² Matsuoka, 95.

God made no culture better than the other, just different, and there is beauty in difference. Any organization striving to cast the vision for diversity must educate its people regarding this.

Rick McClatchy is the coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Texas. One of his duties is to help his organization become a healthy, multi-cultural organization. McClatchy writes that, especially in a Christian organization, “it is imperative to not argue against racism using lofty, secular philosophical language, but to argue based upon our Christian passion.”⁶³ He goes on to explain that this “Christian passion” is “Our most basic Christian ethics moved against racism. Christian ethics are rooted in acts of love toward others, which might be summed up in ‘do to others as you would have them do to you,’ or ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’”⁶⁴ As with others, McClatchy believes that motivating people in an organization to embrace diversity requires tapping into their inner senses of ethics and moral imperatives and that for a Christian organization, the teachings of Jesus allow for this to be done with sincerity. It therefore stands to reason that in an ideal world, churches above all organizations would be the most motivated to embrace ethnic diversity.

Drawing a correlation between embracing diversity and ethics is an effective means of motivation. As people realize the racist nature of allowing one ethnicity’s culture to dominate an organization’s culture and the ethical demand of embracing diversity, their motivation to help facilitate the fulfillment of the vision will increase.

⁶³ Rick McClatchy, “Building a Multi-Cultural Organization in Texas,” *Review and Expositor*, no. 109 (Winter, 2012), 87.

⁶⁴ McClatchy, 88.

Tying Vision for Diversity to Accountability and Incentives

The final primary means of motivation that scholars, business leaders and researchers have identified is to hold people accountable to the vision and provide rewards for their individual commitment to it. Kotter writes, “Good leaders recognize and reward success, which not only gives people a sense of accomplishment but also makes them feel like they belong to an organization that cares about them. When all this is done, the work itself becomes intrinsically motivating.”⁶⁵ This idea that rewards help motivate individuals to embrace their organization’s vision of diversity has the support of Miller and Katz. They believe that holding people and departments accountable through reviews as well as motivating them through incentives is a crucial part of forging diversity.⁶⁶

Yet Robert Greene cautions organizations that tying consequences to the appraisal process will not be as acceptable to people who come from less individualistic cultures where the individual identifies more with a collective group mentality. Greene encourages organizations to adapt their reward and appraisal systems strategically to allow for such differences in cultures.⁶⁷ Dail Fields, Mary Pang and Catherine Chiu agree with Greene. They encourage leaders to understand the differences in the ways various cultures view rewards. They believe that a reward system can be very beneficial but warn that when designing it, one must account for these different ways various cultures perceive rewards and special recognition.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Kotter, 109.

⁶⁶ Miller and Katz, 172.

⁶⁷ Robert J. Greene, *Rewarding Performance: Guiding Principles, Custom Strategies* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 170-175.

⁶⁸ Dail Fields, Mary Pang, and Catherine Chiu, “Distributive and Procedural Justice as Predictors of Employee Outcomes in Hong Kong,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 21, no. 5 (08, 2000): 547-562.

While Howard Ross would agree, he points out two motivational means organizations can use that seem to motivate individuals across cultures. The first is in regard to money. Ross points out that many people are motivated by money and offers the suggestion that bonus pay be directly tied to an individual's progress in meeting diversity goals. The second is in regard to appraisal reviews. He suggests that people will be motivated to support the diversity vision if they know that their work performance evaluation will be affected either way.⁶⁹ Joy Leach agrees, particularly in regard to leaders. She recommends that each leader in the organization gain an understanding of the goals and objectives and then be evaluated against those benchmarks at least annually.⁷⁰ It should be noted that studies have shown that, in general, intrinsic motivation is most effective to the majority of people; that is, such things as ethics are most powerful in motivating individuals. However, money is a motivator to many and, as Ross and Leach argue, it could only help toward motivating people so that the organization can accomplish its diversity goals.

Creating a System-Wide Plan

Motivating people through rewards and accountability—while perhaps less noble than ethical demands—are ways an organization can help motivate its constituents to support its vision for becoming an organization that embraces diversity. Of course, due to different types of personalities and cultures, individuals will respond differently to each of the motivational tools. Some will be more motivated by one strategy over another. This fact speaks to the need of an organization to formulate and implement a strategic

⁶⁹ Ross, 223-224.

⁷⁰ Joy Leach, *A Practical Guide to Working with Diversity: The Process, the Tools, the Resources* (New York: AMACOM, 1995), 203.

plan that touches each and every person within the organization in multiple ways. An organization's success in embracing diversity and creating a multi-ethnic organization is directly related to its ability to create and roll out a plan that permeates the various departments of an organization. This plan needs to be both communicated repeatedly and communicated in multiple ways to all individuals within the organization.

Without exception the researcher found that the experts recommend forming a team of individuals who represent various levels and various departments of the organization with the goal of steering the diversity initiatives. Cox believes that this is an important factor in any sized organization.⁷¹ The purpose behind this is to create a team of individuals who represent the various departments and areas of the organization. The goal of this team then is to formulate a diversity initiative plan.

One of the crucial aspects of creating a successful diversity plan is that the plan permeates the entire organization. It must encompass every employee and every department. This is not simply a matter of communication. It includes the implementation stages and provides departments with mile markers and goals for how they can play their part in pursuing the organization's vision. Davidson writes,

The most skillfully-designed diversity initiatives. ... Inform business strategy, implementation, and managerial practice. Moreover, they encourage policy and system changes that signal to employees that they are respected and valued members of the organization.⁷²

Davidson's point is that there has to be a plan implemented that encompasses the organizational systems, policies, and the execution of those policies. It must do so in such a manner that it permeates the entire organization and reaches every employee with the

⁷¹ Cox, *Creating*, 47.

⁷² Martin N. Davidson, "The Value of being Included: An Examination of Diversity Change Initiatives in Organizations," *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1999): 164.

message that they are important and valuable to both the organization and to its success in accomplishing the vision for embracing diversity.

General Education Needed

Milton J. Bennett created the “Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity” (DMIS).⁷³ It shows that there are six stages or levels of cultural sensitivity. The first three (“denial,” “defense,” “minimization”) are referred to as the ethnocentric stages. They represent people who have little sensitivity or respect for cultures other than their own. The last three (“acceptance,” “adaptation,” “integration”) are referred to as “ethnorelative stages.” They represent individuals who are sensitive towards other cultures and appreciate their differences as beneficial and worthy of embrace. The goal of any organization is to help individuals move toward the integration stage. This represents people who fully embrace cultural differences to the extent that they themselves have integrated various cultural distinctives into their own identity.⁷⁴

The DMIS model is based on the assumption that the more people experience cultural differences of various types, the more they are able to become culturally sensitive.⁷⁵ Yet, a person’s experience is only as good as his or her ability to logically categorize it in a healthy manner; that is, a person has to have the mental ability to

⁷³ R. M. Paige, Melody Jacobs-Cassuto, Yelena A. Yershova, and Joan DeJaeghere, “Assessing Intercultural Sensitivity: An Empirical Analysis of the Hammer and Bennett Intercultural Development Inventory,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 27, no. 4 (07, 2003): 469.

⁷⁴ Paige et al., 472.

⁷⁵ Mitchell R. Hammer, Milton J. Bennett, and Richard Wiseman, “Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: The Intercultural Development Inventory,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 27, no. 4 (7, 2003): 423.

internalize experiences in a manner that causes him or her to develop intercultural sensitivity.⁷⁶

Bennett, along with Mitchell Hammer and Richard Wiseman, caution that “experience does not occur simply by being in the vicinity of events when they occur. Rather, experience is a function of how one construes the events.”⁷⁷ That is to say, education is needed for people to properly interpret their experiences and allow their experiences to change who they are and how they think.

Plowman argues that effective leaders “help others make sense out of what is happening; they give meaning to unfolding events.”⁷⁸ D. A. Gioia refers to such leaders as “sensemakers” in that they serve as an educational catalyst for helping people interpret their experiences properly and in a helpful manner.⁷⁹

Thomas cautions against what he considers a pervasive mindset that organizations mistakenly have in which only the top leadership of the organization need education about diversity.⁸⁰ George Henderson agrees, cautioning that simply putting people together from different ethnicities without proper training can be counterproductive. He writes, “Heterogeneous work groups have greater potential for fostering ethnic equality

⁷⁶ Hammer, 423.

⁷⁷ Hammer, 423.

⁷⁸ Donde Ashmos Plowman, Stephanie Solansky, Tammy E. Beck, LaKami Baker, Mukta Kulkarni, and Deandra Villarreal Travis, “The Role of Leadership in Emergent, Self-Organization,” *Leadership Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (08, 2007): 345.

⁷⁹ D. A. Gioia, “Symbols, Scripts, and Sensemaking: Creating Meaning in the Organizational Experience,” in *The Thinking Organization*, ed. H. P. Jr Sims and D. A. Gioia (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 61.

⁸⁰ Thomas and Woodruff, xii.

than homogeneous groupings. But putting the bodies together does not ensure equity.”⁸¹ Henderson encourages training on such topics as the danger of stereotypes and racism as well as discussing healthy means to handle conflict resolution.⁸²

Marlene Fine argues that there are three components of “cultural sensitivity” concerning which organizations must educate their people.⁸³ The first is to recognize cultural differences. Fine says that people need to be able to recognize differences in how people from different cultures operate and be able to attribute the differences to a difference between cultures. Fine says that the ability to simply recognize differences as “cultural” helps people not jump to false—and often negative—conclusions regarding the differences. The second cultural educational need is for people to be given knowledge about specific cultural differences. This means educating people not only to recognize when they see and experience cultural differences but to go a step further and provide them with understanding regarding the meaning of the differences. This too helps people view the differences in a more positive light. It also helps people attribute the differences in behavior to the culture of which others are a part. The third component of cultural sensitivity is to help people develop a willingness to allow for differences in the manner things are done. This means not automatically dismissing how others do things as less good than their own culture’s way of doing them.⁸⁴ Simply stated, both Fine and Thomas

⁸¹ George Henderson, *Cultural Diversity in the Workplace: Issues and Strategies* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 24.

⁸² Henderson, 198, 203.

⁸³ Fine, 151-153.

⁸⁴ Fine, 151-153.

are arguing that all employees need to be educated regarding differences in cultures and how these differences are both legitimate and valuable to the organization.

Michàlle E. Mor Barak writes,

The training, orientation, and cultural understanding needed for the management and employees of any company—national, international, multinational, or global—include the deep understanding of individuals who live in other national and cultural contexts, and the ability to work within a global team framework.⁸⁵

The goal then of such education is that as individuals experience the uniqueness of cultures different from their own, they will be able to both embrace and appreciate the differences. Individuals embracing the differences of others and being able to appreciate the benefits of diversity is necessary for an organization's success in becoming multi-ethnic. Thus, education is crucial in the planning and implementation processes.

Educational Needs of White Individuals

While general education is needed for all individuals, there are some differences in the educational needs of the dominant culture and those of the minority culture. In *Reinventing Diversity*, Howard Ross argues that education is needed particularly for white people regarding the nature of other cultures.⁸⁶ He argues that organizations have for too long avoided the conversations about differences in cultures because they are trying to be politically correct. Ross points out that, “cultural competence requires awareness and sensitivity.”⁸⁷ He argues that people need to “both know and operate in accord with the understanding that human cultures, and the language and behaviors they

⁸⁵ Michàlle E. Mor-Barak, *Managing Diversity: Toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005), 3.

⁸⁶ Ross, 115-116.

⁸⁷ Ross, 115.

engender are not right/wrong, better/worse, or virtuous/immoral.” He goes on to say that people should not be expected to adopt those differences for themselves, but rather be able to interact with others different from themselves in a respectful, healthy and effective manner.⁸⁸ This takes a dedication on the organization’s part to help educate their employees regarding the need and benefits for embracing diversity.⁸⁹

The General Electric Company is an example of an organization that believes in the importance of educating white employees in a unique manner. It intentionally empowers African American employees to educate white employees about their culture. Susan Reed sites such examples as hiring an African jazz group during Black History Month to educate people on African music.⁹⁰ Another example she pointed out was when the company invited the Tuskegee Airmen, the first black pilots who fought in World War Two, to speak to the employees.⁹¹ The purpose is to help white people appreciate the cultural differences and to understand the beauty of the African American culture. This in turn is intended to help white employees process and internalize in a healthy manner the differences they experience in working with African Americans.

Shiri Lev-Ari and Boaz Keysar of the University of Chicago did a study that showed people who have non-native accents are perceived as less intelligent than native speaking people.⁹² The researcher points this out to show the illogic of someone’s level of intelligence being tied to their lack of having mastered a second language by people

⁸⁸ Ross, 114-115.

⁸⁹ Ross, 221.

⁹⁰ Reed, 195.

⁹¹ Reed, 195.

⁹² Shiri Lev-Ari and Boaz Keysar, “Why Don’t We Believe Non-Native Speakers?: The Influence of Accent on Credibility,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 46, no. 6 (11, 2010): 1093.

who mostly—at least in America—only know their native language, English. The only way to combat ignorance and illogic is through experience and education.

Another area of which white people specifically need education is the benefits of diversity. Page writes, “The evidence speaks clearly: diversity produces benefits.”⁹³ One of the barriers to forging diversity in an organization is a lack of this understanding by the dominant white culture. Thus, educating white individuals regarding common misunderstandings of the white culture is of importance.

Educational Needs of Minorities

The researcher found in both his studies and in his practical field research that one of the most common barriers to an organization becoming multi-cultural is the lack of qualified non-white leaders. While there are many reasons for this, the research showed that the most effective means by which an organization can pursue becoming a healthy multi-cultural organization is by creating leaders throughout the organization who represents the various ethnicities within the organization. That is, the organization must be committed to overcoming the lack of qualified non-white leaders in the community by creating training, educational opportunities and avenues for non-white employees to climb the organization’s ladder.

Fine points out that there is a lack of qualified people of non-white ethnicity and argues that organizations need to offer education and training opportunities in order to create diversity among the leadership of the organization.⁹⁴ Ross agrees, encouraging organizations to make sure their avenues for promotion within the organization are an

⁹³ Page, 299.

⁹⁴ Fine, 174.

inclusive process. This means that the organization meets people of diverse background where they are and helps provide them with avenues for climbing the organizational ladder.⁹⁵

In his doctoral work that focused on how organizations can transition from an all-white leadership team to an intercultural leadership model, Stephen Smith found that many organizations make the mistake of seeking to become intercultural by promoting non-white individuals into leadership based on their non-whiteness while ignoring their qualifications or lack thereof. He writes, “It is a mistake to assume that a non-Anglo can help lead an organization to becoming intercultural merely by being a person of color.”⁹⁶ Smith argues that this is “tokenism” and is actually counterproductive to an organization’s attempt to embrace diversity. Promoting people solely based on the color of their skin, he argues, breeds “mistrust and causes people on both sides to feel betrayed by the other”⁹⁷ in that it sets the leader up for failure and does damage to relationships and trust.⁹⁸

While Smith argues against selecting non-white people to be leaders based solely on their ethnicity, one of the main points of his thesis is that all organizations—particularly churches—have the responsibility to have qualified non-white leaders within their organization to represent the organization’s non-white constituency. Thus, part of the responsibility of an organization when pursuing diversity is to help educate and train

⁹⁵ Ross, 225.

⁹⁶ Stephen Ray Smith, “From Anglo-Led to Intercultural Partnership: How a North American Christian Organization Can Transition Its Leadership to Reflect a Kingdom Culture” (DMin. thesis, Bethel University, 2010), 104.

⁹⁷ Smith, 105.

⁹⁸ Smith, 104-105.

non-white people in an effort to create qualified non-white leaders. Further, Smith argued that the most effective means by which a person is selected by the organization to be trained for leadership is to actually be selected by their peers. He writes,

Tokenism fails to attain a true level of partnership because in most North American Christian organizations, non-Anglos are usually chosen by the Anglos they serve, rather than being selected by their own groups. The majority culture retains control of the selection process. This hobbles the effectiveness of the non-Anglo member in speaking for his people group, as he or she may not be a true leader within the people group itself.⁹⁹

Thus, Smith not only argues for the need and responsibility of an organization to train up non-white leaders. He takes it a step further by arguing that one of the key selection criteria should be that the individual is seen as a leader within his own people group already.

Summary

Scripture clearly demonstrates that God desires the local church to be ethnically diverse when possible. Unfortunately, there have not been enough studies to create a list of best practices for large churches pursuing diversity. Therefore, this chapter sought to identify the best practices of secular organizations that have successfully created a work community that embraces diversity. A large church is very similar to other types of organizations in the sense that it is a community of people committed to pursuing a common goal. Thus, as a large church seeks to break down the barriers to ethnic diversity and seeks to implement strategies that help the staff and congregation celebrate it, it will do well to look at how other organizations have successfully embraced and realized this vision. There are a number of best practices that have demonstrated effectiveness in an organization's attempt toward becoming diverse.

⁹⁹ Smith, 104.

Primarily, there are four best practices for organizations to embrace diversity. The first best practice is for the leadership of the organization to be champions for the cause. This includes modeling it, becoming diverse among themselves and being held accountable for meeting benchmarks related to the organization's diversity initiatives. The second is to cast a vision across the organization for becoming diverse. The plan must allow for two-way communication in order for all employees to be able to own the vision for themselves. The third is to motivate the organization's employees by demonstrating the beneficial nature of the vision's success. Tying it in with the overall mission of the organization is crucial but motivating the employees regarding the ethical side is also of importance. The fourth is to create a permeating, system-wide plan that promotes diversity throughout the organization. This plan must include education for all and include intentional training to help non-white people gain the necessary skills to fill key positions throughout the organization.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

The vast majority of churches are unable or unwilling to pursue ethnic diversity within their churches, despite the researcher's discovery from Scripture that God desires churches to pursue the celebration of diversity when at all possible. Judging from the Emerson and Smith's study, many people find themselves in a community that is increasingly ethnically diverse, yet do not experience this diversity within their church community.¹

Identifying the research problem was relatively simple due to its common occurrence within churches across America. However, as Paul Leedy discusses, identifying the problem is only half the battle in research. He wrote,

In planning the research project, therefore, it is extremely important for the researcher not only to choose a viable research problem but also to consider the nature of the data which the investigation of such a problem will demand and the feasible means of collecting and interpreting those data.²

The real difficulty arose when the researcher sought to identify the availability of data and sought to organize it in such a manner that it could help churches find the most optimal process for becoming diverse. Compounding this problem was the extremely limited amount of research done to identify the diversity best practices for churches. Thus, the researcher sought to answer the question: "How can a large church that finds

¹ Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 135-136.

² Paul D. Leedy, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 85.

itself in a community of ethnic diversity, yet does not represent that ethnic diversity within itself, seek the best way to do so?”

Research Steps

Scripture Study

The first step in the research process was to study Scripture and identify God’s viewpoint. Scripture reveals God’s desire for His church to break down any barriers that keep it from reflecting the ethnic diversity within its greater community. The perfect example is found in Acts 15, when the apostles and elders met to discuss the problem of Jewish Christians demanding that Gentile Christians follow certain Jewish customs and laws. The conclusion was that cultural differences and customs had nothing to do with one’s church membership and thus, the churches should pursue unity in spite of its ethnic cultural diversity. The Apostle Paul explained the grounds of this theological truth when he wrote to the Galatians that all believers are “children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26b-28). Jesus also said that His house shall be called “a house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17b). Jesus, obviously had no categories that His church should ever be segregated according to ethnicity.

Elder Board Discussion

In the second step, the researcher wrote a theological paper to present to the elders of Calvary Church.³ The paper provided evidence that members and attendees of Calvary Church did not reflect the ethnic diversity of its greater community. The paper also

³ Stephen Gibson, “Diversity and the Local Church: Calvary Church’s Call for Meeting the Spiritual and Physical Needs of Its Minority Members” (a paper presented to the Calvary elder board, February 2013).

provided biblical support for pursuing diversity and not allowing one culture to dominate the DNA of a church. Further, the paper pointed out that Calvary Church's operations reflected a very white culture, that it ignored other cultures and created a barrier to growing in ethnic diversity.

The elders were given a month to read the paper. Much time was spent discussing the contents of the paper at the following elder meeting. The elders discussed the issue of ethnic diversity that exists within the larger community. They also discussed how Scripture reveals God's desire for the church to do something about it. The elders agreed that Calvary Church needed to pursue more diversity based upon the truths of Scripture. The elders agreed that the researcher should continue his studies through both literature and field research to identify how Calvary Church could not only become ethnically diverse but also become a church that celebrates diversity.

Calvary Church has eight primary ministry departments. The researcher sat down with each of the eight department directors and reviewed the theological argument and rationale for Calvary's need to pursue diversity. Each of them agreed that this was something that Calvary needed to pursue and that they would do whatever necessary to accomplish that goal. They were then given the task of discussing the issue with their individual departments at their staff meetings.

The researcher found that educating the leadership and staff of the church regarding God's desire for ethnic diversity was foundational. It was necessary to take this step because evangelical churches believe that Scripture contains the formula for pleasing God first. Thus, leaders and staff had to be convinced that it pleased God. Thus, this step

proved to be powerfully influential and offered much benefit to the success of this project.

Literature Review

The next step was to research the best practices for pursuing diversity. Since there are no agreed upon best practices for large churches, the researcher chose to focus on ones that have been established by secular organizations.

Whether an organization is secular or religious, all share essential common characteristics: staff, customers/congregational members, a product, and an organizational mission and vision. The outcomes may vary depending on their different goals, but the overall objective is the same: make the best product they can and sell as much of that product as they can. Scripturally speaking, the mission of every church is to present the gospel of Christ to its community—and to the world—in the best possible manner to make spiritually mature disciples of Christ. As irreverent as it may sound, churches have a product they are selling—Jesus. As with secular organizations, large churches have leaders, staff members, and customers (i.e., congregation members) who gather together to accomplish a mission. Thus, through the literature study, the researcher identified key hypotheses from secular organizations that could then be tested in field study research in large churches.

Robert Yin refers to this overall process as “the targeting process,” which he said “is no different from that used in all scientific studies—where a review of the literature begets key hypotheses to be tested, which in turn become the focus of data collection and analysis.”⁴ The researcher used the targeting process throughout the literature review to

⁴ Robert K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research, Vol. 34* (CA: Sage Publications, 1993), 110.

identify common initiatives shared by secular organizations that seemed successful in their pursuit of diversity. The researcher then put these initiatives into four common categories and, with the department directors, identified action steps that represented each one. These action steps were then implemented within the various departments of Calvary.

Best Practices of Organizations Seeking to Pursue Diversity

The researcher identified that there are four best practices used by secular organizations in pursuit of diversity. The first best practice is for the leadership of the organization to champion the cause of diversity. This includes modeling it, becoming diverse among themselves, and being held accountable for meeting benchmarks related to the organization's diversity initiatives. The literature highlighted the need for leaders both to own this vision and to contribute to its process.

The second practice is to cast a vision across the organization for becoming diverse. To accomplish this, communication is key. Organizations that successfully attained their goal of pursuing and celebrating diversity made sure that everyone within the organization understood the goal, the purpose of the goal, and the plan for its implementation. In order for everyone to be unified around the goal, they must understand and believe in the goal. This practice also requires open dialogue so everyone within the organization can express opinions, ask questions, and speak into the process.

The third is to motivate the organization's employees by demonstrating the beneficial nature of the vision's success. The literature persuasively argued that individuals who identified the personal benefits were more likely to be motivated to pursue the goal. It demonstrated that when the staff of secular organizations believed that

attaining their organization's mission was tied directly to the organization's greater mission of viability, they were motivated to personally contribute to the diversity initiative. The research also showed that the vast majority of people want to know that their efforts are going to benefit themselves before contributing—even if that benefit is simply the satisfied feeling of doing something good.

The fourth practice is to create a system-wide plan that permeates and promotes diversity throughout the organization. A clear and well-designed plan is necessary for success in pursuing and celebrating diversity. Each department, as well as each person in each department, needs to understand what role he or she plays and how that role fits into the overall plan. Everyone within the organization should also receive regular updates regarding how well the company is attaining their goal. This keeps the goal in front of them, encouraging them as they see progress and allowing for opportunities to evaluate any necessary changes.

Field Research

Through field research, the researcher found that these four best practices are indeed effective in a large church's efforts to reflect the ethnic diversity of its greater community. The field study consisted of a three-year process of qualitative research methods. As Creswell wrote, "Qualitative research takes place in the natural setting. The qualitative researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participant to conduct the research. This enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly involved in actual experiences of the participants."⁵ The

⁵ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, 2nd ed. (CA: Sage Publications), 181.

researcher spent much time observing, interviewing, and surveying various non-white individuals at Calvary regarding their experiences of Calvary.

There were two main questions being asked in the field study. The first was “what is preventing Calvary Church from attracting non-white people?” To pursue this answer, researcher employed the case study method, which Yin stated, “are an appropriate research method when you are trying to attribute causal relationships—and not just wanting to explore or describe a situation.”⁶ The goal was to identify obstacles for non-white people who seek to join Calvary by interviewing and surveying some of the non-white constituencies that consider Calvary their church home. It was imperative to identify why they attended Calvary and what they felt prevents more non-white people from making Calvary their church home.

The second questions was “are the best practices of secular organizations transferable and effective for a large church to pursue the celebration of diversity?” The method of answering this question was to identify and implement action steps that both represented the four best practices identified in the literature research and also took into account the findings of the surveys and interviews. Each of the eight departments within Calvary Church was given action steps to implement to help Calvary pursue diversity. Each of the action steps fits within one of the four best practices identified.

Exploratory Field Research

The field research employed the “exploratory case study,” in which “fieldwork and data collection are undertaken prior to the final definition of study questions and

⁶ Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research*, 31.

hypotheses.”⁷ Yin says this process will assist the researcher as he or she becomes more directed and involved.⁸ The exploratory research consisted of an effort to identify the felt needs of the few minorities attending Calvary Church. To accomplish this goal, 37 individuals representing the three main minority groups at Calvary (Black, South Korean, and Hispanic) were interviewed or surveyed to identify their experiences and needs, as well as to build rapport and credibility with them—all things that Creswell argues are important in qualitative research.⁹

The initial interviews and surveys took place in the fall of 2012. They used Grounded Theory, which, according to Yin, “is eminently interested in theory-building, and not theory testing,”¹⁰ or in “theory development and refinement,” according to Glaser and Strauss.¹¹ In this process, Grounded Theory is a “systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research.”¹² It is concerned with identifying the experiences of those directly impacted by the specific focus of study, gleaning valuable information from their life experiences. Lessem and Schieffer refer to such individuals as the “situated knower.”¹³ They are living in the “situation” and therefore hold the “knowledge” necessary to identify the research data. Shulamit Reinhartz believes the

⁷ Yin, 4-5.

⁸ Yin, 5-7.

⁹ Creswell, 181.

¹⁰ Yin, 61.

¹¹ Barney G. Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1967), 40.

¹² Glaser and Strauss, 3.

¹³ Ronnie Lessem and Alexander Schieffer, *Integral Research and Innovation: Transforming Enterprise and Society*, (Farnham, England: Gower Publishing, 2010), 131.

research investigation should always consider the experiences of those who have been impacted by the state in which they find themselves.¹⁴

The goal of these initial interviews and surveys were to identify where problems lie and to allow those of ethnic diversity at Calvary Church to speak into these issues. The researcher hoped this would aid in the theory-building process. During these interviews, the researcher looked for common themes and substantiating evidence that would help identify barriers to Calvary Church's diversity efforts. Thus, the primary field research was focused upon interviewing and surveying non-white individuals at Calvary Church in hopes that theories would arise out of their individual experiences.

The researcher then met with each department director and discussed the findings of the surveys and interviews, as well as the findings of the theological and non-theological research. The researcher and the directors agreed upon actions steps for each of their departments. Each of these action steps represented one of the four best practices identified in the literature review. The directors in turn met with their staff and allowed their staff to speak into the process and to understand the nature of the request so they could effectively and easily implement the action steps within their departments. The researcher found that the staff had tremendous energy around this issue. There was much excitement as each person volunteered to do what they could to help Calvary become a place that celebrates ethnic diversity.

The findings of the initial field research, as well as the staff recommendations regarding action steps were also written out and presented to the elders, deacons, and

¹⁴ Reinharz, Shulamit, "The Principles of Feminist Research: A Matter of Debate," in *The Knowledge Explosion*, ed. Cheris Kramarae and Dale Spender (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992), 425-426.

members of Calvary's Leadership Development Forum (LDF). This forum is made up of congregation members who are being trained to be the future leaders of Calvary Church. The primary purpose of the meeting was to get approval and backing from the elders to implement the various initiatives within the departments. The researcher found that it is crucial to start by convincing the elders of the Scriptural mandate to pursue diversity, based on the first best practice. Without having the backing of the elders, implementing the initiatives throughout the various departments would have been difficult if not impossible. Further, with the elders on board, there was more credibility to the process. The elders agreed that the action steps recommended by the staff should be implemented. The actions steps were then implemented within each department in 2013.

A number of initiatives were implemented inspired by the first best practice. The first was that the elders and deacons would pursue non-white people to serve as board members in the future. The second was to keep in mind the new desire for diversity as Calvary hired people to serve in leadership positions. The third initiative was that the pastoral resident program—a program that hires individuals called to the ministry and prepares them for a full-time ministry vocation—was to hire non-white individuals.

The second best practice was to cast a vision across the organization for becoming diverse. This was accomplished through the staff meetings and elder meetings mentioned previously. Multiple employees commented that “just having the conversation” made them constantly aware of their need to contribute to the process and also motivated them to play their part.

The third best practice is to motivate the organization's employees by demonstrating the beneficial nature of the vision's success. Calvary's staff members view

their work as work for God. One of the most powerful principles that motivated both the board and the staff was demonstrating to them, through Scripture, that the only way to truly please God with their work was to pursue and reflect the ethnic diversity that is represented in the community. This best practice was implemented by drafting a theological paper and presenting it to the board members, department directors, members of LDF, and other key staff. The paper tied the vision for celebrating diversity with the main vision of the church, and showed how pursuing diversity aids churches in fulfilling their vision of being a Christ-like body.

The fourth and final best practice identified in the literature research regarded the organization's ability to create a system-wide plan that permeates and promotes diversity throughout the organization. The researcher found that allowing each department to engage and identify specific action items for them to implement was very valuable. Some of the initiatives worked better than others, but simply having a plan allowed the departments and individual staff members to take ownership. This created unity among the various organizational departments.

The plan was organized by separating the initiatives according to the existing eight departments in an effort to create a system-wide plan that would permeate throughout the organization. The eight departments referred to in the research are: 1) communication, 2) pastoral care, 3) pastoral resident program, 4) college and young adult ministries, 5) children's ministry, 6) worship ministry, 7) hospitality and greeting ministry, and 8) the facilities department.

One of the communication department initiatives was to be intentional about including non-white people in its publications. While there are many different printed

publications that this department produces, the monthly magazine entitled *Calvary Life* is one of the more substantial printed documents and garners thousands of readers. The department was asked to specifically include pictures of non-white congregational members within its pages. They also agreed to seek out non-white individuals to submit testimonies and articles to be included in the magazine. Further, they committed to dedicating one entire issue on the topic of diversity at Calvary.

The pastoral care department offers benevolence to individuals within the church, and also to those in the surrounding community. The researcher discovered that all staff and volunteers within the pastoral care department were white, even though a large percentage of those coming to the department for help were non-white. Thus, the pastoral care department agreed that it needed to hire non-white individuals. This would both help with the overall goal, and would also provide a relational support and comfort to non-white people who come to the ministry with benevolence needs.

The pastoral resident program was one of the most integral parts of the entire research process. The goal for the department was to pay special attention to any non-white people called to full-time ministry, and to welcome them into the program.

The college and young adult ministry committed to helping raise up non-white volunteers and leaders within the ministry. They also decided to integrate multi-cultural music styles within their worship music. Further, they committed to praying together as a leadership team once per month, asking God to identify any other means by which they could play their part in the diversity initiative.

The research process highlighted to both the researcher and the children's ministry team that while they had a presence of non-white children within their ministry,

among the approximately 250 volunteers, few were of non-white status. The leadership of the ministry committed to filling prominent roles with people of diversity. They were particularly concerned with placing people of diversity at the check-in stations on Sunday mornings. Further, they committed to choosing both Hispanic and African American music styles in their children's choir music as well as in their Wednesday evening programming music. Lastly, due to the large presence of Korean children within the ministry, the leadership committed to find ways to communicate and hear from the South Korean parents in order to serve them and their children better.

The worship ministry recognized that they had a critical part to play in this initiative because of the profound impact music has on people. Their role is crucial because it provides music that helps the congregation worship God on Sunday mornings. Thus, they committed to a number of initiatives. The first was that the choir would begin to practice singing African American Christian R and B music as well as Black Gospel. Further, they decided to be intentional about including non-white people on the stage during the worship service.

This included such things as having non-white people participate more in the Sunday morning services—to read Scripture, pray over the offering, sing special songs, be included in the praise team, etc. They also committed to seeking out non-white volunteers to be ushers as well as to join the team that passes the offering plates. In addition, they chose a greater variety of multi-cultural music to play after the services. They decided to invite non-white local pastors to fill the pulpit periodically as guest speakers. Lastly, the department committed to translating each week's sermon into

Korean in order for the many South Koreans still learning English to read in advance and understand the message better.

The hospitality team committed to seeking out ethnically diverse greeters to post at the entrance areas of the church. They also committed to seek out diverse prayer partners to pray with people after the services. Further, they began training the greeters to compensate for the stigma many non-white people feel when coming into an all-white setting, encouraging them to be “overfriendly” to help them feel welcomed and loved.

Lastly, the facilities department was given the task of changing the pictures and artwork throughout the church to depict not only white people, but non-white people as well. The goal was also to display artwork from various ethnicities throughout the church.

Field Research Follow-Up

In the fall of 2015, the researcher repeated the survey and interview process. Of the original 14 non-white people that were interviewed, ten were re-interviewed. Because of the anonymous nature of the survey it is impossible to know how many people who took the 2012 survey also took it in 2015. However, 24 people took the 2013 survey and 40 took the 2015 survey. The increase in those taking the survey was due to new South Korean’s choosing Calvary as their church over the past three years—which is an encouraging indication of the effectiveness of the various initiatives. The researcher’s primary goal was to provide a comparison between the responses in the initial survey with those of the current survey in order to identify progress regarding Calvary’s diversity initiative.

An initial meeting with six dedicated black members of Calvary Church took place to discuss their observations over the past three years. The action steps were discussed and their opinions were given regarding which ones were most effective. The researcher also held personal interviews with four black, one Chinese, and one Latino who have made Calvary their home within the past two years. The primary purpose was to identify what attracted them to Calvary and what their observations were regarding Calvary's efforts to embrace diversity.

The researcher also held individual interviews with the eight department directors in order to assess their individual opinions regarding the effectiveness of the implemented initiatives. Each person was able to share his or her experiences over the past two years as well as his or her observations as to whether or not Calvary was becoming more diverse. The researcher wanted to discover whether or not these interviewees believed Calvary was becoming a place that celebrated diversity.

Lastly, the researcher attended the service, walked the halls, and read the various literature with fresh eyes in order to assess for himself the progress Calvary made.

The overarching goal of the survey, the interviews, and the personal observations was to identify whether or not Calvary was becoming a church that celebrates ethnic diversity. Did it work to implement the actions steps reflecting each of the four best practices identified in the literature review? The hope was to show that the same best practices of secular organizations worked within a large church as well. If successful, the four best practices would aid churches in their efforts toward becoming organizations that celebrate diversity.

Field Research Findings

The researcher has identified that the four best practices found among secular organizations that have successfully become ethnically diverse are indeed transferable and very beneficial to a large church's efforts to do the same. While the researcher was employed by Calvary Church when the study was initially launched, he left to become the senior pastor of another church shortly after the initiatives were implemented. He has been back several times for further field research and has been amazed at the difference, which is very noticeable. When asking a retired missionary to Mexico—whom the researcher had also interviewed in 2012—if he thought the initiatives worked in bringing more non-white people into Calvary, his answer was, “Unequivocally yes! Without question, there is a larger presence of non-white people in the congregation.” The difference is also seen on Calvary's webpage and in the printed literature. They now represent other ethnicities and print some children's ministry materials in Korean. While Calvary has a lot left to accomplish regarding ethnic diversity, it has made great strides by implementing the four best practices of pursuing and celebrating diversity.

Summary

Through the theological and literature reviews as well as the case study methodology in field research, the researcher found that implementing action steps that incorporate each of the four best practices in the secular industry has allowed Calvary Church to take one giant step toward becoming a church that represents the ethnic diversity of their greater community.

The researcher found that Scripture portrays God's desire for any church within an ethnically diverse community to strive to represent that diversity within its walls and

in its DNA. In an effort to help churches design a plan to become places of ethnic diversity, the researcher identified four categories of best practices found to be successful in secular organizations.

The researcher found the first—the leadership embraces the diversity initiative and models and champions it themselves—is crucial to the initiative’s success. The researcher further found that the best practice of casting the vision across the organization was effective in creating synergy among Calvary’s staff members. It also served to help identify ways each department and person could play a role, which gave ownership to the staff as a whole. The research also demonstrated the importance and beneficial nature of explaining how becoming diverse was beneficial to Calvary, but also to them personally. Calvary’s employees love God, His Word, and people, so it was important to dialogue openly about how ethnic diversity both pleases God and benefits people. This dialogue allowed the employees to see for themselves the spiritual growth that would take place in their lives and in the lives of those around them. The study showed that when people believe the initiative is beneficial to the organization’s mission, they are motivated to contribute to its success.

Lastly, the researcher found that the fourth best practice—having a well-designed plan for practical implementation—is crucial not only in a secular setting but also in a large church. Calvary’s staff not only needed to feel the initiative was of ethical value, but also needed to feel like it was attainable. Allowing each department to contribute by coming up with initiatives provided practical steps to follow. It also offered benchmarks for identifying how successful a given department was in working toward making Calvary a place that pursues and celebrates diversity.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The original research question was in regard to how a large church such as Calvary, which does not reflect the ethnic diversity of its community, can best pursue becoming ethnically diverse. The primary research question the field study sought to answer was, “are the best practices of secular organizations transferable and effective for a large church to pursue the celebration of diversity?” The field research was conducted in primarily three different stages. The first consisted of interviews, surveys, and observations. The goal of this first stage was to identify barriers that would interfere with people of various ethnicities feeling welcomed at Calvary Church. Further, in this first stage the researcher desired to identify the felt needs of non-white people coming to Calvary. The second stage included implementing initiatives within the church to help Calvary become a church that celebrates diversity. Each of the initiatives represented one of the four best practices identified in the literature review. The last stage of the field research took place three years after the project began and more than two years after the initiatives had been implemented. The goal of this phase was to see if implementing initiatives in each of the four best practices successfully helped Calvary Church pursue diversity. This phase consisted of going back to most of the same individuals, as well as new non-white constituencies of Calvary, to interview and survey their experiences. Observation was also included in this phase regarding whether or not Calvary Church had more non-white members both in numbers but also involved throughout the various operations of the church.

Overall Observation

After more than two years of allowing the various initiatives to be implemented, the researcher made several trips back to the church both during the week and also during the Sunday morning service. Due to being called by God to take a job with another church, the researcher no longer attends Calvary Church. As a result, the researcher had not attended a service at Calvary in over a year. The researcher felt that this allowed himself to see the differences more readily and conduct an objective evaluation of the differences Calvary had experienced in his absence. The researcher visited Calvary remembering what it was like the last time he had attended. Thus, the difference was very noticeable. Calvary had indeed become more ethnically diverse. Non-white people were represented throughout the church—in the assembly, in serving capacities, on staff, and in printed publications.

This was not the case a year prior. In fact, the researcher had taken his dad to a service a few years before his study and his dad commented after the service, “I have never been in such a large place with so many white people.” What he meant was that he had never been to such a large meeting place that had no ethnic diversity. He was comparing it to going to a stadium for a ball game or a concert. Any time he had ever been to such a large meeting place, he had always seen people from various ethnicities. It struck him that Calvary Church was such a large place but had little to no diversity. But through personal observation, the researcher found a noticeable increase in the number of non-white people who now attend Calvary.

Observations of Calvary Church Members

In addition to personal observation, the researcher conducted interviews and took surveys to identify whether or not other people agreed. This section will present the researcher's findings showing that others had noticed the increase in non-white people attending Calvary over the past couple of years.

One of the few white individuals interviewed was a gentleman by the name of Steve. The researcher had the privilege of talking with him prior to the initiatives being implemented and also after. Steve is a retired missionary to Mexico, a fluent Spanish speaker, and a member of both Calvary and a local Hispanic church. The researcher asked him, "Do you think the initiatives brought more non-white people into Calvary?" He answered with passion, stating,

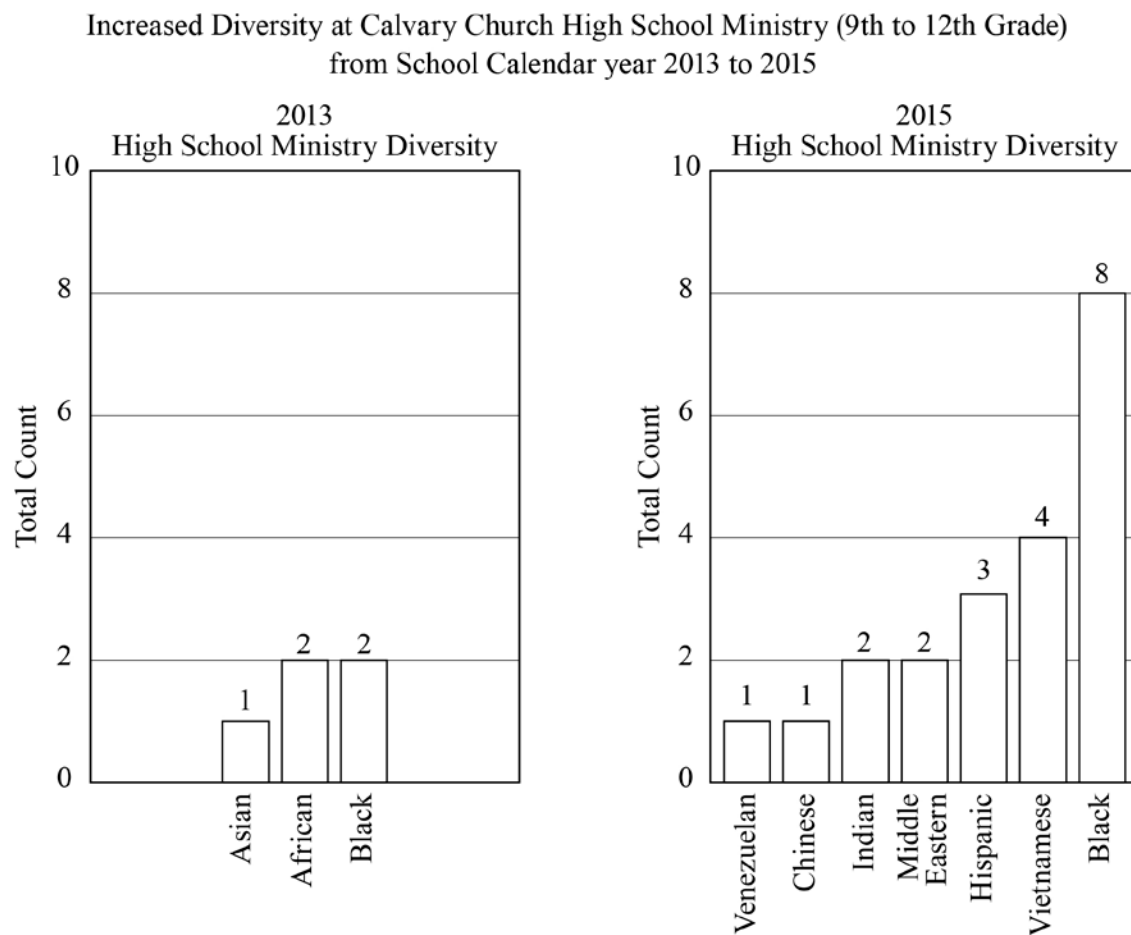
Unequivocally yes! Without question there is a larger presence of non-white people in the congregation. There are more people who are noticeably different looking than it used to be. It is clear that somebody is doing something because a church does not simply become diverse without intentionality. We like to worship with people that are like us.

The increase of non-white people over the past two years has been so dramatic that Steve attributes it to the intentional implementation of the various initiatives.

Steve also mentioned that he is in his second year of volunteering in the high school student ministry. He leads a small group of ten teenage boys. Last year Steve had one non-white student in his small group. This year he has three. He spoke of how he noticed an overall increase in non-white students in the ministry. The increase that Steve has noticed is indeed representative of the diversity the high school ministry (ninth through twelfth grade) has experienced over the past two years. As this chart demonstrates, the high school ministry has experienced a 400 percent increase in non-

white attenders over the past two years. The ministry has gone from having five regular non-white attenders to now having twenty-one non-white students involved in the ministry.

Figure 5.1



In a meeting with six black members of Calvary, one said that his grandson recently started attending Calvary. He attributed his grandson's desire to come to two reasons: "Calvary has a lot to offer, and now that more black kids are coming, it is more comfortable." Every one of the black members in the meeting agreed wholeheartedly that Calvary has become more diverse as a result of the various initiatives. One person said, "The differences are working. There are more people of color than ever." Another person

told the group about how his family left Calvary several years ago, but he has recently returned because it has now become more diverse and he feels more comfortable.

The increase in non-white people attending Calvary has also been seen in its Korean population. There is a substantial population of Koreans in Calvary's nearby communities.¹ The primary reason for this is Calvin Seminary, a Christian Reformed Seminary. The Christian Reformed denomination has a substantial presence in South Korea, and many students come to Calvin to be trained for ministry. Three years ago, the researcher conducted interviews and took a survey of the Koreans who were attending Calvary. One of the goals was to identify why they were attending Calvary as opposed to a South Korean church. The researcher found that the majority of Koreans said they were at Calvary because of the method in which the Bible was preached. They felt the area's Korean churches were not preaching expository sermons and so they come to Calvary.

In the most recent Korean survey, they were asked what they observed about Calvary's diversity efforts over the past two years. One person wrote, "I am more comfortable than [when] I started to attend Calvary because I can see many foreign nationals now." That Calvary has indeed attracted more Koreans is also attested to by the fact that, of the 46 Koreans who responded to the survey, 24 have started attending within the last two years.

Another Korean, in broken English, wrote, "As a man who had visited many churches in Grand Rapids, Calvary looks to be most hospitable church, welcoming and serving other nationals who are in this journey of faith." This statement reflects Calvary's

¹ The 2010 government census data does not reflect this population of Koreans since they are international students and are not American citizens.

willingness to listen to the needs of Koreans by implementing initiatives that address those needs.

In the initial survey, a respondent wrote, “A concern for Koreans in Grand Rapids as well as international students is needed.” However, after the success of the initiatives, one respondent wrote, “I couldn’t feel any discrimination although the majority is Caucasian. Rather, there was a culture to serve and welcome more.” The difference in responses between the first and second Korean survey is a clear indication that the four best practices of secular institutions are indeed effective in a large church’s pursuit of becoming more ethnically diverse. Through implementing initiatives that represent each of the four best practices, Calvary has become a place that both pursues the celebration of diversity and enjoys the fruits of that celebration by attracting a larger population of ethnically diverse people.

The researcher was struck by the number of non-white people he witnessed walking through the halls and sitting in the congregation on the Sunday morning he visited. It is unquestionable that Calvary has increased the number of non-white congregational members. Without fail, the researcher found that each of the eight department directors he interviewed had noticed that Calvary has become more ethnically diverse over the past two years.

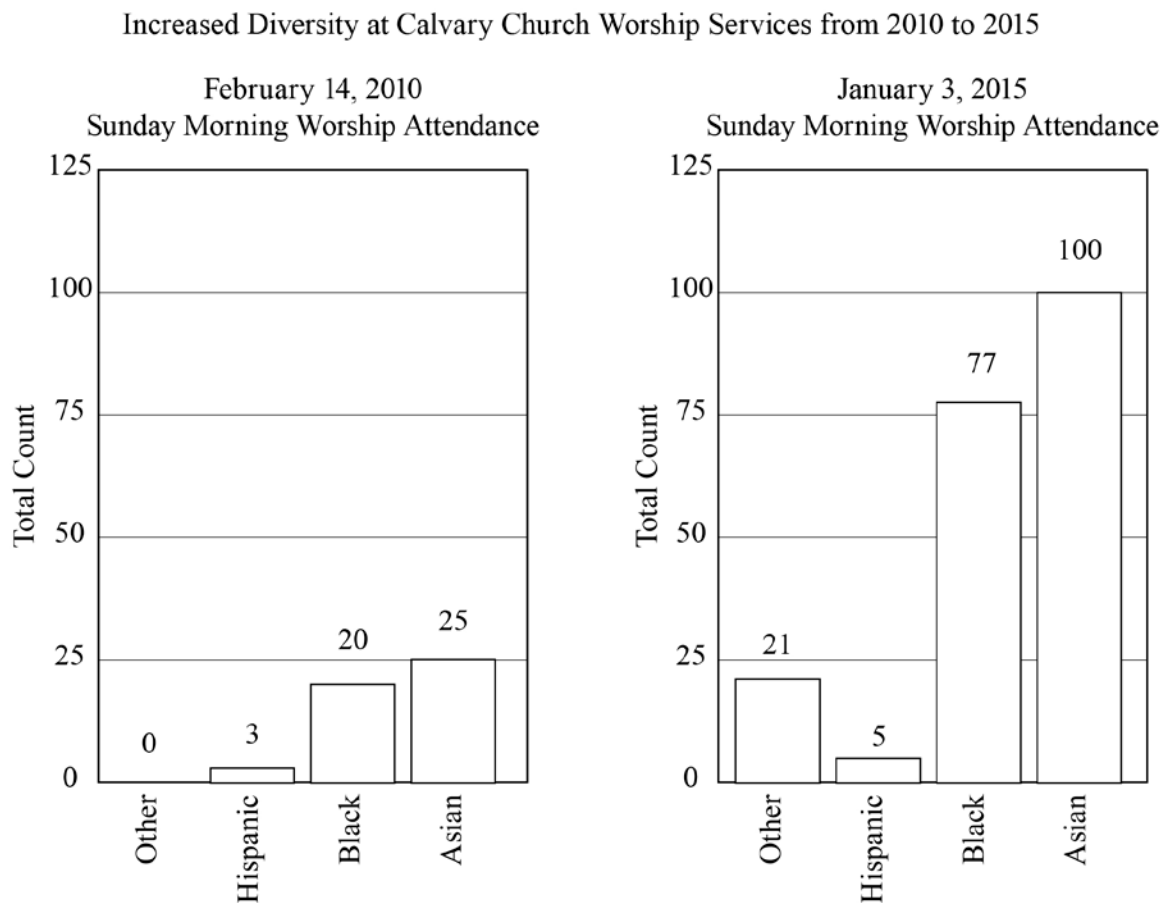
Through a 2010 church-wide questionnaire it was identified that Calvary was 95.5 percent white. The number of people calling Calvary their church home has stayed around 4,000 over the past ten years. Thus, in 2010 there were approximately 180 non-white members. The researcher found that while Calvary is still approximately 4,000

strong,² the percentage of non-white people who attend the church has increased by 45 percent. There is now an average of 261 non-white people who attend Calvary. One of the challenges the researcher faced was that Calvary does not take attendance and has traditionally not made official membership a priority of its congregation. Thus, the researcher had to get creative in identifying the average number of non-white attendees after the initiatives were implemented.

In February 2010, pictures were taken of the congregation on two different Sunday mornings to assist the ushers in identifying seat availability. This was to help them usher more effectively, but they also served this project well. Using the pictures, the researcher identified that there was an average of 37 non-white people attending the Sunday morning services.³ The researcher then had a past elder count the January 3, 2015 and January 10, 2015 services. He found there was an average of 189 non-white people in the sanctuary on those Sunday mornings. This represents a dramatic increase in the number of non-white people attending the morning services. The following chart demonstrates the growth from the service in February 2010 to the service in January 2015.

² Calvary Church has experienced “the ceiling affect,” which is a church growth term referring to a church that has reached its seating capacity and therefore may attract new people, but will lose people at the same time. Though Calvary has grown its number of non-white attendees, it has lost a number of white people over the past couple of years.

³ This number represents the non-white people in the sanctuary and does not include those in the children’s or middle school ministries.

Figure 5.2

The researcher further identified that there are at least 60 non-white children in the children's ministry (birth through fourth grade) and 20 in the middle school ministry (fifth through eighth grade) on any given Sunday. These individuals are not represented in the morning worship service count because they meet in their respective ministries. Thus, taking the average of non-white attendees in the Sunday morning services and adding both children's ministry and middle school ministry non-white members, the total of non-white people attending Calvary on any given Sunday morning has increased from 180 in 2010 to 261 in 2015.

This data gathered through observations and testimonies demonstrates the majority of increase in diversity has happened over the past two years. This is important because the majority of initiatives were implemented two and one-half years ago. The researcher concludes that this demonstrates a direct correlation between the increase in diversity with the implementation of initiatives.

The ultimate goal of this research project was to identify whether or not the four best diversity practices of secular organizations would be effective in a large church's efforts towards doing the same. Without question the researcher found that implementing initiatives that represent each of the four best practices proved very effective in Calvary's attempt to pursuing ethnic diversity. The researcher will now demonstrate how each of these best has improved Calvary's ethnic diversity.

Getting Leadership to Own the Vision

Organizations that have successfully pursued ethnic diversity have found that getting its leadership to personally own the vision is crucial to the vision's success. The researcher desired to specifically identify through his research whether or not this was true for a large church desiring to become more ethnically diverse. Throughout this project, the researcher found that having the leadership on board is the most critical aspect, and is particularly important in supporting and affirming Calvary's desire for non-white people to become part of the church. The leaders are in a position of authority and can offer the support that helps attract and keep non-white people coming to Calvary by meeting their physical and emotional needs and making them feel welcomed, wanted, loved, and supported.

In an interview with Ardo, one of Calvary's black pastoral residents, he spoke about how he was intimidated when he first joined the staff. He said that being the only black man on staff made him and his wife feel a bit uncomfortable and timid. However, he went on to talk about how the leadership embraced him. He said that the pastor over the resident program welcomed him to stop by his office at any time, and that this made him feel supported. He noticed how the leadership embraced the diversity initiative, and how crucial it was to the church's efforts of pursuing diversity. He said, "Without the leadership leading by example and helping make it happen, it will not." The researcher found that having leadership on board helped Ardo successfully endure the awkwardness of being a black man in a white church. Knowing that the leadership was supporting him, Ardo had the strength and courage to continue working in a white organization.

It is hard for a white person to understand the experience of a non-white person seeking to integrate into a white organization. However, the researcher found that the experience can be very hard and can cause non-white people to want give up and leave. Having the support of the leaders is crucial in helping non-white people get over the hurdle of being different and feeling intimidated.

The researcher interviewed a young black man in his twenties named Josh R. who started attending Calvary in the spring of 2013. This young man spoke about how he felt when he first came to Calvary. He also said he was intimidated, feeling like he stood out and like everyone was looking at him. He said he was so uncomfortable that he had decided to leave Calvary. However, prior to leaving he met with Ardo, who told him about how Calvary truly desired to become more ethnically diverse. Ardo challenged him to hang in there, saying, "Somebody has to be a trail blazer." Josh pointed to this

conversation as a defining moment in his decision to stay at Calvary, feeling that God was calling him to help with that process. He was also asked by the leadership to give his testimony to the congregation in a Sunday morning service. He said this was very affirming and also helped him integrate into Calvary and feel more wanted and comfortable.

Without having the leadership own the vision and understand the importance of having non-white people up front, having this man share his story may not have been possible.

Joanna is another black Calvary attendee, and a staff member, who realized the beneficial power of having the leadership believe in the vision. Joanna was hired in January, 2014. She was hired as a result of the pastoral care department's commitment to hire a person of non-white status to serve in the benevolence ministry. The initial field research had identified that since a large part of the benevolence ministry ministered to non-white individuals in the community, having an all-white staff was less than beneficial. The researcher interviewed Joanna and she spoke about the tremendous support she felt from the leadership, particularly the elders, in a conflict situation with a white woman from Calvary.

In the summer of 2015, a white woman confronted Joanna and used racial slurs to try to demean her. Joanna was obviously very hurt, and the leadership felt it necessary to get involved. They decided that this woman should not attend Calvary for a while. Joanna mentioned that the leadership's involvement in the situation made her feel supported. It allowed her to start a process of healing that has given her the strength and energy to continue working at Calvary.

Another example of leadership support was when Joanna went to the elders for prayer. During the prayer time “they affirmed that they were so excited that I was there and I heard them say that they did not expect me to change but that I was welcomed as a black woman,” she said.

It is this type of support that secular organizations have found to be essential for an organization to successfully become ethnically diverse. Without having the elders on board, the researcher would not have been able to acquire the necessary funds to hire new employees and support each initiative. For example, one of the facts that came to light in the initial survey was that most of the South Korean men who attend Calvary are seminary students. Most of them also have families to support, school bills to pay, and other important financial needs. Many of them used the church’s food pantry, but only for the three months allowed by the benevolence ministry. When the researcher presented this fact to the elders, they immediately lifted the rule, allowing all international students and their families to use the food pantry for as long as needed.

This act spoke volumes to the Koreans. Twenty-four (52 percent) of the Korean respondents to the second survey said that they used the food pantry. One Korean wrote, “Calvary food pantry ... helps us a lot to save the living costs here. This is very actual and practical ways to serve the poor international students. Very thank you.” Another wrote, “[The] food pantry and other benevolence become a crucial factor to comfort and strengthen the foreign nationals who are like strangers in this land.” It is clear that the Koreans feel the support and love through the benevolence program. In the interview with Nam he spoke about how the church has also paid for car repairs and helped with rent payments. He said, “All these things really help international people feel welcomed

and loved.” This demonstration of love speaks volumes to those attending Calvary and also, as word travels, attracts other South Koreans to the church.

The point is that since the leadership of the church believed in the vision and desired to include more non-white people into Calvary’s community, funds were made available and policies changed in order to meet the financial needs of the South Koreans attending Calvary. Without the leadership catching the vision, such support would not have been possible. Without such support, attracting more ethnically diverse people would not be possible. Fifteen percent of those who responded to the second survey said that the prime motivation for them making Calvary their church home was the reputation Calvary has for ministering to Koreans. To the extent that a church’s leadership believes in the vision is to the extent that they will support initiatives that help attract and retain non-white people. The South Korean community continues to grow at Calvary because when South Koreans hear that Calvary is generous and seeks to meet their needs, they realize they are welcomed and will be embraced.

There has also been a snowball effect. In the second survey, 43.5 percent of the Korean respondents said that the primary reason they made Calvary their church home was due to the presence of a large Korean community. Thus, as Calvary seeks to minister to the needs of South Koreans, word gets out and attracts more. As more and more South Koreans attend, more and more South Koreans desire to come.

The point of this section is to demonstrate the importance of having the leadership of the church on board with the vision. When the leadership of the church is on board with the vision, they in turn will free up resources to meet the needs of non-white people. They will also meet the emotional needs of non-white people as demonstrated in their

support of the young black man who nearly left the church, as well as the example of Joanna during her time of great difficulty in experiencing hateful prejudice.

As Calvary intentionally ministers to the distinct needs of its non-white congregational members, non-white people feel supported and stay. The more non-white people that stay the more likely new non-white people will come. If the leadership of the church supportive of the diversity initiatives there would not have been the resources made available. Ministering to the needs of non-white people would have been impossible. Having a church's leadership supportive of its diversity initiative is completely essential. Similar to secular organizations it proves powerfully effective in a large church's efforts toward becoming more ethnically diverse.

As was discussed in the literature review, organizations should seek to make their leadership itself ethnically diverse. Some organizations have found it beneficial to identify ethnically diverse individuals who demonstrate leadership qualities and train them to fill leadership positions within the organization. Of all the initiatives that Calvary implemented one of the most effective was the initiative to hire ethnically diverse people who feel the call to full-time ministry as pastoral interns. This is proving to be an excellent way for Calvary to train up the next generation of leaders and increase its staff diversity.

Hiring Non-White Pastoral Residents

One way the researcher proposed integrating ethnic diversity into Calvary was to raise up non-white leaders within the pastoral resident program. Prior to the initial phases of the research, no known non-white person had been part of the pastoral resident program. The elders agreed and the pastoral representative responsible for the pastoral

internship program was asked to seek out qualified non-white individuals to hire for pastoral training. Over two years later, the program is noticeably different and now includes five non-white individuals: two blacks, two Hispanics, and one South Korean. The overall culture of Calvary has changed tremendously because of a more diverse resident program. The leadership's support the hiring of non-white pastoral residents shows its commitment to training up the next generation of leaders to be ethnically diverse, and its seriousness about pursuing diversity. It has also proven to benefit the overall diversity initiative in multiple ways.

One of the pastoral residents was a young black woman named Vida, who was assigned to work in the young adult ministry. Mason, the young adult pastor, credits her presence as the catalyst for bringing in non-white participants in the ministry. Prior to her joining the staff and being assigned to the young adult ministry, there were no non-white young adults regularly attending their ministry programs. Afterward, several joined. Mason stated, "Her presence highlighted the conversation and it offered a non-white presence. She was used much in upfront things." He said he believes that simply having a non-white staff member in a leadership position allowed for others to feel more comfortable in attending the various young adult programs.

Another pastoral resident who was hired is a black male named Ardo. His primary duties have been to preach on Sunday nights and conduct hospital visits. The worship pastor, Dan, feels that having this resident be the primary teaching pastor on Sunday nights was "ingenious." Sunday night service is made up of less than 200 people, typically older adults. He explained that, in his opinion, older adults have the hardest time with change. He said that this resident really won the hearts of the older people. He said

“they love him.” Similarly, Josh M., the pastor of pastoral care, spoke of how the older people loved having him visit them in the hospital. Josh gave credit to the hiring of Ardo as an example of how hiring non-white pastoral residents “works in an incredible way” to help Calvary embrace and celebrate diversity.

Another pastoral staff resident hired was Nam. He was hired to be the director of international ministries and given a budget of \$12,000. The primary objective of his job is to help non-white people get assimilated into the church and to help with any needs they might have. Calvary’s willingness to hire a Korean staff member speaks volumes to the internationals about Calvary’s dedication to making its staff diverse, and also about their desire to meet the needs of the internationals. Seeking to meet the distinct needs of non-white people has proven to communicate the love and acceptance necessary for building a successfully diverse church body. Nam specifically spoke about how he has been told by fellow Koreans that hiring him communicated the care and concern Calvary has for its non-white constituents. He further credited it with helping Calvary grow in numbers of non-white members. As word gets out that Calvary cares for the needs of non-white people, more people feel loved and welcomed and start attending.

Josie is a long-time Hispanic member of Calvary whom the researcher interviewed prior to and after the initiatives were implemented. Josie also feels that hiring Nam has helped Calvary become more ethnically diverse. In her most recent interview, she said that she has noticed more black people, Koreans, and other various cultures, including international families from African countries.

Without a doubt, pursuing diversity in the pastoral resident program and other leadership initiatives has been effective in Calvary’s efforts to become an organization

that celebrates diversity. The congregation is able to see Calvary's leadership demonstrating their commitment and passion for pursuing diversity as they hire and train non-white pastors for leadership.

Calvary has found that the best practice of getting the leadership to own the vision is crucial and is effective in its efforts toward pursuing the celebration of diversity. Hiring non-white pastoral residents and training them to become future leaders in the church has proven to be an effective initiative in support of this best practice.

Casting the Vision across the Organization

The researcher found that the second best practice is to cast the vision in such a manner that it infiltrates the entire organization. It is critical to get people to understand the vision. It is also critical to encourage people to talk about it and enable them to do so by giving them a common language. The researcher noticed in the second round of interviews that people used the terminology "non-white." This term was used by the researcher throughout the project to refer to anyone who was not from a white culture. Dan made the comment, "It is constantly on my mind throughout the week to make sure non-white people are included in the service." Throughout the interview, he used the term "non-white" naturally and often. Throughout the conversation, it was helpful to have a common understanding of what was meant by the term. This created a common language whereby people can discuss it using commonly understood terms.

Dan also said, "The best thing about the diversity initiative is that the worship planning team is more conscious." The great thing about hearing the vision multiple times and having the opportunity to interact with it and to own it for themselves is that it became part of their decision-making process. They were cognizant of Calvary seeking to

become more ethnically diverse and therefore kept it in the forefront of their minds as they planned the worship services.

At one point during Mason's interview, he pointed to a whiteboard on the wall of his office. On the whiteboard was written "diversity (blind, hidden unknown areas)." He said that at the last young adult ministry staff meeting they had brainstormed ways to pursue even more ethnic diversity in their ministry and were seeking to identify anything that was hindering that goal. This is a perfect example of the benefit and importance of casting the vision throughout the organization, letting it infiltrate the various ministries, and causing the various ministries to keep it on their minds as they make decisions and brainstorm regarding their individual ministries.

Sarah, the director of communications, shared how the staff culture has experienced what she called a "revival." She said, "A revival has broken out among the staff toward forging a cultural change to where people are not simply seeking to minister to people like us. It is on the forefront of everyone's mind: how do we reach out to people different from us?" She talked about how the culture has changed and that people are not only seeking to minister to ethnically diverse people but to diverse people in general. Josh M. also mentioned this "revival," referring to it as a cultural change that he felt was ignited out of the vision to become more ethnically diverse. He said that the whole staff was being challenged by the leadership to become more aware of their need to reach out and minister to people different from themselves.

The point is very clear. Any large church that desires to pursue ethnic diversity must cast the vision for it throughout the organization. The vision must be communicated in a manner that it is clearly understood and that gives people the opportunity to interact

with it. As a result, in some regard it takes on a life of its own. For example, the researcher found that many initiatives, beyond the original initiatives implemented through this research process, have been developed and implemented at Calvary over the past two years. Casting the vision and getting it into the DNA of the church allows for a snowball effect. Thus, the field research affirmed that the best practice of casting the vision throughout the organization is indeed an effective and crucial process for a church that desires to successfully pursue the celebration of diversity.

Tying the Vision with the Success of the Organization's Mission

Successfully diverse secular organizations have found that the third best practice is to tie the vision for becoming ethnically diverse with the ability to successfully pursue the overall mission of the organization. The researcher also found this to be true in an evangelical large church.

The senior pastor and the executive pastor of Calvary had learned in seminary that the mission of a church is ultimately to please God by following His Word. Further, they both knew that Scripture clearly demonstrates God's desire that, whenever possible, His church be made up of people from various ethnicities. Because of this knowledge they both encouraged and facilitated the goal to hire and motivate the other leaders of the church toward successfully pursuing diversity.

The senior pastor and the researcher now realize that one of the issues was a lack of understanding on the part of the elders regarding God's heart on this issue. Once the researcher's theological paper was presented, they more fully understood that Calvary could only fulfill its ultimate mission by pursuing ethnic diversity. Tying the vision with the overall mission created understanding and support from the elders, which is crucial in

accomplishing anything within a church body. In fact, the elder chair, Dan, credits understanding what Scriptures says about the nature of God's heart on this issue as the driving force behind him and the other board members being able to support the initiative. The researcher asked Dan to reflect on the diversity initiatives Calvary has been implementing over the past two years. He said he now realizes that "when we do not have diversity in our local church, we are missing out." He further stated,

I believe that as we develop greater diversity, our worship experience becomes richer and our understanding of who Christ's church really is becomes much deeper. As I visit other churches while travelling, I have often sensed that those churches with greater ethnic and cultural diversity have something that has been largely missing in our local congregation over the years.

Dan admits that he and the other elders would never have been able to reach this conclusion and to support the vision without understanding that Scripture portrays that God desires His church to pursue ethnic diversity when possible.

Understanding God's love of diversity also motivated the elders and staff to own the diversity initiative themselves and play a role in becoming ethnically diverse. In Mason's follow-up interview, he said that simply making diversity a core value in the church was "a major step in the process of allowing it to become part of who we are and our mindset." He further stated that "the awareness has issued other initiatives such as the mercy and hospitality initiative, which in turn is helping us be more welcoming to non-white people." The diversity initiatives changed their mindset, highlighting that God calls His followers to be people of mercy and hospitality.

The researcher found that tying the ability for Calvary Church to fulfill its mission—of being the church God desires—with becoming ethnically diverse was central to its efforts of becoming a church that celebrates diversity. This reflects the best

practices of the secular organizations that have successfully pursued diversity. It gave the staff and volunteers focus and energy toward pursuing this vision.

Creating and Implementing a Plan

The researcher identified that the fourth best practice of successfully pursuing diversity was to create and implement a plan that permeates the entire organization. This plan needs to include various initiatives that represent each of the best practices.

As a result of both the literature and field study research, specific initiatives were designed and implemented at Calvary. However, the purpose of this research project is not to argue for any specific initiative. Each church would have to do its own research to identify the initiatives that will best help it implement the four best practices and in so doing pursue diversity.

As a result of both the literature and field study research, Calvary created and implemented a plan that included many initiatives that represented each of the four best practices. Throughout the research process, though, the researcher noticed that the initiatives that specifically sought to address the felt needs of its non-white members were particularly effective.

The Effectiveness of Calvary Church's Attempt to Meet the Needs of Non-white Members

One of the common responses to the survey given two years ago was the language barrier the Koreans faced. Many Koreans, especially the women, voiced their concern that they could not understand English and that as a result they had a hard time understanding the sermons on Sunday mornings. As a result, Calvary hired a South Korean individual to translate the messages into English. Calvary now supplies the manuscripts to the Koreans prior to the service so that they can better understand the

sermon, having read it in advance. Of those who responded to the second Korean survey, twenty-four (53 people) said they read the manuscripts in advance. When asked if they feel their ethnic culture is appreciated by Calvary Church, one person responded, “Actually, providing the translated manuscript itself is a way to sense that consideration.” Another person responded to the question “What initiatives have worked?” by stating “It was great to read the translated manuscripts.” The survey seemed to show that providing translated manuscripts has offered practical help in understanding the sermons, and emotional help in understanding their worth at Calvary.

Nam spoke about how he has worked with the children’s ministry to overcome the language barrier. One way is providing Korean manuals to the Korean mothers. Another way is providing a picture sheet to Korean children so they can communicate basic needs—such as having to use the restroom—to their teachers. A third way is having a Korean woman available in the children’s ministry on Sunday mornings to translate when needed.

Nam also believes that the increase in non-white people who make Calvary their church home is a direct result of Calvary’s intentional efforts to meet the needs of international families. He is also currently working with five families from China, one from Chile, one from Romania, and three from Uzbekistan that have just recently made Calvary their church home to identify how Calvary can best serve them.

Another initiative Calvary implemented was in regard to helping non-white people integrate into small groups, which at Calvary are known as community groups. One of Calvary’s goals is to have every attendee assigned to a community group for fellowship and Bible study together. In the initial Korean survey, many respondents

mentioned a desire to join a small group, yet they felt apprehensive because of the language barrier. The researcher encouraged the church's small group ministry to start community groups with the express purpose of allowing international people to integrate and build relationships with white people. In Nam's interview, the researcher found that Calvary has now started five community groups with this purpose in mind.

Nam also said they have started a ministry called "Sister to Sister Ministry." This ministry brings together international women with older, white, American women for mentoring and sharing of cultural differences. The first group, which consisted of five South Korean women and five American women, met for six weeks. The second group has started and is currently meeting with a new group of women. Nam spoke about how these two attempts toward integration have been "a small but very helpful avenue for individuals in the church to understand and embrace each other's cultural differences."

Being strategic about getting people involved in each other's lives and experiencing the cultural differences proves beneficial in forging relationships between people of various ethnicities. It not only communicates value to non-white people but also helps white people appreciate other cultures. This all contributes to the goal of helping non-white people integrate into the Calvary community.

Marco is a Hispanic pastoral resident, hired less than two years ago. The researcher interviewed him regarding his experience of coming to Calvary as a non-white person. He spoke of how emotionally difficult it was at first for both him and his wife. He said that when he first joined the staff at Calvary, he thought to himself, "I am not like these people ... they all come from squeaky clean families and I came from a very dysfunctional family." He said, "We felt a lot of loneliness." He also explained that after

a while people began pursuing a relationship with them, which provided the great community he and his wife have now. While there are still times he feels uncomfortable, he said that most of the negative feelings about being different have dissipated. Once he got to know people, he realized that everyone has issues and that no one is “squeaky clean.” Marco found that Calvary’s intentionality in getting people connected into relationships was important to him successfully integrating into a white world as a Hispanic individual.

One of the questions given on the second Korean survey was “What has worked?” The question was asked to find out what initiatives they felt had worked to help Calvary become a place that welcomes ethnically diverse people. Many respondents pointed to Calvary’s efforts toward integrating non-white people into community groups and ministry programs. One respondent wrote, “It was easier to get adjusted to Calvary by the encouragement to join a small group and the love within it.” Another said, “It is great to see that there are programs to induce the foreign nationals to participate in.” Another respondent pointed to Calvary’s attempts at “promoting the fellowship within church members.” These respondents are saying that the various initiatives that Calvary put into place to help non-white people get into community with the white people of the church has made Calvary a place that successfully pursues diversity.

To understand this need, Calvary had to first identify the felt needs of its non-white people and then put into place initiatives that helped meet those needs. Desiring to be in community yet finding it difficult to do so was a need identified through the survey. Calvary’s attempts to meet that need has produced great benefits in its efforts towards pursuing diversity.

The best practice of having a well-designed plan for practical implementation is crucial not only in a secular setting but also in a large church. Implementing initiatives that address the felt needs of the church's non-white members are especially effective. Further, part of the plan should include initiatives that forge integration, helping non-white people experience community with white people and vice-versa.

The goal of this research is not to simply help churches become more hospitable to non-white people, but to also include them and integrate their cultures into the DNA of the church.

Serving Capacities

The research also showed that another highly effective way to forge integration is through encouraging non-white people to serve in the various ministries. The church should become a different entity as a result of the various ethnic cultures being represented throughout the programming and daily operations of the church. One essential ingredient for accomplishing this is to have not only a greater number of non-white people worshiping at the church but also having them serve in the various ministries. It was very encouraging to the researcher that the number of non-white individuals serving throughout the various ministries of the church has increased substantially over the past two years. This is particularly true in the worship and children's ministries.

Worship Ministry

As previously mentioned, the last phase of the field research consisted of the researcher simply attending the Sunday morning church service and observing the congregation. When the researcher first walked into the doors on Sunday morning, he

was greeted by a black usher. Two years ago, the chances of being greeted by a non-white individual would have been more unlikely, as there was only one non-white usher and he was assigned to only one of the three services. The researcher later found out through interviewing Dan, the worship pastor, that two new black ushers had been recruited and assigned to the center aisle to make them more prominent. Dan also shared that there are several new black families who have started attending who have musical talent. He now has several new black people on the praise team as well as a regular lead guitarist from South Korea. Prior to the initiatives being implemented, there was only one non-white person who served periodically on the praise team and no non-white person in the band.

Dan also shared how the choir has now included black gospel songs in its song set in an effort to sing songs that represent black culture. Further, he shared his commitment to making sure that every three weeks at least one non-white person is on the platform playing a significant role in the service.

In the researcher's interviews with non-white people, it was brought up several times that many non-white people play roles in the service. One interviewee is a black woman named Miriam, who started attending Calvary in the summer of 2012. At the time, she noticed there were not many black people. However, she said it was not a deterrent to her family because they felt like God had told them to come to Calvary. She went on to say that she has noticed the change over the last couple of years and that she loved that there is often "a person of color on the platform." She has two teenage boys and commented that when people of color began being included on the stage "it was huge for my boys." She went on to explain that seeing black people participate in the service

communicated that “they value non-white people.” Further, she spoke about being asked to share her testimony in front of hundreds of women at a women’s ministry event. She said it made her feel valued and appreciated, and that it has opened up doors for individual conversations regarding diversity issues. Perhaps the most encouraging thing Miriam said was that while she did not know about the research project or the initiatives, she had thought to herself that there must be some intentionality on the leadership’s part since the church was becoming more diverse.

Another person interviewed was Nyama, from China. She started attending Calvary Church in the summer of 2014. She said that she and her husband visited many churches, “looking for a Bible-based church with diversity.” She and her husband noticed that Calvary “does a good job of involving non-white people in leadership. They allow different ethnicities up front.” A Korean responding to the anonymous survey, said, “I was very inspired by the effort to put Asians from Korea onto the stage to pray in public.” When he looked up front and saw a fellow Korean using his gifts and talents to benefit the church body, it spoke volumes to him regarding the love Calvary has for all nations.

All of the examples the researcher has given have been a direct result of Calvary formulating a strategic plan for implementing initiatives to pursue ethnic diversity. The researcher found that the best practice of creating and implementing a plan, particularly in regard to meeting the felt needs of non-white people and including non-white people in upfront serving capacities is crucial and effective in a church’s effort towards becoming an ethnically diverse church. When non-white people visit Calvary and see other non-white people serving in the various capacities on Sunday mornings, they not only feel more comfortable but they also realize that Calvary values diversity.

Children's Ministry

One of the things the initial field research showed was a need to have non-white volunteers within the children's ministry. It is encouraging to see that the children's ministry now has seven non-white people working in various volunteer roles. There is now a black man who is a "desk team leader," overseeing the check-in desk volunteers. There is also a black woman each Sunday at the check-in desk. Shelly, the children's pastor, said that they are seeking to recruit more non-white volunteers. She also mentioned that they have had an influx of South Korean children. "It is pretty incredible and shocking how diverse Calvary Kids is becoming. I do not feel like it is anything we are doing," she said. But indeed it is. Responding to the prompt to share any other comments they have, one South Korean—who has since moved back to South Korea—responded,

I'd like to express my gratitude to Calvary rather than suggesting. I cannot attend anymore because I left there, but Calvary was the most influential church in my life. I felt that Calvary was willing to love with all hearts, seeing the humbleness, efforts, benevolence, a wish to serve ... I am still missing Calvary. Although I left, I am still a Calvary member.

This person recognized the love Calvary has for them through the efforts to embrace their diversity, celebrating their culture, and affirming who God made them to be.

Summary

Over two years ago, Calvary Church created initiatives that represented each of the four best practices found among secular organizations pursuing diversity: getting leadership to own the vision, casting the vision across the organization, tying the vision with the success of the organization's mission, and creating and implementing an

organization-wide plan. The field research showed that implementing these initiatives has proven successful in helping Calvary become more ethnically diverse and in becoming a church that celebrates diversity. The data demonstrated that Calvary Church experienced a 45 percent increase in non-white congregational members between the years of 2010 and 2015. The data also showed that the majority of that increase took place between 2013 and 2015. Since the initiatives were implemented at the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, this demonstrates a correlation between the initiatives and the increase in ethnic diversity.

Of particular effectiveness were the initiatives that sought to address the felt needs of the non-white congregational members. Reaching out to these people spoke volumes to them and also attracted more non-white people to the church. Further, the researcher found that intentionally recruiting non-white people to serve in positions of prominence caused non-white visitors to realize that Calvary values their culture and embraces diversity. This in turn has caused Calvary to grow in diversity as well. The initiatives Calvary put into practice has changed its DNA. Unlike in 2012, Calvary can now honestly say it is successfully pursuing becoming a church that reflects the ethnic diversity found within its greater community. The researcher believes he has successfully affirmed that implementing the four best practices found in secular organizations is effective in a large church's pursuit to celebrate diversity.

CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

In the initial phase of this research project, the researcher began to study the Scriptures regarding the issue of diversity and the local church. Through this study, the researcher became more and more convinced that Scripture does indeed communicate God's desire for people of various ethnicities to come together as the body of Christ. Scripture is clear that in no way did God ever plan or desire for his people to congregate separately according to ethnicity. This is particularly true for a church such as Calvary, whose surrounding community is ethnically diverse. Once this truth was identified, there were four challenges that lay ahead for the researcher: 1) communication to the elders, 2) communication to the staff, 3) implementing the various initiatives, and 5) identifying the effectiveness of the initiatives.

Elder Communication

The elders of Calvary Church are godly men who desire nothing more than to glorify God in all they do. They seek Him tenaciously regarding the decisions they make that affect the church. Further, they are committed to the Bible and seeking to make all decisions in accordance with God's revealed truth as expressed in Scripture. Thus, the researcher knew that the very first thing to do was to develop a solid scriptural argument for ethnic diversity within the church. That part was not very difficult. The difficult part was convincing the elders that the burden of pursuing ethnic diversity was on the church and not the responsibility of the non-white people seeking to integrate into Calvary. It was not nearly as easy to convince them that Calvary was doing things that were

hindering its ability to represent the ethnic diversity outside its walls. Calvary is a very welcoming church. The church has long desired to be hospitable to everyone coming through its doors. In some ways, the church prides itself in being a friendly church, always ready to welcome people regardless of their differences. This fact made the project somewhat more difficult. The challenge was convincing the elders that being a welcoming church was not enough.

Through his literature research, the researcher identified a significant difference between simply being hospitable to people and actually helping them become part of the church community. The challenge the researcher faced was expressing to the elders that while Calvary does a great job of welcoming people, simply being hospitable was not enough to attract people of diversity. It took multiple conversations communicating to the elders that in order to pursue diversity, Calvary must move from a “come be like us” mentality to a “come, bring your differences and let us all become different and better as a result” mentality. This was by far the most difficult concept to get across to the elders so that they understood it and also supported the initiatives enough to do something about it.

The researcher found that the most effective manner in which to express this idea to the elders was in story form. That is, after the initial theological paper was written regarding diversity, the researcher began interviewing non-white individuals at Calvary. The primary purpose of these interviews was to hear their experiences in coming to Calvary. It seemed to the researcher that the most effective manner for data to arise regarding what Calvary could do better in regard to this initiative was to interview the people who had firsthand experience in trying to integrate into the existing culture of the

church. The interviews were incredibly enlightening and showed that Calvary did a really good job of being friendly to non-white people, yet did not do a good job of helping non-white people cultivate deep friendships and community.

The researcher found that relaying non-white people's stories and experiences to the elders proved powerful. Their stories gave greater understanding to the elders. They emphasized that if Calvary was truly intent on pursuing diversity, it was going to have to implement steps to change the culture of the church. Calvary needed to move from simply being a church that was hospitable to non-white people to being a church that takes extra effort in getting them involved and integrated into the church community.

One of the most powerful stories was that of Marvin Williams, the first non-white person to be hired by Calvary. He was hired primarily to help with preaching and teaching. Marvin Williams is highly respected at Calvary, especially among the elders. He found people at Calvary to be very receptive of him and his family. Yet, in the interview he mentioned that he and his wife were not able to fully integrate into Calvary's community. He expressed his love and appreciation for Calvary, yet at the same time communicated his opinion that Calvary needed to be more intentional about reaching out to non-white people. They needed to become better at including and integrating them into the community.

The researcher found that sharing Marvin's story with the elders was very effective in two ways. The first was that it offered an example of the difference between churches that are simply being nice and churches that intentionally reach out and invite others into community. The second was in regard to the motivation it created on the elder board to influence change. Many of the elders knew Williams personally and respected

his opinion. Because of their emotional connection, the elders were able to feel a sense of duty and responsibility toward influencing change.

Therefore, the researcher would advise any church working toward the celebration of diversity to listen to people's stories. It is especially helpful if the stories are from people known by the church leaders. Hearing and sharing the stories of non-white people is a powerful means of motivating change. The elders' support was necessary for the researcher to be able to move to the next step of mobilizing the staff to support the diversity initiative.

Staff Communication

The researcher held several meetings with each of the department directors both to help them understand the need for Calvary to pursue diversity and to help them formulate specific initiatives that they could implement within their specific departments. There were several things the researcher learned through this process.

Avoid Referencing Business Practices

As the researcher studied the secular literature regarding organizations that are known to have had success in pursuing diversity, it became increasingly clear that large churches were not that organizationally different from secular organizations. While this was clear to the researcher, others were not as easily convinced. The researcher found that introducing ideas based on the experiences of such companies as PepsiCo and American Express was not helpful and sometimes even created a barrier in communicating the diversity initiative to others.

It seems, at least at Calvary, that there is a general fear of the leadership running a church like a business. As soon as the researcher mentioned Calvary doing something

similar to businesses, people became a bit defensive, saying things like, “The church is not a business.” Therefore, the researcher found that when dealing with the staff and coming up with a plan of initiatives to implement, staying away from referring to business practices was helpful. Even though a large church shares many characteristics with a business and even though the project, in many ways, was influenced by ideas from large companies, the researcher found it more helpful not to mention secular business practices to the church staff. When advising the staff how to implement a diversity initiative, the researcher did not highlight the fact that many of the ideas came from secular business practices.

Allow Ideas to Surface

The researcher also found that there was a direct correlation between the department director’s passion for implementing a certain initiative and where the idea for that initiative originated. Perhaps it is human nature, but people seem to be much more passionate about the ideas they come up with or help generate than they are about other people’s ideas. The researcher found that it was helpful simply to have conversations about the findings of the research project and allow ideas for implementing specific initiatives to arise out of the conversations. The researcher found that patience is crucial. It is easy for a leader who is passionate about implementing change within a church to move too quickly, not allowing others to discuss the vision and bring ideas to the surface. A leader must facilitate the process of change, not simply push his ideas off on other people to accomplish.

The researcher also found it helpful to discuss the research findings with the department directors and then allow them to hold their own discussions with their teams

at a later date. Often the department directors would come back to the researcher with ideas that the team had generated. Again, allowing each department to have time to think through the issue and stir passion for pursuing the diversity initiatives through coming up with ideas on their own proved helpful in the implementation process.

Thus, the researcher encourages any church seeking to implement a diversity initiative to communicate the needs of the church to the staff and allow time for further conversation. Patience is key. The researcher found that allowing the employees to generate the ideas for initiatives proved to be more motivational than simply being told what to do.

Discuss Stories and Needs

The researcher found storytelling beneficial in helping the elders catch the vision and own the need for change. Likewise, the researcher found it beneficial to share the experiences of non-white people with the department directors. The researcher found that as he expressed the unique experiences and challenges non-white people experienced at Calvary, a desire to help was generated. This allowed for the department directors to put a face with the needs and to feel compelled to address them. This desire to help gave way to ideas being generated. One example was in regard to Josie, a Hispanic woman the researcher interviewed.

Josie had a history of reaching out to other Hispanic women in the community, ministering to them in various ways. She said she was required to pay for space at Calvary to hold meetings with these ladies. She also expressed that she did not feel supported by Calvary in ministering to these women. The researcher shared this information with Susan, the women's pastor, and she took it to her ministry's leadership

team, who agreed that Susan should meet with Josie to identify how the ministry could best support her in her attempts to minister to Hispanic women within the community. The two ladies met and as a result Josie's outreach is now recognized at Calvary as a part of the women's ministry. Becoming part of the women's ministry at Calvary meant that she no longer had to pay for facility use. Other benefits were also included, such as advertising and the availability to seek congregational volunteer support.

Ensure Accountability and Support

The researcher found that it is important to hold department directors accountable for implementing their various initiatives. While time needs to be given to the directors to own the vision for themselves and to generate ideas, accountability is helpful to ensure that the initiatives get implemented. The researcher periodically asked the directors how they were progressing in their efforts to implement the various initiatives they were given. These progress reports kept the initiatives on the to-do list, and ensured that they were indeed implemented.

Accountability became a little tougher when the researcher left Calvary and became the lead pastor for another church in the Grand Rapids. This happened shortly after the researcher and department directors formulated the various initiatives and made a plan for each of their departments. Until the researcher left, the initiatives were being implemented and the department directors were striving to see them through. It was helpful that the researcher and the directors were able to discuss their progress in person. This allowed them to brainstorm any adjustments needed. However, after the researcher felt God was calling him to another ministry, this interaction, accountability, and hands-on support was no longer possible. The researcher had to trust that his research,

theological paper, and diversity initiatives would live on and ignite change in the culture of Calvary Church.

After a period of over two years, the researcher returned to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. He found that while the majority of department directors continued to implement their various initiatives, there were some initiatives that had fallen through the cracks. This goes to show that having an accountability partner to serve as the champion for the project empowered others to keep working toward the vision.

Evaluation of the Plan

There was a period of three years between the start of the project and the researcher's evaluation of the effectiveness of the overall project. The goal of the evaluation was to see if implementing the initiatives that represented each of the four best practices found in secular organizations worked in a church setting. The evaluation sought to answer this question: Did Calvary become more diverse as a result of these initiatives?

The researcher was very pleased to find that Calvary had become more diverse. Implementing initiatives that represented the four best practices found in the secular workplace were successful in helping Calvary grow into a more diverse church. This was easily recognizable from the numbers of non-white congregational members who attend services and volunteer. However, the researcher started this project with the goal of helping Calvary not simply grow in numbers but also grow in celebrating ethnic differences. The researcher found this hard to quantify. In one regard it could be argued that growth is an indication that Calvary has moved from simply being hospitable to non-white people to integrating them into the DNA of the community. However, three years is

not long enough to accurately show that. The various initiatives Calvary implemented have indeed attracted more non-white people and have made them feel more comfortable and loved. But it remains to be seen whether the initiatives were enough to cause non-white people to experience unhindered community and whether Calvary Church will become a different place as a result of diversity.

Weaknesses of the Research Project

While overall the project was successful, the researcher has identified a few circumstances that seemed to hinder the effectiveness and overall success of the project.

Researcher Leaving Staff Position

One of the most significant weaknesses of the project was the fact that in the middle of the project, the researcher felt God calling him to leave Calvary and take a pastoral position at a different church. The researcher was not only very passionate about this project but served in a position that afforded him the ability to both empower and hold accountable the staff in accomplishing the vision. After leaving, the researcher realized how beneficial his position had been in helping the project move along.

The researcher learned that having a staff member own the vision and see it through to its completion is most beneficial. He also realized that the staff member must be one of influence—preferably on both the church board as well as the staff. The researcher's position of executive pastor allowed him to attend elder and deacon meetings, which allowed him to keep the project in the forefront of the board members' minds and gave him access to the necessary resources. While the vast majority of the initiatives were implemented, a few strategic ones unfortunately fell by the way side.

For example, one of the strategic initiatives to be implemented was to have non-white people be greeters at the front doors. In the researcher's evaluation, he noticed that one non-white person is assigned to the information booth but there are no non-white people greeting at the front doors. Another initiative that was not implemented was to have Korean and Spanish speakers in the prayer room. The idea was to make sure people who are not fluent in English feel comfortable coming to the prayer room for prayer. Both of these examples were initiatives that were to be implemented by a certain department that experienced a change in leadership. Because the researcher was no longer at Calvary and no one had taken over the project, the new department director was not made aware.

The Building Campaign

It takes a lot of concentration, effort and dedication on the part of the leaders of a church to change its culture. Moving a church toward becoming an organization that seeks the celebration of diversity is a shift in culture. Such a shift requires the ability for the leaders to be focused and not spread too thin with other large projects. In early 2015, Calvary began a \$27 million building campaign. This then became the main focus for the leaders, which caused the diversity project to suffer. Again, the vast majority of initiatives were completed, but the focus of both the board and the staff was primarily on the building project.

The most readily seen impact the building project had on the diversity project was in regard to the staff's ability to evaluate the progress of the initiatives. Any major project that is implemented needs to be evaluated along the way. The effectiveness of the

initiatives could have been better evaluated as they were being implemented. As a result, they could have been tweaked in order to become more effective.

One example of this was in regard to the pastoral care department. Hiring a non-white staff member was one initiative they were to complete. The goal of this was to better care for the large number of non-white individuals coming in from the community for benevolence. Thus, Joanna, a black woman, was hired. She proved to be incredibly talented and was quickly promoted to case manager, tasked with handling the cases of people who have multiple needs and coordinating a holistic plan for them. Unfortunately, case managers are often not the face for people walking in needing help. Thus, non-white people who come to Calvary's pastoral care department for help with purely physical needs (financial, food, clothing) are still only being helped by white people. Hiring Joanna has helped the diversity initiative in other ways, but meeting the specific need she was hired to do has fallen by the wayside. Josh M., the pastor over this ministry, brought this to the researcher's attention during the project's evaluation stage. He admitted that an oversight regarding this particular initiative had given rise to this issue. He also discussed that the staff had been focused on other projects within the church, spreading thin the ability for the leaders to give adequate attention to the diversity project.

The researcher advises other churches implementing a diversity project to remember that it is a huge undertaking that requires much attention. It is important to remember that an organization cannot have too many large vision projects going at the same time or the staff's focus becomes spread too thin. A diversity project should be given the attention it needs to see it through to completion, otherwise its effectiveness will be stymied.

Lack of Education and Communication to Congregation

Perhaps the biggest weakness of this project was a lack of educating and communicating to the congregation the purpose for the diversity initiatives. Through the interviews and surveys, some people from the congregation were made aware of the project but the vast majority were not. Unfortunately, this did not allow for the congregation as a whole to proactively support this project.

Educating the congregation about the scriptural basis for diversity and encouraging them to play their parts would have caused the project to be more successful. Like the elders, the congregation as a whole does not understand the difference between simply being a welcoming and hospitable church to all ethnicities and being a church that celebrates its differences through an invitation to do life and ministry together. Further, the congregation as a whole does not understand the heart of God regarding this topic and His desire for churches to reflect the diversity that is in their greater community. The researcher identified this lack of understanding as he was interviewing and educating the sample group of people from the congregation.

The researcher feels that having the congregation understand the goal of the project and the heart and scriptural truth behind it would have given the congregation the ability and desire to look for opportunities to support it. This is evident in the fact that the need for the education of the congregation about how to make people of different ethnic backgrounds feel welcomed was mentioned in almost every interview. Nam mentioned that the church greeters became very nervous when he first came to Calvary and—with broken English—attempted to have a conversation with them. He stated that Calvary's

greeters should be encouraged to strive to understand what non-English speakers are saying, as opposed to becoming nervous and ending the conversation.¹

A similar topic came up in the interviews with black people. Some expressed how they often feel people get nervous when they enter into a conversation with them, and that instead of leaning into their fears people often tend to rush off.² Don said that when he first came to Calvary over fifteen years ago he felt very uncomfortable because he was so different. When someone's behavior is perceived as less than friendly, it can be internalized and lead to the non-white person thinking it is because they are of a different ethnic background. In those situations, Don said they then start to think about their differences even more, causing an unpleasant experience. However, he went on to say that there were a few people who were "over-friendly" to him and thus made him feel welcomed. He felt Calvary should train others to be over-friendly and inviting as well. He further suggested that they educate people concerning this sociological reality in order to make people aware of what challenges minorities face when seeking to integrate into another culture.³

Thus, the researcher recommends to other churches seeking to implement a diversity initiative to educate their congregation, especially people in positions of "first impressions," concerning what it means to be what Don considers "over-friendly." This includes greeters, ushers, prayer room hosts, Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, pastors, deacons, elders, and others who welcome new individuals into the church

¹ Nam, Interview by Author, Grand Rapids, MI, 22 October 2012.

² African American Members of Calvary Church, Interview by Author, Grand Rapids, MI, 4 November 2012.

³ Don, *Interview by Author*.

community. Of course, people of minority ethnicities should also be part of the team as they would be invaluable in determining the nature of the training needed.

One Field Study Site

Implementing initiatives that represent each of the four best practices of secular organizations at only one site limited the amount of confidence the researcher has in this study. In some ways, it seems like common sense that any organization—whether a church or a business—that has the essential characteristics of a staff, customers, and a product follow the same steps in their pursuit of diversity. The only way to know for sure, though, is to have more than one large church implement the four best practices.

Strengths of the Research Project

There were many strengths of this project, but a few particularly stood out to the researcher as very beneficial to the overall success of the project.

Having a Pastoral Staff Member Oversee the Project

Strengths and weaknesses are often two sides of the same coin. Just as it was a weakness of the project that the researcher left over a year before the project was completed, the time he was on staff was extremely beneficial to the project. As mentioned, having a staff member responsible and empowered to keep the project moving was a tremendous help. This was particularly true during the initial stages of developing the initiatives and seeing that they were implemented. The researcher has yet to see a person in ministry not having enough to do. The responsibilities of ministry staff seem never ending. Much of ministry effectiveness is picking the right things to do and that support the core values of the church.

It is the researcher's experience that the leadership of the church needs to identify the core values and empower its staff to spend their time on things that support those core values. Having a staff member who understands the core values of the church and is able to help the ministry leaders stay focused on them is essential. The researcher found this to be true while he was a staff member at Calvary, particularly in regard to the diversity initiative.

The researcher recommends to any church seeking diversity to identify a staff member who is passionate about diversity and has time to invest in overseeing the project's progress—personally and adequately. It is of great importance to educate the staff, help them identify their individual roles in supporting the project, keep accountable the various departments for implementing their agreed upon initiatives, and continually evaluate the success of the initiatives and the overall project. The researcher found that being able to oversee this project as a staff member was extremely valuable and directly linked to the success of the project.

Making it a Core Value of the Church

Each year the elders and deacons of Calvary Church identify several key goals they feel God leading them to accomplish and communicate them to the staff members. For something to become a core value means that the board desires the staff to spend their time supporting it. In 2013, the board agreed that the diversity initiative was a core value and that Calvary's staff's time and Calvary's resources should be committed to it. This support from the board was incredibly helpful. It not only gave the staff a mandate to do whatever they could to support the project, but it also provided the researcher with the necessary funds to support the initiative.

Calvary has a reputation for having lots of money and therefore because it has lots of money it can do lots of good things. The researcher thinks that this is an inaccurate assessment. The researcher believes that Calvary does lots of good things and therefore it has lots of money. The researcher believes that God blesses Calvary financially because Calvary is willing to pass it on to those in need. This characteristic of Calvary was tremendously beneficial to this research project.

The researcher points this out because one great benefit of this project was the fact that the project could include initiatives that required money. For example, in the initial Korean survey it was identified that many of them were students from Korea and were unable to secure jobs in the U.S. Many of them had financial needs. Having this project as a core value allowed for monies to be available to meet some of those needs. This in turn, as the paper has described, communicated care to the South Koreans and thus served to help Calvary attract more South Koreans.

Another example of the benefit of having diversity become a core value of the church, and therefore providing funds to support it, was their willingness to hire Nam as a part-time employee to serve as a staff representative for international people at Calvary. This spoke volumes to Calvary's internationals regarding its love and dedication to meeting their needs. Nam has been given a \$20,000 budget to minister to the needs of international congregational members.

The researcher realizes that not all churches have the ability to financially support a diversity project to this extent. However, the researcher encourages any church actively pursuing diversity to develop it into a core value, giving sufficient time and resources to support its efforts.

Calvary's View on Scripture

Another strength that was critical to the project's success was Calvary's view of Scripture. As stated in chapter three, one of the things that secular businesses have found to be very valuable in its diversity efforts is creating a personal benefit for its staff. This personal benefit can be monetary- or reward-based. However nothing is more powerful than when people adopt the initiatives as moral or ethical endeavors. Further, the researcher demonstrated that secular businesses found it very helpful to tie their overall mission's success with the success of becoming ethnically diverse. These two motivations proved very beneficial to Calvary as well.

Calvary believes it is a moral imperative for each person to seek to live their lives in accordance with the truths of Scripture. This is also true for the nature of the church. Calvary's leaders and staff members believe that a church's main mission is to please God as instructed through Scripture. Thus, the researcher found the motivation to pursue diversity grew when he connected the individual moral imperative to the church's ability to accomplish its mission of pleasing God.

The researcher encourages any church that desires to pursue ethnic diversity to identify how it can best communicate the goal in such a way that allows people to view it as a personal moral mandate as well as part of the overall church's mission. For most evangelical churches, the connection is Scripture.

Summary

The researcher found that communication to both the board and staff was imperative to the research process. Beyond the importance of grounding the argument in Scripture, communicating in a way that helped both the board and staff acknowledge

Calvary's needed growth in the area of diversity was key. The researcher found that the stories of non-white people's experiences were particularly effective in communicating the need for Calvary to pursue this project. Without telling the real life stories of non-white people at Calvary, this project would not have been as successful.

Allowing ideas to surface through telling the stories and having conversations about the issues with the department directors worked well. It not only allowed them to begin to understand and own the vision for the project, but also allowed ideas for initiatives to surface. The staff participation in formulating specific initiatives for their departments to implement resulted in their ownership and passion for the overall plan.

One real weakness of this project was a lack of communication to the congregation. The researcher believes that the overall project would have been even more successful had there been a plan to educate the congregation as a whole. The members of the congregation who did know about the project were incredibly excited and willing to do whatever they could to support it.

The researcher found that it was more helpful to the project to leave out details concerning where the ideas came from. For whatever reason, the researcher found that there is a stigma with many against implementing secular business practices in the church. While this seems to be a lack of education and understanding regarding the similarities between businesses and the church, the researcher found it was best to simply keep the fact that the best practices emerged from secular industry to himself.

The researcher further identified the importance of pursuing diversity as a core value of the church. It was valuable to get the leadership to believe in the goal and support the diversity initiatives, empower a staff member to lead the project, dedicate

financial resources to it, and communicate their desire for the staff to be involved. This gave the staff the motivation and the resources to play their individual roles in making the project a success.

The researcher encourages any church seeking to pursue diversity in this manner to identify what will motivate the leaders, staff, and congregation to embrace the vision as a matter of personal ethics. Believing that it is a moral mandate is powerful motivation. Pursuing diversity is a huge undertaking that takes time and concentrated effort. Having a dedicated staff member who believed in the goal and was committed to seeing it through to completion was ideal and proved most effective.

Overall, the researcher believes that his research has affirmed that the best practices found in secular organizations is effective when implemented in a large church's efforts toward becoming ethnically diverse. It is the researcher's hope that the results of this study will inspire more churches to pursue and celebrate diversity in this manner.

CHAPTER SEVEN: REFLECTIONS

The Researcher's Personal Growth

The experience of this project has been both challenging and exhilarating. Watching Calvary Church grow in diversity as a result of the leadership and staff's intentionality has been personally encouraging and spiritually edifying to the researcher in many ways.

It was encouraging to see how it demonstrated the heartfelt love people have for ministering to others. To the researcher's surprise, he did not have even one experience where people demonstrated an attitude of racism. Any pushback the researcher experienced was always grounded in a lack of understanding, as opposed to a heart issue. Seeing the manner in which people caught the vision and desired to do whatever they could to help with the project was a powerful reminder of the bond that exists between brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of their ethnic differences.

It was also encouraging to see the power of God's people pursuing obedience. God desires obedience more than worship (1 Sam. 15:22). Christians are also told throughout Scripture that as they strive to live their lives for Him that He will assist them. Throughout the project, the researcher witnessed people striving to please God through obedience to His Word, and God in turn helping them to do so. Time and time again, the researcher ran into hurdles that attempted to stymie the effectiveness of this project, and yet time and time again, God miraculously moved mountains to keep the project going.

One mountain-moving example was when Calvary was seeking to hire non-white staff members. Periodically, as a position became vacant—and this happened several times—the researcher sought qualified, non-white applicants to fill it. Each time, though, the hiring team inevitably chose a white person. God then began bringing in qualified non-white pastoral residents. It seemed that God had put them on Calvary's doorstep, because no one had sought them out. This experience helped the researcher realize that as people make their plans they should always be open to God fulfilling the vision in a different manner than they originally intended. It was indeed God's will for Calvary's staff leadership to become ethnically diverse. God desired Calvary to train them up through the pastoral resident program.

God affirmed, over and over again, His pleasure with the project through miraculously moving the hearts of key people toward supporting it. At one point the researcher had a problem with helping some of the elders see the Calvary's need to become more intentional in pursuing diversity. They felt that Calvary being a welcoming place was all that was needed and found it hard to understand the difference between being hospitable and being a church that invites non-white people into its community. This is where the interviews and personal stories came into play, particularly that of Marvin Williams's. The researcher had not anticipated the power Williams's story would have in helping the elders understand Calvary's deficiencies in the area of diversity and its need to be more proactive in creating a culture that celebrates diversity. Yet God did.

The researcher also felt God miraculously guiding him through the whole process of the project. This was very spiritually encouraging to the researcher and as a result has increased his faith. Every time he was stumped or needed a source that he could not find,

God opened doors and identified the right information at the right time. The researcher was also amazed that in God's kindness, the most important initiatives continued to be implemented even after he was no longer on staff.

Throughout the whole process, the researcher realizes more than ever that God is faithful to lock arms with His people to assist them accomplish initiatives that please Him. This lesson was an important one for the researcher to learn since he is now serving as a lead pastor. Experiencing God's miraculous leading and empowerment through this project has taught the researcher to depend even more on God's miraculous leading and empowerment as he seeks to lead his own congregation in pleasing God in all areas.

Another area in which the researcher grew was in his sensitivity toward non-white people. The researcher was struck by what he termed "the sociological phenomenon" of non-white people's experience when present in an all-white situation. Without exception, each ethnic group spoke to how it feels to come into a space where everyone else is white. They said it was awkward and that they struggle with the fact that their difference is never far from their mind. They discussed the tendency to internalize everything and to view their interactions through the lens of their differences, thinking any negative experience is a result.

The researcher was reminded of a time when he was a meter reader for a power and light company. One day he was reading the meters in an all-black community. He was thirsty and happened upon a carry-out. He went in and took a Mountain Dew from the cooler, pulled out a dollar, and put them both on the counter. There were two black men on the other side of the counter, one of whom said, "We do not sell to white people." The researcher thought he was joking and laughed, but when he looked at their faces, he

realized it was not a joke. The researcher quickly grabbed his money and fled. The feeling of that moment still lingers. Throughout this process, the researcher could not help but remember that day and that feeling often. It struck him that as impactful as that experience was, it was only one brush with discrimination. To think about how many times non-white people have experienced that feeling throughout their lives really impacted the researcher. It helped explain why non-white people struggle with this “social phenomenon.”

The researcher feels he has become much more compassionate toward the situations of non-white people who live in a mostly white country. The researcher has a desire to take extra time and effort to make non-white people feel loved and welcomed in any situation he can. This is especially true now that he is the lead pastor. While his new church is 99 percent white, the church does have a few non-white people who attend or visit periodically. As a result of this research project, he is much more cognizant of his need to lead by example and help his church be a place where non-white people can experience hospitality and also an invitation to truly be part of the community.

One area of growth and insight was in regard to the sensitive nature of white people during this process. The researcher was surprised by the number of times white people expressed that they do not think forcing diversity is appropriate. There were also times when white people voiced concern that non-white people might feel that this initiative is making them a product or suggesting that the project is promoting “tokenism.” It seemed that some white people were more concerned with offending non-white people than proactively supporting the project. The researcher found this to be the furthest thing from the truth in that non-white people were very appreciative of the

project. Multiple times the researcher was thanked by non-white people for taking on this project. Multiple times non-white people pointed to the project and Calvary's support as evidence that the people of Calvary really do care and want to include people of all ethnicities into its community. The researcher learned that reaching out and inviting people different from oneself to do life together is a love language shared by all and that he should be motivated to do it more often.

Another area of growth for the researcher was in his leadership skills. The project involved lots of communication, explanation, mobilization of people, motivating people, and being patient with others. The researcher was extremely passionate about this project. It was birthed out of his studies in his ministry courses at Bethel Seminary. Often he would find himself in situations that took patience and finesse. It took practicing the servant leadership principles of helping but not forcing the staff to see and own the vision. At first, some staff members resisted, arguing that the project was forcing diversity and was promoting tokenism. Some staff members took longer than others to catch and own the vision. The researcher experienced firsthand the importance of leading in such a manner that does not force people to gain his passion. The researcher had to move much slower than he would have liked, and experienced a situation that taught him to lead and guide rather than force and tell. The researcher experienced how powerful it is when someone owns the vision for themselves and realized that allowing people the time to own the vision—and even help mold the vision—pays great dividends. The researcher feels his ability to lead as a servant of those who report to him has been significantly enhanced through this project.

Another area of growth is in his research and writing abilities. The researcher feels he has grown extensively in his ability to research topics. Understanding how to navigate search engines and take advantage of the plethora of research tools available has been helpful to his job as lead pastor. The researcher preaches nearly every week, so learning to research has enhanced his ability to prepare sermons. He had been trained in seminary to research through commentaries and other theological works, but not so much through articles and journals available online—that are not necessarily theological, yet are helpful and applicable in sermon preparation.

The researcher also found that this project helped him grow in his ability to write clearly and concisely, as his thesis readers faithfully pushed him to do. While he still has work to do, writing this paper helped him grow extensively in this area. This growth is particularly felt in his sermon preparation. Having the ability to write manuscripts that express his thoughts more concisely and clearly has helped him become a better preacher. He also believes he has become more clear and concise in his speaking, as members of his congregation have noticed. One person thanked him for being “so clear each week.” The researcher is thankful for this and would have never anticipated this growth when he first entered the Doctorate of Ministry program. Obviously, however, God did.

Opportunities for Future Areas of Study

This research project was implemented at a large church with a large staff. It seems to the researcher that for the best practices found in secular organizations to be effective in a church, the church must be large enough to have a significant number of people on staff. However, it would be interesting to see how effective the four best practices would be in a smaller church. Could a smaller church implement these best

practices effectively by leaning more on volunteers? Could the initiatives that are implemented be tailored so as to allow a smaller church to effectively pursue diversity using the four best practices of the secular industry?

Another area of possible study would be the “social phenomenon” the researcher identified. This concerns the tendency people have of entering into a situation where there is something that makes them distinct from the majority of others present. There may have been some sociological work done on this, but it would be interesting to study and identify the best way to break down its negative effects. How can people treat others different from themselves in such a manner that does not allow the difference to affect their experience? Likewise, how can people of difference best deal with this tendency to internalize things and become too sensitive to their difference?

One of the weaknesses of this project was in regard to a lack of educating and communicating to the congregation regarding the project. One area of possible research would be how to best educate and prepare a congregation to play a role in a church’s efforts to pursue diversity. The researcher experienced the power of mobilizing the leaders and staff of the church toward the vision; adding the congregation to the mix would prove most powerful. However, it would need to be done in a way that is effective and does not cause confusion or misunderstanding. A research project focused on identifying the best way to do this would be both interesting and beneficial.

Lastly, while the effectiveness of this project has been experienced and while Calvary has enjoyed growth in diversity, the church still does not reflect the amount of diversity in its surrounding community. It will be interesting to see how well Calvary can sustain its diversity and whether or not it will grow even more diverse as a result of the

continued implementation of the initiatives. In some sense, the researcher found that simply having people of various ethnicities naturally attracts more people of diversity. Thus, there is a natural snowball effect that the researcher expects will continue. However, Calvary has new projects they are working on—including a very extensive building project. It will be interesting to see how Calvary's ability to continue the pursuit of diversity is affected by the leadership redirecting their attention to another project. A study that identifies the necessary ingredients for a church that hopes to continue to grow in diversity would be helpful. Does it take having a person on staff dedicated to the continual pursuit of diversity? Does it take the leadership making the diversity initiative a core value each year? Perhaps, simply getting the ball rolling will prove sustaining in and of itself. A study that deals with how a church pursuing diversity can best sustain that diversity would reveal the answer.

Summary

This research project has been both spiritually and educationally enriching for the researcher. Experiencing the power of love between people in their effort to reach out and embrace others in their differences was powerful. The researcher has grown more sensitive to the unique needs of non-white people. Further, he has grown in his ability to perform his role as lead pastor of a church through the various experiences this project has brought. Developing a sensitivity to non-white people who attend or visit his church gave him a passion for embracing all people with an invitation to do life together. He also found that the project helped him improve his sermon prep. Overall, the researcher experienced growth as a follower of Christ. He is excited for Calvary and grateful that Calvary is pursuing God's desire for His church to be ethnically diverse. Whether or not

Calvary continues to implement the various initiatives this project put forth and grow in ethnic diversity remains to be seen. One thing is for sure—Calvary will never be the same and many people have been impacted through this project. And for that the researcher gives God the credit and praise.

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