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Can the Church of God Pursue Ethnic Diversity in Leadership?

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CAN THE CHURCH OF GOD PURSUE ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP?

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ABSTRACT

The Church of God denomination has more than seven million members in 185 nations and territories. More than 36,000 congregations serve around the world. The Church of God denomination has been in existence for 130 years and in its entire history no person of color served on the International Executive Committee until the year 2008. The question this project explored is how can the Church of God promote cultural diversity in leadership? The lives of Joseph, Jonah, and Jesus and the Antioch Church were studied to seek God's view of diversity. A study was conducted on the importance of diversity and inclusion and its effective implementation in the corporate world, in education, and in non-profit organizations. A qualitative exploratory case study was conducted. This project utilized open-ended questions in interviews to produce data that was analyzed and categorized thematically to show why diversity is lacking in the Church of God denomination. Grounded theory approach was used to analyze the data and discover theories.

Key findings appeared from the data collected. The data showed there is lack of intentionality in appointments and placements. Visible opportunities for people of color are also lacking. There is a need to find individuals who excel in ministry and have qualifications to serve in leadership. The General Assembly is only held in the United States and ministers from different countries are not able to participate. A faulty system is still intact in the Church of God and the "buddy system" still exists. The history of the South was found to impact the progression of diversity. Segregation continues in the

Church. A mindset change has to occur for change to transpire. Lack of training and relationship building affects the implementation of diversity. The data also showed positive improvements and progress being made with regard to diversity. Action plans for Church of God to implement in order to obtain more cultural diversity within its leadership were developed based on the research findings.

CHAPTER ONE
THE PLAN FOR DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH OF GOD DENOMINATION

Statement of the Problem

This project addressed the lack of cultural diversity in the Church of God Leadership. There was no intentional action plan to implement diversity in the Church of God denomination. The researcher discovered the biblical view on diversity. The researcher gained an understanding of how diversity impacts the secular world. The researcher collected data through interviews and surveys to understand the perception of diversity by Church of God leaders. The researcher developed action plans from the data collected for the Church of God to implement ethnic diversity.

Setting of the Project

The Church of God denomination began on August 19, 1886 in Monroe County, Tennessee near the North Carolina border.[1] Former Baptist Richard Green Spurling preached in a millhouse along Barney Creek and eight individuals formed the Christian Union for the purpose of following the New Testament as their rule for faith and practice, giving each other equal rights and privilege to interpret Scripture, and sitting together as the Church of God.[2] Twenty-one years later, the growing movement formally adopted the name Church of God.[3]

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[1] Charles W. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1996), 11.

[2] Conn, 19.

[3] Conn, 30.

Today Church of God ministries include more than seven million members in 185 nations and territories. Some 36,000 congregations serve around the world; regional and international ministries provide resources and support through divisions of World Evangelization, Care, Discipleship, Education, and Support Services.

According to the data received from the Church of God Headquarters, 90 percent of the Administrative Bishops are white and only ten percent are African-American. These Administrative Bishops are appointed by the Church of God International Executive Committee. Ninety percent of the employees at the Church of God International Headquarters are white and the remaining ten percent include Hispanics and African-Americans, while more than 185 nations are served. The data reveal the lack of diversity within the Church of God organization and its leadership.

The data given by the Church of God highlights the reason for this project. This project identifies action plans that the Church of God denomination can implement to move to a more multi-ethnic and diverse leadership.

In 1962 Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "As a minister of the Gospel I am ashamed to have to affirm that eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, when we stand to sing, 'In Christ there is no east nor west,' is the most segregated hour of America and the Sunday school is the most segregated school of the week."[4]

Our churches in the United States of America are mostly homogeneous. Eddie Gibbs in *I Believe in Church Growth* stated,

> A church which identifies exclusively with one group may live a self-centered, impoverished life. If that group dwindles, it will face extinction. Furthermore, given the high population density and high level of heterogeneity in many urban

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[4] John J. Ansbro, *Martin Luther King, Jr. (*Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 181.

areas, for a church to run exclusively on homogeneous lines may result in the spiritual isolation and exclusion of the majority of the surrounding population.[5]

Celeste Warren, leader of Merck's Global Diversity and Inclusion Center of Excellence, says,

> I firmly believe that diversity and inclusion aren't simply "nice" virtues for a company to have or boxes for us to check—they create success both in our bottom line as well as in fostering a happy, healthy, and invested workforce. Basically, my dream for Merck is to get to the place where placing the weight of valuing global diversity and inclusion isn't on one person's shoulders, but in the minds and hearts of everyone.[6]

Modern corporations, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations fully understand the long-term ramifications of remaining homogeneous in the workplace. The realization that diversity in a world that is deeply connected is directly linked to increased revenues and profits has driven companies across industry sectors to invest heavily in the process of inclusion to achieve their desired end result. Corporations work towards inclusion and diversity with a certain vision and mission in mind. On a broad level all corporations work with a vision of success (a major part of which is profits and increased returns on investment) and a mission (setting out to accomplish the vision; broadening the horizons of trade and commerce by bringing in workers from diverse backgrounds with specialized skills).

Corporate businesses that are racially diverse outperform industry standards compared to those that are not. In McKinsey's 2015 *Diversity Matters*, Vivian Hunt examined proprietary data for 366 public companies across a range of industries in Canada, Latin America, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The research

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[5] Eddie Gibbs, *I Believe in Church Growth* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Seminary Press, 1993), 29.

[6] Celeste Warren, "Diversity and Inclusion: Good for Business," Merck.com, accessed June 20, 2017, http://www.merck.com/about/featured-stories/celeste-warren.html.

concentrated on metrics such as financial results and the composition of top management

and boards, and revealed that companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity

are 35 percent more likely to achieve financial returns above their respective national

industry medians. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 percent more

likely to achieve financial returns above their respective national industry medians.[7]

Churches need to determine whether they have really been able to break away

from the grip of uniformity in a racially diverse world that calls desperately for the

Gospel. Churches today need to perceive diversity as a Gospel reality and not as a

method reserved only for corporations for the sole purpose of augmenting profits. One

might argue that the Church is not a for-profit organization and therefore does not need to

embrace policies implemented in a revenue-oriented enterprise. However, such an

argument loses sight of the fact that the Gospel is not exclusive in nature and that the

concept of diversity is not something that makes sense only in the business realm. The

end result that the Church must seek to earn as its profits are the souls won in the name of

Christ.

Eddie Gibbs in *I Believe in Church Growth* states, "While the business world has

caught on, the church still remains 93 percent segregated, nearly 50 years after Martin

Luther King Jr. declared Sunday the most segregated day of the week."[8] He substantiates

his argument with a study quoted in *Time* magazine which revealed that only 7.5 percent

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[7] Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, and Sara Prince, "Why Diversity Matters," McKinsey & Company, accessed August 29, 2017, https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters.

[8] Hunt, Layton, and Prince, 24.

of churches are racially diverse. According to this study, diversity was defined as "no single racial group making up more than 80 percent of the congregation."[9]

Assumptions

This project attempts to address this problem by beginning with several assumptions. First, the Bible states that all humans regardless of race, culture, or ethnicity are created in the image of God. The image of God rests on all people. "So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God, he created them" (Gen. 1:27). God often uses human vessels to accomplish God's ultimate Kingdom goal in the world. The Gospel should be preached to all cultures, races, and ethnicities. Second, it is assumed that attitudes toward ethnic diversity exist between the degree to which a church's leadership promotes diversity and the extent to which it becomes diverse. Third, it is assumed that while differences undoubtedly exist between a church and a secular corporate business, both signify a group committed to achieving a mission and purpose.

Subproblems

The first subproblem addressed by the researcher was to grasp an understanding of biblical and theological principles relevant to the Church of God denomination in the journey of ethnic diversity in leadership. The second subproblem was to understand what current research literature reveals regarding the importance of multicultural leadership within an organization. The third subproblem was to identify transferable action plans to help the Church of God organization grow in ethnic diversity in leadership.

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[9] Gibbs, 29.

Importance of the Project

The Importance of the Project to the Researcher

Part of the researcher's passion for this topic stems from life experiences. The researcher is a third-generation minister of Indian descent in the Church of God denomination. The researcher's grandfather served in the ministry for more than 60 years and his father for more than 40 years. All three generations have been affiliated with the Church of God denomination, but none have seen an ethnically diverse leadership. The researcher has witnessed and experienced many prejudices and racist behaviors within the community of the Church of God denomination. The researcher believes that if Christians and Christian leaders believe in the Holy Bible, they must strive to eradicate prejudice from the Christian community.

The researcher has been committed to articulating issues that relate to the lack of ethnic diversity. Although he cannot go back and change history, he can impact the present time. The researcher desires passionately to discover why prejudices still exist within the Christian community, specifically in the leadership of the Church of God denomination. The researcher believes a denomination that includes a majority of believers of diverse ethnicities should reflect its members' demographic in its leadership. The researcher believes the Church should impact the world and not the other way around. If secular institutions can promote diversity, the church leadership should do the same and more.

The researcher can empathize with other minority individuals who face similar struggles on a daily basis. The researcher believes every race and culture should be heard and represented, but not enough opportunity is available for all to lend their voices. The researcher does not want one culture to dominate others but rather to see liberation within

church walls. Because many ethnicities are linked with the Church of God around the world, the researcher would like to see this represented at every level of leadership. In the researcher's opinion leadership opportunities are only available for individuals in the few groups that have always occupied positions of power, and these individuals reiterate the false assumption that no change is needed. Although ample opportunities are available, people from other ethnic backgrounds do not get to serve in leadership because they do not belong to the dominant group.

The researcher wants to give voice to those who have been silent and enable people to bring about a change in society. The word "minority" should not exist with the Church as a whole. God sees all races and ethnicities as equal; therefore, the Church should have the same view. "There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). The Church should be characterized by an atmosphere of liberation and expectation for all that a person can offer to the Church. Race, nationality, and culture should not determine who serves in leadership.

Importance of the Project to the Immediate Ministry Context

The Church of God leadership must be willing to invest significant time and effort into discerning how to assign more ethnically diverse individuals to leadership in the organization. As an organization that includes more than seven million members in 185 nations and territories, the denomination should focus on diversity. If the Church believes in reaching all races and ethnicities with the Gospel of Christ, people of different ethnicities should be part of the leadership in order to lead more people to Christ. To achieve a meaningful and successful ministry in the new postmodern world, it is critical

to rethink the diversity aspect. In today's society, minorities and different non-white ethnicities do not feel valued. These individuals want to see the Church as a prime example for the secular world to follow in terms of how they should treat people of color. The Church of God denomination is well equipped with representatives of many African, Asian, and Hispanic cultures to step into leadership positions.

Importance of the Project to the Church at Large

Christians who are not affiliated with the Church of God denomination are paying close attention and notice the lack of diversity represented within the church leadership. This project is beneficial for the entire denomination because diversity benefits everyone by bringing different ideas to the table. Ethnic minorities can share their unique perspectives not seen or experienced by whites. Even perspectives that may oppose diversity are not necessarily bad and should be included.

Many negative stereotypes and perspectives are taught. Even if leadership wants change, a great deal of training that enables minorities to rise to the challenge will need to happen in order to see change occur. When nearly 36,000 congregations and 185 nations around the world are represented within the denomination, yet diversity is not promoted within the leadership, changes should occur. Since the establishment of the Church of God leadership, people of color have been excluded from the church's International Executive Committee. It is an unfortunate reality that even after 100 years not much has changed.

Many denominations across the country must immediately come to grips with this reality. Churches must resolve to promote and bring about diversity within leadership if they are to enjoy a successful future in an ever-changing diverse world.

It is the researcher's desire that this project will serve to help other denominations that want to become more diverse. It is the researcher's belief that leaders of various denominations would pursue diversity once they realize it will not change the atmosphere or the structure of the Church but instead will bring more souls to the Kingdom of God.

It is the researcher's desire that this project will serve to educate leaders about how a church organization will benefit from diversity. It is also the researcher's desire that this project will help the Church of God leaders and members to grow spiritually in order to work to break down the walls of discrimination and segregation.

Research Design

This research project used an exploratory qualitative case study research method as the primary model. The exploratory qualitative case study allows for an in-depth look at the problem to be researched. Robert Yin stated, "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context."[10] The research goes beyond merely qualitative data, as the perceptions, core beliefs, values, and understanding were all relevant to discovering the problems and obstacles that prevent ethnic cultural diversity in leadership.

The research for this project was collected in several ways. First, information on the Church of God's history, size, doctrine, and values were gathered from the denomination's website. Each participant was interviewed with the same questionnaire that was developed along the lines of the biblical and literature review. The primary tools

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[10] Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, 2003), 1.

used in this project were personal and phone interviews, surveys, observational field notes, and organizational documents.

      The research consisted of collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing the data in order to determine a biblically sound and practical plan and strategy for achieving diversity within the Church of God leadership. The results of the literature reviews, interviews, questionnaire, and other data were used to develop action plans for the Church of God organization to implement.

Conclusion

      The researcher's desired outcome for this project was to create action plans for the Church of God to implement in order to promote ethnic diversity in leadership. Christ operated with a clear vision and mission to reach souls and preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, which is impossible to accomplish without understanding the role diversity plays. The current structure of the Church of God denomination must be more proactive in their approach to diversity to create a more racially and culturally diverse church, including the leadership, if it is to resonate meaningfully with people through the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth.

CHAPTER TWO
A BIBILICAL VIEW ON DIVERSITY

The Holy Bible was written over a period of 1600 years in a variety of languages

and by many different authors inspired by the Holy Spirit. People can use the Bible to

relate both to God and to fellow humans. Scripture is the best resource for learning how

to deal with cultural diversity.

Human society is ever-changing. It has changed tremendously both ethnically and

culturally in just the last generation. Furthermore, upsurges in immigration and

globalization are paving the way for a broader outlook on inclusion and diversity.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, the size of the U.S. immigrant population has

grown from 9.6 million to 43.3 million, nearly quadrupling since 1970.

Table 1. Numerical Size and Share of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States,
1970-2015

Year	Size of Immigrant Population (Millions)	Immigrant Share of Total U.S. Population (%)
1970	9.6	4.7
1980	14.1	6.2
1990	19.8	7.9
2000	31.1	11.1
2010	40.0	12.9
2015	43.3	13.5

Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010
and 2015 American Community Surveys (ACS), and 1970-2000 decennial Census[1]

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[1] Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, "Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States," accessed June 16, 2017, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states.

These emerging cultural trends present a great opportunity for Christian churches to embrace and promote diversity within the body of Christ. To engineer such a diverse landscape, the Church should look to the Holy Bible for guidance on what diversity should look like in the Church.

The problem the researcher addressed was the lack of ethnic diversity in the leadership of the Church of God denomination. The researcher examined the role of ethnic diversity in church leadership throughout the Holy Bible and explored the Scriptures in search of principles and examples that promote acceptance of diversity.

Origin of Diversity

Christians agree that God is the creator of everything and that God created every human to be distinctly unique.

> The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us (Acts 17:24-27).

Acts 17:26 identifies the origin of diversity. Every human being came from one man and one woman, Adam and Eve. The first chapter of Genesis recounts the story of creation.

> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control (Gen. 1:26-28).

God created many things, and they varied greatly. His creation of man in His own image was His masterpiece. He gave authority to govern over all the earth to man. The book of Genesis teaches that God created diversity as a demonstration of God's creativity. In Genesis 1:31 God declares that all He created was "very good." A creation of sameness cannot fully portray God's glory because it does not display God's creativity.

God's love of diversity is not confined to nature; it is also evident in the uniqueness of each human being. To begin with, God separated the human race by gender, male and female (Mark 10:6). Although they were created in His likeness and image at our core, both genders have specific and unique qualities, appearances, and purposes.

God also revealed His intent for diversity in His act at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:9) wherein He confused people's languages to encourage humanity to spread out across the earth, later to emerge as one in Christ. Each individual is a masterpiece created by God to be an instrument of His glory. The very fact that every individual looks different from the others speaks volumes about God's love of diversity. Humans are not clones that look like factory products manufactured by some mechanical procedure. Each human being represents the differences and uniqueness of God's creation. It is God's intent for us to be different, as diversity is a very important part of His plan. In the final gathering, God's purchase of people from every tribe and language and nation with His precious blood reveals His love for the differences and uniqueness of all His handiwork (Rev. 7:9, 5:9).

In the Bible's account of Noah and his family, after the great flood the human race began again. "These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood" (Gen. 10:32). An account of the descendants of Noah's sons and their geographic locations are given in the tenth chapter of Genesis. Many nations developed and "the whole world had one language and a common speech" (Gen. 11:1). As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. The people decided to build a city with a tower that reached to the heavens to make a name for themselves, so they would not be scattered over the face of the whole earth (Gen. 11:2-4).

God in His divine wisdom came down and confused the people's languages and scattered them throughout the earth (Gen. 11:6-8). This narrative tells of the derivation of the nations with their different locations, languages, and cultures. Every nation formed since that time has established its own identity with its own culture.

When God said "let us go down and confuse their language" it indicates He had a purpose and a plan to create people of different languages. According to David Ireland, "The wonder of God's expanding creation is how all the expressions of diversity complement each other. Diversity among nationalities, races, cultures, and ethnic groups was an indispensable ingredient in the plan of God regarding mankind."[2]

God's Affirmation of Cultural Diversity in Leadership

God's promise to Abraham included blessing his future generations and all the families of the earth (that is, the several nations in the world). Nations encompass a large aggregate of people of different descent, history, culture, and language, inhabiting

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[2] David Ireland, *What Color Is Your God?* (Verona, NJ: Impact Publishing House, 2000), 68.

different countries or territories. God's plan to extend His blessings to people across the globe cuts through geographical and cultural barriers, making diversity imperative in truly manifesting His glory.

Undoubtedly, the God of Abraham is a God of transformation and has rattled the status quo in powerful ways through the ages. He is a God who uproots people from their familiar settings and plants them in foreign lands to lead people of different nations, drawing them closer to Him.

In this section, the researcher explores how God ordained Joseph, a Hebrew, to lead the people of Egypt to draw parallels and address the need for leaders from diverse backgrounds within the church structure. The life of Joseph supports understanding of the significance of diversity and its instrumental role in fulfilling God's promises.

The Life of Joseph—A Call to Leadership in a Foreign Land

From his adolescence, Joseph believed in God's plan to raise him to great leadership. He had been gifted with a remarkable sense of discernment and mental perception. God spoke to Joseph in dreams and told him that he would hold a position of leadership in several areas (Gen. 37:5-11). Joseph perceived these gifts as the means to fulfill God's divine purpose above all else.

Joseph also enjoyed the privilege of being the favorite son of his father Jacob, much to the anger and indignation of his brothers (Gen. 37:3-4). Although his brothers initially plotted murder against him, they ended up selling him to a caravan of traders carrying goods to Egypt. The traders in turn sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen. 37:36; 39:1).

Potiphar acknowledged Joseph's abilities in effectively handling his responsibilities and promoted him to be his personal steward. However, following the sexual advances from Potiphar's wife and Joseph's repeated dismissal of her efforts to seduce him, Joseph was arrested on false charges with absolutely no legal recourse.

He continued to interpret dreams even while in prison and attained the jailor's favor, but was soon forgotten once the cupbearer obtained his previous position. After two more years, he was released from prison. Joseph was once again remembered for his skills when Pharaoh had a series of disturbing dreams. Pharaoh told Joseph he had heard of him as the interpreter of dreams. Joseph articulated God's purpose in his life to lead and interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. Joseph knew God had given him the ability to interpret dreams. Joseph said, "I cannot do it … but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires" (Gen. 41:16). He spoke as if he was an expert in the matter and took leadership. Joseph advised Pharaoh to look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt, which resulted in his promotion to second-in-command of Egypt (Gen. 41:37-45).

Joseph prepared for the coming famine and successfully managed the crisis, eventually setting up a sound infrastructural and agricultural policy. He also relieved the people of Egypt from the poverty that had plagued them for so long (Gen. 41:46-57).

Parallels between Joseph's Life and Contemporary Church Structure

A Call to Nurture

Joseph's brothers did not want to see him in a leadership position. Their hatred and envy led them to plot murder against him in a spiteful attempt to put an end to his dreams. Likewise, many times an individual's dreams of church leadership are put on

hold because of their ethnicity. However, this shows a serious lack of acceptance of people as beings created in the image of the one true God. Individuals are seen through the tainted glasses of prejudice, diminishing their chances of rising to a position of leadership within the Church. The respect of leadership in the Church of God is lessened when sons of ministers continue to wear their fathers' badges of ministry leadership. This reduces the call to service to a "family business" and decreases opportunities for diverse leadership when only a select few meet the cultural criterion. The researcher spoke to a young African-American Church of God minister who is thinking about leaving the organization due to the lack of diversity with the leadership. He observed that it was extremely unusual for an international organization with a majority of its constituents residing outside of the continental United States to have an essentially homogenous white governance. This minister is on the verge of leaving the organization because he is keenly aware of people in his hometown in the state of New York who have dedicated their lives to the Church of God and would likely never have the opportunity to serve in international leadership.

Being different from others does not absolve the Church from its responsibility to build leaders from various ethnicities. It is the collective responsibility of the Church to nurture the dreams of aspiring leaders. Furthermore, exclusion of individuals on the basis of their ethnicity is an intolerable violation of God's framework of diversity.

A Call for Acceptance

The jailor and Pharaoh favored Joseph because of his interpretation skills that befuddled even the best of counselors in Egypt. They invested in Joseph's success despite his heritage, his faith, his principles and values, all of which contrasted sharply with those

of the Egyptian people. Conversely, it is a sad state of affairs when church leadership holds heavy reservations about investing in believers who share the same values and faith only because they happen to be of a different ethnic background. Joseph operated in a land with different social and theological sensitivities and had to face many adversities to earn the people's trust, acceptance, and appreciation. The dynamics of Joseph's story are still relevant within the church structure today, as individuals of color struggle to survive the political intrigue of the absolute dominion and concentration of leadership power in the hands of a select few. The researcher knows many minority ministers who have left the Church of God organization because leadership opportunities are not given to minorities. One individual who was a third-generation Church of God member left the organization when he came to Cleveland, Tennessee and saw the lack of diversity within the International Executive Committee and among the state Administrative Bishops. He said, "I know my hard work will not be acknowledged because I am not the right fit for the select few who make the decisions."

Joseph's life sheds light on how our God is a God of transformation and an advocate for diverse leadership. Even though Joseph was in a foreign land, God was with him in every step. Church organizations need to disregard cultural and traditional differences and recognize the God-given attributes of a leader. Joseph was raised up by God even in a foreign land because he was one of God's chosen people. There are many such chosen people of God who come from different backgrounds, but it is up to the select few of the International Executive Committee to recognize those people, bring them forward, and raise them to leadership positions. Pharaoh gave Joseph the chance to lead in order to demonstrate what God wanted to accomplish through him.

Pharaoh had nothing in common with Joseph but did not consider Joseph's appearance or ethnicity; he only wanted the right interpretation for his dream. Church leadership needs to generously extend the grace of God as widely as possible to all those who aspire to be leaders in the Church regardless of cultural differences.

Transformation seldom takes place when the status quo is maintained. Change is essential in bringing about new leaders. Profound changes must permeate all aspects of the Church including the Administrative Bishops and International Executive leadership structure to present a holistic picture of diversity as intended by God.

The International Executive Committee appoints individuals to Administrative Bishop leadership roles. There are no criteria for being appointed as an Administrative Bishop other than receiving three out of five votes after one of the five Executive Committee members nominates an individual. Limiting church leadership roles to individuals who belong to a dominant group or ethnicity renders meaningless the process of creating leaders from across the world who can touch lives for generations to come.

Human Similarities

In this section the researcher explores the how the Bible clearly states that all humans regardless of race, culture, or ethnicity are created in the image of God.

The image of God rests on all people. "So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God, he created them" (Gen. 1:27). "Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end" (Eccles. 3:11). God gave people conscience, which reflects another attribute shared with God: morality.

"Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know His law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right" (Rom. 2:14-15). Humans also reflect God showing and giving love.

"But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). The principles of Scripture are intended by God to be used by persons of any culture to relate to persons of any other culture or subculture.[3]

> 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. Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body (1 Cor. 12:12-20).

The Church is made up of different parts just as the human body is. As we perceive different organs to be part of one body, so the Church must be able to perceive diverse ethnic groups to be part of the body of Christ and actively incorporate them, even into the realm of leadership.

The Church cannot afford to assume that one group is not significant compared to another. Ethnic differences make us unique but do not prohibit us from being part of the body of Christ.

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[3] "Introduction to Cross-Cultural Ministry," *Ethnic Harvest Ministry Resources*, N.p., n.d., accessed August 30, 2016, http://www.ethnicharvest.org/links/articles/sutherland1.html.

The Bible focuses on the importance of being one instead of dwelling on our collective differences. While it is good to celebrate our uniqueness, we must not underestimate the importance of bringing many parts together as one body of Christ. The Bible is above culture since it stands to judge any culture. God is intentionally involved in the ministry of diversity because Christians are to go to every ethnic group to preach the Gospel. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Bridging the Cultural Gap—A Divine Purpose

Jonah and the Ninevites

Jonah was given the commission to preach to the Ninevites. As the capital of the Assyrian empire Nineveh was a dominant and powerful force in the world.[4] But Jonah refused to go, fled from God's calling, and was swallowed by a great fish. After three days of repentance and prayer, the fish vomited him out onto dry land. Jonah learned that he could not run or hide from God. When Jonah received his second commission to go and preach in Nineveh, he reluctantly obeyed.

Jonah disliked the Ninevites. Although he insisted that the people of Nineveh atone for their sins, his deep-seated desire was to see their destruction and punishment. However, the Ninevites did repent and confess, and God showed His everlasting mercy and saved them from destruction. Meanwhile Jonah sat atop a hill watching, waiting, and hoping God would destroy the city. When God produced a gourd plant to grow and give

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[4] Henrietta C. Mears, *What the Bible Is All About: KJV Bible Handbook* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2011), 357.

Jonah relief from the hot sun Jonah felt contentment. But his happiness soon turned into

anger when God allowed a worm to eat the gourd. The destruction of the gourd grieved

Jonah because he had tended to it and received comfort from its shade. God wanted Jonah

to understand that in the same way He was concerned with the plant, God was filled with

passion and compassion for the well-being of the people of Nineveh.

> But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?" (Jon. 4:10-11).

The Ninevites were valuable and treasured in the sight of God even though they

were ethnically and culturally different from the Israelites. God was concerned about the

destruction of the Assyrian people, who were made in His own image. No matter how

different from the Israelites, God cared for all the people He created.[5]

Parallels between Jonah's Life and Contemporary Church Structure

Much like Jonah, the Church and its leadership run away from God's calling for

them as the body of Christ: to preach the message to all the nations of the world and to be

one with God despite their varied ethnicities, pedigrees, races, and cultures. Jonah held

deep-rooted contempt for the Ninevites because they were different. He wanted judgment

to be brought upon the people he hated. They lived differently, spoke a different

language, and worshipped a different God. Their entire thought processes were on a

different wavelength from Jonah's and the Israelites'. Sadly, the present-day Church also

holds subtle but strong reservations about incorporating individuals from different

ethnicities within the Church, especially in the leadership realm. In the Church of God

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[5] Jim Lo, *Intentional Diversity* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2002), 34.

leadership, the dominant group quite clearly has all the decision-making powers, thereby marginalizing a sea of people who share similar spiritual aspirations to preach, to grow, and to lead.

Diversity sits at the heart of God's purpose. His plan to reconcile racial differences was to bring under one umbrella those scattered across the globe as one people, one body. Christians cannot afford to make the same mistakes Jonah did. Jonah perceived himself as superior to the Ninevites and preached to them with anger instead of compassion and love—a flawed picture of his precious calling. Salvation is of the Lord (Jon. 2:9). Salvation does not belong to any race or ethnicity. The present-day Church with its concentrated power paradigm will render its spiritual work meaningless if it assumes a position of superiority and clings to a homogeneous culture alone. It is not pragmatic to keep diversity at the periphery while preaching the Gospel to nations of the world.

The Life of Jesus

Jesus Christ is the central figure in all of history. He enabled us to live in Him because He lives in us. "God is building a nation of all nations, a people of all peoples, and family of all families through Jesus."[6]

Ministry of Jesus

Jesus is the perfect example of leadership in ministry. Even though Jesus was born a Jew, He ministered to all. His mission was to reach all the people of the world.

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[6] Sean S. O'Neal, *Bridges to People: Communicating Jesus to People and Growing Missional Churches in a Multi-ethnic World* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2007), 39.

Jesus crossed cultural, gender, and national barriers that a normal Jew would not have

crossed.

During the time of Jesus, the Jews had a hostile relationship with the Samaritans.

Ben Witherington compares the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) to the

relationship between "Whites and Blacks in America, even within the church."[7] Jesus

endured pressure from His own people to exclude the Samaritans from His ministry but

chose to reach out to the Samaritan woman despite the hostility (John 4:9, 39-40). He did

not withhold His salvation, healing (Luke 17:15-16), or mercy (Luke 9:52-54) from

Samaritans who were despised by others. Luke 10:37 shows how Jesus modeled

impartiality by building a bridge between the Samaritans and the Jews.

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well speaks

volumes about His heart for reconciliation and equality. He did not succumb to a dead

system of works that hindered His ministry to all, regardless of their standing in society.

Jesus conversed with the woman despite the hostility that was widely prevalent during

that time (John 4). In *The Gospel According to John* Leon Morris says the Jews despised

the Samaritans and considered them spiritually unclean.[8] The Jews avoided the

Samaritans because they were the offspring of Assyrian invaders who intermarried with

Israelites after 745 B.C. when the Northern Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians.[9]

When Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for water, she was extremely surprised that a

Jewish man would ask her for a drink of water. The Samaritan woman said, "You are a

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[7] Ben Witherington, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 195.

[8] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 226.

[9] Morris.

Jew and I am a Samaritan woman … Jews do not associate with Samaritans" (John 4:9).

But Jesus was willing to get a drink from her, and He was willing to give her an eternal

supply of living water. Jesus replied, "The water I give them will be in them a spring of

water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). Jesus gave the Samaritan woman an

invitation to become part of the Church and receive eternal life. According to Morris,

John's Gospel clarifies "living water" as the Holy Spirit and this represents Jesus offering

to her a new relationship with God.[10] The Apostle Paul explained that receiving the Holy

Spirit also initiates baptism into 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" (1 Cor. 12:13).

Jesus' interaction with the racially unwanted shows how the Church should

represent His Body to the world. Jesus loves humanity and desires to have a relationship

with people no matter what their cultural and ethnic differences are.

Not only must the Church have zero tolerance for prejudice but it must also take

bold steps to eradicate it, especially within the body of Christ. Curtiss DeYoung in *United*

by Faith writes that Jesus did not simply offer kindness to the Samaritan woman. Jesus

also waged a crusade against the Jewish people's prejudice against the Samaritan

people.[11] His meeting with the Samaritan woman was no coincidence. It was carefully

designed to display His disapproval of the prejudice among Jews and Samaritans that

eclipsed their love and respect for each other. Jesus was intentional in His actions.

Jesus spent the night in Samaritan villages (John 4:39-42), spoke to Samaritan

men and women on many occasions (Luke 17:11-19; John 4:4-26, 39-42), and offered

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[10] Morris, 230.

[11] Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 125.

them spiritual (John 4:39-42) as well as physical healing (Luke 17:11-19).[12] According to

DeYoung the most fundamental thing Jesus did to fight prejudice was to tell the parable

of the Good Samaritan in which He depicts the Samaritan as the hero. Jesus used this

parable to show the people a bigger picture and change their cultural view of Samaritans

from unclean to good.[13] This what the Church and its leaders should do to curb the

widespread prejudice that exists in the world today.

It is important for the Church of God leadership to move forward into a more

diverse leadership. The Church should represent Christ's Body to the world without bias

or prejudice.

God also showed His heart for racial reconciliation on the day of Pentecost. When

the outpouring of the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12), God equipped a

monocultural group of people to become a ministry of diversity.

According to Luke, at least fifteen different countries and regions of the world

came to listen to the disciples speak (Acts 2:9-11). Peter needed a great deal of help from

God to prepare to overcome Jewish prejudices against people from other nations and

cultures.

Peter went to Samaria after Pentecost to pray for the Samaritan believers to

receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-15). After this he went to Caesarea to

meet with Cornelius who was a Gentile. Cornelius stated, "You yourselves know that it is

unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I

should not call anyone profane or unclean" (Acts 10:28). According to custom, Jews did

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[12] DeYoung.

[13] DeYoung, 125-126.

not associate or have fellowship with Gentiles. Peter said to Cornelius, "I truly

understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him does

what is right and is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35). Peter started to realize that the

message of the Gospel was for all nations and it was confirmed after the Holy Spirit came

upon the Gentiles at Cornelius' house. They all spoke in tongues just as they did on the

day of Pentecost. They were all welcomed into the community of believers.

God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the Gospel in advance to

Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you" (Gal. 3:8). The Gospel was first

preached to Abraham that "all nations" would be blessed through him (Gen. 12:3).

This theme that blessing would come to all nations was repeated in both the Old

and New Testaments. Jesus stated,

> Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the
> Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey
> everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very
> end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

These verses clearly indicate that the Gospel is for all ethnicities and cultures.

Christians should incarnate Christlikeness in all cultures. Because the Gospel is not for

just one group of people, it must be relevant for all who encounter it. This also means the

Church should be developing more diversity and must incorporate the cultures it reaches.

To that effect, no culture can be excluded, as the Gospel is meant to be preached in all

corners of the world. For the Church to truly represent the Body of Christ, its actions

must be in accordance with the Gospel. Cultural diversity cannot be shunned within the

church structure, including the Church of God's international leadership. The central

mission of the Church should not be immersing individuals in their own cultures but

bringing all cultures together as part of one body, the Body of Christ, so that it can reflect

Christlikeness.

> The Jerusalem church's expansion from Hebraic Jewish culture into Grecian Jewish culture in Acts 6:1-6 shows that an energized local church in a cosmopolitan area will inevitably take on greater diversity as it grows (and, perhaps with it, greater internal conflict). An insulated, homogeneous Christianity that is not crossing any cultural barriers will probably be free of conflict, but it will probably not be dynamic or growing either. Cultural diversity, then, though uncomfortable at times, may be a necessary by-product of a healthy and vital church.[14]

As we live in a society that is becoming ever more multi-ethnic and multicultural,

it is all the more obvious that the "black and white" matrix of the American Christian

church is outdated. A true commitment to Christ-centeredness should not compromise

biblical truth because the word of God is the beginning point for understanding the

nature, words, and works of Christ. This should be the on-ramp to the next phase, which

is cross-cultural leadership.

Heaven will be a multicultural place with people from every nation, race, and

language. "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one

could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne

and before the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9).

Luke 16 shares the story of the rich man and the poor man Lazarus. When they

both died, the rich man went to hell and the poor man went to heaven. In Hades the rich

man was able to "see Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side." This suggests that

people will be recognizable in heaven. There will be recognition of race, ethnicity, and

language in heaven.

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[14] James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity International Press), 1990.

Diverse Leadership for a Diverse People

In *Building a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church*, Mark Deymaz writes that the

diversity within the pastoral leadership of the Antioch Church was extremely intriguing.[15]

The Bible clearly states that God does not have any favorites; He sees all human races as

one and not from the perspective of any hierarchical scale. Luke, the writer of Acts,

mentions diversity in leadership. "There were at Antioch, in the church that was there,

prophets and teachers; Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of

Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul" (Acts

13:1).

> Luke lists these men not only by name but also by ethnicity. Simeon was called
> Niger because he was from Niger, a country located both then and now in sub-
> Saharan West Africa. Lucius was from Cyrene, a city near the northern coast of
> Africa in what is today the country of Libya. Lucius was one of the original
> evangelists and church planters at Antioch mentioned in Acts 11:20, and therefore
> among the first to arrive in Antioch to speak to both Jews and Gentiles. Manaen
> was brought up with Herod, the tetrarch. This suggests that Manaen was from
> somewhere in Palestine—either Judea or Galilee or perhaps even Samaria—for
> the Herodian dynasty ruled over the entire region from approximately 65 B.C. to
> 90 A.D. The passage does not comment directly on the background of Barnabas
> or Paul.[16]

However, Luke informed his readers that Barnabas was from the island of Cyprus

(Acts 4:32) and Paul was from the Roman city of Tarsus located in Asia Minor (Acts

9:11).[17]

"Luke listed the five leaders of the church at Antioch not only by gifting and role

but significantly by ethnicity as well. Two of these men were from Africa, one was from

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[15] Mark Deymaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 22.

[16] Deymaz, 24

[17] Deymaz, 23.

a Mediterranean island, one was from the Middle East, and one was from Asia Minor."[18]

This passage should not be dismissed as merely descriptive of the local church at

Antioch. Instead it should be used as the prescription needed for the Church today.[19]

Deymaz says, "The church of Antioch is the most influential church of the New

Testament."[20] Deymaz claims that the church of Antioch was the first to do many things.

It was the first to take a collection for those who were in need (Acts 11:28-30). It was the

first summoned after the Great Commission was given and first to send missionaries into

the world (Acts 13:2-3). The Church of Antioch had a variety of ethnic and cultural

backgrounds. Deymaz asks, "So why did the church at Antioch care about the world?

Because the church at Antioch reflected the world!"[21]

When healthy characteristics of multiculturalism are inculcated within the church

structure as in the Antioch Church, the privilege of leadership will be gracefully extended

to all despite their differences. It is important that present-day churches work toward

inclusion and diversity by incorporating those beyond their walls.[22]

The Church of Antioch was not devoid of issues arising from differences of

opinion. Members of the Antioch Church were at extreme odds with each other over the

question of circumcision.

> Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers,
> "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be
> saved." And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with

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[18] Deymaz, 24.

[19] Deymaz, 24.

[20] Deymaz, 22.

[21] Deymaz, 23.

[22] Deymaz.

them, Paul and Barnabas and certain of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders (Acts 15:1-2).

Kathleen Garces-Foley, author of *Crossing the Ethnic Divide*, stated "Though certain individuals wanted the Jewish and Gentile Christians to worship and eat separately, Paul and Barnabas prevailed."[23] It was necessary for Gentiles to follow the Mosaic law, but for the larger good Paul and Barnabas chose to remain focused on unity rather than cultural differences. According to Garces-Foley, Paul persisted in unifying the Church by reconciling differences instead of urging the Gentiles to adopt Jewish practices. Garces-Foley also stated that the survival of the Antioch Church is seen as evidence of how the Church should move from being ethnocentric to becoming multicultural.[24]

The Church at Antioch supplies the current Church with guidelines for operating in a manner that encourages diverse leadership.

Deymaz asks,

Why was Luke compelled, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not only to mention the names of the men involved as prophets and teachers at Antioch but their country of origin as well? Was it not to make clear that the church, like the Gospel itself, is for all people? What is it not to suggest that such a diverse team is best fit for leadership in a "house of prayer for all the nations?" (Isa. 56:7).[25]

The example of the Church at Antioch should help with the development of diverse leadership. The Church at Antioch serves as an example of a great mix of cultures that is essential for diversity in all areas including leadership. Since earlier times, the privilege of leadership within the Church of God has only been extended to a select few.

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[23] Kathleen Garces-Foley, *Crossing the Ethnic Divide: The Multiethnic Church on a Mission* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 39.

[24] Garces-Foley.

[25] Deymaz, 71.

The prescription that is necessary for the Church to expand and grow in diversity is for the leadership to represent the people whom they serve around the world. One of the reasons the Church at Antioch was very successful in its mission to expand the Kingdom of God was because of the diversity in its leadership. People relate more to their own culture and are drawn to organizations that are represented by individuals who belong to their same culture. In order for the Church of God to expand its outreach, it should provide more opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to grow into Administrative Bishop and International Executive Committee leaders and represent Christlikeness in their respective communities as well.

Key Aspects of Christ's Approach to Ministry

A Call for Introspection by the Present-Day Church

Jesus Christ's ministry and death was for all people. When Christ died, He died a multicultural death. The blood He shed on the Cross of Calvary was multicultural because He shed it for every race, nation, tribe, and creed. The luxury of ministry and spiritual leadership is to be extended to all people regardless of ethnic differences. It is of paramount significance to reach out to any and every race, culture, creed, and lineage with grace and compassion. Racial reconciliation and mending of hostile relationships is imperative to the message of Christ. The current situation in the modern-day Church calls for serious introspection and emphasizes the need for a much more diverse ministry. The Gospel of Christ is inclusive in nature and leaves no room for pride or prejudice. The primary community we must be proud to belong to is that of the community of believers.

Church Model—Revelation

The book of Revelation reiterates the importance of a multicultural Church

through the Apostle John's vision. It is written:

> Here before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" (Rev. 7:9-12).

The multitude worshiping the Lamb of God included "all nations, tribes, peoples

and languages." This illustrates the perfect amalgamation of innumerable races in heaven

forming one perfect bond in the house of God. Fear and traditions must be ousted from

within the Church to nurture racial unification and crush age-old patterns that act as

breeding grounds for racial division.[26] Fear of change has made some in the Church take

on the characteristics of the Pharisees. "The Pharisees and other such groups were not

militant toward the different groups, but they intentionally withdrew from any contact

with people who were not exactly like them."[27] There is fear that difference will

contaminate the old way of doing things, but diversity will not weaken the Church.[28] The

Church of God leadership may not be intentional in failing to promote people who may

not look exactly like them. There is fear of change due to the fact that it is what people

have known. Changes are not easy for people to make. When big changes occur, fear

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[26] Patrick LeBlanc, *On Earth as It Is Heaven: An Image for Church Diversity in Diverse Communities* (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2010), 38.

[27] LeBlanc, 64.

[28] LeBlanc.

comes along with it. How is the dynamic of the Church going to change if there is a big force of diversity ushered in within the leadership of the Church of God in the Administrative Bishops and International Executive Committee? Members of the Church of God have only known things to be one way—all of the leadership is homogeneous.

The fact that the concentration of power among a certain group of individuals has attained a state of normalcy is indicative of a dangerous trend of a kind of subconscious exclusion of "the others" from the Church leadership structure. The difference that diversity brings will certainly not contaminate the old way but instead will act as a catalyst for much-needed change and growth with the Church. More importantly, people who are leaving the Church due to the lack of diversity might be willing to come back because they see a change from talk to action.

When Jesus chose His twelve disciples they were not chosen from just one ethnic background or tribe. "Andrew, Peter, James, John, and Philip were from Bethsaida of Galilee, Simon the Zealot was from Jerusalem, Judas Iscariot was a Judean, and Thomas was a Greek."[29] These disciples were not chosen based on their educational merit. When Peter and Andrew were chosen they were fishing with a net. Jesus chose these men for who they were. "This is an excellent model for churches to follow as a cultural change and diversity flood our country."[30] It is time for the Church to focus on just the fruit of the tree. Matthew 12:33 articulates a tree is known by the fruit.[31] Patrick LeBlanc, author of *On Earth as It Is in Heaven*, states:

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[29] LeBlanc, 65.

[30] LeBlanc.

[31] LeBlanc.

Political election time is apparently an occasion when there is no concern for church integration. It is during these months when candidates from one race, seeking an elected office, will come to the church of a different race to fellowship and worship with the people he/she are seeking to represent, although the majority of these people are of different ethnic racial groups. Candidates have no problem worshiping together pre-election or accepting votes from different ethnic or racial groups. The meaning in the message is seemingly easily contextualized in order to foster partisanship.[32]

LeBlanc believes leadership should also reflect the people who are being represented. Each state has an Administrative Bishop who is assigned by the International Executive Committee of the Church of God. These Administrative Bishops are nominated by the five International Executive Committee members. If a nominee receives three out of five votes, he or she is appointed as the Administrative Bishop of that state. There is a lack of diversity because the nominees chosen by the International Executive Committee are not necessarily people with credentials but those who are familiar. The positions are assigned according to the relationship these individuals have with the International Executive Committee, and not by merit.

Conclusion

Multiculturalism and the Gospel go hand in hand. Scripture teaches the Church to reflect diversity both universally and locally. The fact that Jesus died for the redemption of all mankind takes away all traces of exclusivity. The Lord did not discriminate. He did not assign power to those who were influential but to those with pure and believing hearts. For a group of people to dominate any organization including the Church based on cultural or ethnic preferences sharply contradicts the message of Christ. Therefore, it is important for the Church to bring out into the open issues of assumed bias, prejudice, and favoritism.

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[32] LeBlanc, 66.

The Church and its leadership should be proactive in promoting diversity, uprooting all prejudices, and in surpassing cultural, ethnic, and language barriers.

CHAPTER THREE
THE SECULAR WORLD'S VIEW ON DIVERSITY

Leaders and founders of both major multinational corporations and the startup businesses around the world, especially in the recent past, describe the instrumental role of diversity in the overall success of an organization. The effort to foster a sense of belonging and enabling different people to become integral parts of a world in which we call ourselves "global citizens" has come a long way. Efforts to encourage diversity are no longer confined to occasional diplomatic visits by high officials of one nation to another. Inclusion has become imperative in all spheres for a more collaborative structure that aims to assimilate people of different ethnicities in order to achieve a specific goal, whether for business, cultural, or political purposes. The present-day American workplace draws on varied perspectives of people from diverse backgrounds.

In this chapter the researcher examines the importance of diversity and inclusion and its effective implementation in the corporate world, in education, and in non-profit organizations, and issues a call to action regarding church structure.

Diversity and the Civil Rights Movement

The civil rights movement was a monumental part of American history. It showed the separation between black and white churches. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the main leader of the movement in 1964. He was born into a family of ministers and brought up in a home where church was of the utmost importance to their faith. King went to Morehouse College in 1944 to study religion and philosophy, then became an ordained

Baptist minister in 1947. He studied theology at Crozer Theological Seminary in

Pennsylvania. King was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and his practice of nonviolent

protest.[1] Johnny Hill wrote, "For King, the church is called to reflect the love ethic of

Christ and personify important elements to those universal truths, such as agape,

fellowship, nonviolence, and the like."[2] King's vision for the church was the following:

> In spite of the noble affirmations of Christianity, the church has often lagged in its concern for social justice and too often has been content to mouth pious irrelevances and sanctimonious trivialities. It has often been so absorbed in a future good "over yonder" that it forgets the present evils "down here." Yet the church is challenged to make the gospel of Jesus Christ relevant within the social situation. We must come to see that the Christian gospel is a two-way road. On the one side, it seeks to change the souls of men [and women] and thereby unite them with God; on the other, it seeks to change the environmental conditions of men [and women] so that the soul will have a chance after it is changed. Any religion that professes to be concerned with the souls of men [and women] and yet is not concerned with the economic and social conditions that strangle them and social conditions that cripple them is the kind the Marxist describes as "an opiate of the people."[3]

King's ideas regarding civil rights were not based on his own ideas, but were

deeply rooted in Scripture. The Christian faith is not just a one-way road. It should be

interested not only in saving a man's soul but also in helping to change the environment

of the less fortunate and to be the voice of the oppressed. These things should go hand in

hand. King used nonviolent practices to aid oppressed people and helped organize the

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Life in

Montgomery, Alabama was highly segregated, and blacks could not have a social life.

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[1] Thomas Peake, "Martin Luther King Jr.," *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia* (2013), accessed April 24, 2018, EBSCO*host*, 0-search.ebscohost.com.library.acaweb.org/login.aspx? direct=true&db=ers&AN=88801983&site=eds-live.

[2] Johnny Hill, *The Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Desmond Mpilo Tutu* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2007), 191.

[3] Hill.

The Supreme Court decision in the 1954 Brown versus Board of Education case barely touched Montgomery, and black Americans had little hope that life would improve.[4]

King's momentous civil rights activism began on December 1, 1955 when Rosa Parks was ordered by a bus driver to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. When she refused, she was arrested; this led to a 381-day bus boycott. Due to this boycott, the U.S. Supreme Court made the "segregated transit system unconstitutional."[5] King was the primary leader of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which led the boycott as a nonviolent method of protesting legal segregation.[6]

The "Montgomery way" became the model for cities in the south to fight segregation. A movement was formed in January 1957 by King's close friend Ralph Abernathy and two dozen other black ministers. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), used by King for his civil rights movement, was formally created. King spent the rest of his life working with the southern nonviolent movement. Many forces drove the movement, but King was the spokesperson. His most significant accomplishment occurred between 1963 and 1965 when the SCLC planned a nonviolent protest in Birmingham. Because it was seen as the hub of the south, Birmingham was an important place for the confrontation to occur. It took place during the Easter season in order to coincide with the Easter shopping season and affect the economy. King was arrested during the protest and while in jail he wrote his famous "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" in 1963. The intent of the letter was to respond to the white men

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[4] Peake.

[5] Peake.

[6] Peake.

who advised King to be patient and wait for gradual change on segregation.[7] King

responded,

> I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Councillor or the Ku Klux Klanner but the white moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says, "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically feels that he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time; and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.… Isn't this like condemning Jesus because His Unique God-consciousness and never-ceasing devotion to His will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men willing to be coworkers with God, and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation.[8]

One of King's disappointments came from the white moderates who agreed with

the goal of the civil rights movement but rejected the method of achieving freedom. King

said that lukewarm acceptance is more devastating than no support at all, like from the

White Citizens Councillor or the Ku Klux Klan. Lukewarm acceptance is not what a

Christian should receive. The Bible clearly states that lukewarm Christianity is not what

Christ wants. Revelation 3:16 states, "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor

cold, I will spit you out of my mouth." A true Christian should show the love of Christ by

their actions. King responded,

> I continued to think about the matter, I gradually gained a bit of satisfaction from being considered an extremist. Was not Jesus an extremist in love?—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Was

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[7] Peake.

[8] Martin Luther King, jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," August 1963.

not Amos an extremist for justice?—"Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the gospel of Jesus Christ?[9]

Martin Luther King, Jr. considered it a gain that people considered him an extremist. The love Jesus showed was extreme. He loved His enemies even when He was crucified on the Cross. There are two types of extremism: the good and the bad. King longed for people of color to be freed from the oppression, brutal injustice, and segregation that they faced each and every day. He was considered an extremist by religious leaders because his mission was a mission of change that they did not like. King's response to disappointment was as follows:

> I have been disappointed with the white church and its leadership.… I say it as a minister of the gospel who loves the church, who was nurtured in its bosom, who has been sustained by its Spiritual blessings, and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen. I had the strange feeling when I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery several years ago that we would have the support of the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests, and rabbis of the South would be some of our strongest allies. Instead, some few have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows.… I have heard numerous religious leaders of the South call upon their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers say, follow this decree because integration is morally right and the Negro is your brother. In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sidelines and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities.… One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters they were in reality standing up for the best in the American dream and the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage.[10]

The biggest disappointment King felt was the lack of support from Christian religious leaders who did not support the civil rights movement. King confronted white

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[9] King, "Letter."

[10] King, "Letter."

Christians in his letter, asking them to take a position against inequality and discrimination being carried out. He saw that the white Christian church should unite with Christians of color to come together as a community to stand against injustice.[11] But lack of support came from the people he thought would understand the oppression faced by people of color. First John 3:10 states, "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother." It is not possible for a Christian to be called a child of God if they do not love their brothers of color. King longed to hear the religious leaders not just tell their congregations to obey desegregation laws, but to tell their congregations they should love their brothers and sisters of color because God made all men equal in His sight.

The Birmingham movement caught the national attention. Television showed the police chief using fire hoses and trained dogs to attack nonviolent protestors. When President John F. Kennedy and his administration had to take a blatant stand on the civil rights movement, he insisted that the Congress pass a comprehensive civil rights bill. While the bill was awaiting the votes, King and more than 200,000 people led a march to Washington, DC at the Lincoln Memorial. Here he presented his most famous speech of all, "I Have a Dream," urging the country to "rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed 'that all men are created equal.'"[12] King attained more influence after the March on Washington. Violence in Birmingham returned when four black girls were murdered at

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[11] Soong-Chan Rah, *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010,) 57.

[12] Peake.

the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church.[13] After the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, President Lyndon B. Johnson ended legally authorized segregation in the United States by signing into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[14]

Martin Luther King, Jr. believed passionately in the Gospel and the love of Jesus Christ to be demonstrated not only verbally but also through actions. In order for this to occur, King said, "first, the need for a tough mind, characterized by incisive thinking, realistic appraisal, and decisive judgment" were necessary.[15] A tough mind will pierce through the myths and examine what is true. A tough-minded person will not always fear change but a soft-minded person will because they do not have the capability to discern true from false. Soft-mindedness will affect the church in a negative way because these individuals will try to put stumbling blocks in the midst of truth-seekers.[16] King stated, "Soft-mindedness is one of the basic causes of race prejudice.… Race prejudice is based on groundless fears, suspicions, and misunderstandings."[17] A tough-minded person looks at the facts before making his or her judgment. A soft-minded person sees white as superior to people of color. In order to see prejudice broken there must be tough-mindedness to look at the facts with making judgments based on fear.[18]

The second factor King saw was that "the gospel also demands a tender heart."[19] According to King tough-mindedness cannot work without tenderheartedness. King said

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[13] Peake.

[14] Peake.

[15] Martin Luther King, jr., *Strength to Love* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 2.

[16] King, *Strength to Love,* 4.

[17] King, *Strength to Love,* 5.

[18] King, *Strength to Love.*

[19] King, *Strength to Love.*

a hardhearted person cannot understand true friendship because "he is too cold to feel affection for another and too self-centered to share another's joy and sorrow."[20] A person without a tender heart is not moved by pain or oppression of other people because of the absence of authentic compassion. King cited the illustration that Jesus used about the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man went to hell not because he only thought about and saw himself in the mirror instead of being tenderhearted toward others. The rich man's heart "was not tenderhearted enough to see Lazarus and because he made no attempt to bridge the gulf between himself and his brother."[21] It is impossible for a person to love genuinely if he or she has a hard heart.

The third factor King stated was "open to our quest for freedom, namely non-violent resistance, which combines tough mindedness and tenderheartedness and avoids the complacency and do-nothingness of the soft minded and the violence and bitterness of the hardhearted."[22] King saw this as the method that should be followed to address the race issues people faced. He saw this nonviolent method as showing the love of Christ by rejecting the unfair system and also loving the wrongdoers. King said, "The greatness of our God lies in the fact that he is both tough minded and tenderhearted.… God has two outstretched arms." He provides love and justice with one arm while the other gives grace. God punished the Israelites when they departed from His ways, but He is also a loving God who embraces the prodigal son when he returns home.[23]

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[20] King, *Strength to Love,* 6.

[21] King, *Strength to Love.*

[22] King, *Strength to Love,* 8.

[23] King, *Strength to Love.*

Martin Luther King, Jr. saw the Cross as a representation of love. He stated, "we must see the Cross as the magnificent symbol of love conquering hate and of light overcoming darkness."[24] The crucifixion shows how much love Jesus has for this world. He laid down His life not for one race but for all of the people.

Lack of Diversity in the Church of God

The law did not change attitudes toward colored people. The change must occur in the hearts of the people before it can change society. Southern churches have grown over time as a result of the civil rights movement. The Church of God denomination is an organization that includes more than seven million members in 185 nations and territories. Nearly 36,000 congregations serve around the world; its regional and international ministries provide resources and support through divisions of World Evangelization, Care, Discipleship, Education, and Support Services. To date a comfortably homogeneous culture has dominated the Church structure, including leadership. Statistics show a distinct lack of diversity in the Church of God leadership, with more white people serving as bishops.

Administrative Bishops are appointed by the International Executive Committee for each state. According to the data, 90 percent of the Administrative Bishops are white and only 10 percent are African-American.

Eight regions have been separated from the rest of the states and regions and designated as single-race regions. One is Romanian and the other seven are Hispanic. If it is deemed important to create separate regions for Administrative Bishops because of a

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[24] King, *Strength to Love,* 41.

single race, why does the Church of God fail to see the importance of representing the

185 countries and territories that the denomination represents?

Ninety percent of the employees at the Church of God International Headquarters

are white and the remaining 10 percent includes Hispanics and African-Americans, while

more than 185 nations are served. The data reveal the lack of diversity within the Church

of God organization and its leadership. However, the researcher believes that the Church

can learn from the secular world the importance of diversity and how it can positively

impact an organization.

The Case for DEI in Business

Importance of Diversity and Inclusion in the Corporate World

In 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, making

discrimination against African-Americans and other racial, ethnic, and religious

minorities illegal. Even though major legal changes were made, hiring practices did not

witness rapid change. In 1965, President Johnson signed Executive Order 11246 into

effect, requiring federal contractors to hire individuals regardless of race, religion, or

national origin. Gender was added to the list in 1967.[25]

Business professionals soon came to understand the importance of diversity in the

workplace. Ekaterina Walter stated in *Forbes* magazine, "Diversity is critical for an

organization's ability to innovate and adapt in a fast-changing environment. Diversity is

essential to the growth and prosperity of any company: diversity of perspectives,

experiences, cultures, genders, and age. Why? Because diversity breeds innovation. And

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[25] Mark Kaplan and Mason Donovan, *The Inclusion Dividend: Why Investing in Diversity & Inclusion Pays Off* (Brookline, MA: Bibliomotion, Inc., 2013), 10-11.

innovation breeds business success."[26] Diversity ushered in significant changes in the realms of sports, music, and politics but not in the Church, especially the Church of God and its leadership.

A 2014 study in *Time* magazine argued that the fact that "86.3% of local churches throughout this country fail to have at least 20% diversity in their attending membership is one reason the American Church has been rendered impotent in attempting to speak on what is, perhaps, the most critical issue of our time: lingering, systemic, racial injustice in a supposedly post-racial society."[27] While the business world has caught on, the Church still remains 93 percent segregated nearly 50 years after Martin Luther King, Jr. declared Sunday to be the most segregated day of the week.[28]

When Scott Williams started his research for his book *Church Diversity,* he focused on corporate diversity. The goal of the research was to learn from the diversity practices of successful businesses and draw parallels for the Church. The more he read about the diversity strategies of corporations like Johnson & Johnson, IBM, Coca Cola, AT&T, Marriott, Merck, and others, the more he realized that these diversity strategies are marketing and growth strategies. Williams believes these strategies are not simply for corporate America; they must be strategies for the local church as well.

Marriot Hotels places a premium on diversity. Their global diversity officer Jimmie Paschal states:

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[26] Ekaterina Walter, "Reaping the Benefits of Diversity for Modern Business Innovation," *Forbes,* accessed April 20, 2017, https://www.forbes.com/sites/ekaterinawalter/2014/01/14/reaping-the-benefits-of-diversity-for-modern-business-innovation/#5c9bfef92a8f.

[27] Gabriel Salguero et al., "Multi-Ethnic Churches Lament America's Racial Injustice," *Time,* August 25, 2014, accessed July 27, 2017, http://time.com/3173810/multi-ethnic-churches-lament-americas-racial-injustice/.

[28] Salguero et al.

Our business is all about people. That's why we view our "spirit to serve" culture of more than 80 years as a source of strength that our competitors can't easily replicate.[29] We strive to create an inclusive environment where the talents and unique ideas of 300,000 employees at our managed and franchised properties worldwide can flourish.[30] When our employees feel respected and valued, we know that they'll make our guests, suppliers, owners, and franchisees feel the same way, too. This is more than a philosophy—it's a strategy that works.[31]

Promoting solidarity in the workplace creates an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, which in turn shapes employees to be better leaders of tomorrow.

Williams believes that if a successful organization with more than 300,000 employees around the globe can embrace and understand the importance of diversity, the local church should be able to adapt similar strategies for more diverse leadership. The largest church in the United States has fewer than 50,000 people who attend on a weekly basis, which should allow the Church to put strategies in place for more diverse leadership.

According to Williams, Paschall hit the nail on the head when he talked about the "spirit to serve" culture that cannot be replicated by competitors.[32] Shouldn't we be able to say the same of the Church? This is more than political correctness or corporate drivel; it is a strategy that will prove to change the heart and face of the Church. The Church of God should focus on the people whom the organization serves and represents. The organization should be a venue in which the leaders of the Church of God create an environment where many talented people of different races and ethnicities work together

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[29] Scott Williams, *Church Diversity* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 2011), 112.

[30] Williams, 113.

[31] Williams.

[32] Williams, 114.

to expand the Kingdom of God. These efforts should serve to inspire other denominations.

Merck chairman, president, and chief executive officer Richard T. Clark describes his view of diversity thus: "Embracing diversity and inclusion is not only the right thing to do; it is an important part of our business strategy and key to the long-term success of Merck."[33] As a strong advocate of diversity, Clark personally signs off on all executive compensation tied to diversity as well as goals and achievements for supplier diversity. His ten direct reports (all high-ranking leaders) reflect his commitment to diversity—three black, one Asian, and one Native American.[34]

In *Courageous Leadership* Pastor Bill Hybels says, "The local church is the hope of the world and its future rests primarily in the hand of its leaders."[35]

If we truly wish to obey Jesus' commandment to spread the Gospel throughout the entire world, to make disciples of all nations, and to lead people to Him, it is imperative that church leaders follow the example of Merck chief executive officer Clark with regard to inclusivity. Not only is embracing diversity the right thing to do, but it should also be an important part of the Church's "business" strategy.[36] As the world continues to shrink and racial lines continue to blur, the Church must recognize diversity as being the future and key to its long-term success.[37] For the Church of God's success in the long term, more leaders from different backgrounds must be added to the

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[33] Williams, 101.

[34] Williams.

[35] Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009).

[36] Williams, 167.

[37] Williams.

Administrative Bishops and International Executive Committee. The Church leadership

cannot be homogeneous while the Church itself is diverse.

Diversity alone will not bring success, but diversity, equity, inclusion, and

cultural competence must all be utilized. Cultural competence is part of the key to

success.

According to *Business Dictionary,* cultural competence is the behavior, attitudes,

and policies that allow effective and appropriate response to different cultural groups to

work professionally in any situation. This includes the ability to accept and recognize

differences in cognitive, behavioral, philosophical, social, and communication styles that

arise from different cultural and generational contexts.[38] It is necessary for church leaders

to begin conversations regarding cultural competence and how diversity will positively

impact the Church as an organization.

Business Imperative

In the recent past several global companies have taken initiatives to create a

culture of inclusion and demographic diversity, as it has become a very significant part of

their commitment to business excellence. Although the focus is predominantly on

business results, other aspects of diversity help not only to devise appropriate strategies to

increase sales and revenue but also to create top-of-the-mind recall among key

stakeholders, increasing creativity, promoting innovation, and building loyalty among

customers from different ethnic backgrounds.

Businesses today are moving away from their exclusive ways to adopt an

approach based on participation and representation that reflects real-world demographics.

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[38] *Business Dictionary,* s.v. "What is cultural competency? definition and meaning," accessed July 3, 2017, http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/cultural-competency.html.

Engaging in substantive conversations on diversity and inclusion and outlining their

stance on the concept, companies across industry sectors agree that diversity is certainly a

business imperative.[39] Felix Lozano and Teresa Escrich give reasons why diversity is

imperative in business:

> (1) The employment structure is changing and becoming increasingly diverse, (2) the cost of managing diversity conflicts and the resulting demotivation is high, (3) diverse groups are more creative and are better at resolving problems, (4) having minority workers attracts other workers from those minorities (HR marketing), (5) having workers from minorities brings the firm closer to those groups (marketing), (6) developing diversity management policies is seen as part of CSR and can attract more responsible investors, (7) diverse groups are more innovative and flexible and (8) having diversity in the organization facilitates internationalization.[40]

Business outcomes are dependent on support from the leadership. In "The Effects

of Diversity on Business Performance: Report of the Diversity Research Network," a

five-year study was conducted by Business Opportunities for Leadership Diversity

(BOLD), a group of business executives and human resource employers. They sought to

help businesses use diversity for economic gain. The research concluded that racial

diversity was positively associated with growth in branches' business portfolios among

financial services firms. Racial diversity correlated with higher overall performance in

branches that enacted integration and learning perspectives on diversity compared to

branches that did not.

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[39] Felix J. Lozano and Teresa Escrich. 2017. "Cultural Diversity in Business: A Critical Reflection on the Ideology of Tolerance," *Journal of Business Ethics* 142, no. 4, 679-696. *Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCO*host* (accessed June 26, 2017), 689-690.

[40] Lozano and Escrich, 689-690.

According to the BOLD study, racial diversity has a positive effect on overall performance in branches that used diversity as a resource for innovation and learning.[41]

> Success is facilitated by a perspective that considers diversity to be an opportunity for everyone in an organization to learn from each other how better to accomplish their work and an occasion that requires a supportive and cooperative organizational culture as well as group leadership and process skills that can facilitate effective group functioning. Organizations that invest their resources in taking advantage of the opportunities that diversity offers should outperform those that fail to make such investments.[42]

When integration and learning perspectives are put in place, businesses are given the opportunity to learn from each other's differences. The leadership will drive the effectiveness of business outcomes when a supportive and cooperative culture exists.

The ability to embrace diversity and recognize the benefits helps an organization succeed and become competitive. When an organization puts a diversity plan in place, the benefits reported include the following:

- Diversity stimulates innovation and productivity and creates a world class culture that can outperform the competition.

- A multicultural organization is better suited to serve a diverse external clientele in an increasingly more global market. Such organizations have a better understanding of the requirements of the legal, political, social, economic, and cultural environments of foreign nations.

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[41] Thomas Kochan, Bezrukova Katerina, Ely Robin, Jackson Susan, Joshi Aparna, Jehn Karen, Leonard Jonathan, Levine David, and Thomas David. 2014. "The Effects of Diversity on Business Performance: Report of the Diversity Research Network, Human Resource Management," *BASE*, EBSCO*host* (accessed June 26, 2017).

[42] Kochan et al.

- In research-oriented and high-tech industries, the broad base of talents generated by a gender- and ethnically-diverse organization becomes a priceless advantage. "Creativity thrives on diversity."

- Multicultural organizations are found to be better at problem solving, possess better ability to extract expanded meanings, and are more likely to display multiple perspectives and interpretations in dealing with complex issues.

- Organizations employing a diverse workforce can supply a greater variety of solutions to problems in service, sourcing, and allocation of resources.

- Employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands.

- A diverse collection of skills and experiences (e.g., languages, cultural understanding) allows a company to provide service to customers on a global basis.

- A diverse workforce that feels comfortable communicating varying points of view provides a larger pool of ideas and experiences. [43]

The following businesses (McDonald's and L'Oréal) focus on diversity and inclusion in the work force. These companies make an effort to change the culture of their company to a culture of acceptance.

McDonald's—Distinct Training Stages in Implementing Inclusion and Diversity

McDonald's has been known as a company that provides opportunities for a diverse group of people from the crew to the boardroom. Its definition of diversity

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[43] Ankita Saxena. 2014. "Workforce Diversity: A Key to Improve Productivity," *Procedia Economics and Finance* 11: 76-85. *ScienceDirect*, EBSCO*host* (accessed June 27, 2017).

includes "a broad mix of different ideas, opinions, backgrounds, and life experiences in addition to the traditional measures like race and gender."[44] "As of January 2009, the workforce—from the crew members in our restaurants through our CEO—is comprised of 62 percent women, 35 percent Hispanics, 20 percent African-Americans, 5 percent Asians, and 2 percent Native Americans."[45] According to Patricia Harris, McDonald's Global Chief Diversity Officer, "The first essential element is a strong and unwavering commitment to diversity from senior management."[46] As the creator of McDonald's, Ray Kroc's main concern was to sell hamburgers to a wide range of consumers. In order to achieve this sales objective, the inclusion of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian entrepreneurs in the corporate mix was inevitable to expanding the company's outreach to minority communities.[47] Training was perceived as a vital component not only for the effective implementation of diversity but also to the overall productivity of each employee. Bringing people through the front door was easy, but without proper training to develop corporate survival skills the same people would walk back out the door. McDonald's conducted comprehensive training sessions to help new employees understand the corporate environment and enable them to develop strategies that contributed to their personal success. Training was not limited to lower entry level employees.

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[44] Patricia Sowell Harris, *None of Us Is as Good as All of Us: How McDonald's Prospers by Embracing Inclusion and Diversity* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009), 4.

[45] Harris, 3-4.

[46] Harris, 6.

[47] Harris.

Managers and supervisors were also trained to understand the nuances of managing a diverse workforce.[48] The Church of God does well bringing people of diverse backgrounds to join the Church as members and pastors; however, little or no training is provided to help these individuals move up the ladder into leadership. As a result, many people of color are leaving the Church ministry because they perceive no opportunity to grow into a leadership role.

The successful integration of employees from diverse backgrounds at McDonald's did not happen overnight. The organization and its leadership invested energy and time to put in place a diverse workforce in a gradual process focused on both the ultimate sales objective and the needs of the minority community employees. Not only did this provide maximal productivity in their North American markets, it also provided an outlet to branch out and become a leading global provider in the fast food industry.

Four Distinct Stages

McDonald's went through four stages in their development of diversity and inclusion. Affirmative action allowed emphasis on equality of opportunity as the company asked whether there were enough African-Americans, women, Hispanics, and Asians in the workforce.[49] The next step was to recognize difference. Once a team of diverse individuals was assembled, an in-depth evaluation was undertaken to identify the unique difference each person brought to the business.

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[48] Harris, 7.

[49] Harris, 132.

McDonald's looked to see how each person could support the business and contribute their talent to grow the company.[50] This step was vital to valuing differences and brought forth an environment where everyone felt like part of the team. Their ideas and contributions were valued. Each person's experiences and perspectives were looked at from a team perspective that brought success to the business. The measure of this stage's success was qualitative in nature, stressing mutual understanding and respect for each other.[51] The managing diversity stage allowed McDonald's to use "diverse workforce as a strategic business tool to create competitive advantage or to solve specific business problems."[52] Operating in a corporate culture where different opinions, views, and experiences are respected was of immense significance. Everyone felt valued and was a contributing member of the team, thus creating an environment for the making of a successful corporation.[53]

The Church of God can definitely draw inspiration from the approach to inclusion and diversity used by McDonald's. Dissemination of Christ's message to the corners of the earth is the crux of the Gospel and calls for serious introspection regarding its compartmentalization by churches and denominations. To connect with communities outside the ambit of the present-day Church, extended outreach to people belonging to different races and cultures is essential to attain the ultimate objective of the Gospel.

The concept of affirmative action is also significant within the body of Christ to maintain the equality bestowed on all by Christ. The decision by McDonald's to prioritize

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[50] Harris.

[51] Harris.

[52] Harris.

[53] Harris, 132-133.

diversity stemmed from first receiving the mindset of diversity. Leaders had to identify and notice the lack of diversity within their company that might have kept them from being successful. Understanding the significance of diversity provided the outlet for affirmative action to take place. In order to reach a global audience McDonald's has invested in understanding the cultural differences and similarities in each community they serve, expertly choosing people who represent those cultures to bring their perspectives and insights to the table. In India McDonald's serves veggie and masala burgers. In Japan they serve a teriyaki-flavored burger, and Israel has its own falafel twist. Menu variations highlight the popular flavors and cuisines of local customers while maintain the overarching McDonald's brand. The part diversity has played in the worldwide success of McDonald's is evident.

The Church likewise must be willing to draw from the varied experiences and perspectives of people from different communities in the way corporate culture recognizes, understands, and values divergent points of view. Leaders within the Church structure should undergo training similar to that implemented by McDonald's to understand and incorporate how to cater effectively to different communities. Above all, it is of utmost importance that churches stop treating their immediate community as their worldview in order to create a truly multicultural experience across levels of church structure.

Economic Imperative

Forbes Global Diversity and Inclusion Study

Forbes Insight conducted a study in 2011 titled "Global Diversity and Inclusion: Fostering Innovation through a Diverse Workforce." This study surveyed more than 300

senior executives involved in implementing, developing, and managing initiatives related

to diversity at companies generating revenues of at least $500 million and up to $20

billion.[54] Results demonstrated that top business executives understand that their

companies cannot be profitable or thrive on a global platform if they do not have a

workforce that is diverse and inclusive. Diverse and inclusive workforces bring forth

innovation, promote creativity, and influence business strategies on a global platform.[55]

The senior executives were asked about their viewpoints on this phrase: a diverse and

inclusive workforce is crucial to encouraging different perspectives and ideas that drive

innovation. Forty-eight percent said they strongly agreed, 37 percent somewhat agreed,

11 percent somewhat disagreed, and 1 percent didn't know.

The business case for diversity and inclusion is essentially connected to a

company's innovation strategy.[56] According to the Forbes study, "survey respondents

overwhelmingly agreed that a diverse and inclusive workforce brings the different

perspectives that a company needs to power its innovation strategy."[57] Workforces that

reflect diversity among consumers and in markets result in new product development,

consumer confidence, and significant revenue growth.[58] As Rosalind Hudnell, director of

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[54] "Global Diversity and Inclusion: Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce," *Forbes Insights* (July 2011), accessed March 18, 2017, https://www.forbes.com/forbesinsights/innovation_diversity/.

[55] "Global Diversity."

[56] "Global Diversity."

[57] "Global Diversity."

[58] Linda Barrington, The Conference Board, and Kenneth R. Troske, "Workforce Diversity and Productivity: An Analysis of Employer-Employee Matched Data," (analysis of workforce diversity and economic performance of establishments in manufacturing, retail trade, and services sectors, University of Missouri-Columbia, April 18, 2001).

global diversity and inclusion at chipmaker Intel stated, "Because of our diverse workforce, we've experienced a boost in productivity."[59]

<div align="center">*L'Oréal USA—Diversity Report*</div>

L'Oréal USA uses the following formula for diversity management: DIVERSITY + INCLUSION = INNOVATION & SUCCESS®.[60] This formula is used for recruitment, sales, and outreach in the community. The office of diversity reports directly to Frederic Roze, chief executive officer of L'Oréal USA. He stated, "Diversity fosters creativity. We need to generate the best ideas from our people in all levels of the company and incorporate them into our business practices."[61] Sumita Banerjee, vice president of talent recruitment at L'Oréal USA, stated, "The recruitment of diverse talent for our organization is critical to our ability to build our business and drive future growth."[62] Diversity is giving L'Oréal an advantage in the makeup industry. Balanda Atis, a woman of color, was a group leader tasked with innovating a new makeup line for people of color. After many hours of research and innovation, Atis and her team succeeded in meeting the needs of women of color for the right shade of foundation color.

L'Oréal's business goal is to reach a billion new consumers in the next 10 years. However, as a brand catering to a multitude of ethnic groups they understand that merely creating a structure of diversity and inclusivity will not help them attain these goals unless diverse talent within the workforce is put to use effectively.[63]

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[59] "Global Diversity."

[60] "Global Diversity."

[61] "Global Diversity."

[62] "Global Diversity."

[63] "Global Diversity."

Lack of diversity can come at great cost. Discrimination and weak diversity management can lead to significant economic costs. According to employment lawyer Chris McKinney it would cost a company $250,000 to defend a discrimination lawsuit.[64] Americans who identify themselves as Hispanic, black, Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander will outnumber non-Hispanic whites by the year 2042 according to the U.S. Census Bureau.[65] The economy is becoming global and implementation of diversity practices signifies an investment.

Human Imperative

Intolerance to diversity carries both financial and human costs. It prevents people from understanding other cultures and leaves them focused only on outward appearances. In society today every corporate decision is publicly exposed and debated. Each work environment carries its own culture, established and maintained by those in authority. It is vital for company leaders to foster a workplace that stands by diversity and that employees understand and follow. The culture of the business is dispersed throughout the company from the top down. Companies that maintain a culture can hire more readily, deliver strong customer service, and be more profitable over time. For change to occur in the culture, leadership must be accountable and must drive the change, which will then drive performance. Results should be measurable and should be reported both internally

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[64] John Hyman, *How Much Does It Cost to Defend an Employment Lawsuit?* (May 2013), accessed July 5, 2017, http://www.workforce.com/2013/05/14/how-much-does-it-cost-to-defend-an-employment-lawsuit/.

[65] Sam Roberts, *Minorities in U.S. Set to Become Majority by 2042* (August 2008), accessed July 5, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/14/world/americas/14iht-census.1.15284537.html.

and externally. Policies, processes, and systems should align with an organization's purpose and values.[66]

DiversityInc is an American company focused on issues of diversity and inclusion in the workforce. Since 2001 it has published a yearly list of the top 50 companies for diversity in the world. The process involves rigorous survey and data-driven analysis of companies within the context of their own industries. The following information was taken from the website Diversityinc.com.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) is a major accounting firm that demonstrates the best practices in mentoring and sponsorship. PwC participates actively in the company's formal corporate-sponsored mentoring program which includes all of the managers and senior partners at top levels and focuses on promoting employees from diverse backgrounds. PwC chairman and senior partner Robert E. Moritz spearheads the organization's diversity efforts, propagating conversations about race and diversity in the workplace through frequent interaction with CEOs and corporate leaders. As a reflection of his own beliefs on inclusion, Moritz credits the firm's diversity initiatives for its success.

AT&T is a leader in diversity and innovation, bringing people from all walks of life and all kinds of backgrounds in order to improve the human condition.[67] The company focuses on four pillars of diversity: employees, community, marketing, and suppliers. Chairman and CEO Randall Stephenson says, "Diversity and inclusion are

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[66] David Brown et al., "Culture and Engagement," DU Press, accessed July 5, 2017, https://dupress.deloitte.com/dup-us-en/focus/human-capital-trends/2015/employee-engagement-culture-human-capital-trends-2015.html.

[67] AT&T, "AT&T Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report" (2016), accessed March 18, 2017, http://about.att.com/content/dam/sitesdocs/ATT_DandI_2016_AR_FINAL.pdf.

powerful success drivers, making us a better company and a much stronger competitor. When you attract and retain the best people and seek out diverse backgrounds and experiences, you set yourself up for continued success. That's why we've always embraced diversity at AT&T—from our Board to our executives to our retail and service employees to our suppliers. It's a core part of who we are."[68]

Ernst & Young (EY) is one of the largest professional services and accounting firms. They utilize two main strategies for diversity: formal training and mentoring. Leaders throughout the company are responsible for mentoring, sponsoring, and advancing diverse talent and are recognized for leading the diversity charge. U.S. chairman and managing partner and American managing partner Steve Howe says, "At EY, diversity drives our fundamental purpose to help build a better working world. Our teams leverage and learn from all the diverse perspectives at the table, creating an inclusive environment where people feel free to be themselves, are more engaged, and can deliver innovative, exceptional service to our clients."[69]

Kaiser Permanente has been a leader in diversity for many years. Chairman and chief executive officer Bernard J. Tyson "personally signs off on executive compensation that is directly tied to diversity, diversity metrics and progress and goals, and achievement for supplier diversity."[70] According to the company, "Kaiser Permanente

[68] DiversityInc (2016), accessed March 18, 2017, http://www.diversityinc.com/att/.

[69] DiversityInc (2016), accessed March 18, 2017, http://www.diversityinc.com/EY/.

[70] DiversityInc (2016), accessed March 18, 2017, http://www.diversityinc.com/kaiser-permanente/.

fosters a highly diverse culture as a cornerstone of its mission and business strategy."[71]

The commitment to diversity starts directly at the top of the organization. Tyson stated,

> Kaiser Permanente's 70-year history is inextricably linked to and rooted in diversity and inclusion. Our founders refused to segregate and insisted on making our health plan available to all. Today, our organization and the people we are honored to serve are incredibly diverse.
>
> It is our collective differences that empower us every day, and enable us to consistently deliver high-quality and affordable health care to our members, customers, and communities.[72]

An organization's framework for diversity should include skills, abilities, and organizational demographics. Whether the business is accounting or phone services, diversity always starts with its leaders. Each group has an initiative to drive change and reap the benefits. The quality of service and the reach of a company expand as the workplace enlarges its own borders. If profitable businesses find value in diversity, the Church should also recognize it, especially when our leadership comes from Christ, our universal leader.

The Case for DEI in Education

A little girl named Linda Brown from Topeka, Kansas had to ride five miles on the bus to school every day even though a public school was just five blocks away from her house. Although Linda met all of the requirements to attend that public school, because of the color of her skin she was not allowed to until 1954 when the "separate but equal" doctrine was challenged. A class action lawsuit was filed against the Board of Education of Topeka Schools and the court struck down race-based segregation.

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[71] DiversityInc (kaiser-permanente).

[72] DiversityInc (kaiser-permanente).

Integration of students of color did not come easily, as politicians and southern activists resisted the integration process.

In 1957 President Dwight D. Eisenhower was forced to send National Guard troops to protect the first group of black students who entered high school. The Supreme Court decision in the 1954 Brown versus Board of Education case changed the political, economic, and social construction of America. As a result of the Brown case American public schools became integrated and ended legal segregation in the public. Affirmative action in the 1970s created a movement because of the slow progress of integration in school and employment.[73]

Importance of Diversity in Higher Education

According to W.E.B. DuBois, "The function of the university is not simply to teach breadwinning, or to furnish teachers for public schools or to be a center of polite society; it is above all, to be the organ that finds adjustment between real life and the growing knowledge of life, and adjustment which forms the secret of civilization."[74] Professors and teachers play an integral part in society by shaping the minds of future generations. They are tasked with preparing their students to enter the diverse world. It is of the utmost importance that students learn from different perspectives so they can enter a diverse society. "With the changing demographics of student populations and the emergence by 2060 of a 'minority majority' country, faculty and staff on university and

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[73] *Brown v. Board of Education* (2016), accessed July 10, 2017, http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h2776.html.

[74] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Pocket Books, 2005), 85.

college campuses must reflect the increasingly diverse nature of the United States population; homogeneity is not an alternative."[75]

Diversity brings many advantages within higher education.

- **Engagement** supports the notion that faculty service and the learning experience extend beyond the campus. It implies that a two-way relationship exists for students learning in an academic setting. Students learn from the wider campus experience as well as from those who work at the college (i.e., faculty and staff) and who are assigned to impart knowledge. As a result, "the engaged campus builds on higher education's contribution to society and history of higher education that has always been inextricably intertwined with the larger purposes of American society."

- **Talent management** speaks to the need for a diverse faculty and staff population in order to stay competitive in a global economy. Hiring and retaining qualified faculty and staff are critical to maintaining a competitive strategic advantage. There are many benefits to having a talented workforce. For example, "talented administrators enhance institutional capabilities through innovation, speed, efficiency, technological know-how, and social capabilities such as leadership, collaboration, communication, and a shared mind-set. Talented faculty bring innovation, disciplinary expertise, new research perspectives, and successful pedagogical approaches to the table."

- **Civic preparation** means that when students graduate from an institution with a diverse community they are better prepared to enter and meet the challenges of a

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[75] A. Evans and E. Chun, "Are the Walls Really Down? Behavioral and Organizational Barriers to Faculty and Staff Diversity," *ASHE Higher Education Report* 33 (2007), 2.

global society. Research supports the impact of diversity in promoting student learning outcomes (i.e., critical thinking, intellectual engagement) and democracy outcomes (i.e., citizenship, engagement, racial and cultural understanding) and in enriching the educational outcomes of undergraduates. The "vitality, stimulation, and educational potential of an institution are directly related to the composition of the student body, faculty, and staff."

- **Institution quality** points to how diversity and quality combined assist in the formation of a strong and durable constituency Institutional distinctiveness is formulated from an organization's culture comprising a common set of values that are translated into policies, procedures, and practices Diversity and quality provide an opportunity for institutional differentiation. With the support of effective leadership, diversity can transform institutional culture and pedagogical approaches and create a foundation for institutional distinctiveness.

- **Accreditation** is a focal concern of institutions of higher education. Without it they cannot offer credible degrees and students cannot receive financial aid. "Accrediting agencies have increasingly emphasized the importance of diversity, demanding evidence of concrete and tangible actions related to the incorporation of diversity in campus programs and practices."[76]

Diversity in Hiring in Higher Education

Even though affirmative action and antidiscrimination laws are in place, faculty members of color are underrepresented on higher education campuses. The number of college students from diverse backgrounds has increased but the number of faculty

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[76] Marie Gould. 2015. "Faculty/Staff Diversity," Research Starters: Education (Online Edition) Research Starters, EBSCO*host* (accessed July 4, 2017).

members has trailed far behind. According to statistics, 80 to 90 percent of faculty and staff in most institutions represent the predominant group.[77] Likewise the Church of God is far behind. Although members of the Church are from diverse backgrounds, Church leadership is predominantly one homogenous group. As we compare diversity within the educational realm specifically with Church of God leadership (the focus of researcher's study), the topic of diversity is an issue that needs to be discussed.

It is clear that U.S. colleges and universities have more to do to promote diversity. Likewise, churches must understand the biblical narrative of spiritual leadership and God's heart for diversity.

In Uma Jayakumar's study "Racial Privilege in the Professoriate: An Exploration of Campus Climate, Retention, and Satisfaction" a survey of faculty was conducted at 416 colleges and universities nationwide. Two- and four-year schools both private and public were included. According to the research, doctorates of color face structural barriers when it comes to promotion and tenure. This is the most contentious issue confronted by faculty of color. The research showed that faculty of color "felt isolated, lacked information about tenure and promotion, found their work environments unsupportive and struggled with gender bias, language barriers, lack of mentorship, and lack of support from superiors."[78]

> The negative impact of the promotion and tenure process on retention and job satisfaction for faculty of color and White faculty speaks to the need to reform the traditional reward structure of the academy. While institutional transformation is a slow and difficult process, the alternatives of failing to retain faculty of color and preserving a hostile racial climate are far more detrimental. Understanding the

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[77] Gould.

[78] Gould.

factors involved in broaching such change is the first step in the process of achieving greater equity in our society.[79]

Reasons for not hiring diverse faculty and staff include the following:

- **Perceptions:** Myths and assumptions exist regarding practices of hiring diverse faculty and staff in order to change a faculty's overall composition. One assumption is that those at the top support diversity initiatives and those on search committees consider diversity a top priority. Although senior leadership's support of diversity initiatives is critical, the institutional culture must support the initiatives in order for the practices and plans to succeed.

- **Resistance:** Institutions with a high level of resistance find that it is hard to change the culture and environment. People bring their baggage and stereotypes with them.

- **Sensitivity:** Three levels of intercultural sensitivity exist: defense, minimization, and acceptance. Individuals in the "defense" category see cultural differences as a threat and view diversity initiatives as promoting incompetence, affirmative action, and special privileges for candidates who represent diversification. Therefore, they deny such candidates equal opportunity and see them as inferior. "Minimizers" highlight ethnocentric similarities instead of differences, but only consider candidates who are like themselves and fit into the mainstream culture of their department or college. In other words, they support diversity as long as a candidate does not challenge the mainstream view. "Accepting" individuals are strong advocates of diversity.[80]

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[79] Gould.

[80] Gould.

In order to maintain diversity and promotion of diverse faculty, action must be taken. Some institutions utilize faculty mentor programs. For example, Saint Joseph's College in New York is a private undergraduate and master's college rooted in the liberal arts. It is the third most racially segregated college in the country with nearly 5,000 students and only 8 percent minority representation among faculty. St. Joseph's plan to address diversity involves a diversity committee made up of administrators, faculty, students, and community leaders. Board to Erase Racism is an effective community organization of which the president of St. Joseph's is a member. Diversity Initiative is also put into the budget that supports diversity projects.[81]

The importance of the Church lies in the community it creates. Anyone can have a relationship with God but the embrace of the Body of Christ is important. However, like the isolated professors of different races, there are divisions in the Church. When one racial group dominates and leads the Church, the minority often feel a sense of loneliness. Although they are part of the Church body, the lack of engagement in their identity triggers a separation. This negates the purpose of the Church. William Du Bois argued that education will allow one to see their capabilities, rather than reject them.[82] When Christians are called to love one another as themselves, they fully accept each other. When leaders accept each other fully, they will see the potential in the other, rather than rejecting it due to racial bias. In response to this bold faith, all parts of the Church body must be receptive, especially leadership.

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[81] Orlando Taylor, Cheryl Burgan Apprey, George Hill, Loretta McGrann and Jianping Wang, "*Diversifying the Faculty*," Association of American Colleges & Universities (December 29, 2014), accessed July 5, 2017, https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/diversifying-faculty.

[82] DuBois, 179.

When leaders act as minimizers they hire and lend authority to people who are like them, moving in the same circles or belonging to the same families. It is easy to approach the familiar and although this is not necessarily wrong, it does hinder prospects for diversity. People who are new and different, even when they are part of the same community, can subconsciously contribute to fear of change. However, leaders must accept change if they want their reach to extend farther than their own communities. Otherwise they run the risk of isolating the people they are trying to reach.

There is no denying that there is plenty of room for diverse practices and leadership in the contemporary Church, especially the Church of God denomination. The potential for improvement and learning is infinite.

The Case for DEI in Non-Profit Organizations

Affirmative action has given the spheres of business and education tools with which to implement diversity in the workforce. Organizations leave themselves open to criticism when they ignore efforts to improve diversity.

The term diversity is more sensitive among non-profit organizations than governmental entities or private sector organizations. Non-profit organizations present a favorable impression to the public and public disapproval can result in reduction of revenue.[83] Stakeholder satisfaction is vital for survival of non-profit organizations.

One advantage of a non-profit organization is its board of directors, and the biggest hurdle is creating a board that represents the community it serves and demonstrates diversity and inclusion. "The most effective boards are those that are able to bring together a diverse group of people that bring a range of thought and perspective,"

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[83] Shawn Wilson and Sharon Parsons. 2001. "Diversity in the World of Non-profit Organizations," *PA Times* 24, no. 1, 7. Business Source Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed July 5, 2017).

stated Jeri Eckhart-Queenan, a partner at The Bridgespan Group. A diverse board helps an organization understand the community's needs and brings forth an assortment of backgrounds, resources, and skills. Diversity on the board can also bring forth a diversity of donors to the organization.

Chairman of Campbell & Company Edith Falk stated, "What happens on so many boards is that they recruit people who look like themselves—that's their circle of friends." This is one of the main reasons for lack of minorities in the boardroom.[84]

According to the National Council of Non-profits, with "diversity of experience, expertise, and perspectives, a non-profit is in a stronger position to plan for the future, manage risk, make prudent decisions, and take full advantage of opportunities. A diverse board that is also sensitive to cultural differences is usually one that has a stronger capacity to attract and retain talented board members—as well as to be in touch with community needs."[85]

Why Diversity Is Useful for Non-profit Organizations

The non-profit organization can better access resources and funds when the board reflects the diversity of the community it serves, which brings in donors and/or mutual partners and policy makers. Diversity can improve decision-making because when a non-profit board faces difficult decisions, diverse perspectives enhance its ability to identify a full range of opportunities and risks.

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[84] Aloma Arter, "Diversity in the Nonprofit Board Room," *Top Nonprofits* (May 6, 2015), accessed July 5, 2017, https://topnonprofits.com/diversity-in-the-nonprofit-board-room/.

[85] "Diversity on Nonprofit Boards," *National Council of Nonprofits* (February 2, 2017), accessed July 5, 2017, https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/diversity-nonprofit-boards.

If a board is homogeneous and its members belong to the "same social circle" it will become stagnant and promotion of new board members will be difficult.[86]

Non-profit organizations' ultimate and common goal is to improve the world. Diversity allows for greater empathy and understanding for the communities being served.

Call for Action in the Church

Training and Mentoring Programs for Diversity within Church Structure

The success of any diversity program depends on how effectively an organization can tap into the unique perspectives, experiences, skills, and talents of individuals from various ethnic backgrounds. The same principle holds true for churches.

The Church must promote training and mentoring programs that take into account the cultural sensitivities of different ethnic backgrounds, and must address these issues in an unbiased and objective manner in open discussion forums.[87] It is easier for the Church to be complacent about the current situation and remain quiet than it is to develop mentoring and training programs that involve honest talk about lack of diversity within the Church. It is also comfortable for churches to pretend that issues of race do not exist.

Training is the first step in addressing issues of race and diversity. A general training program for current and new employees of the Church of God must be implemented. To ensure that a variety of voices are encouraged and heard, it is vital that the executive leaders of the Church of God be actively involved in the training and

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[86] "Diversity on Nonprofit Boards."

[87] Williams, 98.

diversity discussion. It is the only way such effort will be received or viewed as credible.[88]

Promoting Leaders from Diverse Groups

If the Church of God truly wants to create a diverse denomination, it should address the issue of the marginalization of ethnic minorities and respect the differences among believers from all backgrounds. Sermons often tell of the one true God and how all mankind is made in His image irrespective of cultural differences.

To practice what is being preached the Church of God must encourage the development of successful ministry leaders from diverse groups. To actualize racial equality within leadership, Randall Stephenson's advice on strong communication about diversity and displaying diversity should be taken seriously.

Acknowledging the Sense of Accountability That Comes with Power

As the body of Christ, we too are responsible for reaching out to all peoples of the world to enrich their spiritual lives with the message of Christ. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the kind of accountability that comes with positions of leadership in the Church and to eliminate segregations that reinforce prejudice. It would not only be appropriate but also extremely beneficial if Church leaders had accountability partners of a different ethnicity than their own. According to Scott Williams, having a diverse group of mentoring relationships will help develop diverse perspectives. He recommends that at least one of the mentoring relationships should be a multicultural relationship. This helps to broaden one's sense of diversity and fosters appreciation for diversity.[89]

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[88] Williams.

[89] Williams, 114.

Understanding the Importance of Drawing from Varied Perspectives

It is vital that the Church of God denomination understand the diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and capabilities that are available to help the Church grow and expand. An Executive Committee that is intra-divisional should be implemented in order to move forward with diversity and inclusion.

Keeping Jesus at the center, cross-race leadership structures can be enriching in attracting and retaining people from racially and culturally diverse groups.

Embracing and Learning from Collective Differences

Undoubtedly the Church of God would benefit from having a diverse perspective. This will allow us to reach the lost and broken world more effectively. Commitment to diversity is necessary for the Church of God as well. The reconciliation of all mankind to God no longer allows us to live ethnocentric lives. Cultural preferences stand in the way of progressive development of a diverse framework within the Church. If we are to create an environment that is conducive to diversity, the Church of God must be willing to accept, learn from, and be gracious in being led by individuals from different ethnic groups. It is not enough to preach about diversity without putting it into practice.

Conclusion

Diversity entices a newness that should be met with a sense of pride and excitement rather than fear. Its benefits will further carry the Church to all nations, which is Christianity's call to action.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE METHOD TO ACHIEVE DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

According to the researcher's findings in Scripture, God values diversity. Although society in general is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse, the Church of God Executive Committee does not fully pursue representation of ethnic diversity in leadership. In *Intentional Diversity* Jim Lo contends that "fear is a very common reaction to the 'shrinking' of the planet."[1] There are more opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to connect with each other. Although this can be seen as an exciting and positive opportunity, some find it threatening.[2] Many secular businesses have embraced diversity not only to increase sales and revenue but also to increase creativity, innovation, and loyalty among customers.

In June 2015 the researcher served as one of five panel members of diverse ethnic backgrounds who voiced their concerns about the lack of diversity within Church of God leadership. Between 100 and 150 audience members who attended the seminar had the same concerns. The seminar was nearly two hours long; people from the audience voiced their concerns and the panel discussed their questions and concerns. The seminar's concluding consensus was that it is unclear why the church is not promoting ethnically diverse people to leadership. One comment made during the discussion was that it has taken more than 100 years for an ethnically diverse leader (African-American) to be

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[1] Lo, 16.

[2] Lo.

elected to the Executive Committee (2008) since the Church of God organization began. The researcher observed that the issue of diversity in Church of God leadership is impacting people from diverse backgrounds.

Research Steps

Scripture Study

The first step in the research process was to look deeply into the Scriptures and pinpoint God's view on diversity. Jesus Christ is the perfect example of leadership in ministry. Scriptures show that Jesus' desire for diversity is to bring people together instead of having barriers (1 Cor. 12:13). Jesus faced pressure from His own people to exclude the Samaritans from His ministry but He chose to reach out to the Samaritan woman despite the opposition (John 4:9). Jesus did not withhold His salvation, healing (Luke 17:15-16), or mercy (Luke 9:52-54) from the Samaritans who were despised by others. He ministered to all, even though He was born a Jew. Jesus crossed cultural, gender, and national barriers throughout his ministry. He spent the night in Samaritan villages (John 4:39-42), spoke to Samaritan men and women on many occasions (Luke 17:11-19; John 4:4-26, 39-42), and offered them spiritual and physical healing (John 4:39-42; Luke 17:11-19). His disciples learned to lead from His example.

Luke, the writer of Acts, mentions diversity in leadership in the Church at Antioch. He refers to five leaders in the Church at Antioch by their leadership role and ethnicity (Act 13:1). Mark Deymaz asks, "So why did the church at Antioch care about the world? Because the church at Antioch reflected the world!"[3] His conclusion was that ethnic diversity in leadership can expand the Kingdom of God; therefore, the Church of

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[3] Deymaz, 23.

God leadership should pursue diversity within leadership roles regardless of ethnic cultural diversity. The Church is made up of different parts just as the human body is (1 Cor. 12:12-17). As we perceive different organs to be part of one body, so the Church must be able to perceive diverse ethnic groups to be part of the body of Christ and actively incorporate them, even into the realm of leadership.

Executive Leadership Presentation

In the second step, the researcher met with the General Overseer of the Church of God. The discussion focused on how the leadership in the Church of God does not reflect the people of ethnic diversity who are members of the Church. The researcher presented biblical findings on cultural diversity within the context of Scripture. The researcher pointed to how the leadership of the Church at Antioch was highly successful in representing ethnic diverse leadership within the community it served. Due to its ethnic representation, the church grew.

The leadership team discussed the findings among themselves and agreed that more ethnically diverse leadership must be represented and pursued in order to grow the Church. The general overseer agreed that the researcher should continue the study to help identify action plans to implement diversity.

Literature Review

The next step was to use literature review to show how the secular world pursues and uses diversity. The researcher chose to focus on diversity methods used by businesses, education, and non-profit organizations in the secular world. Inclusion of diversity in the realms of business, education, and non-profit organizations allows for a more collaborative structure that aims to assimilate people of different ethnicities to

achieve a specific goal. The present-day American workplace draws on varied perspectives of people from diverse backgrounds. The researcher used the literature review to compile action plans used by secular organizations that can be transferred to the Church of God denomination.

A secular organization and a church denomination have similar attributes even though their end goals are different. Scripture declares that the goal of the church is to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). The goal of the church is to create as many disciples for Christ as possible no matter what the individuals' ethnic backgrounds might be. The goal of some businesses is to make money by selling their product to as many people as possible no matter what the individuals' ethnic backgrounds might be. The business world uses different perspectives from diverse backgrounds to reach this goal. McDonald's is a global fast food industry which focuses on selling their product to as many people as possible. The McDonald's organization and its leadership invested energy and time to put in place a diverse workforce in a gradual process focused on both the ultimate sales objective and the needs of the minority community employees. Not only did this provide maximal productivity in their North American markets, it also provided an outlet to branch out and become a leading global provider in the fast food industry.

Research Method

The researcher conducted an exploratory qualitative case study to investigate perceptions among bishops and leaders in the Church of God with regard to promoting diversity in leadership. The problem of ethnic diversity in leadership is an issue faced by

many churches and organizations. In his research on business and other organizations'

implementation of diversity and diversity in leadership, the researcher encountered ideas

intended to help the Church of God organization to become more diverse in its

leadership.

The best type of case study for this project was an exploratory qualitative case

study because it can be used to answer a question that needs to be explored. This type of

case study can allow the researcher to identify believed links to real life perceptions that

are much too difficult for an experimental strategy or survey. Therefore the researcher

sought to answer the following question: "Why does the Church of God denomination

with its millions of ethnically diverse members fail to represent ethnic diversity within its

leadership? What action steps can the Church of God denomination take to promote

diversity in its leadership?" This was the information sought by the researcher.

The researcher used an exploratory qualitative case study to conduct the research.

According to Michael Patton, qualitative research can use a small number of participants

to build meaning.[4] The case study method allowed information gathering and a more in-

depth investigation through interviews with pastors and leaders in order to understand

their perspectives on diversity in leadership. Robert Yin states that case studies seek to

understand a contemporary phenomenon, lack of diversity, in its real-life context.[5] The

case study research enabled the researcher to obtain information from individuals who

currently hold leadership positions and can speak from personal experience. The

researcher collected the data by asking questions during interviews. Yin says there must

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[4] Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods,* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2001), 14.

[5] Yin, 18.

be a firm grasp of the problem being studied in order for the researcher to ask good questions.[6]

The questions were developed after evaluation of the biblical and literature review. The researcher developed questions that attempted to answer "why" and "how" in order to deepen the understanding. According to the data, to date a comfortably homogeneous culture has dominated the Church of God structure, including leadership. Statistics show a distinct lack of diversity in the Church of God leadership, with more white people serving as bishops. According to the data, 90 percent of the Administrative Bishops are white and only 10 percent are African-American.

Ninety percent of the employees at the Church of God International Headquarters are white and the remaining 10 percent are Hispanics and African-Americans, while more than 185 nations are served. The data reveal the lack of diversity within the Church of God organization and its leadership.

A 2014 study in *Time* magazine argued that the fact that "86.3% of local churches throughout this country fail to have at least 20% diversity in their attending membership is one reason the American Church has been rendered impotent in attempting to speak on what is, perhaps, the most critical issue of our time: lingering, systemic, racial injustice in a supposedly post-racial society."[7] While the business world has caught on, the Church still remains 93 percent segregated nearly 50 years after Martin Luther King, Jr. declared Sunday to be the most segregated day of the week.[8] The literature review indicates the

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[6] Yin, 69.

[7] Salguero et al.

[8] Salguero et al.

need for more research on the current perception of diversity within the Church of God. The research questions were developed in order to understand the different perceptions.

The interviews allowed the researcher to understand the participants' perceptions of diversity in leadership. It was especially important for the researcher to examine how the leaders' perceptions are framed because there are so few leaders of ethnic diversity in the leadership of the Church of God.

The researcher's focus was on understanding the perceptions of the leaders within the Church of God in relation to opportunities for promoting diversity within leadership. Case studies are the preferred method when "how" or "why" questions are being posed.[9] With regard to determining whether a case study is the right method to use for a research project, Yin says, "There's no formula, but your choice depends in large part on your research question(s). The more that your questions seek to explain some present circumstance (e.g., 'how' or 'why' some social phenomenon works), the more that the case study method will be relevant."[10] The question the researcher sought to answer was "How can the Church of God denomination implement diversity in its leadership?"

Harvard Business School professor John Hammonds says, "Simply stated, the case method calls for discussion of real-life situations that business executives have faced."[11] Businesses have implemented diversity to increase revenue and promote growth of the company. A case study was the appropriate method because lack of diversity and its promotion in leadership is an issue that affects the Church leadership.

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[9] Yin, 2.

[10] Yin, 4.

[11] John S. Hammond, *Learning by the Case Method*, Harvard Business School (April 16, 2002), accessed April 3, 2018, https://www.study.net/sample/pdf/Learning_by_the_Case_Method.pdf, 1.

The exploratory case study research method was appropriate for the researcher's

ministry hopes. "Through case studies, researchers hope to gain in-depth understanding

of situation and meaning for those involved.… insights gleaned from case studies can

directly influence policy, procedures, and future research."[12] The researcher has been

with the Church of God denomination for the last twenty years and wanted to investigate

whether what he saw in leadership was an accurate evaluation as seen from different

perspectives. The researcher saw that it was important to listen to the leaders themselves,

and the best method to listen to others' thoughts and perceptions is a case study. To

obtain information from leaders from diverse backgrounds in order to convince the

Church of God leadership that changes are necessary, it was vital for the researcher to

suggest ideas for implementing diversity as well as the changes that are necessary. Thus

it was essential for the researcher to explore different perceptions of lack of diversity in

leadership through the eyes of current leaders and those who have worked for the Church

of God for a long period of time. A case study provided the opportunity to increase the

understanding of diversity from different viewpoints.

This case study identified common themes that were discovered in the interviews.

It was important to hear the participants' perspectives in order to suggest an action plan

for diversity. Through the different perspectives the researcher identified the different

perceptions and practices of leaders that limit diversity in leadership roles.

After the questionnaire was developed, the researcher began the interviews in

December 2017. The questionnaire is included in Appendix A. The researcher conducted

interviews with a set of open-ended questions, which was beneficial because it allowed

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[12] Bob Algozzine and Dawson Hancock, *Doing Case Study Research* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2017), 10.

the researcher to ask a common set of questions and then follow up with more questions. Interviewing allowed the researcher to talk directly with each person and request any necessary clarifications. This allowed deep dialog to occur and developed more data.

The researcher met with the Second General Overseer of the Church of God and was given the names of appropriate potential participants. The researcher began by emailing a brief description of the project to potential participants, twenty of whom responded. When the researcher attempted to set up interview times, twelve individuals backed out. The researcher then contacted the eight individuals who accepted the invitation to discuss the topic, and conducted the interviews face-to-face in one-on-one interviews. Each participant was interviewed individually for approximately 30 to 60 minutes, and the researcher took notes during the interview. Due to time constraints and travel schedules, some of the interviews were conducted via email. Before each interview the researcher described the purpose of the interview.

The researcher reached out to more individuals for interviews and after many attempts to recruit participants added twenty-two more individuals to participate. In all, the researcher interviewed thirty participants.

Each participant was asked for permission to use the data collected from them in the project writeup. All of the participants indicated that they did not want their names identified in the research writeup.

After the interviews were completed and the notes prepared, the researcher emailed copies of transcripts of conversations and responses to the thirty participants to strengthen data validity or "member check." W. Paul Vogt defines "member check" as "the practice of researchers submitting their data or findings to their informants

(members) in order to make sure they correctly represented what their informants told them. This is perhaps most often done with data such as interview summaries; it is less often done with interpretation built on those data."[13] This step allowed the researcher to eliminate any misunderstandings that might have occurred. It also allowed the individuals to review the data and to agree or disagree with what was compiled. One participant asked to make additions to the interview via email and the other participants agreed that the compilation correctly represented their responses.

Analysis

After all of the interviews were conducted the researcher sought the most productive way to interpret or analyze the information. According to Yin, "analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units."[14] The researcher used a constant comparative method, which is also known as grounded theory. "Grounded theory was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss who believed that theory could emerge through qualitative data analysis."[15] Grounded theory allows the researcher "a way of arriving at a theory suited to its supposed uses."[16] Use of a grounded theory method for the field research allowed the flexibility essential to improve the findings as set of beliefs that developed from the research. A researcher using a grounded theory should not have predetermined ideas

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[13] W. Paul Vogt and R. Burke Johnson, *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2005), 190-191.

[14] Yin, 127.

[15] Sharon M. Kolb, "Grounded Theory and the Constant Comparative Method: Valid Research Strategies for Educators," *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 3, 83-86, Scholarlink Research Institute Journals, 2012.

[16] Barney G. Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 2012), 3.

about their research, but should allow the stories of the participants to form the direction

of the research.[17] The researcher used "multiple stages of collecting, refining, and

categorizing the data."[18] Constant comparison method is vital in "developing theory that

is grounded in the data."[19] The researcher should allow the results to develop from the

data and the categories of data that are being developed. During the first stage, the

researcher continuously sorted through the data that was collected and analyzed the

information. This step involved reviewing data from the researcher's interviews and

observations and comparing it to other data that was collected from the researcher's

observations in the field. The researcher noted any emerging themes and the data was

reviewed again. During the second stage, the researcher kept track of common themes

that appeared, noting categories in the margins. The researcher also used flash cards to

help keep track of categories. The researcher looked for both similarities and differences

in order to classify provisional patterns in which categories could be compared to each

other. During the third stage, the researcher then gathered the data according to the

pattern in order to develop a theory. During the fourth stage, the researcher analyzed all

the data by giving attention to triangulating data and looking at the data among

participants and within each participant. The analytic technique of triangulation was used

after patterns were discovered. "Triangulation is a means of checking the integrity of the

inferences one draws. It can involve the use of multiple data sources, multiple

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[17] Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications 2006), 17.

[18] Kolb.

[19] Hennie Boeije, "A Purposeful Approach to the Constant Comparative Method in the Analysis of Qualitative Interviews," *Quality & Quantity* 36, 391-409, Kluwer Academic Publisher, 2002.

investigators, multiple theoretical perspectives, and/or multiple methods."[20] The

researcher accomplished triangulation by bringing together what he heard and observed

in the interviews.

"Data can be collected from observations, interviews, or other research

sessions."[21] While the researcher collects the data the researcher can use a variety of

methods to "elicit information pertaining to the study."[22] Coding is the process of

analyzing data.[23] The researcher studied the data numerous times before attempting to

code the data. This allowed the researcher to comprehend the data in greater depth and to

code with confidence. The researcher examined the data and pondered the biblical review

and literature review, and was thus better able to analyze the participants' perceptions.

As the researcher continued to gather new formal and informal data (for example,

via email) the researcher began to perceive more themes in the analysis. Coding uses

three phases of analyses—open coding, axial coding, and selective coding—to

understand a whole picture of the information gathered using the data collection

process.[24] During the open phase of coding, the researcher continuously looked at the

data and asked questions about what was and was not understood. During the axial

coding phase the researcher looked at how the data were "pieced together in new ways

after open coding allowing connections between categories."[25] During the selective

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[20] Thomas A. Schwandt, *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry,* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc., 2007), 298.

[21] Kolb.

[22] Kolb.

[23] Kolb.

[24] Kolb.

[25] Kolb.

coding phase the researcher identified and chose essential categories, analytically connected them to other categories, confirmed those similarities and relationships, then looked at categories that needed more modification and development.

The researcher looked at the comparing patterns that occurred, then was able to improve the codes and omit others that were not related to the data. Throughout the entire process the researcher read, examined, interpreted, and determined common themes on a constant basis to understand the perceptions of the participants. "Data saturation occurs when the researcher is no longer receiving information that has not previously been noted."[26] Once the researcher reached the point of data saturation, data coding was stopped because the researcher did not observe new themes emerging from the analysis.

Participants

The thirty research participants in this case ranged in age from 35 to over 60 years. A demographic survey was sent via email to all of the participants. The demographic survey is included as Appendix B. The following are descriptions of the participants. These individuals preferred to remain anonymous; therefore the names provided below are pseudonyms.

The first interview was with Abraham. He is in the age group 55 to 59 years. Abraham has been with the Church of God between 25 and 30 years. The interview was conducted on December 12, 2018. He greeted the researcher with a handshake and led the way to his office. The meeting took place at a round table in Abraham's office where Abraham and the researcher sat across from each other. The researcher gave an

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[26] Kolb.

introduction to the study and asked the questions. It was clear that Abraham had a deep knowledge of the Bible.

The second interview was with Thomas. The interview was conducted on January 16, 2018. The researcher was greeted with a handshake and led to Thomas' office. Thomas sat behind his desk while the researcher sat on a chair across from him. The interview lasted only 15 to 20 minutes. The researcher gave an introduction to the study and asked the questions. Thomas was very direct and brief in his responses.

The third interview was with Judah. He is in the age group 45 to 54. Judah has been with the Church of God between 20 and 35 years. The researcher reached out to Judah to ask about a face-to-face interview, but due to his busy schedule he was not able to meet. The researcher emailed the questions to Judah and he responded via email. Judah is very knowledgeable about the Bible and was eager to speak about this study.

The fourth interview was with Ruth. Ruth is in the age group 60 years and over. The researcher reached out to Ruth to ask about a face-to-face interview, but due to her travel schedule she was not able to meet. Ruth was very willing to speak to the researcher and suggested discussing the research topic via telephone interview. The interview was conducted on January 22, 2018. The researcher gave an introduction to the study and asked the questions. The interview lasted about an hour. Ruth was articulate, focused, and energetic.

The fifth interview was with Isaiah. He is in the 45 to 54 age group. Although the researcher tried on many occasions to set up a one-on-one interview with Isaiah, due to his very busy schedule a face-to-face interview could not be conducted. The researcher spoke to Isaiah via telephone and found him to be very willing to speak regarding the

topic. At Isaiah's suggestion the researcher emailed the questions to him, preceded by an introduction to the project. The researcher sent the questions on January 21, 2018 and Isaiah replied the next day, January 22, 2018. His answers were very short and concise.

The sixth interview was conducted with Elijah. He is in the 45 to 54 age group. The interview was conducted in Elijah's office on January 24, 2018. Elijah greeted the researcher with a firm handshake and the two sat at a round table across from each other. The interview lasted about 45 minutes. Elijah was very articulate in his responses and aware of the issue raised during the interview. He impressed the researcher as a thoughtful and caring individual.

The seventh interview was with Donald. Donald is in the 55 to 59 age group. He has been with the Church of God 25 to 30 years. The researcher met with Donald at a local restaurant in Cleveland, Tennessee per the participant's request for a more intimate conversation. The interview was conducted on January 31, 2018. Donald was very cordial and open to understanding the study. After the researcher gave an introduction to the topic the interview lasted about an hour.

The eighth interview was with Jacob. When the researcher spoke to Jacob about interviewing him for this research Jacob was eager to speak regarding the topic. Because he was unable to meet for a face-to-face interview with the researcher Jacob asked that the questions be emailed. The questionnaire was sent to Jacob on February 5, 2018 and his responses were received on February 8, 2018. The answers to the questions were concise and to the point.

The ninth interview was with Micah. Micah is in the 45 to 54 age group. He has been with the Church of God between 25 and 30 years. Because he was unable to meet

for a face-to-face interview with the researcher Micah asked that the questions be emailed. The questionnaire responses were received on February 15, 2018. The answers to the questions were most insightful.

The tenth interview was with Stephen. He is in the 45 to 54 age group. The researcher interviewed Stephen on April 17, 2018 in the researcher's office. The researcher and the participant greeted each other with a firm handshake and the two sat across from each other at a table. The interview lasted about 30 to 40 minutes. Stephen was very pleasant.

The eleventh interview was with Aaron. He is in the 45 to 54 age group. Aaron has been with the Church of God for more than 30 years. The researcher interviewed Aaron on April 19, 2018 at a local Mexican restaurant. The two sat across from each other at a table. Aaron greeted the researcher with a firm handshake and a smile. The interview lasted about 45 minutes. Aaron was very cordial and enthusiastic. He impressed the researcher as a thoughtful and caring individual.

The twelfth interview was with Ezekiel. The researcher met with Ezekiel in the researcher's office on May 3, 2018. The researcher greeted Ezekiel as he walked into the office. The two sat across from each other at a table during the interview, which lasted about 30 minutes. Ezekiel was very polite and friendly.

The thirteenth interview was with Asher. He is in the 55 to 59 age group. The interview was conducted in the researcher's office on May 7, 2018. The researcher and Asher greeted each other with a firm handshake, then sat across from each other at a table in the office. Asher was a pleasant individual with a great deal of knowledge. The interview lasted 35 to 40 minutes.

The fourteenth interview was with Joshua. Because he was unable to meet for a face-to-face interview with the researcher Joshua asked that the questions be emailed. The questionnaire responses were received on May 10, 2018. The answers to the questions were most insightful.

The fifteenth interview was with Jared. He is in the 45 to 54 age group. The researcher interviewed Jared via Skype on May 15, 2018. Both parties were in their offices during the interview. The researcher greeted Jared, who was very cordial and excited to participate in the interview. The interview lasted for 30 to 40 minutes.

The sixteenth interview was with Jesse. He is in the 45 to 54 age group. The researcher conducted a phone interview with Jesse on May 17, 2018. Jesse was willing to speak to the researcher but mentioned that he had time constraints. The interview lasted about 20 to 25 minutes. Jesse was very cordial and friendly.

The seventeenth interview was with Philip. Philip is in the 45 to 54 age group. The researcher called Philip to set up an interview, but was unable to do so due to Philip's time constraints and travel schedule. Philip was very polite on the phone and most willing to help out. He said he could answer the questions if the questionnaire was sent via email. The researcher sent the email on May 22, 2018 and Philip responded on May 23, 2018.

The eighteenth interview was with Levi. The researcher met with Levi at a local restaurant on May 29, 2018. The researcher arrived at the restaurant first, and when Levi arrived he greeted the researcher with a firm handshake and a friendly smile. The interview lasted 30 to 40 minutes. Levi was very friendly and focused on the topic.

The nineteenth interview was with Peter. When the researcher called Peter to set up a time for the interview Peter was very busy with traveling, but he was willing to do the interview. He asked if the questions could be sent via email so he could answer it between his travels. The researcher sent the questionnaire via email on May 30, 2018 and it was returned on June 1, 2018.

The twentieth interview was with Paul, in the 55 to 59 age group. The researcher conducted a phone interview with Paul on June 6, 2018. The interview lasted for 25 to 30 minutes. Paul was very friendly when answering the questions.

The twenty-first interview was with Ruben, in the 55 to 59 age group. The researcher conducted the interview on June 12, 2018. The interview lasted for 30 to 35 minutes.

The twenty-second interview was with Noah. He is in the 45 to 54 age group. When the researcher contacted Noah to set up an interview he suggested a phone interview. The interview was conducted on June 14, 2018 and lasted about 30 to 35 minutes. Noah was very responsive and cordial throughout the entire interview.

The twenty-third interview was with Luke. When the researcher contacted Luke to set up an interview his extremely busy schedule prevented him from doing so. The researcher suggested emailing the questionnaire and Luke agreed. The questionnaire was sent via email on June 18, 2018 and Luke responded on June 21, 2018.

The twenty-fourth interview was with Moses, in the 55 to 59 age group. When the researcher contacted Moses to set up an interview time it took a while for Moses to respond. He agreed to meet for lunch to do the interview. The researcher met with Moses

at a local restaurant on June 21, 2018; the two greeted each other with a handshake. Moses was very approachable and responsive. The interview lasted for 30 to 35 minutes.

The twenty-fifth interview was with Silas, in the 55 to 59 age group. When the researcher conducted the interview on June 22, 2018 the researcher was in his office and Silas was in his office. Silas greeted the researcher and asked how he was doing. He was very pleasant to interview. His knowledge was well rounded. The interview lasted 35 to 40 minutes.

The twenty-sixth interview was with Josiah, in the 45 to 54 age group. When the researcher contacted him to set up an interview Josiah said he was unable to meet because he was traveling overseas. The researcher asked if he would be willing to complete a questionnaire via email and Josiah agreed to do so. The questionnaire was sent via email on June 23, 2018 and Josiah responded on June 25, 2018.

The twenty-seventh interview was with Joseph, in the 55 to 59 age group. Joseph met the researcher with a firm handshake and invited him to sit at the round table in his office. The researcher and Joseph sat across from each other during the interview. The interview lasted 30 to 35 minutes, and the researcher was astonished by the depth of Joseph's knowledge.

The twenty-eighth interview was with Isaac, in the 45 to 54 age group. The researcher had an interview with Isaac on June 27, 2018 with the researcher in his office and Isaac in his church office. The interview lasted 20 to 25 minutes and Isaac was very cordial during the meeting.

The twenty-ninth interview was with Simon. The interview was conducted via telephone on June 28, 2018 and lasted 20 to 25 minutes. Simon was very pleasant during the interview.

The thirtieth interview was with Gideon. Simon asked if the questions could be emailed. The researcher sent the questionnaire via email on June 27, 2018 and Simon responded on June 28, 2018.

Conclusion

The researcher conducted an exploratory qualitative case study of thirty individuals who are leaders within the Church of God organization. The case study allowed the researcher to investigate perceptions among the leaders of the Church of God with regard to promoting diversity in leadership.

CHAPTER FIVE
PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY FROM CHURCH OF GOD LEADERS

The researcher conducted an exploratory qualitative case study to determine why the Church of God denomination lacks in diversity in leadership. As a person of color and a pastor in the Church of God denomination, the topic of diversity is important to the researcher. The Church of God denomination has been in existence for 130 years and in its entire history no person of color served on the International Executive Committee until the year 2008. As a person of color it was important to the researcher to understand why there is lack of diversity in leadership. As a minister of color in the Church of God denomination, the researcher speculated that there was lack of diversity in the denomination itself. The researcher conducted thirty interviews to investigate why diversity is lacking.

The Church of God denomination serves 185 countries and has over seven million members worldwide. The research question asked why a denomination as large as the Church of God fails to represent ethnic diversity effectively, and whether it can pursue ethnic diversity in leadership. The field study question that the researcher sought to answer was how can the Church of God promote ethnic diversity? A case study was conducted to answer the field study question. "Through case studies, researchers hope to gain in-depth understanding of [the] situation and meaning for those involved.… insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, procedures, and future

research."[1] The field research first consisted of interviews and observations. The goal of this step was to understand the different perceptions of various leaders. The next step was to discover theories from the data. The goal of this phase was to determine whether any common theories and themes were gathered from the data. The third step was to meet with the leadership of the Church of God organization and go over the results. The goal of this phase was to deliver the findings from the research to the leaders of the Church of God.

Participant Demographics

The researcher interviewed thirty participants for the research. The following chart shows the racial/ethnic backgrounds of the participants.
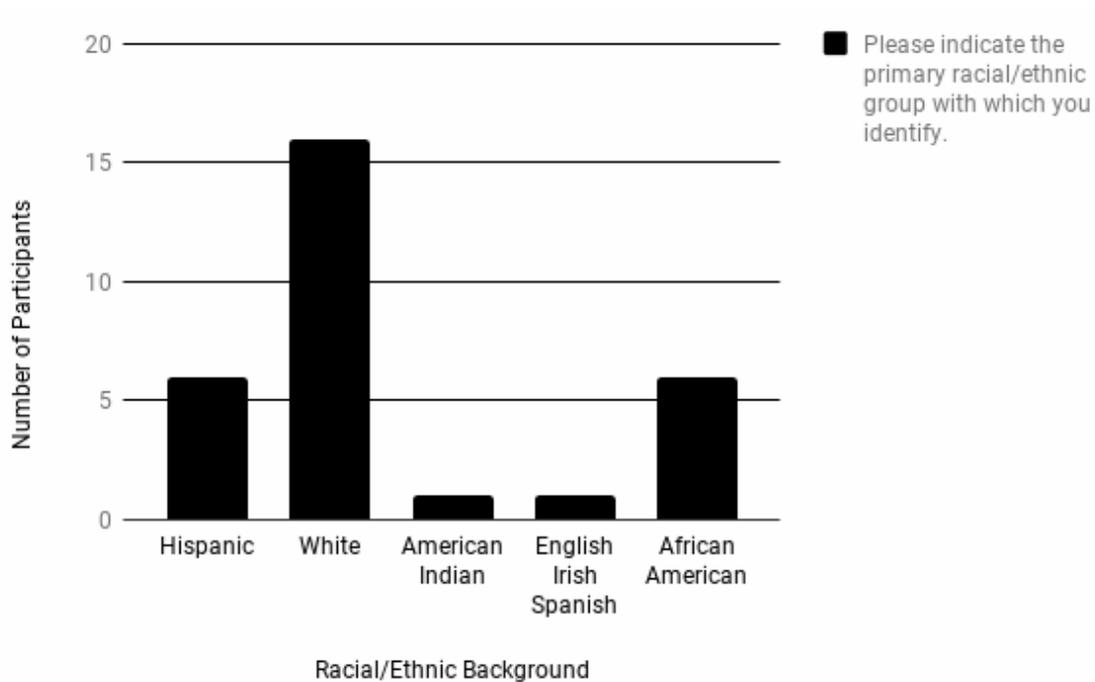
Figure 1. Participants' Racial/Ethnic Backgrounds

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[1] Algozzine and Hancock, 10.

Each participant was asked to identify their racial/ethnic background. Sixteen participants identified themselves as white, six as Hispanic, and six as African-American. One participant identified himself as American Indian and one as English, Irish, and Spanish.

In order to remain objective, the researcher asked a few questions that allowed the participants to express their viewpoint on diversity. The following chart shows the participants' views on ethnic diversity in the Church of God leadership.
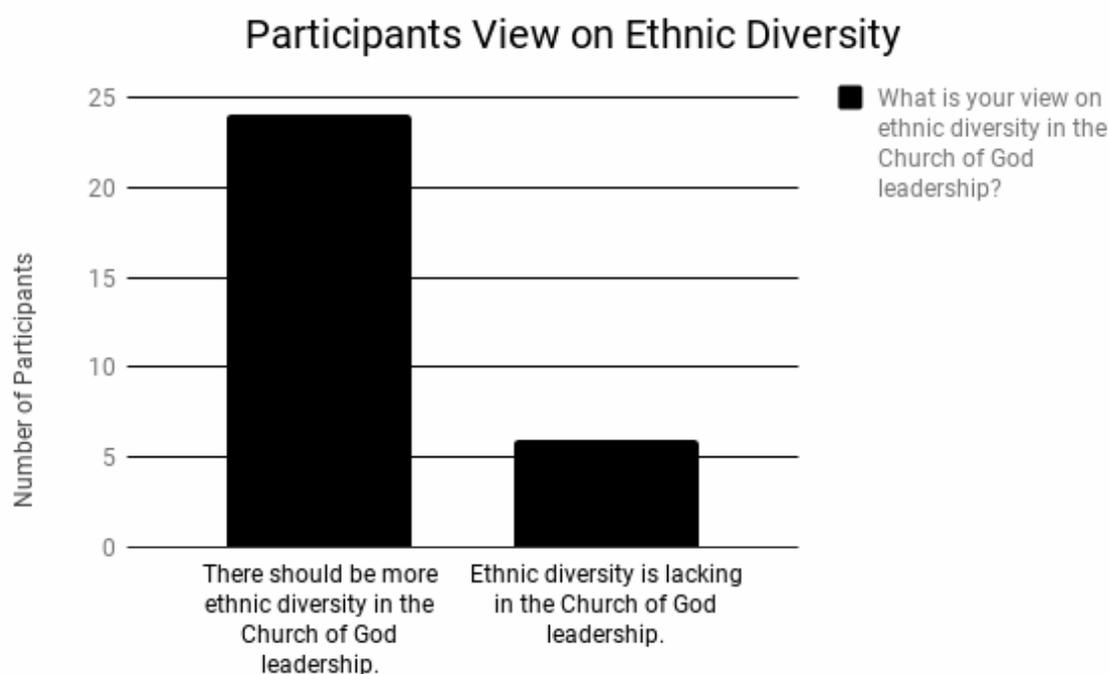
Figure 2. Participants' Views on Ethnic Diversity

The participants were asked about their viewpoint regarding diversity. Four choices were given: 1) there should be more ethnic diversity in the Church of God leadership, 2) ethnic diversity is lacking in the Church of God leadership, 3) there is enough ethnic diversity in the Church of God leadership, and 4) there is too much ethnic diversity in the Church of God leadership. None of the participants indicated that there is

enough or too much ethnic diversity. Twenty-four of the thirty participants said there should be more ethnic diversity in the Church of God leadership and six said ethnic diversity is lacking in the Church of God leadership.

The following chart shows the participants' views on the adequacy of ethnic diversity in the Church of God leadership.
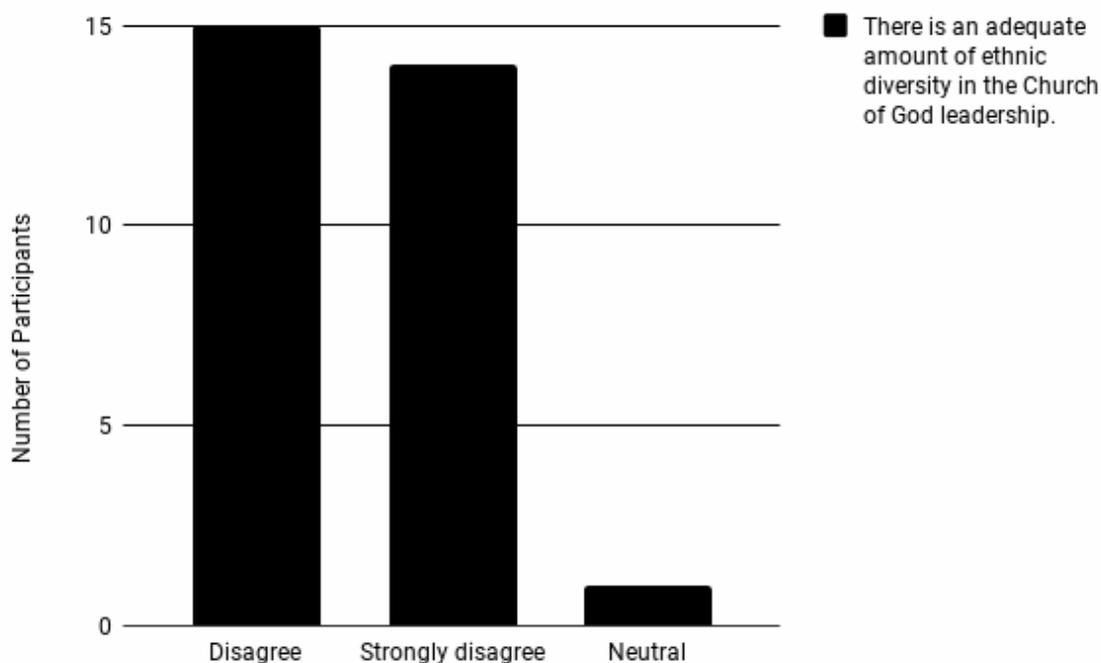
Figure 3. Participants' Views on Adequacy of Ethnic Diversity

The participants were asked about their viewpoint on the following statement: *There is an adequate amount of ethnic diversity in the Church of God leadership.* The choices given were: *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neutral*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. Fourteen participants strongly disagreed with the statement that an adequate amount of diversity is represented in leadership. Fifteen participants disagreed with the statement and one individual said they were neutral. None of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

The following chart shows the participants' viewpoints regarding whether ethnic diversity among the Church of God leadership reflects the population in which the Church of God serves.
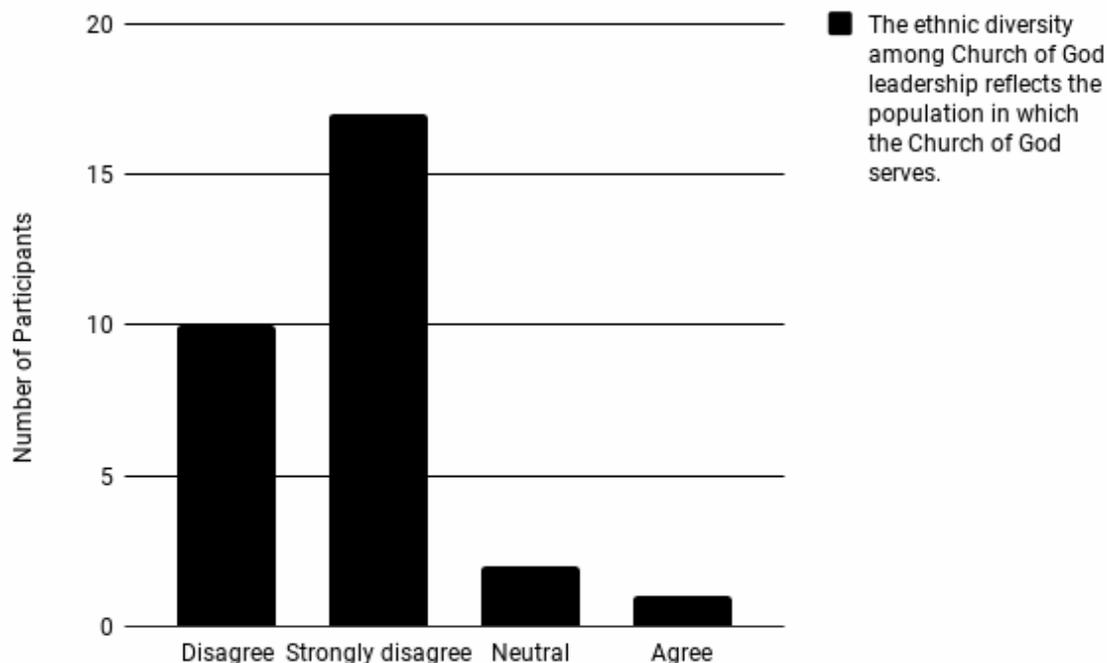
Figure 4. Participants' Views on Diversity Reflecting the Church of God Population

The participants were asked whether ethnic diversity among the Church of God leadership reflects the population in which the Church of God serves. The choices were: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. Seventeen participants strongly disagreed and ten participants disagreed. Two participants were neutral and one agreed that leadership reflects the population in which the Church of God serves. None of the participants strongly agreed with the statement.

Open-ended Interview Questions

Analysis

A set of open-ended questions were asked of all thirty participants. Twenty-nine

of the participants were male and one was female.

Question 1: Current level of the Church of God's vision for cultural diversity in leadership

Participants were asked about the current level of the Church of God's vision for

cultural diversity in the leadership. Each response was coded and counted to create data

points. From the thirty participants, 41 responses were reported for the current vision.

Table 2 lists the responses to question 1 and the frequency of each response.

Table 2. Responses to Question 1

Response	Number of Occurrences
Work in progress	7
Low lack of vision	5
Understanding is there	4
Vision takes time	3
Working to improve	3
Agree with current vision	2
Lack of strategic plan	2
Moderate vision	2
Confined to attribution	1
Confined to placement	1
Confined to challenges of visibility of potential leaders	1
Reality is challenging	1
Not discussed in public	1
Improvement is lacking	1
Representation needed	1
Room for improvement	1
Vision is more inclusive	1
Unacceptable lack of vision	1
Acceptable current vision	1
Issue of implementation	1
More awareness needed	1

According to Table 2, of the 41 responses *work in progress* was the most common response (7) to question 1. It was followed closely by *low lack of vision* with five responses and *understanding is there* with four responses.

The responses from Table 2 were assigned to different categories in Table 3. Four different categories were identified: *acceptable vision*, *lack of vision*, *work in progress*, and *lack of progress*. Twenty-two of 41 responses point to work in progress. Three of 41 responses indicate that the current vision is acceptable and agreed upon. Nine of 41 responses show a lack of vision and seven show a lack of progress. A little over half of these responses sense a gradual movement towards cultural diversity in the Church of God.

Table 3. Categories for Responses to Question 1

Category	Responses
Acceptable vision (3)	Acceptable current vision (1) Agree with current vision (2)
Lack of vision (9)	Low lack of vision (5) Lack of strategic plan (2) Reality is challenging (1) Unacceptable lack of vision (1)
Work in progress (22)	Work in progress (7) Understanding is there (4) Moderate vision (2) More awareness needed (1) Vision is more inclusive (1) Room for improvement (1) Working to improve (3) Vision takes time (3)
Lack of progress (7)	Confined to attribution (1) Confined to placement (1) Confined to challenges of visibility of potential leaders (1) Not discussed in public (1) Improvement is lacking (1) Representation needed (1) Issue of implementation (1)

In Table 4 the information in Table 3 was recategorized according to whether or not the response to the vision was positive or negative.

Table 4. Effect of the Current Belief in the Vision

Category (total occurrences)	Sub-category (total occurrences)	Responses
Positive understanding of the current state of vision (25)	Acceptable vision (3)	Acceptable current vision (1) Agree with current vision (2)
	Work in progress (22)	Work in progress (7) Understanding is there (4) Moderate vision (2) More awareness needed (1) Vision is more inclusive (1) Room for improvement (1) Working to improve (3) Vision takes time (3)
Negative understanding of the current state of vision (16)	Lack of vision (9)	Low lack of vision (5) Lack of strategic plan (2) Reality is challenging (1) Unacceptable lack of vision (1)
	Lack of progress (7)	Confined to attribution (1) Confined to placement (1) Confined to challenges of visibility of potential leaders (1) Not discussed in public (1) Improvement is lacking (1) Representation needed (1) Issue of implementation (1)

Table 4 shows the correlation between vision and progress being made. In the *positive understanding* category responses were placed in sub-categories related to *acceptable vision* and *work in progress*. In the *negative understanding* category responses were place in sub-categories related to *lack of vision* and *lack of progress*. Both sub-categories of *positive understanding* show the current state of the vision going toward a more acceptable and beneficial state of cultural diversity in the Church. This makes the connection between the current vision and a positive understanding. There were 22

responses in the *work in progress* category aligned with the vision currently taking place.

However, a handful of responses indicate that the current state of the vision is not yet at

an acceptable level of diversity in leadership. Both sub-categories within the *negative*

understanding category express a lack of implementation of the vision for cultural

diversity within the Church's leadership. This is significant because it shows a spectrum

of understanding of the vision within the Church's leadership. The overall significance is

somewhat split between the responses. Both the positive and the negative understandings

of this vision have close levels of representation.

Question 2: Intentionality given by the Church of God leadership to include diversity in leadership

The participants were asked an open-ended question about intentionality on the

part of the Church of God leadership to include diversity in leadership positions. From

the thirty participants, 48 responses were reported. Table 5 presents the responses given

by the participants.

Table 5. Responses to Question 2

Response	Number of Occurrences
Work in progress	14
Effort progress	6
Challenging	4
Intentional effort initiated	3
Diversity is discussed often	2
Leadership is intentional	2
Lack of qualified appointment of leaders	2
Needs qualified individuals of leadership regardless of race/ethnicity	4
Predictable appointments	2
Lack of opportunities for colored	2
Same states/regions serve as only appointment for people of color	2
Moderate intentionality	2
No follow-through on efforts	1
Some intentionality shown in featured speakers	1
Lack of intentionality regarding cultural diversity	1

The most frequent response given by the participants was *work in progress* with

14 occurrences. The next most frequent response was *effort in progress* with six.

Table 6. Categories for Responses to Question 2

Category	Responses
Appropriate amount of intentionality/follow through (4)	Diversity is discussed often (2) Leadership is intentional (2)
Moderate amount of intentionality/follow through (26)	Work in progress (14) Effort in progress (6) Intentional effort initiated (3) Moderate intentionality (2) Some intentionality shown in featured speakers (1)
Lack of intentionality/follow through (18)	Challenging (4) Lack of qualified appointment of leaders (2) Needs qualified leadership individuals regardless of race/ethnicity (4) Predictable appointments (2) Lack of opportunities for colored (2) Same states/regions serve as only appointment for people of color (2) No follow-through on efforts (1) Lack of intentionality regarding cultural diversity (1)

Table 6 lists the categories assigned to the responses to question 2 based on the responses from Table 5. There were three different categories: *appropriate amount of intentionality/follow through*, *moderate amount of intentionality/follow through*, and *lack of intentionality/follow through*. *Moderate amount of intentionality* had the most responses with 26, followed by *lack of progress* with 18. Eighteen of 48 responses indicated a lack of intentionality among the leadership toward intentional diversity in leadership. Thirty of 48 responses indicate a positive intentional effort on the part of leadership. Over 60 percent of the responses express a sensible degree of intentionality given to diversity.

In Table 7 the information from Table 6 was recategorized according to whether or not progress was being made toward intentionality in diversity.

Table 7. View of Intentionality in Cultural Diversity

Category (total occurrences)	Sub-category (total occurrences)	Responses
Positive progress in Intentionality (30)	Appropriate amount (20)	Work in progress (14) Effort in progress (6)
	Moderate amount (10)	Intentional effort initiated (3) Moderate intentionality (2) Some intentionality shown in featured speakers (1) Leadership is intentional (2) Diversity is discussed often (2)
Negative progress in Intentionality (18)	Lack of intentionality (6)	Predictable appointments (2) Same states/regions serve as only appointment for people of color (2) No follow-through on efforts (1) Lack of intentionality regarding cultural diversity (1)
	Obstacles in intentionality (12)	Challenging (4) Lack of qualified appointment of leaders (2) Needs qualified leadership individuals regardless of race/ethnicity (4) Lack of opportunities for colored (2)

Table 7 shows the correlation between positive and negative progress toward intentionality given to diversity. According to the data, 30 responses indicate *positive progress in intentionality*. Both sub-categories of positive progress point to the efforts being made by leadership in choosing people to speak at events and discussing diversity within the leadership. The data favors a more positive outlook regarding progress being made. This shows that the view of intentionality is seen as appropriate to include cultural diversity within the Church of God's leadership.

Question 3: Strategies that can be implemented by the International Executive Leadership to include cultural diversity in State Administrative Bishop and other leadership positions

The participants were asked an open-ended question about how the International Executive Leadership can include culturally diverse individuals in State Administrative Bishop and other leadership positions. Table 8 presents the 75 responses reported.

Table 8. Responses to Question 3

Response	Total number of occurrences
Intentionally appoint people of color	15
Seek qualified individual of excellence	12
Increase visibility of ethnic speakers at events	12
Celebrate different cultures	5
Better communication needed	5
Intentionally appoint leaders to roles historically held only by Anglo leaders	4
Training needed	4
Build platform for emerging cultural leaders	3
Strategic networking	3
Utilize gifts and calling	3
Strategy needed to implement leadership diversity	2
Appoint leaders based on qualifications rather than ethnicity	2
Give opportunities to lead	2
Leadership opportunities should be earned, not given	1
Build a bridge	1
Diversity is already in place	1

The most frequent response to question 3 with 15 was *intentionally appoint people of color*. The next most frequent response with 12 was tied between *seek qualified individual of excellence* and *increase visibility of ethnic speakers in events*. The rest of the responses were much less frequent. Only one response indicated that *diversity is already in place*.

Table 9. Suggested Strategies for More Cultural Diversity

Categories	Sub-Category	Responses
Leadership not based on diversity (7)	Not race dependent (6)	Utilize gifts and calling (3) Leadership opportunities should be earned, not given (1) Appoint leaders based on qualifications rather than ethnicity (2)
	Current strategies are enough (1)	Diversity is already in place (1)
Lack of cultural expansion strategies (68)	Public exposure (38)	Intentionally appoint people of color (15) Increase visibility of ethnic speakers at events (12) Intentionally appoint leaders to roles historically held only by Anglo leaders (4) Give opportunities to lead (2) Celebrate different cultures (5)
	Recommendation (21)	Build a bridge (1) Strategic networking (3) Build platform for emerging cultural leaders (3) Seek qualified individuals of excellence (12) Strategy needed to implement leadership diversity (2)
	Lack of communication (9)	Better communication needed (5) Training needed (4)

Table 9 shows the strategies suggested to introduce more cultural diversity. About

90 percent of the responses identify a *lack of cultural expansion strategies* within the

leadership. This points to a greater need for strategies that can put people of other races

into leadership positions, including public exposure and recommendation by leadership.

Those individuals who are qualified are often not seen, so they need more recognition to

be assigned to leadership positions. However, a small group of responses indicate that

leadership strategies are good enough as they are or should not be race-dependent. A

qualified person should be appointed to lead whether or not they are from a minority

group. According to the respondents, the strategy to implement diversity is to simply appoint individuals based on qualifications rather than ethnicity.

Question 4: Cultural diversity overseen by the Church of God leadership

The participants were asked an open-ended question about how the Church of God leadership oversees cultural diversity. Table 10 presents the 36 responses reported on the topic of cultural diversity being overseen.

Table 10. Responses to Question 4

Response	Total Number of Occurrences
Some diversity oversight	8
Poor job	6
Communicated but not implemented	4
Moderately well	3
Conversation and dialog taking place	2
Leadership does their best	2
Not much is done	2
Lack of oversight by leadership	2
No change over several years	2
Follow-through is problematic	2
No oversight	1
Not diverse to reflect global ministry	1

The most frequent response was *some diversity oversight* with eight. It was closely followed by *poor job* with six responses.

Table 11. Categories for Responses to Question 4

Category	Responses
Lack of oversight (19)	Poor job (6)
	Not much is done (2)
	Lack of oversight by leadership (2)
	No change over several years (2)
	Follow-through is problematic (2)
	Communicated but not implemented (4)
	Not diverse to reflect global ministry (1)
Good oversight (8)	Moderately well (3)
	Conversation and dialog taking place (2)
	Leadership does their best (2)
	No oversight (1)
Some oversight (8)	Some diversity oversight (8)

Category	Responses

Table 11 lists the question 4 responses from Table 9 in three different categories. The category *lack of oversight* had 19 responses, which was significantly more than *good oversight* and *some oversight* with eight responses each. This shows that the respondents believe there is not enough oversight of leadership to promote diversity. However, almost half of the respondents identified a moderate amount of oversight by the leadership to promote diversity.

Question 5: Existing barriers to implementing a strategy for cultural diversity

The participants were asked an open-ended question regarding existing barriers to implementing a strategy for cultural diversity. Table 12 lists the 148 responses reported.

Table 12. Responses to Question 5

Response	Number of Occurrences
Lack of new leader identification	17
General Assembly	16
General Assembly not diverse	10
Buddy system	9
Lack of intentionality	8
Few opportunities/positions	8
Segregation	8
Lack of preparation in appointment	8
Lack of integration	6
Southern culture influence	5
Continued one-sided culture leadership	5
Resistance	5
General Assembly held in U.S.	5
Same individuals repeatedly elected	5
Lack of trust	5
Attribution/placement of current leaders	5
Recycling of leadership-same people different positions	4
Lack of desire	3
Faulty system	3
Status quo	3
No barriers	2
Lack of awareness	3
Election process	2
Racism	1
Fear of criticism	1
Prejudice	1

The most frequent response to question 5 was *lack of new leader identification* with 17 occurrences. It was closely followed by *General Assembly* with 16 responses and *General Assembly not diverse* with ten.

Question 6: Reasons why barriers exist

The participants were asked an open-ended question about why barriers exist. Table 13 lists the 88 responses reported.

Table 13. Responses to Question 6

Response	Number of Occurrences
Segregation	11
History of the South	9
Lack of exposure	9
Fear of no vote	7
Racism	7
Faulty system	7
Historical development of the church	5
Lack of opportunity	5
Not understanding global church	5
Election process	4
Priority not given to cultural appointments	4
Lack of awareness	4
Loss of power to others	3
Lack of training	3
Lack of experience	3
Inherent cultural differences	1
History repeats	1

Segregation was the most frequent response to question 6 with 11 responses. It was closely followed by *history of the South* and *lack of exposure*, both with nine responses. Next was *racism* with seven responses.

The information from Table 11 and Table 12 was categorized together to look for correlation between existing barriers and the reasons for them.

Table 14. Categories and Sub-categories for Responses to Questions 5 and 6

Category (total occurrences)	Sub-category (total occurrences)	Responses
Opportunity barrier (146)	Lack of appointment intentionality (42)	Lack of new leader identification (17) Lack of intentionality (8) Lack of preparation in appointment (8) Attribution/placement of current leaders (5) Priority not given to cultural appointments (4)
	Lack of intentional opportunity (28)	Few opportunities/positions (13) Lack of exposure (9) Lack of training (3) Lack of experience (3)
	Faulty system (34)	Faulty system (10) Buddy system (9) Recycling of leadership-same people different positions (4) Continued one-sided culture leadership (5) Status quo (3) Lack of desire (3)
	General Assembly (42)	General Assembly (16) General Assembly not diverse (10) General Assembly held in U.S. (5) Election process (6) Same individuals repeatedly elected (5)
Historical barrier (88)	Segregation (25)	Segregation (19) Lack of integration (6)
	History of the South (37)	Historical development of the church (5) History of the South (9) Southern culture influence (5) Prejudice (1) Racism (8) History repeats (1) Inherent cultural differences (1) Lack of awareness (7)
	Fear (26)	Fear of criticism (1) Fear of no vote for positions (7) Loss of power to others (3) Not understanding global church (5) Lack of trust (5) Resistance (5)
No barrier (2)	No barrier (2)	No barriers (2)

Table 14 shows the correlation between what barriers exist and why they occur. The category *opportunity barrier* includes four sub-categories: *lack of appointment intentionality*, *lack of opportunity*, *faulty system*, and *General Assembly*, with 146 total responses. *General Assembly* had 42 responses, followed closely by *lack of appointment intentionality* with 42 responses. The *historical barrier* category had three sub-categories: *segregation*, *history of the South*, and *fear*. *History of the South* had the most responses with 37; *segregation* and *fear* were very close. The *no barrier* category had two responses. According to Table 14 the major reason for lack of diversity in leadership is the opportunity barrier for people of color.

The data shows that both the opportunity and historical barriers are very prominent in limiting cultural diversity within the Church leadership. However, the barrier of opportunity has 60 percent of the overall number of responses. The respondents in this category identified a lack of exposure and intentionality in the selection of leadership. During conferences and meetings, ethnically diverse individuals are seldom able to showcase their abilities. People of diverse ethnic backgrounds are not chosen to speak or to demonstrate their leadership skills. There is also belief in a faulty system that limits the introduction of people of other races and representation of other ethnicities. According to the participants, there is a longstanding mentality in the current process for selecting leaders in which people "take turns" leading instead of leadership being based on the gifts and callings of candidates. The General Assembly has never been held outside the U.S., which leads to the same individuals being elected to the Council and Committee over and over again.

Question 7: Bringing changes in cultural diversity

Participants were asked an open-ended question on how the leadership's focus

could bring about change. Table 15 lists the 133 responses to question 7.

Table 15. Responses to Question 7

Response	Number of Occurrences
Intentionally promote diverse leaders	16
Improvement occurring	12
Represent culture of Kingdom of God	10
David Rameriz	10
Intentionality in speaker selection for events	9
Change in mindset	7
Kingdom mindset	6
Seek qualified individuals	5
Integration of segregated ministry	5
Empowerment from leadership	5
Prayer	5
Exposure/visibility	5
Celebrate differences	4
More inclusion needed	4
Create a new/better system	3
Understanding culture	3
Online voting	3
Wallace Sibley	3
Sincere dialog	2
General Assembly voting	2
Appoint intentionally	2
Unified Church	2
Biblical minded	2
Intentionally appoint non-Anglo individuals to historically African-American position	1
Time	1
Include more ethnic people in council of 18	1
Appoint ethnic leaders at international levels	1
Sincere relationships	1
Clear focus on diversity	2
Appoint without fear	1
Respect	1

The most frequent response with 16 was to *intentionally promote diverse leaders*.

Twelve of 134 responses said *improvement is occurring*.

Table 16. Categories for Responses to Questions 7

Category (total occurrences)	Responses
Intentionally promote (22)	Intentionally promote diverse leaders (16) Appoint intentionally (2) Include more ethnic people in council of 18 (1) Intentionally appoint non-Anglo individuals to historically African-American position (1) Appoint without fear (1)
Intentional opportunity (24)	Intentionality in speaker selection for events (9) Seek qualified individuals (5) Exposure/visibility (5) Empowerment from leadership (5)
New system (15)	Integration of segregated ministry (5) Create a new/better system (3) Online voting (3) General Assembly voting (2) Clear focus on diversity (2)
Mindset change (40)	Represent culture of Kingdom of God (10) Change in mindset (7) Kingdom mindset (7) Biblical minded (2) Unified Church (2) Celebrate differences (4) More inclusion needed (4) Understanding culture (3) Respect (1) Time (1)
Relationship (8)	Prayer (5) Sincere dialog (2) Sincere relationships (1)
Improvement occurring (25)	Improvement occurring (12) Wallace Sibley (3) David Rameriz (10)

Table 16 was regrouped to show the types of changes that respondents suggested.

Table 17. Types of Changes Needed for Diversity

Categories	Sub-category (total occurrences)	Responses
Systematic Change (60)	Intentionally promote (21)	Intentionally promote diverse leaders (16) Appoint intentionally (2) Include more ethnic people in council of 18 (1) Intentionally appoint non-Anglo individuals to historically African-American position (1) Appoint without fear (1)
	Intentional opportunity (24)	Intentionality in speaker selection for events (9) Seek qualified individuals (5) Exposure/visibility (5) Empowerment from leadership (5)
	New system (15)	Integration of segregated ministry (5) Create a new/better system (3) Online voting (3) General Assembly voting (2) Clear focus on diversity (2)
Mental Change (48)	Mindset change (40)	Represent culture of Kingdom of God (10) Change in mindset (7) Kingdom mindset (7) Biblical minded (2) Unified Church (2) Celebrate differences (4) More inclusion needed (4) Understanding culture (3) Respect (1) Time (1)
	Relationship (8)	Prayer (5) Sincere dialog (2) Sincere relationships (1)
Current Changes (25)	Improvement occurring (25)	Improvement occurring (12) Wallace Sibley (3) David Rameriz (10)

Table 17 shows that 45 percent of the responses express a need or desire for

systematic change. The level of diversity in leadership is primarily controlled by the

International Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee does not intentionally

make changes in how they fill leadership roles (for example, by seeking out people of color for leadership positions), then diversity in leadership will not occur. Thirty-six percent of the responses express the need for a mentality/mindset change. Due to the involvement by non-white people in leadership positions, there have been many benefits. Nineteen percent of the responses show full support for changes currently taking place without suggesting the need for further changes. This means that 81 percent of the respondents do indicate the need for a systematic or mental change in order to bring about diversity. To change the mindset, one overall suggestion was that changes are needed in people's perspectives through diverse worship, teaching, and preaching styles. This means that leaders must recognize the Church on the international level. Some suggested that diverse leaders should be intentionally promoted or that qualified individuals of other races should be sought out for leadership positions. One overall suggestion was to unify the church's leadership and to disregard race as a factor in selecting those who fill leadership positions.

Question 8: Response to diversity

The participants were asked an open-ended question about what the response might be if diversity was part of leadership. Table 18 lists the 34 responses.

Table 18. Responses to Question 8

Response	Number of Occurrences
Resistance	5
Positive over time	13
Positive response if Kingdom minded	2
Resistance from old culture	2
Embrace from new culture	2
Negative response	6
Negativity from the South	2
Kingdom mindset	1
Positive from outside U.S.	1

Positive response was the most frequent response from participants, followed closely followed by six responses indicating *negative response*. Overall, 15 of 34 participants predicted a *positive response* to diversity and 12 of 34 predicted a *negative response*. Three participants predicted both positive and negative responses.

Table 19. Overall Response to Changes in Diversity

Categories	Responses
Positive responses to changes (19)	Positive response if Kingdom minded (16) Embrace from new culture (2) Positive from outside U.S. (1)
Negative response to changes (15)	Resistance (7) Negative response (6) Negativity from the South (2)

Table 19 shows that the overall responses to changes brought to diversity are split between positive and negative. Fifty-six percent of the responses express a positive outlook on the hypothetical changes brought to diversity, and 44 percent express a negative outlook. The thinking behind the positive responses is about brought by Kingdom mindset changes. A Kingdom mindset is seeing people as one body of Christ, with all members having the equal purpose of contributing to the Church of God. According to the findings, global ministry does not represent a single ethnic background but rather should be biblical in its approach. However, the negative responses are based on the historical barriers to cultural diversity within the Church.

Question 9: Training and other programs that could be part of the system

The participants were asked an open-ended question about whether training would be beneficial and if there are other programs that could benefit the Church of God organization. Table 20 presents the 91 responses given by participants.

Table 20. Responses to Question 9

Response	Number of Occurrences
Mentor	13
Seminary and Christian education	9
Build relationship	7
Increase awareness	5
MIP training	5
Safe place for all to ask questions	5
Important	4
Dialog	4
Training white male	4
Model more than training	3
Training on global mindedness	3
Change in mindset	3
Create platform for more opportunities	2
Training is a place to start	2
Exposure to cultures	2
Model the Bible	2
Short term missions trip	2
Training without words having inflamed meanings	1
Essential	1
Training positive role	1
Philosophical writing on multicultural ministry	1
Train state leaders	1
Develop leadership skills among minorities	1
Training for diverse cultures to lead somewhat beneficial	1
Occasional training	1
Impactful	2
Paid or unpaid intern position	1
Training for potential leaders	1
Some effect	1
Seminars	1

Mentor was the most frequent response by participants with 13. It was followed by nine responses for *seminary and Christian education. Building relationship* came in third with seven responses.

Table 21. Effective Training to Promote Cultural Diversity

Category (total occurrences)	Sub-category (total occurrences)	Responses
Relationship building training (44)	Mentor (15)	Mentor (13) Paid or unpaid intern position (1) Develop leadership skills among minorities (1)
	Cultural awareness (24)	Build relationship (7) Training on global mindedness (3) Increase awareness (5) Change in mindset (3) Create platform for more opportunities (2) Exposure to cultures (2) Short term missions trip (2)
	Model (5)	Model more than training (3) Model the Bible (2)
Formal training (23)	Education setting (16)	Seminary and Christian education (9) MIP training (5) Seminars (1) Philosophical writing on multicultural ministry (1)
	Training specific people (7)	Train state leaders (1) Training white male (4) Training for diverse cultures to lead (1) Training for potential leaders (1)
Benefits of training (23)	Safe place (9)	Safe place for all to ask questions (5) Dialog (4)
	Positive impact (11)	Essential (1) Impactful (2) Training positive role (1) Important (4) Training is a place to start (2) Training without words having inflamed meanings (1)
	Some benefit (3)	Somewhat beneficial (1) Occasional training (1) Some effect (1)

Table 21 presents the categories and sub-categories for responses to question 9.

The three categories are *relationship building training*, *formal training*, and *benefits of training*. *Relationship building training* had a total of 44 responses. According to Table

21 training needs to be relationship building through mentorship, cultural awareness, and modeling. *Formal training* had 23 responses, which demonstrates the need for specific training for leadership. *Benefits of training* also had 23 responses, which shows the importance of training for the Church of God. According to the findings, diversity training needs to occur not only among the leadership of the Church of God who are in place but also among people of color who are interested in growing into leadership positions. Close to 50 percent of the responses indicate that relationship/personal training is necessary to promote cultural diversity. This is double the number of responses that express the need for formal training. The data shows that training in relationship building has more support than formal training in terms of being effective. Twenty-five percent of the responses state that training creates a positive impact and a safe place for individuals. The Church of God should establish a system where new and aspiring leaders are trained and coached to move up. Mentoring should be done by the leaders of the Church of God denomination.

Table 22. Lack of Intentionality Theme

Category (total occurrences)	Sub-categories (total occurrences)	Responses
Lack of intentionality (167)	Intentionally promote (22)	Intentionally promote diversified leaders (16) Appoint ethnic leaders at international levels (1) Appoint intentionally (2) Include more ethnic people in council of 18 (1) Intentionally appoint non-Anglo individuals to historically African-American position (1) Appoint without fear (1)
	Intentional opportunity (24)	Intentionality in speaker selection for events (9) Seek qualified individuals (5) Exposure/visibility (4) Give opportunities (1) Empowerment from leadership (5)
	Lack of appointment intentionality (42)	Lack of new leader identification (17) Lack of intentionality (8) Lack of preparation in appointment (8) Attribution/placement of current leaders (5) Priority not given in cultural appointment (4)
	Lack of public exposure (51)	Intentionally appoint people of color (15) Seek qualified individual of excellence (12) Increase visibility of ethnic speakers at events (12) Intentionally appoint leaders to roles historically held only by Anglo leaders (4) Build platform for emerging cultural leaders (3) Give opportunity to lead (2) Utilize gifts and calling (3)
	Lack of intentional opportunity (28)	Few opportunities/positions (13) Lack of exposure (9) Lack of training (3) Lack of experience (3)

Table 22 illustrates one of the themes that appeared throughout the research. There were 167 responses from participants indicating a *lack of intentionality* within the leadership to promote diversity. Throughout the interviews many respondents indicated that more public exposure and more opportunities are needed in order to promote cultural

diversity in the Church's leadership. This response recurred across the individual

questions, indicating belief that intentionality in promoting diversity within the Church is

lacking. These findings show that leadership has to be more deliberate when it comes to

appointing and placing leaders.

Table 23. Progress Being Made to Promote Cultural Diversity Theme

Category (total occurrences)	Sub-category (total occurrences)	Responses
Progress (95)	Acceptable vision (4)	Acceptable current vision (1) Leadership is doing much (1) Agree with current vision (2)
	Progress in place (4)	Leadership is intentional (2) Diversity is discussed often (2)
	Moderate amount of Work in progress/intentionality (47)	Work in progress (21) Effort in progress (6) Intentional effort initiated (3) Understanding is there (4) Moderate intentionality (2) Vision takes time (3) Working to improve (1) Getting better (1) Fair but could be better (1) Vision is more inclusive (1) Room for improvement (1) More awareness needed (1) Moderate vision (1) Some intentionality given in featured speakers (1)
	Improvement occurring (25)	Improvement occurring (12) Wallace Sibley (3) David Rameriz (10)
	Current strategies are working (16)	Diversity is already in place (1) Conversation and dialog taking place (2) Leadership does their best (2) Moderately well (3)

Table 23 illustrates another theme that appeared throughout the research. A total

of 95 responses indicated that *progress is being made* with regard to diversity in the

Church of God organization.

Table 24. Improvements Needed to Promote Cultural Diversity Theme

Category (total occurrences)	Sub-category (total occurrences)	Reponses
Improvement needed (62)	Lack of progress (25)	Challenging (4) Lack of qualified leaders appointments (2) Need qualified individuals in leadership regardless of race/ethnicity (2) Predictable appointments (2) Lack of opportunities for colored (2) Same state/region serve as only appointment for people of color (2) Confined to attribution/placement (2) No follow-through on efforts (1) More diverse appointment needed over states not cultural specific (1) Appoint more to reflect global ministry (1) Lack of intentionality in cultural diversity (1) Not discussed in public (1) Confined to challenges of visibility to potential leaders (1) Improvement is lacking (1) Representation needed (1) Issue of implementation (1)
	Lack of oversight (28)	Poor job (6) Not much is done (2) No change over several years (2) Lack of oversight by leadership (2) Not diverse to reflect global ministry (1) Follow-through is problematic (2) Communicated but not implemented (4) Better communication needed (5) Training needed (4)
	Lack of vision (9)	Low lack of vision (5) Lack of strategic plan (2) Realty is challenging (1) Unacceptable lack of vision (1)

Table 24 illustrates another theme that appeared throughout the research, *improvement needed*. According to Table 24, 62 responses indicated that improvement is needed with regard to diversity in the Church of God organization. According to Table 23 and Table 24, almost 60 percent of the respondents believe that progress is continuing to

move in a positive direction. However, the other 40 percent believe that necessary

improvement to further promote cultural diversity is lacking. This shows that more

people agree with the current state of cultural diversity within the Church of God. The

data shows that most of the respondents believe the Church is going through a positive

shift in cultural diversity in leadership.

Table 25. Relationship Building That Promotes Cultural Diversity Theme

Category (total occurrences)	Sub-category (total occurrences)	Responses
Building relationships (58)	Relationship (8)	Prayer (5) Sincere dialog (2) Sincere relationships (1)
	Mentor (15)	Mentor (13) Paid or unpaid intern position (1) Develop leadership skills in minorities (1)
	Cultural awareness (24)	Build relationship (7) Training on global mindedness (3) Increase awareness (5) Change in mindset (3) Create platform for more opportunities (2) Exposure to cultures (2) Short term missions trip (2)
	Recommendation based on relationships (11)	Strategic networking (3) Strategy needed to implement diversity in leadership (2) Celebrate different cultures (5) Build a bridge (1)

Table 25 represents another theme that appeared throughout the research,

relationship building. According to Table 25, 59 responses indicated that relationship

building is an important need with regard to diversity in the Church of God organization.

Conclusion

The research data demonstrates that there are positive improvements and progress

being made with regard to diversity in the Church of God organization. Addressing the

themes below will boost the current state of cultural diversity within the Church of God's leadership. It shows:

- Lack of intentionality in promoting diversity: Across multiple questions, the data shows that there is not enough intentionality when it comes to selecting people of other races for leadership positions within the Church of God denomination. The findings show that leadership has to be more deliberate when it comes to appointing and placing leaders. Therefore, the Church of God must demonstrate a greater degree of intentionality in selecting individuals for leadership positions.

- The importance of relationships to promote diversity: The mentoring of gifted and qualified individuals of all races can build relationships within the Church of God, as can recommendation to the current leadership of potential candidates for certain leadership positions.

- The need for a systematic and mindset change: The Church of God must be more unified and must start to disregard race as a qualification for leadership roles. The Church must be more "Kingdom-minded" when selecting people to fill leadership positions, regardless of their ethnicity.

- The importance of offering training as an important part of promoting diversity: Training can help potential leadership bolster their God-given gifts and also make them more effective leaders. Training not only benefits future leaders, but also has a positive effect on those who supervise the training or currently hold leadership positions.

CHAPTER SIX
RECOMMENDED ACTION PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING DIVERSITY
IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

This exploratory case study utilized open-ended interviews to produce data that

was analyzed and categorized thematically to show why diversity is lacking in the

Church of God denomination. In this chapter the researcher discusses the results of the

study. The next step will be to implement ideas for promoting diversity in the leadership

of the Church of God organization. The goal of this step is to help the Church of God

denomination take action plan steps to promote diversity.

Intentionality

Intentionality was seen as being deliberate in the choices being made. According

to Table 22, intentionality was a recurring theme throughout the research. There were a

total of 167 responses pertaining to intentionality. Many participants reported lack of

exposure and lack of visibility for people of color. The Church of God hosts many state

and national denominational gatherings throughout the year. According to Ruben, if

leaders would focus on diversity, constituents would learn from exposure the necessity

for and beauty of diversity. The findings show that intentionality is needed to seek

individuals who are excelling where they are in order to build a platform for emerging

cultural leaders. According to the participants, an intentional effort should be made to

appoint a non-Anglo individual to a historically African-American position and to

appoint an African-American to a historically Anglo position. The findings show that

leadership has to be deliberate and intentional when it comes to appointing and placing

leaders. Participants also noted that intentionality must be exercised in choosing event speakers. They favor intentionality around the topic of diversity in every area, including printed material that shows people of color.

Appointment and Placement

The primary place where the International Committee has influence is in appointments and placements. The Church of God International Executive Committee has the daunting task of placing and appointing individuals to leadership across the country and also on different boards and committees. According to Ruben, appointments are very predictable, meaning the same states/regions are the only opportunities for leadership by individuals other than Caucasians. The only elected positions are the International Executive Committee, Director and Assistant Director of World Missions, Director and Assistant Director of Youth and Discipleship, and the Council of Eighteen. All other positions within the Church of God are appointed by the International Executive Committee. Among the latest appointments across the Church of God, all board chairmen are white males. The only exception is the Hispanic Ministry, where a Hispanic male is board chair. According to Abraham, when members of the leadership are appointing leaders they must be intentional. For example, currently an African-American is most often placed in a state or region with a predominance of African-descent churches. The degree of diversity in leadership is controlled by the International Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee is not intentional in their leadership placements and appointments for Administrative Bishops and other board appointments, then diversity in leadership will not occur. The study findings show that these placements are not a result of interviews, but are people known to members of the International Executive

Committee. According to Isaiah, the International Executive Committee appoints Administrative Bishops and many other offices. Therefore, they can promote diversity in their appointments. Furthermore, they can mandate that those they appoint be aware of the importance of diversity. Jared said, "The International Executive Committee have intentional effort in this regard; however, the challenge continues to be placement of leaders."[2]

Intentional Opportunities

The findings in Table 17 list 24 responses to intentional opportunities. Participants indicated a lack of visible opportunities for people of color. According to Joshua, "many times I look at our conferences and they are nothing but white men."[3] The findings demonstrate a lack of multicultural opportunities in which individuals who are not white exert leadership. The findings also show a lack of exposure and visibility for people of color. During conferences and meetings, ethnically diverse individuals are seldom able to showcase their abilities. People of diverse ethnic backgrounds are not chosen to speak or to demonstrate their leadership skills. Speakers at events are mostly white individuals. A few participants stated that the last camp meeting held in Tennessee represented the largest number of ethnically diverse individuals visible on the stage to pray or speak. The findings demonstrated a visibility challenge among potential leaders. Existing platforms must be utilized to make more opportunities available and to expose the church at large to individuals who are excelling in their area of ministry. Camp meetings are presently the forum in which individuals are placed on display in order to

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[2] Interview with Jared, May 15, 2018.

[3] Interview with Joshua, May 10, 2018.

become viable candidates for leadership in the United States. These individuals are

mostly white males who are visible as speakers. The findings indicate that people of color

need increased visibility in the pulpit to showcase their talents. Participants stated that if

camp meetings and other venues are the places where people are being showcased as

viable candidates, then people of color should be given that opportunity as well.

Deymaz says, "The church of Antioch is the most influential church of the New

Testament."[4] He claims that the Church of Antioch was the first to do many things. It was

the first to take a collection for those who were in need (Acts 11:28-30). It was the first

summoned after the Great Commission was given and first to send missionaries into the

world (Acts 13:2-3). The Church of Antioch represented a variety of ethnic and cultural

backgrounds. Deymaz asks, "So why did the church at Antioch care about the world?

Because the church at Antioch reflected the world!"[5]

When healthy characteristics of multiculturalism are inculcated within the church

structure as in the Antioch church, the privilege of leadership will be gracefully extended

to all despite their differences. It is important that present-day churches work toward

inclusion and diversity by incorporating those beyond their walls.[6] The Antioch church

was intentional about the leaders who were put in place because their goal was to

effectively reach as many people as possible.

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[4] Deymaz, 22.

[5] Deymaz, 23.

[6] Deymaz.

Action Plan: Intentional Choice of Event Speakers and Leaders

It is important for the Church of God to be intentional when choosing individuals as speakers and leaders at different events. In order to change people's viewpoints, things have to been done with more intention. If an ethnically diverse individual is chosen as an event speaker, it could help that individual to showcase talent that otherwise might not have been seen. It will allow a platform for those individuals to demonstrate their leadership ability, and an opportunity for the church to see individuals' abilities which might not otherwise have been known.

Qualification

According to the findings, there is a need to find individuals qualified to serve in leadership who are already ministers excelling in the area of ministry. There is a challenge of visibility for potential leaders, knowing who is available and qualified to serve. The findings show that the International Executive Committee and the Council of Eighteen have conversations and dialog regarding diversity, but the challenge is how to accomplish greater diversity in the church. According to Peter, appointments should be based on qualifications, not quotas based on race or ethnicity. A qualified person should be appointed to lead even if that leader is from a minority group. According to the participants, the strategy to implement diversity is to simply appoint individuals based on qualifications rather than ethnicity. According to Paul, the state bishops need to be more intentional about inclusiveness within their state programs. The state bishops should provide a list of people within their state who show leadership potential at the international level. A personal meeting with the selected people should occur to see if they express interest in serving at the international level. Next, talk with key leaders from

various cultures to see who they recommend to serve at international levels. Last, connect

prospective cultures with key leaders within the movement for exposure. Those

individuals who are qualified are often not seen, so they need help being recognized and

promoted. Simon stated, "In the elective process, the barrier is a lack of knowledge of

potential candidates for office." According to the findings, the Administrative Bishops

should be encouraged to identify people of diversity in their regions and to utilize their

gifts and callings. Instead of the buddy system there should be some type of system

where leaders are qualified and vetted.

In the life of Joseph as recounted in the Old Testament, Potiphar acknowledged

Joseph's abilities in effectively handling his responsibilities and promoted him to be his

personal steward. Joseph was recognized for his qualifications and when those qualities

were displayed, he was promoted to the next step even though Joseph was a foreigner in

the land of Egypt. Just as Joseph was promoted because of his abilities, the Church of

God should also effectively look for qualified individuals.

Action Plan: Interview Potential Candidates

The first step is to identify which boards, committees, and general appointments

lack a full representation of the Kingdom of God. Second, with the assistance of local,

state, regional, and departmental leaders, the Church of God should develop a pool of

potential leadership candidates. Third, potential candidates should be interviewed to

discover their leadership burden and unique gifting. Fourth, appointments should

intentionally include ethnically diverse leaders for roles historically held only by white

leaders.

Barriers

General Assembly

According to the findings in Table 14, several barriers hinder diversity within the leadership of the Church of God. The two main categories are *opportunity barrier* with 146 responses and *historical barrier* with 88 responses.

General Assembly was seen as one of the main barriers with 43 responses. It is a gathering of all Church of God members that takes place in Orlando, Florida every two years. During the General Assembly, all ordained bishops who attend are allowed to vote and elect the Council of Eighteen, director and assistant director of world mission, and director and assistant director of youth department. Every four years, ordained bishops vote and elect the International Executive Committee. All other leadership positions within the Church of God organization are appointed and placed by the International Executive Committee.

The Church of God also has constituents outside of the United States. Gideon stated, "General Assembly is never done outside of the United States. This maintains the status quo and gets elected to the Council and Committee the same individuals over and over again."[7] According to Ruth, "Church of God has become decentralized to a great extent, and many pastors don't have the money to make General Assembly attendance a priority."[8] The majority of constituents who attend the General Assembly are white. According to Micah, there is socio-political and economic segregation of decision making at the General Assembly.

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[7] Interview with Gideon, June 28, 2018.

[8] Interview with Ruth, January 22, 2018.

Several participants reported that it is difficult to bring about change when the general council floor of the General Assembly is not racially diverse. If the same constituents keep making the same decisions to vote and elect, then change will be difficult to come by. According to data provided by the Church of God there are 137 ordained bishops in Canada, 7,401 ordained bishops in the United States, and 5,329 ordained bishops outside of North America. Study participants stated that the majority of ordained bishops outside of the United States are not able to attend the General Assembly held in the United States every year. Several participants reported that the Church of God has become decentralized, and many pastors (especially culturally diverse pastors) do not have the financial resources to make General Assembly attendance a priority. According to Ruth, pastors of color who do attend the General Assembly "make the commitment and go and not much on the agenda has anything do with their lives and work, and they don't see many people who are willing to grapple with the issues they face every day, so they don't go back."[9] This lack of synergy prevents pastors of color from ever being present at the General Assembly in strong enough numbers for their votes to make a difference. Several participants also stated that the issue of diversity seldom comes to the floor, so these individuals do not see a need to vote as a block.

Action Plan: Development of Online Voting

It would benefit the Church of God to develop an online voting system to allow broader participation in elections. Many bishops are capable of voting, but due to lack of financial resources and/or the location of the General Assembly they cannot exercise their authority to vote. Moving the General Assembly to different locations around the world

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[9] Interview with Ruth, January 22, 2018.

would increase the likelihood that ordained bishops from outside of the United States would attend. Online voting would benefit those individuals who are not able to travel to the location of the General Assembly.

Faulty System

Thirty-four responses indicated that a faulty system was another barrier. According to these responses, the Church of God has a "faulty system." According to Isaiah, it is difficult for leaders to take chances in a system where they are evaluated by numbers and subject to not being elected or appointed. Isaac stated that the faulty system is still intact because the government of the church is set up this way. They developed since the birth of the denomination but haven't adjusted as the church has grown or diversified. Gideon stated, "There must be intentionality to make it happen. This is not a voting matter; it is a structural shift to make it happen."[10] There is fear according to Aaron: "We don't want those who are different than us to take leadership."[11] The operation of the church has been a "buddy system for so long that we get uncomfortable thinking of our system in different way,"[12] stated Aaron. According to the participants, there is an "old school" mentality in the current process for selecting leaders with a "leading-by-taking-turns model instead of leading-by-passion, -gifting, and -diversity model." A taking-turns model is recycling the same group of people into other leadership positions after their term is over. Several participants indicated that the Church of God has operated on the buddy system for so long that people are uncomfortable thinking

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[10] Interview with Gideon, June 28, 2018.

[11] Interview with Aaron, April 19, 2018.

[12] Interview with Aaron, April 19, 2018.

about the system in different ways. The good buddy system, according to Peter and several other participants, is the fact that "people sometimes look out for their friends or they owe someone." The leadership appoints and places individuals because they are friends with someone or they owe someone. The system has been more reactive to appointing people of color instead of being proactive in developing leaders in the church for the future. The leadership can bring about change by creating a better or new system and operating structures.

Historical Barrier

History of the South

The Church of God was birthed in the foothills of Tennessee in 1886. It was founded during the time when African-Americans were slaves in the United States. Ruben stated, "We are a movement centered in the southeastern United States where racism remains an issue."[13] Southern history continues to exert a hold; according to Paul, the supervision of the church is more southern and not diverse to reflect the Global Ministry. Race is an issue even after many decades.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was an important civil rights movement leader who was arrested even though he protested peacefully. He saw that the white Christian church should unite with Christians of color to come together as a community and stand against injustice.[14] But support failed to come from the people he thought would understand the oppression faced by people of color. First John 3:10 states, "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice

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[13] Interview with Ruben, June 12, 2018.

[14] Rah, 57.

righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother." It is not possible for a Christian to be called a child of God if they do not love their brothers of color. King longed to hear religious leaders tell their congregations not just to obey desegregation laws but also to love their brothers and sisters of color because God made all men equal in His sight. The Church of God is the strongest in the South since it is where the Church began. The southern white church is more conservative in its belief system.

Historically the Church of God has shown a degree of concern for and emphasis on cultural diversity. In 1910 R.M. Evans, a Church of God bishop, went to the Bahamas as a missionary. This began the lifestyle of missions and concern for people of color and ethnic diversity. Aaron stated that the Church of God "unfortunately [has] maintained the missionary approach. We must change our mindset to understand we are not just to be missionaries who 'go there' and 'keep them there.'"[15]

Fear is another barrier reported, with 26 responses. It is an obstacle that hinders leaders from appointing and placing people from ethnically diverse backgrounds in leadership positions. The leadership are afraid that they will not be elected for leadership positions if they risk appointing people of color in more leadership roles. Lack of trust was another issue of fear. Participants stated that if people of color are put in leadership, there is a lack of trust, that these individuals would change the Church of God denomination by implementing their respective cultures into the Church.

Martin Luther King, Jr. believed passionately in the Gospel and the love of Jesus Christ to be demonstrated not only verbally but also through actions. In order for this to

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[15] Interview with Aaron, April 19, 2018.

occur, King said, "first, the need for a tough mind, characterized by incisive thinking, realistic appraisal, and decisive judgment" were necessary.[16] A tough mind will pierce through the myths and examine what is true. A tough-minded person will not always fear change but a soft-minded person will because they do not have the capability to discern truth from falsehood. Soft-mindedness will affect the church in a negative way because these individuals will try to put stumbling blocks in the midst of truth-seekers.[17] King stated, "Soft-mindedness is one of the basic causes of race prejudice.… Race prejudice is based on groundless fears, suspicions, and misunderstandings."[18] A tough-minded person looks at the facts before making his or her judgment. A soft-minded person sees whiteness as superior to people of color. For prejudice to be broken there must be tough-mindedness to look at the facts without making judgments based on fear.[19]

Action Plan: Remember the Past to Avoid Repeating It

Holding open discussion seminars is an action the Church of God can take. The issue of racism is something that should be discussed openly within the Church leadership and the Church as a whole. It is vital to look to the past and see how it influenced the South so that history does not repeat itself in the future. In the past, colored people were easily ignored due to the laws. In the present time, it is very difficult to ignore the cultural shift taking place.

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[16] King, *Strength to Love*, 2.

[17] King, *Strength to Love,* 4.

[18] King, *Strength to Love,* 5.

[19] King, *Strength to Love.*

Segregation

The Church of God has Administrative State Bishops who are appointed by the International Executive Committee. All fifty states are assigned an Administrative State Bishop. There are also divisions within the Church of God. At present the Church of God has segregation occurring within its walls. For example, the state of Florida is divided into two offices. The Cocoa office is where African-American bishops report, and an African-American is the Administrative Bishop of the Cocoa office. The Tampa Church of God office is where white American bishops report, and a white American is the Administrative Bishop for the Tampa office. A few African-American churches do report to the Tampa office, but the majority report to the Cocoa office. Even though these offices are separate, it allows people to exert leadership skills. However, working together can lead to better growth as an organization and can also lead to the formation of more beneficial ideas.

Philip stated that "segregated offices are not the theologically correct mark of the Church."[20] Leadership for persons of color or ethnic diversity is exercised by people of the same color or ethnic background. According to Isaac, "the issue of diversity is problematic because nationally the church is segregated into Hispanic ministries, black ministries, and ministry to Native Americans, etc."[21] This barrier exists because the government of the Church is set up as segregated. In the separation of black ministries and Hispanic ministries, "we are reinforcing separation and we do not cross-pollinate and allow a true Kingdom-oriented integration to happen," stated Joshua.[22] This approach

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[20] Interview with Philip, May 23, 2018.

[21] Interview with Isaac, June 27, 2018.

[22] Interview with Joshua, May 10, 2018.

was developed at the birth of the denomination, but hasn't been adjusted as the church has grown and diversified. Ministries like the Hispanic, African-American, Romanian, and Native American ministries are relegated to a department, not integrated as part of the entire organization.

The Bible clearly states that all humans regardless of race, culture, and ethnicity are created in the image of God. The Bible focuses on the importance of being one instead of dwelling on our collective differences. While it is good to celebrate our uniqueness, we must not underestimate the importance of bringing many parts together as one body of Christ. The Bible is above culture since it stands to judge any culture. God is intentionally involved in the ministry of diversity because Christians are to go to every ethnic group to preach the Gospel. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Action Plan: Integrate Segregated Ministries

The church should integrate and blend the segregated ministries alongside the Anglo ministry. Church constituents have seen the Church of God separate people of color into different ministries. But if the church is able to blend these ministries with the Anglo ministry, constituents would see themselves no longer as separate people but as one.

Mental Mindset Changes

According to the researcher's findings presented in Table 17, a total of 48 responses for attitudinal mindset change were given. Participants stated that it is

necessary for the Church of God to experience a mental mindset change in order for diversity to take place. The Church of God is a global organization that reaches more than 185 countries and millions of members all over the world. According to Judah, "Christ's church is an agent of God's kingdom on earth. It announces and demonstrates God's Word and love to a sinful, broken and hurting world. The Church is to illustrate the beauty of Christ's body."[23]

In the researcher's findings, some participants referred to Revelations chapter 7. The men and women who gather around the throne of God for eternity will be from every tongue, tribe, and nation. They will represent everyone in the entire world. According to the participants, the Church must realize that we all are God's creation, made in Him. Jacob stated, "Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., called our attention to *imago dei*,… that we are all made in the image of God. He stated in a 1965 sermon preached at Ebenezer Baptist Church, 'There are no gradations in the image of God. Every man from a treble white to a bass black is significant on God's keyboard, precisely because every man is made in the image of God. One day we will learn that. We will know one day that God made us to live together as brothers and to respect the dignity and worth of every man.'"[24]

According to the findings, diversity is essential for people who are Kingdom-minded because they have an understanding that is biblically based. A Kingdom mindset is seeing people as one body who will be represented in heaven. It is seeing people as Christ sees people of all races. According to the findings, global ministry does not

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[23] Interview with Judah, January 18, 2018.

[24] Interview with Jacob, February 8, 2018.

represent a single ethnic background but should be biblical in its approach. The Church of God is a global church with members from all ethnic backgrounds.

According to the findings, the mindset of the people must change in order for diversity to exist. There must be a change in the mindset of the church and its leaders. This means that leaders need to recognize and treat the Church of God as an international church. Judah stated, "There has to be a commitment to changing how people think about other ethnicities and cultures, how they communicate, and how they interact."[25]

The findings show that the structure, leadership, and activities of the denomination must reflect the cultural values of the various ethnic groups and their global outlook and perspective. In order to change the mindset, there needs to be change in people's perspective through diverse worship, teaching, and preaching styles. The findings show that in order for people's mindset about diversity or prejudice to change, the Holy Spirit has to work inside their hearts. There must be genuine love and understanding toward all people. When the Holy Spirit works inside of a man or woman, it is reflected and seen outwardly in his or her interactions with others.

The findings showed responsibility on the part of leadership to celebrate the contributions of each ethnic group and its culture by encouraging positive outcomes from interacting with many ethnic groups and cultures, and by supporting the sharing of power among people of different ethnic groups and cultures. Intentionality must be kept in the forefront at all times for the church to represent the culture of the Kingdom of God, which is culturally diverse by calling and nature. The findings show that if the mindset of

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[25] Interview with Judah, January 18, 2018.

the people changes, having more diversity in leadership will bring a positive response over time.

During the time of Jesus, the Jews had a hostile relationship with the Samaritans. Ben Witherington compares the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) to the relationship between "Whites and Blacks in America, even within the church."[26] Jesus endured pressure from His own people to exclude the Samaritans from His ministry but chose to reach out to the Samaritan woman despite the hostility (John 4:9, 39-40). He did not withhold His salvation, healing (Luke 17:15-16), or mercy (Luke 9: 52-54) from Samaritans who were despised by others. Luke 10:37 shows how Jesus modeled impartiality by building a bridge between Samaritans and Jews.

Jesus showed his disciples that there needed to be a change in mindset in order to bring more people into the Kingdom of heaven and to receive salvation. The change had to come from within the heart just like Christ's heart. The Apostle Paul explained that receiving the Holy Spirit also initiates baptism into 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" (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit needs to touch the hearts of the people and change their mindset and perspective about people of color.

Action Plan: Pray for a Change of Mindset and Celebrate Different Cultures

The most important thing the Church can do is to pray. It is important for the Church of God leadership to make prayer the most vital part of the Church. It is vital that the Church pray for a change in the mindset of people within the Church who may harbor prejudice and racism. The Church should pray for more loving hearts to come forth. It is

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[26] Witherington, 195.

also important to celebrate different cultures so that people have a chance to witness and experience how other cultures worship. Celebrating other cultures can provide an opportunity for people to have more interaction with each other.

Training

According to the findings in Table 21, relationship building training is a major factor in developing a system that allows for more diversity. The findings show that the church lacks training to reflect cultural diversity. According to Josiah, "a training program will play a vital role in preparing leaders from diverse cultures to serve in leadership in the Church of God."[27] The findings show that a training program would have a tremendous impact on increasing diversity in leadership. According to the findings, training on diversity needs to occur not only among the leadership of the Church of God who are in place but also among people of color who are interested in growing into leadership positions. The participants said that training should be put into place for individuals with the desire to be trained and developed as leaders. Building relationships with people of color, according to the participants, will be the most effective type of training because it will cause the leadership to have direct conversations and relationships with persons of color.

Mentoring is one type of development that was mentioned in the findings as being useful across the board. According to Ruth, "If district pastors would encourage and mentor pastors who are people of color, that would help them learn the ropes and get a helping hand in getting started in the church culture. If state overseers could mentor district pastors of color, etc. up the chain of command. Pastors of color often need

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[27] Interview with Josiah, June 25, 2018.

someone to help them to the next rung of the ladder—to think about them consciously and to be intentional about helping them succeed."[28] Mentoring can also be done by people of other races to teach Caucasian people, as a system of cross-mentoring among all demographics. According to the findings, leaders must accept the challenge to develop mentoring opportunities and invest in potential leaders from all demographics. Building a relationship is an important factor in mentoring by a proven leader.

According to DiversityInc. the top five businesses were successful because of mentoring. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) is a major accounting firm that actively participates in a formal corporate-sponsored mentoring program which includes all of the managers and senior partners at top levels and focuses on promoting employees from diverse backgrounds. Ernst & Young (EY) also utilizes two main strategies for diversity: formal training and mentoring. Leaders throughout the company are responsible for mentoring, sponsoring, and advancing diverse talent and are recognized for leading the diversity charge.

Perception is reality when it comes to the topic of diversity. Therefore, the presentation of training for diversity in the Church community will need to employ a good marketing strategy that doesn't use challenging words or phrases. The words "diversity training" are sometimes connected to inflamed meanings, depending on the audience. The findings show that exposure will eliminate ignorance.

Currently the Ministry Internship Program (MIP) allows pastors to become ordained bishops within the Church of God denomination. In this program, students receive the book *Bridge to People* that outlines essential relational bridges that can and

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[28] Interview with Ruth, January 22, 2018.

should be built among people on an ongoing basis. Peter stated, "Every MIP student and every ministerial credentials candidate should be required to take a course in intercultural studies and write a paper on his/her philosophy of intercultural, interracial ministries."[29] He feels that those individuals who cannot or do not agree with the intercultural approach to life and ministry should not be credentialed.

Isaiah stated, "I am not sure that training programs are the answer, although it might be a positive to have one occasionally. I think being strategic about modeling is more important."[30] The findings show that training is not necessarily the only answer; modeling is also a strong strategy for improving the Church's leadership candidates. It was seen to have some potential for effect, but according to the findings the best way to move toward diversity is relational—connecting by giving people the opportunity and the environments for connecting with a wider cultural diversity.

The Missions board has the greatest number of ethnic minorities represented compared to other boards, but does not provide training for board members. This puts racial minorities at a disadvantage because they have less experience with how the board functions. Board orientation would be beneficial so that their presence could be enhanced.

The life of Jesus was the greatest example of leadership in the ministry. He exemplified the training that was necessary to reach all the people of the world. Jesus crossed cultural, gender, and national barriers that a typical Jew would have not crossed.

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[29] Interview with Peter, June 1, 2018.

[30] Interview with Isaiah, January 22, 2018.

Action Plan: Create a Farm System for the Church of God

A farm system is what sports teams use. Its role is to provide experience and training for young players. In a farm system there is understanding and agreement that any player who is successful can move to a higher level. For example, baseball teams have young players who aspire to play in the major leagues, and over time when they are given time they are able to show their talent. The Church of God should establish a system where we are training, mentoring, and coaching aspiring leaders to move up. Mentoring should be done by the leaders of the Church of God denomination.

Progress

According to the findings in Table 23, progress with regard to diversity is occurring in the Church of God. There were a total of 95 responses regarding progress toward diversity being made. Luke stated, "The Executive Committee is working to improve cultural diversity at the leadership level."[31] Implementing diversity according to the findings is a work in progress. Although an effort to expand diversity in leadership exists, the challenge is how to accomplish it. Time is an important factor in implementation even though work is already in progress. According to Donald, some states and regions "offer bilingual services and meetings." These are all steps in the right direction toward diversity.

According to the findings, evidence of positive progress exists. Isaiah said that at the September 2016 leadership meeting, a Latino woman was invited to speak to Administrative Bishops about crossing ethnic borders. The findings show that the Church of God is doing several commendable things at present. For example, the recent General

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[31] Interview with Luke, June 21, 2018.

Assembly featured some speakers who were not white males. In addition, the Winterfest conference for the youth of the Church of God has enlisted speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Ruth stated, "The Missions Board is probably the most diverse with international members and people of color as the majority … The Director and the Assistant Director of World Missions are all white males, which makes the interface with the people of color more awkward."[32] However, progress is being made because the Missions Board includes diverse members.

Some attention has been given to elections to the Executive Committee in the last decade. In one of the most historic elections the first African-American individual, Wallace Sibley, was elected to the International Executive Committee as the Third Assistant Overseer in 2008. Sibley was the first person of color elected to the International Executive Committee since the founding of the denomination. The second person elected was Victor Pagan, born in Puerto Rico, as the Assistant World Missions Director in 2008. The third most historic election was when David Ramirez was elected as the Third Assistant Overseer for the Church of God. His election was even more historic because he was born outside of the United States. Micah stated, "The election of Dr. David Ramirez to the Executive Committee was a watershed moment and this raised the level due to his contribution and perspective on decision-making and issues."[33]

In the business world, the ability to embrace diversity and recognize its benefits helps an organization succeed and become competitive. Bringing Dr. David Ramirez to

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[32] Interview with Ruth, January 22, 2018.

[33] Interview with Micah, February 15, 2018.

the Executive Committee was an important step in the Church of God denomination. The following benefits were reported by the participants when compared to the business world with regard to the election of Dr. David Ramirez to the International Executive Committee and the Missions boards:

- A multicultural organization is better suited to serve a diverse external clientele in an increasingly global market. Such organizations have a better understanding of the requirements of the legal, political, social, economic, and cultural environments of foreign nations.

- Multicultural organizations are found to be better at problem solving, possess better ability to extract expanded meanings, and are more likely to display multiple perspectives and interpretations in dealing with complex issues.

- A diverse workforce that feels comfortable communicating varying points of view provides a larger pool of ideas and experiences.[34]

The participants stated that the people of ethnic background on boards and Dr. David Ramirez have brought a different perspective to the Church of God that is helping to give the denomination a new perspective. It was also stated that since the election of Dr. David Ramirez the church has a better understanding of the legal, political, social, economic, and cultural environments of the Hispanic constituents. The participants also stated Dr. Ramirez has brought greater understanding and perspective to the current immigration issues facing the United States. According to the participants, the different perspective Dr. Rameriz has brought to Church of God leadership has given the Church

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[34] Saxena.

of God the ability to communicate differing viewpoints more effectively to the church as a whole.

These three elections demonstrate that the Church of God is seeking to express diversity. To date these are the only people of color to be elected to executive leadership positions in the Church of God denomination. According to Aaron, these three major elections indicate that promoting and encouraging diversity in leadership is catching on for the regular membership. The church is making improvements in promoting diversity. There has been progress, but more is needed.

Improvement Needed

According to the findings in Table 24, a total of 62 responses indicated that more improvement is needed. Several positive steps have been taken, such as the elections of Wallace Sibley, Victor Pagan, and David Ramirez to leadership positions. At the same time, the findings indicate a lack of progress being made. The lack of progress is the fact that only three individuals of color have served in an elected position for the Church of God since the founding of the denomination. The findings include 28 responses that indicate a lack of oversight of diversity. There were 9 responses that indicate lack of vision. The findings show that the leadership is doing a poor job of overseeing diversity, and lack of change over the years. The Church of God once had a department called the multicultural office, now Intercultural Advancement Ministries, but the participants reported a lack of oversight from this department. Even though diversity is discussed by the leadership, the findings show that follow-through and implementation are problems.

The Church at Antioch was a powerful example of diversity. "Luke listed the five leaders of the church at Antioch not only by gifting and role but significantly by ethnicity

as well. Two of these men were from Africa, one was from a Mediterranean island, one was from the Middle East, and one was from Asia Minor."[35] This passage should not be dismissed as merely descriptive of the local Church at Antioch. Instead it should be used as the prescription needed for the Church today.[36]

Deymaz says, "The church of Antioch is the most influential church of the New Testament."[37] He claims that the Church of Antioch was the first to do many things. It was the first to take a collection for those who were in need (Acts 11: 28-30). It was the first summoned after the Great Commission was given and first to send missionaries into the world (Acts 13:2-3). The Church of Antioch represented a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Deymaz asks, "So why did the church at Antioch care about the world? Because the church at Antioch reflected the world!"[38]

Action Plan: Continue to Promote Progress

Progress in promoting diversity is being made, but more is needed. The Church of God should continue to promote the progress that is being made, and should show how election of these three diverse individuals has impacted the Church of God. The discussions that are taking place and follow-through need to be implemented to continue the progress that is being made. The Intercultural Advancement Ministries need to be given specific vision on how to promote diversity more effectively.

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[35] Deymaz, 24

[36] Deymaz, 24.

[37] Deymaz, 22.

[38] Deymaz, 23.

Evaluation

Research Project Design Strengths

Any research that is conducted has areas that could be improved upon, but a good research project has areas that justify the findings and generate a basis for future studies. The construction of this research project had areas needing improvement and areas of strength, both of which are important for future research studies. The main strength of this research project was the participants' ability to provide valuable perceptions regarding the topic of diversity in leadership. There were connections between the open-ended questionnaire, biblical concepts, and the related literature. Each of the questions was associated with themes and categories. The researcher was able to connect the data to the Bible and related literature, but allowed the participants' perceptions to build important principles to develop from the data.

Another strength of this research is that it showed the researcher that much is being done to promote diversity. Responses to the research questions show that the progress being made is significantly greater than the degree of improvement needed. Because the researcher is a person of color, his perspective is biased toward thinking that not much is being done about diversity. However, the research findings indicate that much more is being done than the researcher thought, which was a positive strength of this research project.

The researcher presented the research topic to the Church of God leadership when the research was in its beginning stages, and they were very supportive of the research and its findings. Leadership was interested in the results of the research, and when the researcher presented the findings they were highly receptive. Support from the leadership was incredibly important to the researcher, because it demonstrated their interest in

listening to others' viewpoints on the issue of diversity. In the coming years, leadership plans to make its vision for diversity even stronger. The Church of God even changed the name of the multicultural office department to Intercultural Advancement Ministries. The name change in itself is a big step for the organization because it shows that all cultures are intertwined together to advance the Kingdom of God. Tim Hill, current overseer of the Church of God, has begun a project called Jeremiah Project in which he highlights the younger generation and people of color who are impacting the Kingdom of God.

The research also shed light on areas in which the Church of God can work to improve diversity within the organization. Some specific areas include training, General Assembly, and integrating the segregated areas of the church.

Research Project Design Weakness

One weakness of this project was its less-than-ideal sample size. When the researcher began his interviews he was given names of potential participants, twenty of whom responded. However, twelve individuals backed out when the researcher attempted to set up interview times. The researcher reached out to more individuals for interviews and after many attempts to recruit participants added twenty-two individuals to the study. The researcher is confident that the perceptions collected from the thirty participants will permit further study. On many occasions the researcher attempted to set up interviews with members of the International Executive Committee, but only one individual agreed to the request. The researcher was extremely disappointed that more International Executive Committee members were not willing to be interviewed regarding this research. Nevertheless, the researcher is confident in the valuable data that was collected from the interviews that were conducted.

Another weakness of this project was its time constraints. It was important to take into consideration the interview time with all of the participants. Some participants were not able to meet face-to-face; in those cases the questionnaire was emailed. All of the participants had to take time out their busy schedules to be interviewed. The interview process lasted about 6 months. Had there been more time and more resources (such as more participation by the International Executive Committee), the researcher would have liked to do more interviews. Nevertheless, the researcher is confident in the perceptions collected from the study participants and the further study permitted.

Conclusion

The researcher found that listening to the various participants' perceptions was a very important part of this research process. It allowed the researcher to formulate specific action plans to enable the Church of God to implement diversity. Pursuing diversity is a huge undertaking that will require considerable time and effort on the part of leadership. It is not an easy step for any denomination to simply implement diversity into leadership without consensus on the part of existing leadership. It is the researcher's hope that the results of this study will inspire the Church of God leadership to take more direct steps to promote diversity at all levels of leadership.

CHAPTER SEVEN
PERSONAL GROWTH IMPACTED BY THE PROJECT AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Personal Growth

As the researcher reflects upon and processes this project, it took a lot of dedication and many long hours of data collection, analysis, and synthesis. This experience has been not only challenging but energizing. As the researcher reflects on this project and sees it come to completion, the reality is that the voyage has only just begun. The researcher has created areas of future potential in which he will continue to explore.

Speaking as a person on color, the topic of cultural diversity in the Church of God denominational leadership was a passion of the researcher. The researcher wanted to be a voice for the voiceless. Many fellow ministers of color known to the researcher have voiced their concerns with regard to the lack of cultural diversity within the Church of God, and were leaving the denomination due to the lack of diversity. The researcher's role in this project was to see whether cultural diversity is being pursued in the Church of God leadership. Throughout the project the researcher saw the hand of God guiding him every step of the way. The researcher is a third-generation Church of God minister, and each generation has seen very few ethnically diverse leaders. As a minister of color, the researcher has witnessed and experienced many prejudices and racist behaviors within the Church of God denomination. As the researcher began the project and conducted the interviews, he worried about whether he would face any attitudes of racism or resistance. Although the researcher did not experience a great deal of racism from the participants,

he did experience some resistance when approaching leaders about potential interviews. The researcher was greatly encouraged to see that the participants who did accept his invitation for an interview were so willing to talk about cultural diversity. It was also inspiring to see the heart of the Church of God leaders' perspective on diversity.

It was incredible to see how miraculously God moved throughout this project and directed every step of the process. The hand of God was upon the researcher when he met with the General Overseer of the Church of God with regard to diversity. The researcher witnessed a mighty movement of God when the leadership team discussed the topic of diversity and concluded that more research should be conducted to identify action plans for implementing diversity. The researcher felt God guiding him in this step because it showed the researcher the importance of the topic of ethnic diversity. The next step was to recruit participants. At the very beginning stages of the research the researcher was given 20 names, but when he reached out to these individuals, only eight committed to the interviews. The researcher spent many hours in prayer to be led in the right direction. Even though it was not easy to recruit enough participants at first, the researcher contacted more leaders. The favor of God was upon this research when more participants agreed to interviews. The researcher was able to recruit a total of 30 participants to take part in an interview. All of the participants were very welcoming and respectful when the interviews were conducted.

The researcher experienced God's affirmation during this project, especially when the leadership team invited the researcher to discuss the research findings. The leadership team was very receptive and supportive throughout the entire process. This project has been very encouraging to the researcher and it has increased his faith in God. The

researcher's faith was increased because God was very faithful in helping the researcher with every need for this research, especially the support received from the Church of God leadership. The support from the leadership team was vital to the researcher because it exhibited their interest in listening to others' viewpoints. The researcher is very excited to see how the action plans will be implemented into the Church of God denomination and how it will impact the Kingdom of God.

This entire process has allowed the researcher to see God's faithfulness more evident in the researcher's life. This process showed the researcher how God can help His people accomplish a purpose that will help to expand the Kingdom of God. As a lead pastor, leaning and depending on God became a greater need for the researcher. He has learned throughout this process that prayer is the greatest necessity for guidance. He has depended on God more through prayer and sought His guidance in every area when leading the congregation. This project has helped the researcher in the journey of transformation of becoming true in Christ. Knowledge of the true self came when there was an intimate, personal knowing of God's Divine love. Through this process, the researcher experienced a transformation. The transformational knowing of himself occurred when he accepted who he truly is and realized how God knows him. The researcher was able to understand the foundation of who he is, centered in God.

This research has helped to develop several areas of the researcher's life. For a lead pastor, communication skills are very important, and doing this research has involved a tremendous amount of communication, explanation, and writing. Throughout this research, it was important that the researcher communicated clearly and concisely to the participants during the interviews. This has helped the researcher as a lead pastor. It

has enabled the researcher to be a better communicator when giving sermons to the congregation. It has allowed him to grow in his communication skills, especially when delivering sermons, to make sure the message is clear and concise. It is important as a pastor who is delivering a sermon to the congregation that the sermon is clear and well explained. This project has also enabled the researcher to become a better writer, especially when preparing for his weekly sermons. The researcher was not a strong writer in the past, but this process has helped him become a better writer. The researcher has grown tremendously since he started the Doctorate of Ministry program. He could not have done this project on his own, but only with the help of God. It has been an amazing journey, seeing how God's hand was upon this project.

Further Study

It would not be reasonable to claim that interviewing 30 Church of God leaders and pastors can explain leaders' perceptions overall. However, a key characteristic of an exploratory case study is that it can identify areas which are appropriate for further study. A few areas that invite further study are the links between relationship building training and formal training, and their effects on promoting diversity. It is clear from the data that training is an important part of promoting diversity. None of the participants indicated that sufficient training is taking place with regard to diversity.

It was clear from the findings of this study that the participants believe diversity in the Church of God denomination to be an important aspect of the church. It is clear from the data that the General Assembly location is important. The participants stated that the majority of constituents who attend the General Assembly are white. Another area for future study would be the effects on diversity of the General Assembly location

and voting method. If online voting were implemented, would more diverse people be elected to positions in the organization? If the General Assembly location was moved to different parts of the world, would there be an increase in diversity among attendees?

Action plans for the Church of God were presented. Further study could be done to determine how the recommended action plans can be implemented successfully within the Church of God organization. Research could also be done to assess how effectively these action plans promote more diversity.

Conclusion

This research project has affected the researcher in more than one way. It has helped the researcher grow spiritually and also allowed the researcher to grow educationally. This researcher has found a deep passion to continue what was begun in this research. It was inspiring to see that the Church of God denomination was willing to listen to the researcher with regard to the importance of ethnic diversity in the Church of God leadership. It was encouraging to see that the Church of God is making positive improvements and progress is being made in promoting ethnic diversity in the leadership of the Church of God denomination.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How good/acceptable is the current level of the Church of God's vision for cultural diversity in leadership?

2. How much intentionality is given by the International Committee to include cultural diversity in leadership?

3. What strategies can be implemented by the International Committee to include cultural diversity in State Bishops and other leadership positions within the Church of God?

4. How well does the Church of God internal board or committee oversee cultural diversity initiatives?

5. What barriers exist to implementing a strategy for cultural diversity in leadership?

6. Why do these barriers exist (why did they develop and/or why/how are they sustained)?

7. How could the leadership's focus on cultural diversity in leadership bring about change?

8. Would there be a positive or negative response to increased diversity in denominational leadership? Why?

9. What role might be training programs play in effectively increasing diversity in leadership and what else outside of training programs might be part of a system of effective strategies?

APPENDIX B
DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

My age is:

18-24 years
25-34 years
35-44 years
45-54 years
55-59 years
60 years and over

My gender is:
Female
Male

Please indicate the primary racial/ethnic group with which you identify:
African American
American Indian/Alaskan Native
Asian/Pacific Islander
Hispanic
White/Caucasian
Other

I am:
Mono-lingual (English only)
Bi-lingual
Multi-lingual

What county were you born in? If outside the United States, how long have you been
residing in the United States?

How long have you been working with the Church of God denomination?
0-5 years
5-10 years
10-15 years
15-20 years
20-25 years
25-30 years
30+ years

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