

January 1st, 2014

The Multiethnic Church as a Reflection of God's Image: A Focus on Reconciliation in a Local Congregation

Jodi C. Gatlin
Seattle Pacific Seminary

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.spu.edu/spseminary_projects



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gatlin, Jodi C., "The Multiethnic Church as a Reflection of God's Image: A Focus on Reconciliation in a Local Congregation" (2014).
Seattle Pacific Seminary Projects. 1.
https://digitalcommons.spu.edu/spseminary_projects/1

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Seattle Pacific Seminary, 2009 - at Digital Commons @ SPU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Seattle Pacific Seminary Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ SPU.

The Multiethnic Church As A Reflection of God's Image

Jodi C. Gatlin
Seattle Pacific University

The Multiethnic Church As A Reflection of God's Image

A Focus on Reconciliation in a Local Congregation

By Jodi C Gatlin

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment

Of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Theology: Racial and Intercultural Reconciliation Studies

Seattle Pacific University

2014

Approved by



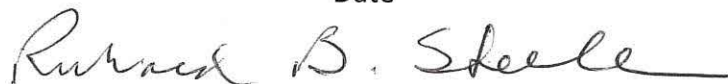
(Brenda Salter McNeil, D.Min., Thesis Advisor, Seattle Pacific Seminary)

Program Authorized to Offer Degree

Seattle Pacific Seminary

June 23, 2014

Date



(Richard B. Steele, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Seattle Pacific Seminary)

Abstract

This thesis seeks to discover whether or not a focus on reconciliation in a local church can prompt the congregation to engage their multiethnic neighborhood and become a more diverse church. It argues that in the midst of a broken and hurting world the multiethnic congregation offers a reflection of the image of God and a message of hope to the world. Specifically, this project will explore the question, “Can a focus on reconciliation in the local church lead to an increase of social and cultural engagement by its congregants that produces positive change in the surrounding community?” As a result of this research, the scope of this thesis will also move to a more narrow focus that asks, “Can a focus on reconciliation with the staff of a local church lead to changes that produce an increase in the ethnic diversity of their congregation?” In conclusion, this thesis will demonstrate that an exploration of social psychology’s theory of categorization has direct implications for increasing the senior leaders role in developing a multiethnic congregation.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5-11
What Is Reconciliation?	6
The Segregated Church	9
A Focus On Reconciliation In A Local Church	12-22
Church Demographics	12
Neighborhood Demographics	14
Engaging the Congregation	21
A New Question	23-27
The Staff	24
The Lessons	28-38
The Nature of Culture	28
The Lesson on the Nature of Culture	31
A Lesson on Romans 12	32
A Lesson on the Nature of People	35
A Lesson on the Image of God and Body of Christ	36
After the Lessons	38
An Answer	39-67
The Nature of People	39
The Theology of Recategorization	43
The Theology of Decategorization	49
The Homogeneous Unit	53
The Theology of We	60
The Multiethnic Church	64
Outcomes	68-72
The Importance of Leadership	68
Connecting The Vision with Recategorization	70
Conclusion	72
The Bibliography	73
Appendix I: The Initial Lesson Plans	76
Appendix II: The Invitation	78
Appendix III: The Lesson on Romans 12	79
Appendix IV: The Categorization Object Lesson	83
Appendix V: The Lesson on the Nature of People	92
Appendix VI: The Lesson on the Image of God and The Body of Christ	95

Introduction

As part of my course work in the Reconciliation and Intercultural Studies degree program, I developed my own definition of reconciliation. It is important to start this thesis defining this term because it is central to how I understand and believe the Christian community should embody and practice the ministry of reconciliation. My definition is as follows: *“Reconciliation is the intentional, ongoing spiritual journey with God, who makes all relationships new, this journey restores one’s relationship with God, self and others, and results in justice.”* This reflects everything that I believe the scriptures tell us God’s church is to be about, it reflects everything the world needs to see our church living out.

When we look around our world it does not take long to notice that it is broken. Scripture also supports this contention. In Romans 8:22 the apostle Paul writes that the whole creation is groaning together and suffering labor pains. People in our nation are divided along racial, gender, political, and economic lines (to name just a few). Each night the evening news reports on the many different arguments our country is engaged in ranging from how to address the problem of homelessness to legalizing marijuana. We argue over how much should the government be involved in the running and ordering of our society. We debate whether or not it is acceptable that a small percentage of our population possesses the majority of the nations wealth. We disagree whether or not that wealth should be distributed, and if so how and to whom. People argue over the issue of climate change. Is it real or a hoax? These and other issues are polarizing subjects that gain supporters on both sides and then the verbal wars wage.

In the midst of the arguments I wonder where the church is? Unfortunately it seems that we find the church just as divided as the world. Instead of the church showing the world that God’s ways are different, the church is emulating the world. This is evidenced by the way church is just as segregated along racial, gender, political, and economic lines, just as the nation. Christ’s message of hope is lost in all the noise of disunity. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians he writes that Christ is our peace and has made the Jews and the Gentiles into one group, he states that Christ has broken down the barrier of hatred that divided us. “[Christ] canceled the detailed rules of the Law so that he could create one new person out of the two

groups, making peace. He reconciled them both as one body to God by the cross, which ended the hostility to God.”¹ This is what the church has been called to model. The world needs the church to step and authentically reflect the image of God to them.

When I consider the Gospel message in comparison to the state of our world and the message of the church, I believe that reconciliation is absolutely essential. As a result, I have chose to focus my thesis around the question, “Can a focus on reconciliation in the local church lead to an increase of social and cultural engagement by its congregants that produces positive change in the surrounding community?” In order to answer this question I must first develop a theology of reconciliation. To do this I turn to Paul’s second Epistle to the church in Corinth to define what reconciliation is and what it entails.

What is Reconciliation?

¹⁶ So then, from this point on we won’t recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn’t how we know him now. ¹⁷ So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived! ¹⁸ All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:16-18).

When Paul wrote his first letter to the church in Corinth he explained that, “By ordinary human standards not many were wise, not many were powerful, not many were from the upper class. But God chose what the world considers foolish to shame the wise.”² As disciples of Christ we no longer see the world through the same lens, because of Christ we now have a Christ-shaped lens through which we view other people; we no longer judge things by human standards. Even more than this, we are now part of a new creation. Paul says that the old things have gone away and new things have arrived. This new creation is from God, accomplished through the work of Christ—who has now given us the ministry of reconciliation. This scripture tells us that the ministry of reconciliation is from God, it is a spiritual task, and it makes old things new.

¹ Ephesians 2:14-16

² 1 Corinthians 1:26b-27a

As I reflected on the scripture I stopped at, “the old things have gone away,” and I wondered, “what are the old things?” This question led me to Genesis 3 where God has placed the man and woman in the Garden of Eden and has given them a job: tend the garden. They have also been given a limit: they are not to eat the fruit from the tree in the center of the garden. It is at this point that the serpent shows up with a question, “Did God really say you could not eat from the tree?” After the woman affirms that God has indeed forbidden them from eating from the tree, the serpent plants a seed of doubt, “you will not die, rather you will become like God.” The woman sees that the fruit was indeed pleasing to the eye, and she is enticed by the idea of becoming like God. She picks two pieces of fruit, one for the man and one for her, and they eat. Once the two indulge in the fruit their eyes are suddenly open and they realize they are naked. The two are ashamed of their nakedness and searched for a way to cover up. When they hear God walking in the garden they become afraid and hide. God calls out for them so the man comes out from behind the bush and admits to God that they were naked and afraid so they hid. God asked the man how they knew they were naked, and then wonders if they had eaten from the tree in the center of the garden. The man response is to point to the woman to accuse her, “the woman you gave me handed it to me and I ate,” this accusation places the blame on both God and the woman. The woman in turn points her finger at the serpent.

This story reveals several broken (and therefore old) things. By eating the fruit the man and woman have demonstrated that they did not trust the word of God, they violate their relationship with God, “It requires humankind to sit in judgment on God’s word instead of simply listening and doing it.”³ God the creator is not subject to creation, rather creation is subject to God. They have broken their relationship with God and so they hide in fear when God enters the garden. After they eat the fruit their eyes are open and they become aware of their nakedness and they feel shame. God has created them to live in the garden, and in this garden they were created to live in the vulnerability of their nakedness without shame. Their relationship with God is violated, and they can no longer make sense of themselves in environment that God has created for them. Their response to the situation is to create

³ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Creation and Fall*. 1st ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004, pg. 108. Print.

clothing. When God questions them their first reaction is to point to the other and place blame. In response to their disobedience the man and woman are ushered out of the garden and into the “world.”

The environment God created for them is one where they are able to be naked and unashamed. It is an environment in which they are not alone. The garden allowed them to freely be in relationship with God, their own self, and each other. All of these relationships have now been violated. Now that relationship with God has been violated they are no longer able to make sense of their own being and their relationship with the self was broken. No longer able to make sense of the self, they turn and place the blame on the other the relationship with the other is broken. Bonhoeffer helps us again, “This means that the human being no longer regards the other person with love. Instead one person sees the other in terms of their being over and against each other...one person claims the right to the other, claims to be entitled to possess the other.”⁴ Finally they are thrown out of the world in which they were created to live, and the world outside the garden is not a peace filled place.

The gospels tell us that God sent Christ to the world to live with us, that he died for us and then rose again. Christ did this so that we might be reconciled back into right relationship with God. Christ articulated that we must love the Lord with our whole being, that we must love our own self, and that we must love others (Matthew 22:37-39, my paraphrase). This is exactly what Paul was referring to when he declared that through Christ all things are being made new. Through Christ our relationship with God is reconciled it is made new. Now that our relationship with God is made new, God creates us new as well. As new creature in Christ, God reveals to us who we are truly created to be. With the old lens we tried to create our own self in our own image, but now as new creatures God is able to create us once again in God’s image. Our relationships with others can only be as healthy as our relationship with our self, “reconciliation with others is based on having a healthy sense of one's own identity. When we relate out of woundedness, self-hatred, resentment, rage, self-protectiveness, judgment and fear, relationships will always be distorted and eventually destroyed. Relational healing always

⁴ Ibid, pg. 122-123.

involves personal healing, and this requires a healing of our very identity.”⁵ As we begin to know ourself, as only God is able to reveal to us, we are made free to love the other as we were created to do. Therefore reconciliation is a process that creates new relationships with God, with ourself, and with the other. When the church lives out these newly created relationships in the world it models a different way of living. It models the hope of Christ that is able to overcome the roar of injustice in our world.

The Segregated Church

Understanding this theological foundation, the next question that needs to be explored is, “Is the church truly segregated and does it make a difference?” To answer this question I did a historical and sociological exploration. This search took me back to the early 1950’s with a declaration from Dr. Helen Kenyon and ended with a claim from Mark DeYmaz in 2007.

In November of 1952 at the annual Christian Frontier forum of the Women’s Society of Riverside church, Dr. Helen Kenyon stated “eleven o’clock on Sunday morning” was “the most segregated time in America.”⁶ Dr. Kenyon declared that, “American Protestantism tended to maintain the ‘status quo’ and to shy away from ‘new neighbors and new ways of living.’”⁷ The following August graduate student Martin Luther King Jr. was preaching at Ebenezer Baptist on “Communism’s Challenge to Christianity.”⁸ In this sermon King acknowledges that Communism and Christianity are “diametrically opposed” to one another, he also admits “Communism emphasizes many essential truths that must forever challenge us as Christians.” King states that it should challenge Christianity “to be more concerned about social justice,” because Communism emphasizes a classless society and attempts to eliminate racial prejudice. He goes on:

We must admit that we as Christians have often lagged behind at this point. Slavery could not have existed in America for more than two hundred and fifty years if the Church had not sanctioned it. Segregation and discrimination could not exist in America today without the sanction of the Church. I am ashamed [sic] and appalled at the fact that Eleven O’clock on Sunday

⁵ McNeil, Brenda Salter; Richards, Rick. *The Heart of Racial Justice : How Soul Change Leads to Social Change*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004. Kindle Locations 438-440 Kindle Edition.

⁶ New York Times. Worship Hour Found Time of Segregation, November 4, 1952.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/news/vol6announcement.htm>. Retrieved April 21, 2014.

morning is the most segregated hour in Christian America. How tardy we have been. The Church has to [sic] often been an institution serving to crystalize the patterns of the status quo.⁹

Several years later, following up on this, Reverend Robert J. McCracken wrote about the *Shame of Sunday Morning*, “It is a fact, shameful and shocking, that if we look at American life in general, racial discrimination is now nowhere more in evidence than in the churches.”¹⁰ He goes on to state, “The scandal of the situation is that the churches are lagging far behind other bodies in doing something about the problem.”¹¹

The question that we now must ask is, “Has the racial division in the church improved?” The answer is a resounding “No!” In his book *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States*, Michael O. Emerson states, “Congregations in the United States are hyper-segregated.”¹² Emerson defines a multiracial congregation as “one in which no one racial group comprises 80 percent or more of the people.”¹³ According to this definition and using data from the National Congregation Study of 1998, Emerson has determined that 93% of churches in America consist of one single race.¹⁴ In 2008 the *Pew Forum On Religion and Public Faith* published the *U.S. Religion Landscape Survey*. Their data shows that the Mainline Evangelical Protestant church has a membership that is 91% white, while the Historically Black Protestant church has a membership that is 92% black.¹⁵ These two studies, published 10 years apart make it abundantly clear that the Protestant church in the United States remains today an extremely segregated institution. It does not, however, take a survey or study to tell us the answer; it only requires one to look at church attendance at just about any church in America on any given Sunday to know that the church is still “hyper-segregated.” In 1953 King said he was “ashamed” by this segregation, seven years later McCracken stated that it was a “shameful and shocking” fact, and 47 years later, in 2007 Mark DeYmaz declares that it must break the heart of God,

Surely, it must break the heart of God to see so many churches throughout this country segregated ethnically and economically from one another and that little

⁹ King, Martin L, and Clayborne Carson. *The Papers: 6*. Berkeley [u.a.: Univ. of California Press, 2007. Pp. 146-149. Print.

¹⁰ McCracken, Robert J. *Putting Faith to Work*. New York: Harper, 1960. Pg. 167. Print.

¹¹ Ibid, pg. 168.

¹² Emerson, Michael O, and Rodney M. Woo. *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. . Pg. 46. Print

¹³ Ibid. Pg. 35

¹⁴ Ibid. Pg. 36

¹⁵ Pew Research. <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>, pg 44.

has changed since it was first observed that eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in the land.¹⁶

In my experience Mark DeYmaz is correct. In his assertion that segregation in Christ's church breaks the heart of God. Therefore in order to move forward we must ask will a focus on reconciliation in the local church increase the social and cultural engagement by its congregants that produces positive change in the surrounding community?

¹⁶ DeYmaz, Mark. *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley, 2007. Pg. 4. Kindle Edition.

A Focus On Reconciliation In A Local Church

Now that the question “what is reconciliation?” has been answered and it has been confirmed that segregation is a true reality in the church, the attention of this thesis is focused on a local congregation. The purpose for using this church is to provide a case study to answer the question, “Can a focus on reconciliation in the local church lead to an increase of social and cultural engagement by its congregants that produces positive change in the surrounding community?” The first step is to develop a demographic picture of the church and it’s neighborhood. This work was done in pieces over the last year, starting with gathering data and then developing a strategy for engaging this congregation on the topic of reconciliation.

Church Demographics

To maintain the anonymity of the local church that served as the research site, we will refer to it through out as Church X. The church began in 1893 when a number of people began meeting for prayer, and shortly after organized a Sunday school, later a worship service was added and in 1895 they began constructing a church building. The focus on Sunday school and children’s ministry would continue to be a priority for the church through the next 100 years. In 1964 church X moved to their current location. Their average weekly attendance that year was 162 and in 2013 their average weekly attendance was 99 (see Table 1). In 2012 Church X conducted a congregational survey, the result of which indicated that they are a highly educated, upper middle-class, middle-aged, white congregation, the majority of which have attended Church X for more than 10 years (see Table 2).

In 2000 the lead pastor moved his family from New York State and became the new lead pastor for Church X. The lead pastor describes the congregation at that point as “overwhelmingly white, middle and approaching upper middle class, and very suburban. According to the lead pastor, very few of the people who attended Church X at the time lived in the neighborhood. The church had a very set way of viewing itself and how it did ministry; in fact, he was told upon his arrival that there was a “Church X way” of doing things, which for the most part meant that was very closely controlled. Church X was program driven and Sunday

morning worship centric. People were welcome to come as long as they fit into who and what Church X was. I asked the lead pastor what Church X valued at that point, "They were really focused on caring for their members. There was tremendous energy spent on children's programming. What they lacked was any kind of outreach orientation. They loved how they cared for themselves, and they were very good at it. Any sense of mission was not on their radar, they were not anti-mission, it just was not part of the equation." In a board meeting the lead pastor was told by one of the church leaders, "I come to church to be fed so that I can make it through the week." The church administrator began attending Church X around 2000 and described the church at that time as, "Friendly, vibrant, and young. Well, I would say it was bi-polar lots of young families and lots of old people." Now she says "Church X has moved from being superficial, where everything is 'fine' to real people with real issues. It's not fake any more, the façade is gone."

In 2007 Church X was a divided congregation. The dividing line was between those who embraced the vision the pastor had for the church and those who did not. The do not support camp took their concerns to the denominational leadership. In 2010 that leadership came and informed the lead pastor that he would no longer be appointed to Church X. This development was not received well by those in the do support camp. Over a 3-month period the denominational leadership and the church leaders met to pray and talk, in the end the denominational leadership reversed their decision and asked the lead pastor to stay. This reversal was not well received by the do not support camp, and they choose to leave the church.

The lead pastor says that now as he looks back he can see that God was in the journey, and because of it Church X is moving to a healthier place, he said, "When the self-focus was challenged we all but imploded, Church X did its best to self-destruct, but coming from that is a new beginning, where God is the one who sets the agenda, where we are yielding to God. We are not there yet, but we are on the right trajectory." I asked the lead pastor, "What is the vision God has given for the church?" He replied by saying, "I believe that the vision God has given is larger than Church X, but they are a component of it. I believe that God is calling us to engage the culture with a Kingdom of God agenda that would include all peoples. Church X has

the opportunity to be a major part of that, I think we are in the process of determining if we will or not. I see positive signs that we will, but I don't know that we are there yet." The lead pastor admits that the biggest challenge to following God's agenda is the problem of self-focus, "we have a very fixed mindset that 'what I know is what I know, and that is the norm.' So the challenge is to say 'what I know is what I know, but there may be more to know.' Being open to other points of view is hard."

Currently Church X's leadership is made up of a leadership board (comprised of 5 white men and 1 white woman) and a staff. The staff is comprised of the lead Pastor (white male), two associate pastors (both white female), an office manager (white female), a children's ministry director (white female), and an outreach ministry coordinator (white female). Church X has had two outreach ministries, a shelter for homeless women and a tutoring program in partnership with a one of the neighborhood schools. The shelter is run through an outside organization and the congregation does not interact with the women. The tutoring program brought in 20 kids from the neighborhood into the church one night a week for tutoring help, and connected each kid with one adult from the church. The kids who attend are 99% non-white students, and 90% children from immigrant families, and 90% come from Muslim homes. This has not proven to be sustainable at this point. Both of these ministries will be evaluated this year to determine how or if the church will continue with either.

Another form of outreach that bridges the church to the diverse community is the local high school football team. In 2008 the lead pastor began volunteering as an assistant football coach at the local high school. Over the years he develop relationships with the other coaches, and in 2011 was able to introduce one of the other coaches (an African American man) to the Lord. This new relationship with Christ led to reconciliation in his marriage and his wife also beginning a relationship with Christ. This couple visited the church a handful of times, but committed to attending the church their adult son is involved with. Recently, however, the lead pastor asked the wife to become an active member of the worship ministry. She has an amazing musical gift, so her talent was needed—but more than that the lead pastor told her that the church needs diversity on the stage. She was very receptive to this invitation. At this time she is on stage leading worship two times a month. The fact that the lead pastor

recognized this need, indicates that he understands that the diversity in the congregation follows diversity in your leadership.

Neighborhood Demographics

Church X is located in a Seattle neighborhood and sits on the boarder of two different zip codes. According to the 2010 US Census data, the ethnicity make up in zip code 1 is 81% white and 19% non-white compared to 65% white and 35 % non-white in zip code 2. There are eight Seattle Public Schools located around the church with a combined ethnicity of 53.9% white and 46.1% non-white. One of these schools has 11.3% white and 88.7% non-white; while another is almost equal with 50.3% white and 49.7% none white. Sociologist Michael O. Emerson defines multiethnic as “one in which no one racial group comprises 80 percent or more of the people.”¹⁷ If we use Emerson’s definition of multiethnic, this area can be confirmed as a multiethnic neighborhood. Each one of the eight public schools have a total white population lower than 80%, with most falling somewhere in the 50 percentile range. And, although zip code zip code 1 is comprised of 81% whites, when the two zip codes are combined the percent is lowered to 74% (See tables 3-7).

Household incomes also vary between the two zip codes. The 2010 US Census data records that the median income for zip code 1 is \$58,475 compared to \$42,400 for zip code 2. Households making \$24,000 or less comprise 17% of the households in zip code 1 compared to 28% in zip code 2. Both zip codes have fewer than 75% of their population over the age of 25. Of those, 37% have a earned bachelors degree in zip code 1, while only 19% have in zip code 2. Of those under 25 years of age, 3% living in zip code 1 are in grades 9-12 and 7% are in grades 1-8. In zip code 4% are in grades 9-12 and 8% are in grades 1-8. In both zip codes 11% of the population are enrolled in college or graduate school.

Within zip code 2 there are four Seattle housing authority complexes. One complex has 86 apartments ranging from one to four bedrooms. A second complex has 113 one-bedroom apartments. A third complex has 41 apartments with three or four bedrooms. The fourth complex has 69 one-bedroom apartments. According to Seattle Housing Authority 84 percent

¹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 35

of residents have annual incomes below 30 percent of area median income and the average income is \$13,086 per year.

One statistic that is difficult to measure and account for in zip code 2 is the high number of East African immigrants that have settled there. Because they do not trust any form of government and therefore resist giving out their information, it is hard to find reliable statistics, however there are several apartment complexes in the neighborhood that house this population. The evidence of their presence is reflected in the many East African businesses that can be found in the area.

It is clear that the demographics of Church X, over 90% white, highly educated and upper-middle class income, does not match the multi-ethnic, low education and lower middle class to poverty levels of income found in the neighborhood surrounding them. For Church X to begin to reflect this neighborhood they would need to take some intentional steps to increase diversity in their congregation.

Table 1: Church Weekly Attendance 1964-2013¹⁸.

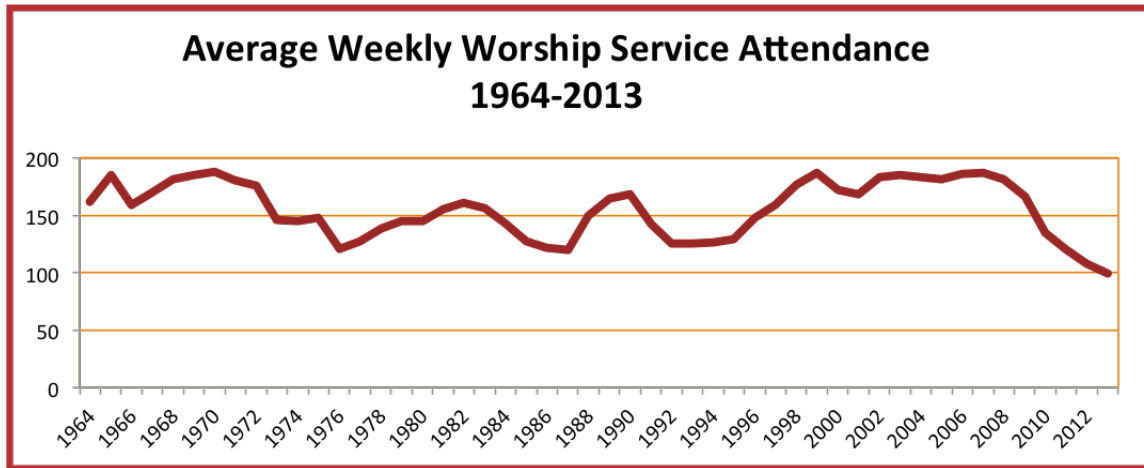


Table 2: Church Demographics¹⁹

Demographics	Percent
Age 19-29	13%
Age 20-49	23%
Age 50+	49%
Non-White	5%
Children under 18 at home	39%
Education (% college degree or higher)	69%
Married	75%
Income under \$30K	2%
Income \$30K-\$74,999	35%
Income \$75K or more	63%
Church Tenure	
Less than one year	6%
One to five years	15%
Six to ten years	18%
More than 10 Years	61%
* Base size 61	

¹⁸ Data from Denomination Year Books

¹⁹ Data from "Reveal" congregation survey conduct February of 2012

Table 3: Schools within the neighborhood surrounding Church X.

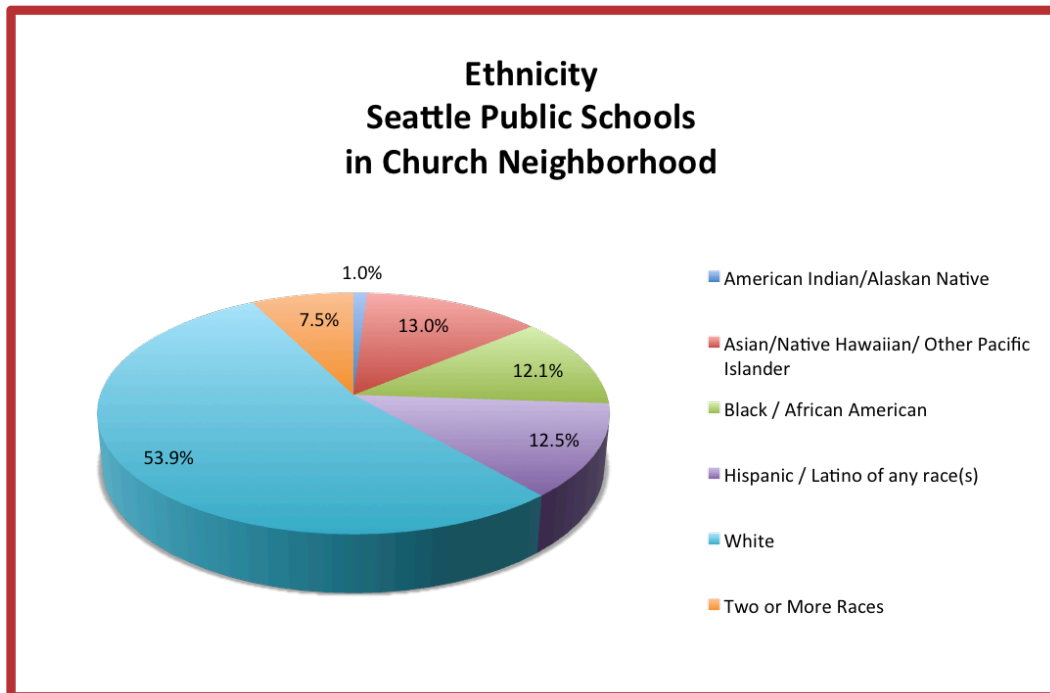
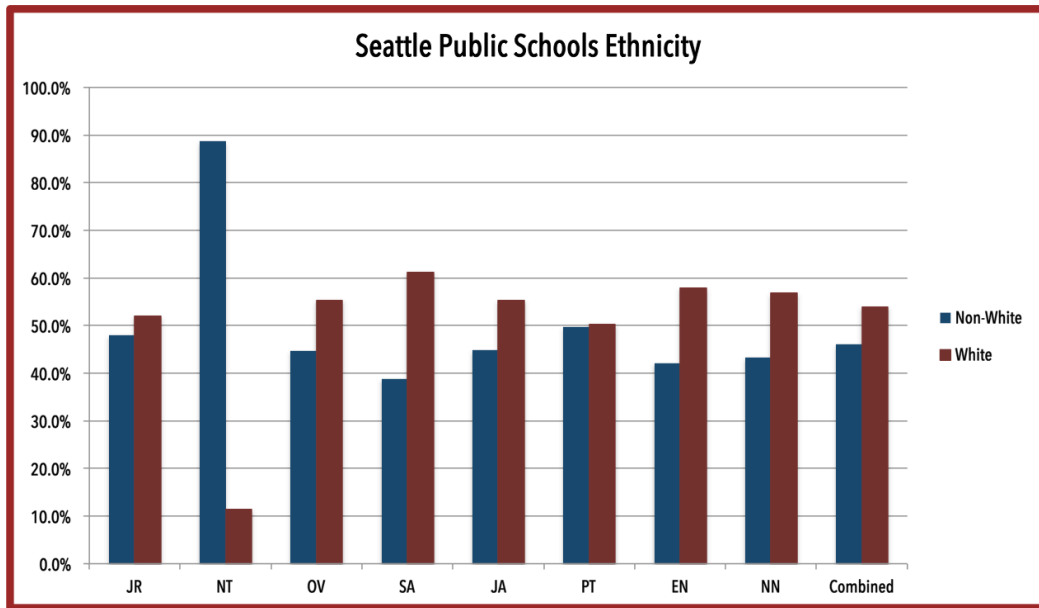


Table 4: Seattle Public School District²⁰

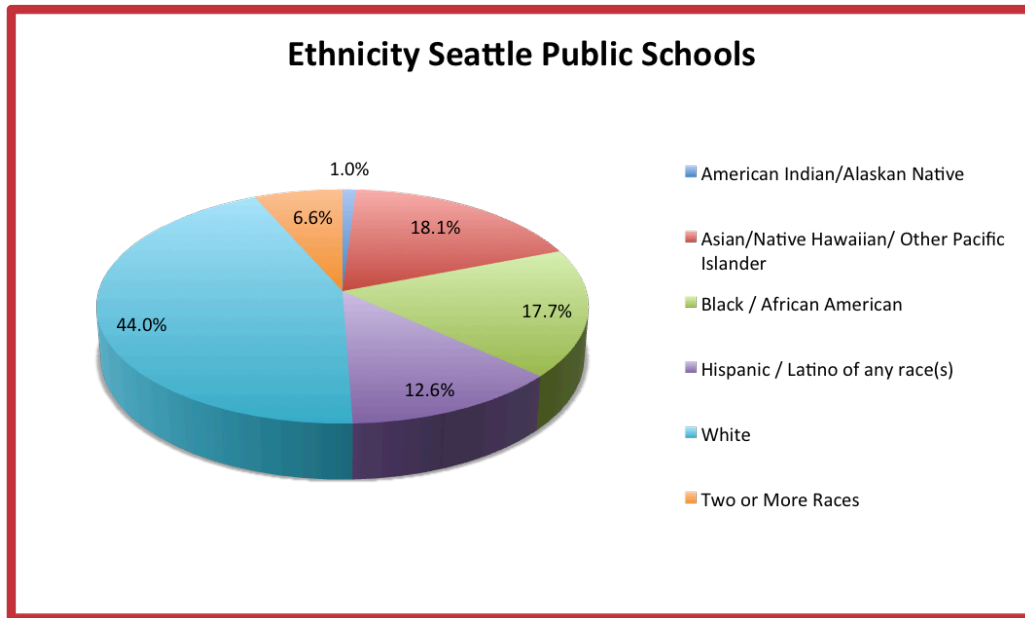
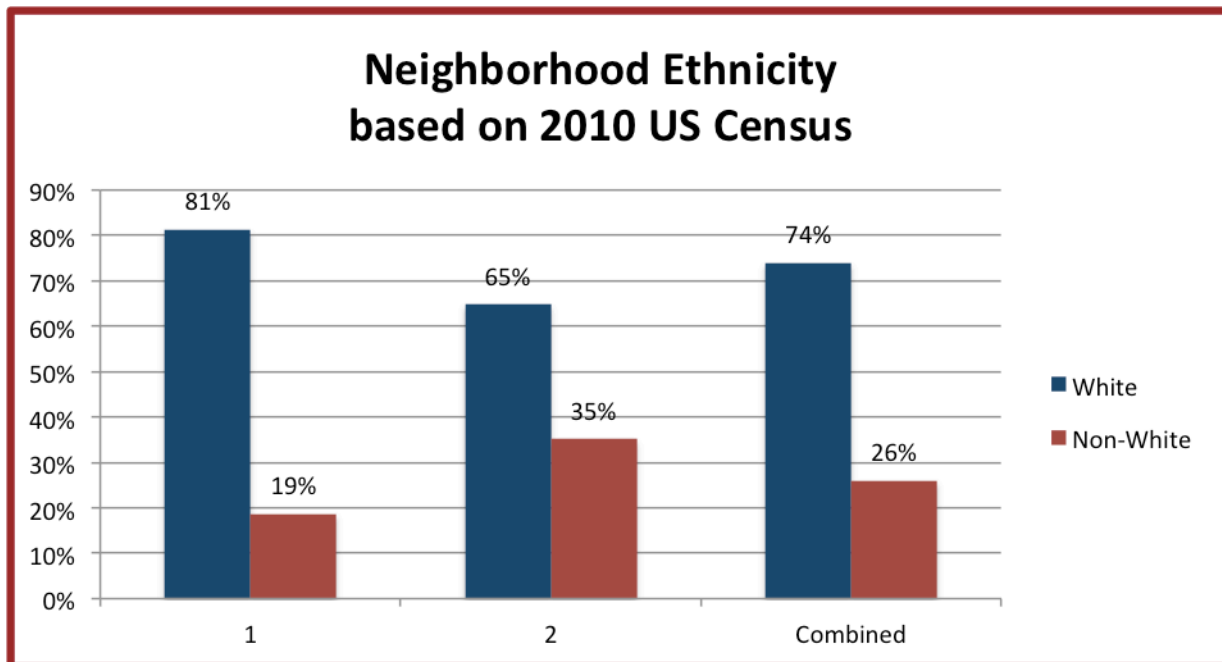


Table 5: Zip Code 1 Ethnicity from 2010 US Census



²⁰ Data Source from Washington State Report Card, <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us>, and is based on October 2012 numbers.

Table 6: Zip Code 2 Ethnicity from 2010 US Census

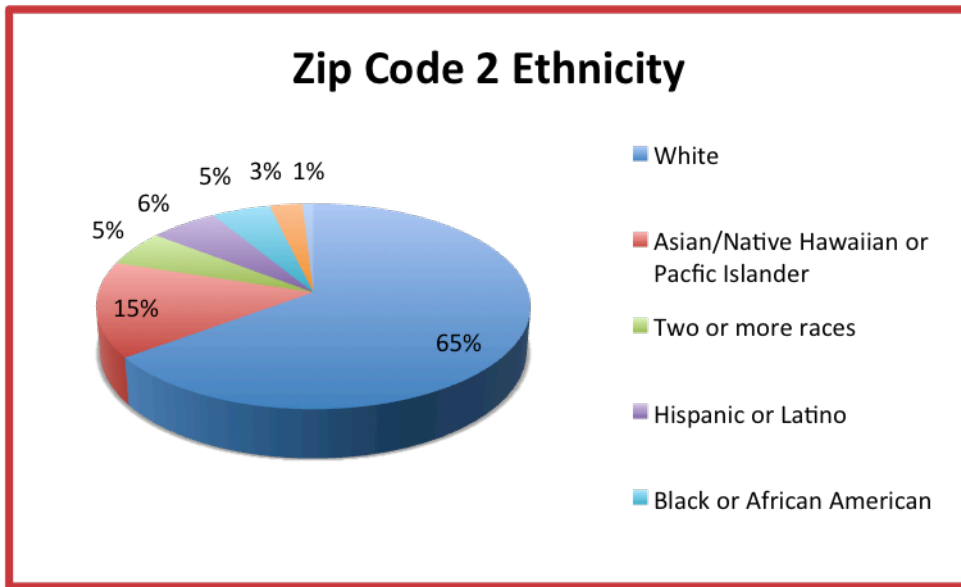
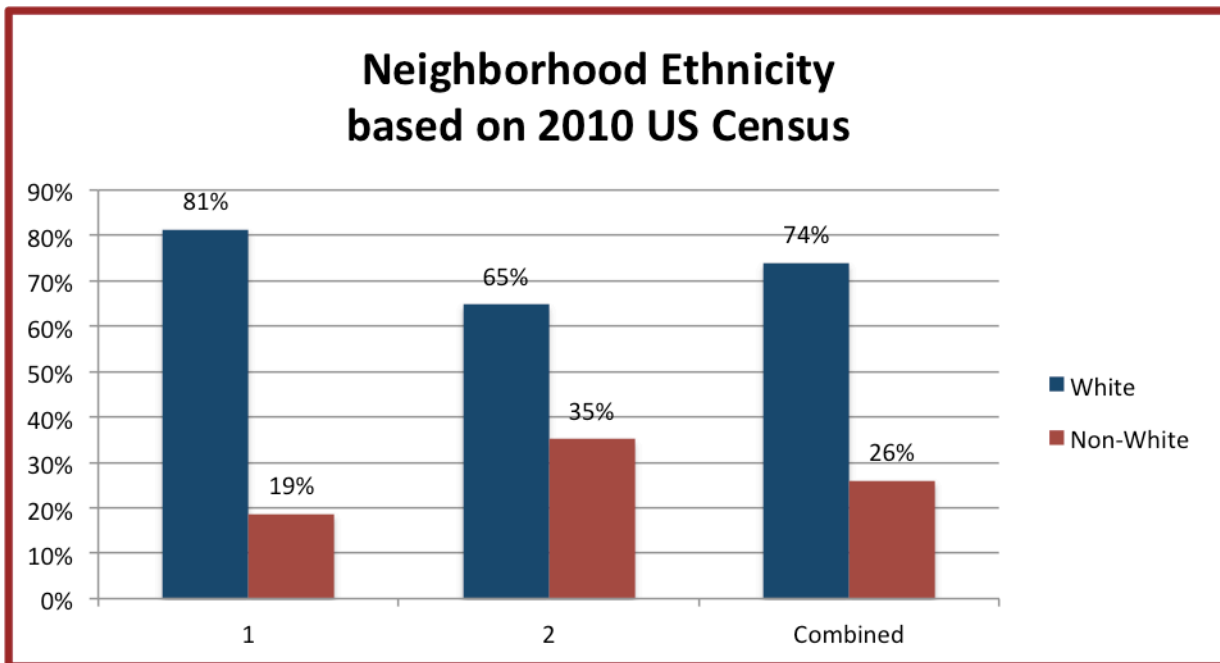


Table 7: Combined Zip Code Ethnicity:



Engaging the Congregation

The reconciliation training process with Church X began with an outline of a six-week course (see Appendix I). It was then advertised through the church communication systems for four weeks. I created and handed out a flyer (see Appendix II), sent email invitations, and extended personal invitations to several individuals. At a church leadership meeting I offered to give the training to them specifically if they would like. Finally, I prepared and delivered a sermon titled “What Is Reconciliation And Why It Matters To Christians,” I ended with an invitation to attend the course. After all this only two people signed up. I was disappointed and unsure about the reason for the lack of response, so I made inquiries in an effort to discover why more people did not sign up.

The major response given was “I don’t have the time.” The second most frequent response was a lack of interest in the topic, or a sense that it didn’t apply to them (ie: all my relationships are fine, or I get along with people from other cultures just fine). One individual responded that these things are always about “how bad and prejudice we white people all are.” One member of the leadership board replied they would prefer to hire a professional to come and teach them. These responses led me to wonder what kind of reaction people had when they heard the word reconciliation. I did an informal research project and sent an email to 50 people asking them if they would be willing to simply write what they thought or felt when they heard the word “reconciliation.” I asked them not to take long to think about but rather send me their initial thoughts or feelings. Out of the 50 emails, 15 people responded back. Eight of the 15 said that they thought of accounts brought into balance and/or broken relationships restored. Some responded with fairly short answers such as, “I think of forgiveness,” or “It is God’s heart, and therefore not an option.” Another stated that when she thought of reconciliation she thought of “taking time to build a bridge through understanding and respect.” One said, “forgiveness, bond-building, new beginnings, peace, creating community, open to change.” While another stated, “in spite of our differences we should be able to work together and strive to understand each other.” And another, “The process of identifying areas, things, thoughts, actions, etc. that are causing a problem and then coming to agreement on how to improve the situation.” Finally, one person said, “correcting social injustice.” I realized

that the concept of reconciliation is all over the board, and for 50% of those responding it is something that happens when a once good relationship is broken. I believe that most people in the church do not see reconciliation as needed or valuable enough topic to add to their already too full life schedule. The other concept I came to understand is that people do not see that it is possible to have a broken relation with someone you have never met. In other words, I believe that if everyone in your circle is just like you and you do not have friendships with people who are different from you then you need reconciliation. Reconciliation is not only about those you already know, it is about those you don't yet know also.

With this new knowledge I realized that I needed to change how and where I focused my energy. In the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* Stephen Covey discusses the difference between our Circle of Influence and our Circle of Concern. Our Circle of Concern contains the things we care about, but have no control over, while our Circle of Influence contains the things we do have the power to effect, "Proactive people focus their efforts in the Circle of Influence. They work on the things they can do something about."²¹ Covey goes on to say that when you focus on your circle of influence in a positive and trustworthy way, your circle will grow. It had not worked to try and engage the whole church in a conversation about reconciliation, I needed to change my approach and focus on my Circle of Influence, rather than my Circle of Concern.

²¹ Covey, Stephen R. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. RosettaBooks, New York, 2012. Kindle Location 1133. Kindle Edition.

A New Question

The answer to my first question had been revealed: “No”, a focus on reconciliation in the local church does not lead to an increase of social and cultural engagement by its congregants in the surrounding community, since the local congregation did not demonstrate an interest in engaging the topic of reconciliation. Therefore, a new thesis question needed to be formulated, “Can a focus on reconciliation with the staff of a local church lead to changes that produce an increase in the ethnic diversity of their congregation?”

Looking at my Circle of Influence I realized that I had begun to develop a solid working relationship with the lead pastor, with whom I had been meeting regularly. In January the lead pastor invited me to join the church staff on an internship basis. As a part of this internship he asked me to run the weekly staff meetings, and encouraged me to use the time for teaching and training. The lead pastor had become aware of the growing Hispanic population in the neighborhood and therefore had become convinced that Church X needed to become a multiethnic body. Although he believe it was important, he had a negative experience with reconciliation efforts, therefore he wasn’t convinced that the discipline of reconciliation had anything positive to add to the conversation. However, he trusted me—so he was willing to allow me a small audience to begin training.

My immediate task was to define the staff meeting time. The staff meets every Tuesday from 10:30 to 11:30, there did not seem to be any defined purpose to the time other than discussing plans. As we met for the first time I told the staff that I wanted to divide the hour into two sections: being and doing. It was important to the lead pastor that we not simply be doing ministry as matter of business, but rather in response to God’s leading. If the staff was going to respond to God’s leading, then we needed to begin by being with God. It was also important that we determine how we are doing spiritually as well as emotionally and physically. Church X comes out of the Wesleyan tradition so I chose to begin the meeting with a Wesleyan question, “How is it with your soul?” Next we spent time reading and reflecting on scripture and praying before we ever began talking about the ministry plans. This allowed for relationship

development as well as spiritual develop, both important components of my reconciliation definition.

The Staff

Since the case study for this particular thesis question is focused on the staff of a particular church, the particular people who participate in the case study will influence the outcome of the project. For that reason the it is important to take time to know and understand the individual people who form the group.

In the beginning the staff consisted of five people. The lead pastor, is in his late 50's and has been appointed to Church X since 2000. He and his wife have four children, two adult sons and two teenage daughters. The lead pastor grew up in New York. After high school he attended college on a football scholarship, and majored in History. The lead pastor became a Christian in his early 20's and soon felt a call to ministry. He then headed to seminary where he earned his Master's of Divinity. He and his wife then returned to New York where he pastored for over 10 years before moving the family to Seattle where they have been since. The associate pastor is in her early 60's and has been appointed to Church X since last June, her position is a quarter-time stipend position. The associate pastor and her husband have 4 adult children and several grandchildren. She and her husband grew up in southern California. After high school they both attended college, where she earned her degree in Christian Education. In 2013 the associate pastor earned her Master's of Theology degree. She held a position as associate pastor at another church for over 10 years prior to coming to Church X. The ministry director is in her mid 50's, and has held the volunteer position of Children's Ministry Director since 2010. The ministry director grew up in Michigan. After high school she attended college earning her degree in biology and physical education. She has worked in the medical field for many years. She and her husband have three children, a son who is attending college and two teenage daughters. The ministry director and her family have been attending the church for over 20 years. The administrator is in her late 40's and has been the administrator for Church X since 2002, this is a part-time paid position. The administrator grew up in Portland, attended college in Oregon and earned a degree in business and marketing. She is a single mother with

two college age daughters. She began attending the church in 2000, however for personal reasons she has not attended for the last several years. The outreach coordinator is in her late 40's, and has been director of the homeless ministry since 2008, this is a quarter time stipend position. She grew up in Seattle, and after high school attended college where she earned a degree in education. The outreach Coordinator and her husband have two teenage children and have attended the church for almost 10 years.

Reconciliation has not been a focus for Church X, and so I asked the staff to tell me what they thought of when they hear the word "reconciliation." The lead pastor replied, "It feels like a loaded expression. It has so many different manifestations in our society, and many times carried out with either personal or group agendas. I don't know that the concept of reconciliation has always been a healthy or positive concept. Or maybe it is that the concept has not met the application." The associate pastor answered, "Reconciliation is to fix what is broken. It is to have something add up properly. It is to compromise with concessions and celebration to be comfortable with that which was not comfortable before. To reconcile is to make right. It can also mean to accept what you don't like or want. An example is, 'He was reconciled to the idea of her leaving for the night.'" The ministry director stated that when she thinks of reconciliation the first thing she said was the word "balanced." "I think of balancing something, bring it back into right relationship. Giving everything equal energy." The administrator's idea of reconciliation has to do with marriage and personal relationships, "it's patching up what is broken in either a marriage or a friendship." She said she knew that's not what I meant when I talk about reconciliation, but she thinks that when you try and intentionally be in relationship with someone simply because they are different from you, "That sounds fake to me. There is a falseness to simply being in relationship with someone who is not like you." She explained that her neighbor used to be homeless and she has become friends with him because he is her neighbor, but if she went up to a homeless person and wanted to become his friend because he was homeless, that would be "fake." Finally, the outreach coordinator stated that when she hears the word reconciliation "What I feel is hope. Reconciliation means to walk intentionally in the direction of peace; to choose to put aside (or to be healed from) our differences in order to walk alongside or towards another."

Next I asked the staff if they believed that Church X needed to be a multiethnic congregation. The lead pastor responded that it was important in order to be missional, and since our country is multiethnic the church needs to be multiethnic. Associate pastor replied, “Just as my checkbook needs to be reconciled and it often is missing an entry I'd compare and say the same for the church. It is necessary and even vital that the reconciliation be accomplished. We just need to find the missing things to add to the efforts.” The ministry director responded, “Yes, because we are in a multiethnic area of the country, and the reality is that our world is multiethnic.” The administrator believes the church needs to reflect the neighborhood around it. She lives within walking distance of the church, and spends lots of time walking the neighborhood, and from her perspective the area immediately around the church is populated with lesbian women, and therefore our congregation should have lesbian women in it. I did not get an official quote from the outreach coordinator, other than she agrees that is important.

In their book *Divided By Faith* authors Christian Smith and Michael Emerson assert that, “evangelicals desire to end racial division and inequality, and attempt to think and act accordingly. But, in the process, they likely do more to perpetuate the racial divide than they do to tear it down.”²² It is common for people in the Christian church to embrace the idea of reconciliation and to get excited about the concept of a multiethnic congregation, but the actual work of tearing down dividing walls and living together in all our differences is much more difficult than the ideas, concepts, and good intentions. The work must be done in an intentional way that is guided by God, informed by wisdom, and built with knowledge. My task with the staff at was to lead them in such a way that all three of these areas came together.

I asked the staff if they would be open to making the first Tuesday of every month an extended staff meeting, with lunch provided. Everyone agreed that it was a good idea and they would like that. I had two objectives to these extended meetings, first cultivate an environment of trust and authenticity. Reconciliation must happen in an environment that allows people to learn how to be authentic and open to others who have different points of view, “a good leader cultivates an environment where people can be themselves, bring their

²² Emerson, Michael O.,. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York, NY: Oxford UP, 2000, Kindle Locations 45-47. Kindle Edition.

'stuff' to the table and be encouraged and influenced to run hard after God without being judged, dismissed, disrespected or rejected."²³ The second objective was to help them begin to think about the steps they would need to make toward becoming a multiethnic congregation. If the congregation is going to become multiethnic it must begin with the leadership of the church, and therefore it is essential for the leadership to know and believe in the vision, "It is imperative that the leadership team supports the vision of multicultural ministry. They need to know that the leader is completely committed to diversity. The team must know that the strategy employed will be racially and culturally inclusive."²⁴

²³ Anderson, David A.,. *Multicultural Ministry Handbook: Connecting Creatively to a Diverse World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010. Kindle locations 447-449. Kindle Edition.

²⁴ Ibid, kindle locations 115-116.

The Lessons

Developing a multiethnic congregation requires you to deal with different types of culture. When various ethnicities come together into one congregation, various ethnic cultures are also brought together into one congregation. Unless the church leadership takes time to understand how culture works, multiple collisions will happen. The second type of culture is organizational culture. A sustainable long term multiethnic congregation will not be able to form if the church leadership does not take the time and effort needed to create a culture that is open to multiple ethnicities. “ The unique culture of a multicultural team must be given constant attention. It can never be left on autopilot. A second-tier leader or even a key ministry volunteer with a strong personality has the potential to create a following that can create a countervision and counterculture if not carefully coached.”²⁵ For these reasons I developed a lesson on the nature of culture.

The Nature of Culture

Psychologist Gordon Allport , “It holds that all groups develop a way of living with characteristic codes and beliefs, standards and ‘enemies’ to suit their own adaptive needs.”²⁶ Defining culture is a difficult task, it is not a concept that can be captured in just a few words or ideas. One of the first classes I took in seminary tackled the topic and defined culture as, “a complex, dynamic process of developing, learning, and sharing knowledge, practices, and stories that serve to order, shape, and make meaning in the world around us.”²⁷ At its very basic level, culture is how we survive in our environment. At its practical level culture is how we order our world. At its philosophical level, culture is the way we make meaning out of our world. Culture is learned and passed on through our knowledge, stories, and traditions.

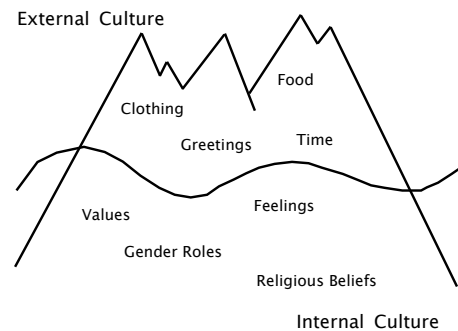
²⁵ Anderson, David A.,. *Multicultural Ministry Handbook: Connecting Creatively to a Diverse World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010. Kindle locations 470-472. Kindle Edition.

²⁶ Allport, Gordon W. (Gordon Willard), 1897-1967. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub 1979. Pg. 39. Print.

²⁷ Leong, David. *Christ, Culture and Context*, Christian Formation in Mission, Seattle Pacific Seminary, Tuesday September 9, 2009.

Ethnic culture develops as a group of people living in a particular geographic location learns how to use their environment and resources to survive. “Because of differences in climate and natural resources, people developed different ways to meet the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, community, family, etc.”²⁸ Cultures typically develop in isolation from other groups, “Human groups tend to stay apart...The fact is adequately explained by the principles of ease, least effort, congeniality, and pride in one’s own culture. People who stay separate have few channels of communication. They easily exaggerate the degree of difference between groups, and readily misunderstand the grounds for it.”²⁹ Developing in isolation naturally leads to myopic vision. The way our particular culture functions and derives meaning in the world makes sense to us, so we naturally assume our way is better than any other. “It is easy to believe that one’s own culture is the best, because it works so well for you it seems impossible to think that it would not be best for everyone.”³⁰ Because different people groups have developed in isolation from one another, and since each one believes their culture is the best, bringing multiple cultures together is a difficult task and it is helpful to understand how culture works.

Every culture has two components: an external or objective component, and an internal or subjective component. The External culture is obvious and can be changed without too much difficulty, “External culture is the conscious part of culture. It is the part that we can see, taste, and hear. It consists of acknowledged beliefs and values. It is explicitly learned and can be easily changed.”³¹ What people eat, how they eat it, when they eat it; what people wear, how they wear it and when they wear it; what people live in, and how they live it are examples of external culture. This component of culture is a small portion of culture, it can be learned easily



²⁸ Law, Eric H. F. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb a Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993. Pg. 4. Kindle Edition.

²⁹ Allport, Gordon W. (Gordon Willard), 1897-1967. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub 1979. Pg. 19. Print.

³⁰ Lane, Patty. *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 2002.. Kindle Locations 496-497. Kindle Edition.

³¹ Law, Eric H. F. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb a Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993.Pp. 4-5. Kindle Edition.

and one can adapt to a change in this part of culture without too much difficulty. These components of culture have been likened to an iceberg. The smallest portion of an iceberg is the portion above water that can be seen. Like the visible portion of an iceberg the external portions of culture are obvious and can be adapted to. Moving to another culture will look simple on the surface, “A person’s clothing, manner of greeting, diet and language may adapt to approximate the dominant culture where the person now lives.”³² It may appear that you have adapted to your new culture, until you begin bumping into the larger, unseen portion of the iceberg that lies below the surface.

Below the surface is the more difficult and larger portion of culture: the internal culture. This portion “consists of the unconscious beliefs, thought patterns, values, and myths that affect everything we do and see. It is implicitly learned and is very hard to change.”³³ These are the things we don’t necessarily even know that we know. The most obvious of these traits is the difference between an individualist culture and a communal culture. In the United States we have been shaped to believe that the individual is the center. I choose how to live my life based on what is best for me, the individual. A communal culture thinks of the community first, what I as an individual choose to do will be based on what is best for the community rather than myself. Neither is right or wrong, they just are different ways of navigating the world. The thought that another way might exist does not occur to us. So if I, who come from an individualist culture move to a communal culture I can step all over people without even knowing it because I am making decisions based on my own needs without thinking of the community. Like a ship on the ocean, simply adapting to the iceberg that we see does not protect you from the much larger portion of ice that you don’t see.

Just like there are ethnic cultures, there are also organizational cultures. “Organizational culture is the unspoken ethos of a group of people, including its beliefs, social behaviors, practices, attitudes, values, and traditions.”³⁴ An organizational culture is developed from many different things. What is the purpose of the organization? Who are the people who are part of

³² Lane, Patty. *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 2002. Kindle Locations 218-219. Kindle Edition.

³³ Law, Eric H. F. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb a Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. Chalice Press, St. Louis, MO, 1993. Pg. 5. Kindle Edition.

³⁴ Addington, T. J. *Leading from the Sandbox : Develop, Empower and Release High Impact Ministry Teams*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2010. Kindle Locations 797-798. Kindle Edition.

the organization and what ethnic culture do they come from? Why do people associate with the organizations culture? How does the organization interact with people outside the organization? Most important of all, what are the values of the organization? All these things will determine both the spoken (external) ethos of the organization as well as the unspoken (internal) ethos of the organization.

Organizational culture is either positive or negative but it is never neutral. It can be shaped and developed intentionally, but it will develop one way or another. Organizational culture can be used as a method of measurement. “The development of a healthy culture is central to getting the missional results one desires. The good news is that you do not need to settle for the culture you have but can proactively define the culture you want to develop.”³⁵ The point that I am trying to make here is that if your organization is going to become a multiethnic, you must be aware of your current organizational culture and then begin to create the culture you need to meet your goals. If you desire to be multiethnic what values do you need to cultivate? What attitudes do you need to shape? What beliefs do you need change or reinforce? What social practices and traditions do you need to let go of or begin to develop? If you value diversity and your organization is not diverse you know you are not meeting your mission. How does your culture need to change in order to become more diverse?

The Lesson on the Nature of Culture

The lesson on culture began with an icebreaker exercise; the goal of the exercise was to help people to begin to share about themselves in a non-threatening way. I laid out about 50 pictures of various things and asked everyone to choose whatever picture they felt drawn to. Then I asked each one to tell us why they chose the picture. This worked well to get conversation flowing. After this I spent about 30 minutes teaching about ethnic and organizational culture. I followed this with a discussion on our own family and ethnic cultures, the culture of our city, our state and our nation. Finally we discussed our local organizational culture, our denominational culture, and the overall church culture in the U.S. I ended with the

³⁵ *ibid.* Kindle Locations 1029-1031.

question of “what kind of organizational culture do we need to develop here at Church X in order for various ethnic cultures to become a part of our congregation?” We spent lunch simply talking with one another. Before everyone left I asked for feedback and received a positive response. We then confirmed the date for the next session.

A Lesson on Romans 12

For the second lesson I wanted to connect the idea of organizational culture to scripture (See Appendix III for the PowerPoint). I decided that Romans 12 was a good place to go. Prior to the session I sent out a message and asked everyone to spend time reading and meditating on the text. I also asked them to bring either a picture or an item from home that was meaningful to them. In a continuing effort to help us get to know one another better, I asked them to be prepared to share the story of why it was meaningful to them.

The lesson began with a reminder of the different elements of organizational culture (beliefs, social behaviors, practices, attitudes, values, and traditions) and that our task was to determine what our organizational culture needed to become in order to foster ethnic diversity. Knowing that change of any kind is difficult, I spent time discussing the difference between following Christ on a journey versus monument building for our own posterity. Using Genesis 11 and the story of Babel we discussed how the people had decided to build a tower to God in order to make a name for themselves. We then read Genesis 12, and discussed how God called Abram to take a journey to the place God promised to show him. As followers of Christ we are called to go where the Holy Spirit leads us. I asked them to consider what skills are required to follow someone on a journey. Using various pictures they determined that it required one to keep their eyes on the person who was leading, it requires a high level of trust in the one leading, and it requires the follower to let go of their own plans. As they talked they realized that on a journey the scenery and environment changes along the way, while a monument, by its very nature, is stagnate and static.

The focus now turned to Romans 12. We read the first verse, “So, brothers and sisters, because of God’s mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service.” I asked them to discuss

what God’s mercies are, and what it means to offer our bodies as living sacrifices. Then we read the second verse, “Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.” We then read Romans 1:18-23 as an example of what the patterns of this world look like.³⁶ Followed by Romans 6:1-14 to discover what transformation looks like.³⁷ According to Romans 6 when we die to our old self we are made more alive in Christ, therefore when we offer ourselves as living sacrifices and are transformed by the renewing of our minds we are actually made more alive than we were before.

This was followed by Romans 12:3, “Because of the grace that God gave me, I can say to each one of you: don’t think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Instead, be reasonable since God has measured out a portion of faith to each one of you.” Followed by Romans 8:12-14,

So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it isn’t an obligation to ourselves to live our lives on the basis of selfishness. If you live on the basis of selfishness, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. All who are led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons and daughters.

We discussed how the renewing of our minds leads to a new way of thinking, how that new thinking shaped our behavior and attitudes.

³⁶ Romans 1:18-23: God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven against all the ungodly behavior and the injustice of human beings who silence the truth with injustice. This is because what is known about God should be plain to them because God made it plain to them. Ever since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—God’s eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, because they are understood through the things God has made. So humans are without excuse. Although they knew God, they didn’t honor God as God or thank him. Instead, their reasoning became pointless, and their foolish hearts were darkened. While they were claiming to be wise, they made fools of themselves. They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images that look like mortal humans: birds, animals, and reptiles.

³⁷ Romans 6:1-14: So what are we going to say? Should we continue sinning so grace will multiply? Absolutely not! All of us died to sin. How can we still live in it? Or don’t you know that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we were buried together with him through baptism into his death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too can walk in newness of life. If we were united together in a death like his, we will also be united together in a resurrection like his. This is what we know: the person that we used to be was crucified with him in order to get rid of the corpse that had been controlled by sin. That way we wouldn’t be slaves to sin anymore, because a person who has died has been freed from sin’s power. But if we died with Christ, we have faith that we will also live with him. We know that Christ has been raised from the dead and he will never die again. Death no longer has power over him. He died to sin once and for all with his death, but he lives for God with his life. In the same way, you also should consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.

So then, don’t let sin rule your body, so that you do what it wants. Don’t offer parts of your body to sin, to be used as weapons to do wrong. Instead, present yourselves to God as people who have been brought back to life from the dead, and offer all the parts of your body to God to be used as weapons to do right. Sin will have no power over you, because you aren’t under Law but under grace.

Now we read Romans 12:4-8 together. I adapted a puzzle exercise from Salter McNeil & Associates that I had received permission to use and used it as a discussion tool. After everyone chose a puzzle piece I asked each person to tell me about his or her piece. I asked each one to tell me what they thought the picture was. We discussed that it is difficult to know what the picture is until all the pieces are in their proper place, we also determined that the picture is ruined if one piece is missing. Then we worked together to put the puzzle together. As they worked to put it together the director of outreach ministries put her piece down and sat back and watched as the rest of the team worked together. I asked her why and she replied that she did not like doing puzzles. As the rest of the team worked to put it together they were struggling a bit until they realized that it was not a square puzzle. As they finished putting the puzzle together I asked them what would happen if the pieces were all square? The obvious answer was that it would not hold together. I asked them what would happen if one of the pieces decided it wanted to be placed somewhere else in the puzzle? The obvious answer was that it would not fit, and the picture would be ruined. I asked them what would have happened if they had insisted that the puzzle was square and refused to put it together once they realized it was not square? The obvious answer was that the puzzle would not be able to be completed and it would be useless. We then connected the puzzle exercise to the scriptures emphasis that every member of the body has a place in the body.



Finally each person read the rest of the chapter for themselves and I asked them to begin developing a list of cultural characteristics that are found in the community of God's people. We spent a few minutes discussing our lists and then I ended this lesson with the question "Are you willing to be a living sacrifice?" We then had lunch together and shared our pictures or items and the stories that went with them. Within the two weeks after this lesson the outreach ministry coordinator decided that she was going to step down from her role at the church.

A Lesson on the Nature of People

The topic for the third lesson was the social psychology account of how people groups operate. Prior to the meeting I sent out an email and asked people to come prepared to share a family value that they either grew up with or had established with their own children. Personal values are the strongest boundaries that we have, Gordon Allport states, “The most important categories a man has are his own personal set of values. He lives by and for his values. Seldom does he think about them or weigh them; rather he feels, affirms, and defends them. So important are the value categories that evidence and reason are ordinarily forced to conform to them.”³⁸ Because our personal values are so strong they are also the most difficult to change. For that reason I wanted us to take time before we discussed the social psychology of people groups to think about and consider our own personal values.

In order to help explain the theory of categorization I had prepared an object lesson. I handed each person an envelop with approximately 100 individual pictures of various items ranging from fruits and vegetables to furniture and vehicles (see Appendix IV). I asked each person to organize the pictures in whatever way seemed to make sense to them. I gave them about five minutes to finish. I then asked each one to explain to me how they had organized, and then why. There were four staff members, and as it happened the group divided in half as to how they organized the pictures. The lead pastor and the administrator organized them in very similar patterns, while the associate pastor and ministry director organized theirs in very similar patterns. I explained that this is the natural way human’s function in the world. In order to traverse through the many decisions we must make every day we categorize things and people. It is neither good nor bad; it simply is the way our mind is able to navigate through life. It is how we react to these categories that matters.

When we were finished with the object less I led them through a short slide show lesson on the nature of people (see Appendix V). The lesson explains that the world if full of lots of different kinds of people who separate into groups of like people (categorization). Once we

³⁸ Allport, Gordon W. (Gordon Willard), 1897-1967. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub, 1979. Pp. 24-25. Print.

have separated into like groups we build fences around our groups. Inside our fences we become less and less open to other points of view. We see our group as “us” and the other group as “them” (stereotyping). We then defend our fences: I am right therefore you must be wrong (prejudice). Our defenses often devolve into violence. After going through the exercise and the slide show the lead pastor had an “ah-ha” moment. This was something that he understood; it fit with his own life experiences, and it helped him to understand the struggles that he had faced since coming to the church. He could identify, and suddenly a light went on. Once the light went on he got very excited.

The lesson continued with the question, “Can and should we get back to a world filled with lots of different kinds of people without fences” (recategorization)? The consensus was yes, but how? At this point I took them back to the previous lesson on Romans 12 and reviewed Paul’s instructions to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, to allow God to transform our thinking, and to not think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Then I suggested that a practical step is to simply ask people to tell you their stories, and then in turn share our stories with them. I explained that just as we have been sharing our stories in an effort to get to know one another better, we needed to begin to interact with people who were not like us and listen to their stories. When we listen to each other’s stories we discover that we have more in common than we realized, as we begin to know the person rather than the stereotype the fences become thinner and smaller.

A Lesson On The Image of God and The Body Christ

For the fourth lesson we focused on the theology of a multiethnic congregation, and why it is important for the church (see Appendix VI). I began by having them read Genesis 1:26-31, then asking them “What does it mean that we are all created in the image of God?” This question is one that I have found really causes people to stop and think. For Christians it is almost second nature to think of ourselves as made in the image of God, but we don’t always consider that everyone, every person ever born or ever will be born, also carries with them the image of God. As the discussion around the table continued I guided them to three answers I wanted them to be sure to take home: Every person ever born has value; the image of God is

vastly dynamic; and, we need those who are not like us in order to have a better understanding of who God is. As we were talking the lead pastor had another “ah-ha” moment. He attended seminary during the height of the church growth movement and was trained using the principles from that philosophy. One of those principles was the “homogeneous unit principle,” a philosophy that taught that church growth happened best when a congregation is comprised of like people groups. This was a realization for both of us. I had not heard of the homogeneous unit principle, and he suddenly realized how this one the concept had shaped his way of leading.

The lesson continued with a discussion on 1 Corinthians 12. In this text Paul is addressing a divided Corinth church, and once again Paul uses the metaphor of the body. Paul articulates to them that the body of Christ is one body with many members. He emphasizes that each member is required and every member needs to play the role they were created to play. Paul asks what would happen to the body if one part decided it wasn't part of the body because it didn't like being a hand or a foot? What if all the parts were the same? Paul tells the Corinthians that the body is not whole and it cannot function properly if parts are missing or not performing as they were created to perform. I asked them what it means for this church that the body of Christ is made of many different parts? Right away the lead pastor said that first of all you have to embrace and accept the part that you were created to be. If you are a foot you have to be comfortable with being a foot. We then discussed that every part is valuable and necessary. If that is the case, then we need to make room for those who are not like us. Paul says that every member belongs to one another, which means that we need to get to know those who are not like us. When we look around our congregation and we see mostly white, middle age, middle class, highly educated people we are more like a body that is only an eye or mouth. We are not able to function as a whole body.



As we ended this lesson the team gave me very positive feedback. The lead pastor asked me if we could begin to us this material to train the other leaders in the church. My circle of influence now had the possibility of expanding. However, shortly after the fourth lesson the associate pastor declared that she no longer wanted to attend the training sessions, as she did

not want to spend her time on it anymore. The lead pastor suggested that we could talk about how to change the staff meetings, two days later she gave her notice. I was never able to teach the fifth lesson. It became apparent that while the lead pastor had asked me to do the training for the staff, I did not have his full support. What I was really doing was training him, and the staff meeting was simply my opportunity to teach him. I discovered that without the full support and authority of the lead pastor behind me the answer to my question, “Can a focus on reconciliation with the staff of a local congregation lead to the changes required in order increase the ethnic diversity in their congregation?” Is “no.”

After the Lessons

After this I met with the lead pastor to discuss what had happened. I asked him if he still felt it was important to train the staff. He agreed that the leadership of the church had been trained and they had to model it for the rest of the congregation, but he was not sure at this point even who the staff was. He asked if we could take some time to determine who it is that we want to train. I told him that if the church was going to be multiethnic the staff and leadership must also be multiethnic. I talked to him about intentionally inviting people of diverse ethnicities to join the church. Brenda Salter McNeil writes in her book *Credible Witness* that if we are going to have an evangelistic witness we need to invite those who are different from us to join us, and we have to acknowledge our need of them, “‘I’m asking you to come join our church because we really need you; we’re impoverished without you and the knowledge you bring.’ Or, ‘You understand and have access to a community of people who know and trust you. We need your help and guidance to establish our credibility, and we will follow your lead.’”³⁹ The lead pastor agrees that unless the church has people of different ethnicities as part of the leadership the church will not change. We decided to take the summer to pray for God to open doors, as well as taking intentional steps to engage with people outside our normal circles.

³⁹ McNeil, Brenda Salter. *A Credible Witness : Reflections on Power, Evangelism and Race*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008, pg. 72-73 Print.

An Answer

After teaching the lessons and interacting with both the staff and the lead pastor, and after reflecting on what I had learned from my experience and my research, I developed the foundational material for future training. Since the turning point for the lead pastor was the lesson on the nature of people I synthesized the research I had gathered from many different social psychology resources into a broad stroke look at how and why people groups develop. It was at this point that I made a connection with Paul's teaching in Romans to the social psychology theory of "recategorization." As I continued to develop the material I realized that the theology of the image of God and the body of Christ went well with social psychology's theory of "decategorization." During this time the lead pastor and I continued to meeting on a weekly basis, I used this material to continue the multiethnic congregation conversation. What I have been discovering is that an exploration of social psychology's theory of categorization has direct implications for increasing the senior leaders role in developing a multiethnic congregation?" The following sections detail the results of my research and conversations with the lead pastor.

The Nature of People

Gordon Allport wrote that, "The human mind must think with the aid of categories. Once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudgment. We cannot possibly avoid this process. Orderly living depends upon it."⁴⁰ We cluster single items into groups rather than consider each as unique.⁴¹ Items such as apples, oranges, and strawberries we categorize as fruit, or food, or maybe even decorations. It is neither a good nor a bad behavior; it is simply the way our minds make order of our world. Once we categorize items into categories we can think about them more easily.⁴² Our ability to process information is limited, therefore the ability to efficiently categorize information is essential to our ability to navigate through the myriad of decisions we make every day. My orderly process of getting ready for the day would

⁴⁰ Allport, Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub 1979Pg. 20. Print.

⁴¹ Kassin, Saul M. *Social Psychology*. 7th ed. Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Pg. 134. Print.

⁴² Myers, David G. *Social Psychology*. 4th ed. New York NY: McGraw-Hill, 1993. Pg. 399. Print.

be much more complex if I had to go through a complicated process of choosing my clothing, deciding on breakfast, and finding a way to get to my destination. When I get dressed I have categorized my clothing without even realizing it: clean versus dirty, warm versus cold, socially acceptable versus socially inappropriate. I have categorized my food, breakfast food as compared to dinner (cold pizza for breakfast or pancakes for dinner?), so that I can quickly prepare my food. I choose my mode of transportation based on the distance traveled, the options available to me, or maybe even the by the environmental impact. If I had to go through long complicated cognitive process every day to get out the door, I would not function in the world very well.

Categorization is not limited only to items or things, but also includes people. Social categorization is the process of classifying persons into groups on the basis of common attributes, "people sort each other into groups on the basis of gender, race, and other common attributes."⁴³ In the process of categorizing people we typically classify ourselves into one social category and out of others.⁴⁴ The group that we identify and feel that we belong is our "ingroup," whereas the group that we do not identify nor feel that we belong is the "outgroup."⁴⁵ We label our ingroup as "us" and the outgroup as "them."⁴⁶ While this is a natural human process, it becomes problematic. When we categorize people we base this judgment on limited and often incomplete information, "Merely dividing people into groups can trigger discrimination...when decisions need to be made quickly, we often rely on efficient but oversimplifies stereotypes."⁴⁷ We stereotype people when we categorize all Asian as highly educated, all Hispanics as migrant farm workers, and all whites as power hungry. When we categorize and assign stereotypes to groups of people we cease to see the individual and see only the group.⁴⁸

Allport stated that, "familiar provides the indispensable basis of our existence."⁴⁹ The groups that we associate with share many similarities with us. We are born into cultures that

⁴³ Kassir, Saul M. *Social Psychology*. 7th ed. Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Pg. 134. Print.

⁴⁴ Dovidio, Jack. *On the Nature of Prejudice Fifty Years After Allport*. John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Pg. 73. Print.

⁴⁵ Kassir, Saul M. *Social Psychology*. 7th ed. Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Pg. 135. Print.

⁴⁶ Dovidio, Jack. *On the Nature of Prejudice Fifty Years After Allport*. John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Pg. 38. Print.

⁴⁷ Myers, David G. *Social Psychology*. 4th ed. New York NY: McGraw-Hill, 1993. Pg. 399 Print.

⁴⁸ Dovidio, Jack. *On the Nature of Prejudice Fifty Years After Allport*. John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Pg. 38. Print.

⁴⁹ Allport, Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub 1979Pg. 29. Print.

inform how we categorize the world around us. As we grow we find that it is easier to maintain our association with those who are like us, “We can conserve our valuable and limited cognitive energy by spending time with people who are like us and whose behavior we can easily predict. Conversely, our interactions with people who are different from us or who violate our expectations are laden with uncertainty and are cognitively taxing.”⁵⁰ Social Identity Theory tells us that group membership impacts our self-esteem. Association with our group enhances our self-esteem just because we are a part of the group, and ingroup favoritism further enhances our personal self-esteem.⁵¹ Those who are in the group who do not share the similar attitudes of the group will eventually leave, and the group becomes more and more homogenous. With few voices of dissent the initial leanings of the group tend to be enhanced and exaggerated.⁵² As each member endorses one another (which is not difficult, since everyone shares the same point of view), the group becomes more and more convinced their way is the right way, “In the absence of diverse influences, homogenous group members tend to adopt more extreme and narrow-minded thinking as time passes.”⁵³

Now that the group is established and has affirmed itself, it begins to defend itself. The group has become a sturdy “us” and those who are outside the group (“them”), who do not share the group point of view become a threat, “We prize our own mode of existence and correspondingly underprize (or actively attack) what seems to threaten it.”⁵⁴ In essence once our group has formed we isolate and guard it. We let in anyone who agrees with us and dismiss those who disagree with us. Since our very existence seems to ride on survival and promotion of our own group we seek to elevate our group, even if that is at the expense of other groups.

To summarize, Social Psychology tells us that the world is full of lots of different kinds of people, who separate into groups of like people. Once people have separated they build fences around themselves. Inside our fences we become less open to other points of view. We see our groups as “us” and their group as “them,” and then we defend our fences. Our group is right,

⁵⁰ Cleveland, Christena, 1980-. *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013. Pg. 45. Kindle Edition.

⁵¹ Kassin, Saul M. *Social Psychology*. 7th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Pg. 151. Print.

⁵² *ibid.* Pg. 274.

⁵³ Cleveland, Christena, 1980-. *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Pg. 27. Kindle Edition.

⁵⁴ Allport, Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub 1979. Pg. 27. Print.

therefore your group must be wrong and we very often turn to violence in order to protect our domain. The process is one that happens easily and often, it simply is the way our minds work. It is so basic to the way we operate as human beings that we should not be surprised to find the same behavior happening in the church.

There are several different methods to help move beyond the ingroup “us” and the outgroup “them.” Gordon Allport suggested that “changing the way people conceive of category memberships held great promise for reducing prejudice.”⁵⁵ One theory called *decatagorization*, also called “the personalization model” puts a focus on the individual. “Members of different social groups are induced to perceive themselves and others as separate individuals.”⁵⁶ This theory suggests that by focusing on the individual stereotypes are disproven and it “breaks down the monolithic perception of the homogenous unit.”⁵⁷ Decategorization allows people to pay less attention to categories and ingroup boundaries while it also allows people to “perceive outgroup members as individuals.”⁵⁸ The advantage of decatagorization is its focus on the individual. As people separate into groups the focus moves from the individual to the group. Lumping people into one group identity reduces them from a person to a unit, and it leads to gross stereotyping. We need to move from group stereotypes to knowing the unique individuals in the group.

A second theory, *recategorization* also known as “common ingroup identity” focuses on “restructuring categorization at higher levels of inclusiveness.”⁵⁹ This theory allows for people to redraw the boundaries of the group moving the “us” and “them” to a new “we.” Recategorization minimizes “attention to category differences by creating new inclusive group identity...ingroup loyalties and concern for collective welfare are transferred from the original subgroups to the new social category as a whole.”⁶⁰ Recategorization changes the group

⁵⁵ Dovidio, Jack. *On the Nature of Prejudice Fifty Years After Allport*. John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Pg. 72. Print.

⁵⁶ *ibid.* Pg. 76.

⁵⁷ Brewer, Marilynn B., *When Contact Is Not Enough: Social Identity And Intergroup Cooperation*. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Vol. 20 No.3/4 (1996). Pg. 293. Retrieved online: <http://sites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1230890.files/WhenContactisNot.pdf>

⁵⁸ Kassin, Saul M. *Social Psychology*. 7th ed. Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Pg. 174. Print.

⁵⁹ Dovidio, Jack. *On the Nature of Prejudice Fifty Years After Allport*. John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Pg. 77. Print.

⁶⁰ Brewer, Marilynn B., *When Contact Is Not Enough: Social Identity And Intergroup Cooperation*. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Vol. 20 No.3/4 (1996). Pg. 294. Retrieved online: <http://sites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1230890.files/WhenContactisNot.pdf>

concept, allowing for a more inclusive and diverse idea of the ingroup. It takes two or more groups and creates an all-new single and diverse group based on some other common category.

I believe that we need to take advantage of both decategorization and recategorization theories. A focus on decategorization and the individual is essential for change to happen, but it is not enough. While it is beneficial to develop one on one relationships, the reality is that we still separate into groups. Rather than ignoring this reality, recategorization uses it and then allows us to define new ways of grouping. Decategorization allows us to know and maintain our uniqueness while recategorization allows us to form new groups that include all that uniqueness.

The Theology of Recategorization: Romans

Paul's letter to the Romans offers us insight into the theology of Recategorization. When Paul wrote to the church in Rome the Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles had a disunity problem. Paul has one desire for all of them: to have life transforming faith in Christ that translated into a new way of living together. As he begins his letter he identifies himself and his credentials, "a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for God's good news" (1:1). Then identifies to whom he is writing, "To those in Rome who are dearly loved by God and called to be God's people" (1:7), in this one statement Paul defines these two different groups as a "we" under the category of "people who are loved by God and who are called to be God's people."

Paul tells the church in Rome that he has wanted to come to them and for some time, but has been unable to. He says that he wants to harvest fruit among them just as he has among the Gentiles, for he is responsible to both the Greek and the non-Greek (1:13 & 14). The word translated here as "Gentile," is the Greek word *εθνος*. Paul uses *εθνος* (*ethnos*) 29 times in his letter to the Romans. It is the word that we receive our own word "ethnic." Many texts translate the word as "Gentile." Which is not wrong, however it does not convey fully the meaning of the word. According to the Theological dictionary of the New Testament, *εθνος* has

“an ethnographical sense” and denotes “the natural cohesion of a people in general.”⁶¹ It is important as we move into the letter to realize that what Paul is addressing here has everything to do with two ethnic groups; these two groups are using their ethnicity as a way to establish their spiritual superiority over the other. Paul argues that it is not your ethnicity that makes you spiritual, but rather it is your faith in Christ, “There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord is Lord of all, who gives richly to all who call on him. All who call on the Lord’s name will be saved” (10:12-13). All who call on the name of the Lord belong to the same “we” group, all who call on the name of the Lord are citizens of the same Kingdom. Next he argues that faith in Christ results in transformation, and this transformation will be evident in the kind of community they become, “So welcome each other, in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God’s glory. I’m saying that Christ became a servant of those who are circumcised for the sake of God’s truth, in order to confirm the promises given to the ancestors, and so that the Gentiles could glorify God for his mercy” (15:7-9). The people of God testify to the truth of God and glorify God, a community that is divided does neither.

After Paul gives his usual thanksgiving prayer he moves into the heart of his letter, “I’m not ashamed of the gospel: it is God’s own power for salvation to all who have faith in God, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (1.16). The gospel is God’s power, so Paul is not ashamed of proclaiming it. The gospel is God’s power for salvation as well. It is a message of salvation for both the Jew and the Greek; no one can claim it for themselves. “God’s righteousness is being revealed in the gospel, from faithfulness for faith, as it is written the righteous person will live by faith” (1.17). It is a salvation for all who have faith, not just the Jews who had received the covenant, not just the Greeks who had received Christ, but to all who live by faith.

Paul begins to unfold his argument with a description of the depravity of humanity, “they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images that look like mortal humans...So God abandoned them” (1:23,24). Paul is establishing the truth that God began with Adam, but humanity abandoned God. In chapter 5 Paul will state that through one man, Adam, sin entered the world. The point Paul wants to make sure everyone gets is that God’s plan began

⁶¹ Kittel, Gerhard. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964. Pg. 369. Electronic Edition.

with Adam—not Abraham. God’s covenant with Abraham was part of the plan, but it was not a plan to exclude the Gentiles, rather it was a plan to rescue all people from the “wages of sin” (6.23).

As the argument develops, Paul explains that both the Jew and the Gentile will be judged based on their faith, not their ethnicity. “Those who have sinned outside the Law will also die outside the Law, and those who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law” (2:12). If you are a Jew, you are not saved by the Law simply because you have been circumcised, for if you are circumcised but don’t follow the law, your circumcision is nullified (2:25). However, if you are a Gentile and are not circumcised and yet follow the law, “they show the proof of the Law written on their hearts, and their consciences affirm it” (2:15). “It isn’t the Jew who maintains outward appearances who will receive praise from God, and it isn’t people who are outwardly circumcised on their bodies. Instead, it is the person who is a Jew inside, who is circumcised in spirit, not literally. That person’s praise doesn’t come from people but from God” (2:28-29). Chapter 3 boils it down to this, “God’s righteousness comes through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who have faith in him” (3.22) So...“All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory” (3:23) Both Jew and Gentile have sinned and fall short of God’s glory, no group gets to claim a greater status than the other—for it was the faithfulness of Jesus that brings God’s righteousness, both the Jew and Gentile have the opportunity to have faith in Jesus. Therefore bragging for either the Jew or the Gentile is “Thrown out” (3:27).

Abraham, Paul says, “had faith in God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” And this faith was credited to Abraham while he was still a Gentile, before his circumcision. Circumcision was a seal of his faithfulness (4:1-11a). “It happened this way so that Abraham could be the ancestor of all those people who aren’t circumcised, who have faith in God, and so are counted as righteous. He could also be the ancestor of those circumcised people, who aren’t only circumcised but who also walk in the path of faith, like our ancestor Abraham did while he wasn’t circumcised” (4:11b-12). Paul has now evened the playing field—both the Jew and the Gentile can now claim Abraham as their ancestor. It is not your heritage or your ethnicity that makes you righteous or unrighteous—it is your faith in Jesus Christ that matters.

Paul spends 11 chapters detailing the sin of all humanity, and the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ. Paul has made an argument for the new covenant people, both Jews and Gentiles who have faith in Christ. The Jews are one ingroup, and the Gentiles are another ingroup, but through their faith in Christ together they make a new group, a covenant group that they both belong to.

Now beginning with chapter 12 Paul is going to talk about how this new covenant community, this new “ingroup” is called to live together. The first word Paul writes is “therefore.” It is a word that is easy to read quickly and move on, but it is essential in this chapter to understand that what Paul is going to say now is in response to what he has already said. Paul has used a lot of paper and ink to make sure the church in Rome understands that faith in Christ has made these two ethnic groups one faith community, now he is going to talk about the obedient response of that faithful community. Paul does not leave the Roman church only with right belief, he also instructs them in right behavior, “For Paul [belief and behavior] are inextricably interwoven. They are the breath and blood of Christian living, the twin signs of life.”⁶² They cannot only have a right understanding, they must also have right way of living.

Paul appeals to the church in Rome to offer their bodies to God and this plea comes with three qualifiers. First Paul tells them that this offering should be done because of God’s mercy. After reading the first 11 chapters we know exactly what mercy Paul is talking about. It is mercy that in despite of the “ungodly behavior and the injustice of human beings” (1:18), has made it possible for those who “confess with their mouth ‘Jesus is Lord’ and in their heart have faith that God raised him from the dead” (10.9), are “treated as righteous freely by his grace” (3:24a). Based on this mercy and because Christ gave himself freely, Paul tells the Roman Christians that they need to offer their own bodies to God.

The next qualifier describes the offering, it is a living, holy, and pleasing sacrifice to God. This is indeed a sacrifice, and should bring to mind the temple practice of animal sacrifice or the story of Abraham offering Isaac on the altar—but this sacrifice is not a mere dead animal

⁶² Wall, Robert W; Wright, N. T. (Nicholas Thomas); Sampley, J. Paul. *The New Interpreter's Bible. Volume X, The Acts of the Apostles, Introduction to Epistolary Literature, the Letter to the Romans, the First Letter to the Corinthians.* Abingdon, 2002. Pg. 700. Print.

sacrifice rather it is a living sacrifice. It is a living sacrifice that recognizes the need to take seriously Jesus' instructions, "All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me. All who want to save their lives will lose them. But all who lose their lives because of me and because of the good news will save them" (Mark 8:34b-35). It is a living sacrifice that recognizes that our bodies are in fact God's temple and are no longer our own (1 Cor. 6:19). It is a sacrifice that is holy because of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, and therefore it is pleasing to God. The final qualifier of this sacrifice is that it is our reasonable act of service and worship. This is not an offering that we should be surprised by or even have to debate over. Apart from God's mercy we were dead in our sin, now that we are alive in Christ it is reasonable to hand over our *whole* body to the one who created us in the divine image.

Following Paul's plea comes a direct instruction: "Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (12.2a). The patterns of this world can be found back in chapter 1 beginning with verse 18. Now that you have received God's mercy, don't go back to living as the world lives, rather you must be transformed. Now that you are being made into a new creation (2 Cor 5:16), we do not embrace the way of the world or our natural tendencies that are a part of it. Paul has told them that because of God we are different, "Don't you realize that God's kindness is supposed to lead you to change your heart and life" (2.4)? Now he is making his point clear, once you have offered your body as a living sacrifice as is your reasonable response to God's mercy, the next step is a transformed mind and this transformation enables you to understand the will of God. Paul doesn't stop at just telling them they will think different, he tells them what those thoughts will be like,

Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Instead be reasonable since God has measured out a portion of faith to each one of you. We have many parts in one body, but the parts don't have all the same function. In the same way, though there are many of us, we are one body in Christ and individually we belong to each other (12:3-5).

A transformed mind has a reasonable understanding of the whole body of Christ. A transformed mind knows its place, and values every other part of the body. A transformed mind knows that every member of the body belongs to every other member of the body—despite their ethnicity. Not only do these two ethnic groups now belong to the same new

ingroup, they also belong to each other. The community that lives as part of the new covenant is not shaped by their own thoughts, rather they are shaped by God's will, they are shaped by Christ, "the Messiah Christians are to strive for unity, which will come through humility in which each thinks soberly about his or her own gifts and role rather than placing too high a value on them."⁶³ As faithful followers of Christ who have offered themselves as living sacrifices and have been transformed by the renewing of their minds we think different, we think like Christ. This new way of thinking is evident in the new way of living together.

As stated earlier, Paul does not just talk about faith, for Paul faith and behavior go hand in hand. So now that he has urged the Roman church to offer themselves as a living sacrifice, called them to a new way of thinking, and told them to know their place in the body, he is going to tell them what that behavior will look like,

Love each other like the members of your family. Be the best at showing honor to each other. Don't hesitate to be enthusiastic—be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord! Be happy in your hope, stand your ground when you're in trouble, and devote yourself to prayer. Contribute to the needs of God's people, and welcome strangers into your home. Bless those who harass you, be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying. Consider everyone as equal, and don't think you are better than anyone else. Instead associate with people who have no status. Don't think that you're so smart.
(12:10-16)

The new covenant people belong to one another (12.5), so they love one another as family. The new covenant people belong to one another so they honor one another, care for one another, they cry and laugh with one another. New covenant people know that every member is equal, and treat everyone as equal. New covenant people, welcome one another—even strangers—into their homes. Notice that in the midst of this list of new covenant behaviors Paul tells the Romans to be on fire with the Spirit, be happy in their hope, and devote themselves to prayer. New covenant people ground their behavior in the power of the gospel! New covenant people remain on the altar of sacrifice; new covenant people continue to allow the Spirit to renew their minds.

⁶³ Wall, Robert W; Wright, N. T. (Nicholas Thomas); Sampley, J. Paul. The New Interpreter's Bible. Volume X, The Acts of the Apostles, Introduction to Epistolary Literature, the Letter to the Romans, the First Letter to the Corinthians. Abingdon, 2002. Pg. 708. Print..

Paul began with two ethnic groups, two ingroups who were struggling to live together as one people of Christ's new covenant. They came from different cultures, different ways of ordering and understanding their world. They categorized differently. They had built their fences and were defending them. Rather than encouraging them to remain in their separate groups, Paul called them to re-categorize. He did not tell them stop being Jews or Gentiles, but he did call them to understand what it meant to be Jews and Gentiles now that they were a new people in Christ. You are still Jews or Gentiles, but now you are also part of the body of Christ. This new identity allows you to move from "us" and "them" to "we."

Paul's answer to my question, "Should we move towards a fenceless church?" Is that yes, we should be intentionally striving to become a fenceless church. He spent a lot of time telling the two groups that they had, in fact, began in the same category, and now because of their faith they have re-categorized and are now members of a new category: the body of Christ. In order to remove our fences and re-categorize we need to place our whole being on God's altar, we need to allow God to transform our way of thinking. We need to begin to see that we are one part of a body that belongs to each other. This is the exact opposite of how groups naturally work. Social science tells us that once we have formed our group with similar people, we begin to engage in "group biases" that defend our group's positive identity. Paul says that new covenant people actually make it a point *not* to think too highly of ourselves (12:3), in fact we do the best we can to honor all the members of the body (12:10), and even welcome the members of the body who are strangers to us (12:13). Re-categorization happens when we are willing to sacrifice ourselves, give up our own way of thinking and doing and embrace God's transforming gospel.

The Theology of Decategorization: The Image of God & The Body of Christ

The Image of God

Genesis chapter one declares that God created humanity in the divine image and then pronounced creation to be supremely good,

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”

²⁷ God created humanity in God’s own image,
in the divine image God created them,
male and female God created them.

³¹ ...God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good.

What difference does it make that humanity was created in the divine image? This is actually a pretty big question with many implications, only a couple of which I will deal with here.

The reality that God created humanity in the divine image and then in verse 31 declares them to be “supremely good” means that every human who has ever lived or ever will live is created with value. It also means that any words, deeds, or actions that devalues and degrades that which God has created in the divine image devalues and degrades God, “Wherever human beings are violated, diminished, or have their life drained away, God’s glory is dimmed and dishonored. Wherever human beings are quickened to fuller and richer lives God is glorified.”⁶⁴ Therefore, we need to embrace the truth that humanity, in all our differences, in all our uniqueness carry with us the stamp of God, and the way we treat one another either glorifies God or degrades God.

Once we stop and realize that every person ever born is made in the image of God, and then recognize that no two people on earth are exactly the same, the image of God emerges as very vast and dynamic. The image of God is bigger than any one person, any one ethnic group, any one society can encompass. In fact, when you begin to realize how big the image of God is, it becomes apparent that we need people who are not like us in order to gain a better idea of who God is. If the body of Christ is going to reflect the image of God it must be filled with people who are different from one another, “Rather than uplifting one race and ethnicity as the ultimate image of God, we must establish churches that honor the breadth of God's image found in a range of cultural expressions.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Johnson, Elizabeth A. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York NY: Crossroad, 1992. Print. Pg. 14

⁶⁵ Rah, Soong-Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism : Releasing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009. Kindle Locations 886-887. Kindle Edition.

As creatures made in the image of our creator we are given a very powerful and unique role in creation, one that comes with real responsibilities. N.T. Wright says that being made in the image of God has a two-fold purpose: worship and mission. As creatures made in God's image we are *angled mirrors*, "The Point of an angled mirror is that it reflects one thing to another." As creatures made in God's image we reflect the world to God (worship) and God to the world (mission). "It is as genuine human beings that we will be able to sum up the praises of creation, and as genuine human beings that we will be able to bring God's justice, freedom, beauty, peace, and above all rescuing love to the world."⁶⁶ Both of these responsibilities are damaged when the church is torn apart by division.

Consider first, that it requires a diverse body filled with a vast array of differences to encompass the image of God, so how can a segregated church reflect a true image of God to the world. Second, consider that any degrading of humanity degrades the image of God, so how can a degraded image of God send a true image of God into the world? As the church we are called to be made new in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are called to be one body and one flock, with one head (Christ) following one Shepherd (Christ). As creatures made in the image of the Creator, we must be made into new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17) who authentically reflect the image of God as angled mirrors. As new creatures, the sheep of one flock, we are not called to strengthen our fences, but to reflect a new image.

The Body of Christ

Paul wrote two letters to the church in Corinth. Corinth was a city filled with many religions, cultures and ethnicities, "in part because the original colonists had been mainly freed slaves recruited from the ranks of Rome's poor. Thus many of them would have been Syrians, Egyptians, and Jews. There were in addition, Greeks native to the area, and then in subsequent years people from all parts of the Mediterranean world."⁶⁷ In both letters Paul is writing to a very divided church. It is divided along ethnic, social, economic, cultural, and religious lines.

⁶⁶ Wright, N. T. *After You Believe : Why Christian Character Matters*. 1st ed. New York, NY: HarperOne, 2010. Pg. 243. Kindle Edition.

⁶⁷ Furnish, Victor Paul. *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pg. 2. Print.

Paul wants the church to be unified under the headship of Christ, and makes this clear in the first chapter of the first letter. He begins by uniting all believers under one category, “God’s people who have been made holy to God in Christ Jesus” (1:2). And then a few verses later he states the thesis of his letter, “Now I encourage you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Agree with each other and don’t be divided into rival groups. Instead, be restored with the same mind and the same purpose.”⁶⁸

In first Corinthians 12 Paul emphasizes his call for unity with a metaphor. He tells the church that the body of Christ is like a human body that is made of many parts while still being one unit. “We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jew or Greek, or slave or free, and we all were given one Spirit to drink. Certainly the body isn’t one part but many.”⁶⁹ There are different parts, and those different parts need to be who they were created to be (remember the image of God is vast and dynamic). Paul states that if the foot decides it is not part of the body because it is not a hand, it does not stop being part of the body. Or if every part of the body were an eye or an ear the body would be incomplete. Each unique part has a role to play, and they need to play their role authentically. “But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the part with less honor so that there won’t be division in the body and so the parts might have mutual concern for each other.”⁷⁰ Each part belongs to the other parts, so that when one part suffers all the parts suffer too, and if one part is rejoicing all parts rejoice too. Just like the Image of God, The body of Christ needs to be vast and dynamic. If we look around our congregation and everyone is the same, we need to ask what parts are missing and then die to our own selfish desires and allow the space needed for every part to take their place.

Conclusion

Everyone is created in the image of God and every human has value. To be human is to be made in the image of God, and to be disciples is to embrace our identity as image bearers. My relationship with you is not determined by your identity as part of an ethnic a group. I must

⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:10

⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians 12:13-14.

⁷⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:24b-25

be in relationship with you because you are a fellow image bearer. I must see you as an individual, not as group. I must

Everyone has been given a place and a purpose in the body of Christ. If the body is going to function correctly every part is needed and every part needs to fill their purpose. In order to play your role you must know what your role is and embrace all that is included in that. If you are foot you embrace being a foot, if you are an ear you embrace being an ear. If you are a woman you don't stop being a woman because you are part of the body, if you are Asian you don't stop being Asian because you are part of the body. Rather you understand that your role as part of the body includes the uniqueness of how God has created you. You are an individual part of the body, you don't stop being an individual rather it is your individualness that is needed for the body to be whole.

Decategorization calls us to relate to one another as individuals. As image bearers and as members of the body of Christ we are individual before we are part of the whole. Decategorization says your identity is not defined by the group, Christ tells us that our identity is defined by our relationship to him. Before we recategorize we need decategorize to be individuals who relate to others as individuals.

Homogeneous Unit Principle

As the lead pastor and I continued to meet and talk we discussed the church growth movement and the homogeneous unit principle. He reported that during the lesson on the image of God continued to motivate him. There was something about the realization that gave him a newfound freedom. The church growth movement principles were not just something that he had learned, they were something that he had embrace and even taught. He has been leading churches using the philosophy of the church growth movement for over 20 years. However, over the last several years as he has watched church attendance decline across the nation, and as he has experienced the unhealthy habits of his own congregation, he as become convinced that much of the philosophy is wrong. The homogenous unit principle was one more principle that he now believes is wrong. Since I did not know anything about the principle I decided to do some research on it and develop my own response to it.

As discussed earlier, the church in the United States is a segregated church. While many have argued that the church should be ashamed by this reality, others have asked the question, “can’t we simply treat one another better, and remain in our homogenous groups?” In researching their book *Divided By Faith*, Emerson and Smith discovered, “For many, although it is perhaps not the ideal case, there is certainly nothing wrong with attending racially distinct congregations, as long as the motivation is not prejudice.”⁷¹ If the church has Her focus on growth in numbers, it *might* seem to make sense to remain in our homogenous groupings. As we discussed in the section on the nature of people, human beings are naturally drawn to socialize with people who they identify with, people who are familiar. Does this mean, then, that the church should be homogenous? The founding father’s of the church growth movement believed that it did.

In the mid 50’s Donald McGavran, a missionary to India, asked the question, “How do people become Christian?” He asked the question because, “This is an enquiry which is of enormous concern to both the younger and older Churches as they carry out the Great Commission.”⁷² It was a strategic question, and a came from a sincere desire for people to be evangelized into the church. McGavran’s ideas develop out of his missionary service in India. He began to realize that his mission efforts were lost when the Western Church did not recognize and work with the culture of the native people,

As McGavran sees it, converts are detached from the natural communities to which they belong, attached to the foreign mission and its institutions, and required to conform to ethical and cultural standards that belong to the Christianity of the foreign missionary. The effect of this policy is twofold. On the one hand the convert, having been transplanted into an alien culture, is no longer in a position to influence non-Christian relatives and neighbors; on the other hand the energies of the mission are exhausted in the effort to bring the converts, or more often their children, into conformity with the standards supposed by the missionaries to be required by the gospel. Both factors have the effect of stopping the growth of the church.⁷³

⁷¹ Emerson, Michael O, and Christian Smith. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Pg. 135. Kindle.

⁷² McGavran, Donald A. *The Bridges of God; a Study in the Strategy of Missions*. New York: Distributed by Friendship, 1955. Pp. 1-2. Print.

⁷³ Newbiggin, Lesslie. *The Open Secret : An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995. Kindle Locations 1670-1674. Kindle Edition.

McGavran's legitimate concern was, "a desire to reignite an evangelistic fervor that would rival the exploding population of the earth."⁷⁴ Taking the Western culture to another land and trying to indoctrinate them with our culture is a problem. In his book *Christianity Rediscovered* missionary Vincent Donovan tells his story of being a part of the problem, and how he changed. He states in the opening paragraph of his introduction, "Many misgivings, fears, and suspicions revolve around the whole missionary movement and missionary history—the violence done to the cultures, customs, and consciousness of peoples, the callousness and narrow-mindedness found in that history. The author of this book was involved in that."⁷⁵ Donovan as well as McGavran saw the problem and made changes to their whole philosophy of missionary service.

McGavran's new missionary methods developed into the "Institute of Church Growth of the School of World Missions" at Fuller Theological Seminary. In the 1970's these principles, developed for the mission field, were introduced to the American church as the Church Growth Movement. The idea behind the church growth movement was to connect the Great Commission with the question, "how do people become Christian?" Christ gave the church the task of making disciples of all peoples (see Matt. 28), and McGavran took this mission to heart, "The fundamental presupposition of McGavran's entire thought is that the growth of the church is always and everywhere God's purpose. God desires a harvest. Thus, a stagnate or declining church is never the will of God."⁷⁶ For McGavran and his many follower, this focus on evangelism was the priority for the church, "'Church growth' means all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership."⁷⁷ And for McGavran, all that is involved includes understanding and utilizing the natural tendencies of people. What Dr. Kenyan had declared was a problem in American Protestantism (that they "tended to maintain the status quo and to shy away from new neighbors and new ways of living [see quote above]), McGavran now wants to endorse as the way to actually grow churches, which he believes is the will of God.

⁷⁴ Fong, Bruce W. *Racial Equality in the Church : A Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle in Light of a Practical Theology Perspective*. Lanham, MD.: U of America, 1996. Pg. 1. Print.

⁷⁵ Donovan, Vincent J.,. *Christianity Rediscovered. 25th An ed.* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2003. Pg. 1. Print.

⁷⁶ Fong, Bruce W. *Racial Equality in the Church : A Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle in Light of a Practical Theology Perspective*. Lanham, MdD: U of America, 1996. Pg. 6. Print.

⁷⁷ Wagner, C. *Your Church Can Grow*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1976. Pg. 12. Print.

Once church growth was understood as God's will, McGavran's principles were endorsed and taught in seminaries across the country. One of these principles was the "Homogenous Unit Principle"(HUP). The basic idea behind the HUP is that it is human nature to separate into similar groups (categorization), and within these groups people are more comfortable to fellowship with one another, therefore it makes sense to cultivate the homogenous unit in order to evangelize and draw more people into the church. Donald McGavran wrote,

Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers...It takes no great acumen to see that when marked differences of color, stature, income, cleanliness, and education are present, men understand the Gospel better when expounded by their own kind of people. They prefer to join churches whose members look, talk, and act like themselves.⁷⁸

McGavran argues that in the New Testament Church "almost all believers became Christians while remaining members of the Jewish community...as long as Jews could become Christians within Judaism, the Church could and did grow amazingly among Jews." Once the Gentiles became Christians a racial barrier was erected between the two groups, a barrier that the Jews could not overcome, and turned away.⁷⁹ In his book *The Bridges of God* McGavran states, "To ignore the significance of race hinders Christianization. It makes an enemy of race consciousness, instead of an ally. It does no good to say that tribal people ought not to have race prejudice. It can be understood and made an aid to Christianization."⁸⁰ C. Peter Wagner, McGavran's first disciple, stated that one sign of a healthy church is a homogenous church, "[A] vital sign of a healthy church, growing church is that its membership is composed of basically one kind of people." These are people from the same culture with the same interests, who socialize freely so that they are comfortable and feel at home.⁸¹ The HUP normalizes human nature and attempts to leverage it for the purpose of the great commission. What it seems to have forgotten was all of Paul's teachings in multiple epistles against the divided body of Christ. For example Paul told the Corinthians, "you are one body with many parts."

⁷⁸ McGavran, Donald A. *Understanding Church Growth*. Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1970. Pg. 198. Print

⁷⁹ *ibid.* Pp. 201-202

⁸⁰ McGavran, Donald A. *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* Rev ed. New York: Friendship, 1981. Pg. 10. Print.

⁸¹ Wagner, C. *Your Church Can Grow*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1976. Pg. 110. Print.

Not surprisingly there was some negative reaction to this principle. In 1979 C. Peter Wagner published *Our Kind of People*, in which he argues that the HUP is not only the key to church growth, but also an ethical answer to racial divisions, "I hope to argue convincingly that an ethical justification for homogenous churches exists in social-psychological, theological, and biblical sources."⁸² Wagner believed that by remaining in our homogenous units the church could actually overcome the racial divide.

Using the social psychology developed by Gordon Allport and others, Wagner explains the problem of ignoring our ethnic and cultural identities. "Social psychologists point out that group identity is integral to human personality. It can be argued, therefore, that no one is a whole person who does not participate in the kind of group we are calling a homogeneous unit."⁸³ Wagner recognizes that homogenous units (what Allport called "ingroups") are groups that understand themselves as "us." This, he explains, is the result of a learned culture, and not part of our genetic make up. Because humans can learn culture, and animals cannot, it is a component of being made in the image of God. Therefore, "Belonging to a homogenous unit that shares a culture and that has a 'we' identity is not to be regarded as a human deficiency to be overcome by sincere effort or increased piety."⁸⁴ Continuing with this line of thinking, Wagner concludes that the best way to work toward reconciliation is to allow the homogeneous unit to develop in their own way, "The best way to bring about the ultimate reconciliation of group to group in America and elsewhere is to recognize the right of each homogeneous unit to be Christian and to do theology in its own way."⁸⁵ It was this way of thinking that led Wagner to write,

At a time when racial sensitivities were worn thin, Christian intellectuals developed theologies that led to the conclusion that local churches which mixed homogenous units were more pleasing to God than those which ministered to only one homogenous unit. Americans scolded themselves because 'eleven o'clock Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America.' The whole created some terrible guilt complexes which at least partially account for the reason some oppose the church growth point of view so harshly today.⁸⁶

⁸² Wagner, C. *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America*. Atlanta GA: J. Knox, 1979. Pg. 1. Print.

⁸³ Ibid. Pg. 96

⁸⁴ Ibid. Pg. 97

⁸⁵ Wagner, C. *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America*. Atlanta GA: J. Knox, 1979. Pg. 96. Print.

⁸⁶ Wagner, C. *Your Church Can Grow*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1976. Print. Pg. 112.

A decade after Martin Luther King Jr. had encouraged the church to stop lagging behind and crystalizing the status quo, and the Reverend Robert J. McCracken had declared segregation in the church was shameful and shocking, the church growth movement was now legitimizing and spiritualizing church it. Considering the overwhelming effect the church growth movement still has on the church, it is not surprising that the 11 o' clock hour is still the most segregated hour of the week.

In order to support the HUP biblically Wagner points to the table of nations and the story of Babel. The table of nations lists the descendants of the sons of Noah who populated the earth after the flood. Genesis 10:5 states, "From these the island-nations were divided into their own countries, each according to their languages and their clans within their nations." Wagner believes that this verse means, "Social pluralism was part of God's creational plan...there is no hint that God intended anything else for the people he had created to populate the earth."⁸⁷ The next chapter of Genesis relates the story of Babel, an attempt by the people of the earth to build a city. Wagner states that they recognized that "God's intention of pluralizing the human race" would lead to cultural differentiation and so they rebelled against it. Therefore God intervened, "to accelerate his program for the decentralization of humankind."⁸⁸

What I believe Wagner fails to recognize is that no matter what conclusions you draw from the story of Babel, the confusion of mixed languages was reversed in Acts chapter 2 on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came and everyone heard the message in their own tongue. What Wagner fails to recognize is that Paul told us that there are differences among us, that is real, but it is not an excuse for the body to be divided. Finally I believe that Wagner fails to recognize that being made in the image of God, while it does say something about us, it actually says something more about God (see section on the Image of God and the Body of Christ). If in all our differences we are all made in the image of God then image of God must be very dynamic, and we need each other to discover more about God than we could know on our own. That does mean that we take seriously who God made us to be, but it also means that we

⁸⁷ *ibid.* Pg. 112.

⁸⁸ *ibid.* Pg. 112.

need those who are different from us. There is at least one category that every human being holds in common, we are all created in the image of God. This is the one “we” we all belong to and we all need to embrace.

McGavran and Wagner did not get it all wrong though. They did recognize the importance of embracing the person that you are. I believe they just applied it erroneously. Social psychology does tell us that it is human nature to categorize, and there are legitimate reasons for doing so (see the section on the nature of people). Theologically Psalm 139 tells us that God created us wonderfully, and as Wagner reminded us, we are created in the image of God. There are good things about who we have been created to be. However, our human nature is broken and needs to be reconciled to God. Paul tells us that when we become disciples we no longer see things by the same standard, “So then, from this point on we won’t recognize people by human standards.” As disciples we made into new creatures, “if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!”⁸⁹

Followers of Christ are not called to embrace human nature, rather they are called to offer themselves as living sacrifices to God, who are not conformed to the patterns of this world, but are transformed by the renewing of their minds so that they can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.”⁹⁰ In his book *The Lion Shall Dwell With the Lamb* Eric Law states that in order for people from different cultures to live together in a “Peaceable Realm” natural instincts will need to be transformed, “In order for the animals to co-exist in this Peaceable Realm, very ‘unnatural’ behaviors are required from all who are involved.”⁹¹ Rather than embracing human nature, Paul calls us to a new way of living (see section on a Theology of Recategorization).

As the lead pastor and I discussed this he was energized by the realization that the homogeneous unit principle actually embraces broken human nature rather than living into the transformed life that followers of Christ have been given. This new understanding was so exciting to the lead pastor that he presented it to the church leadership board and told them

⁸⁹ 1 Corinthians 5:16-17

⁹⁰ Romans 12:1-2

⁹¹ Law, Eric H. F. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb a Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993. Pg. 4. Kindle Edition.

that from here forward the church was going to be focused on the discipleship and spiritual formation of the congregation as a measure of church growth rather than reducing the gospel message to a marketing strategy.

The Theology of “We”: The Gospel of John

After reflecting on the homogeneous unit principle and the church growth movements focus on evangelization, the lead pastor and I discussed the idea of discipleship. The Gospel of John has a lot to say about how Christ’s disciples are called to live together. It occurred to me that Wagner had argued that, “Belonging to a homogenous unit that shares a culture and that has a ‘we’ identity is not to be regarded as a human deficiency to be overcome by sincere effort or increased piety.”⁹² In the Gospel of John Jesus teaches us that as his disciples “we” takes on a whole new definition. With this in mind I went to the Gospel of John and worked out a theology of “we.”

The Gospel of John is a unique Gospel with a different pace, timbre, and vibe than the synoptic Gospels. For instance in the synoptic Gospels Jesus breaks bread with the disciples during the last supper,⁹³ while in John’s Gospel Jesus washes the disciple’s feet⁹⁴. In the synoptic Gospels Jesus teaches the disciples to pray using what has become known as the “Lord’s prayer”⁹⁵, but in John’s Gospel Jesus prays for himself, the disciples, and future believers in what is known as the “priestly prayer.”⁹⁶ And, in the synoptic Gospels Jesus declares the second greatest commandment is to “love your neighbor as yourself,”⁹⁷ but in John’s Gospel Jesus gives a new commandment to love one another⁹⁸, “The focus is on loving one another—that is, on the love that believers have for each other”⁹⁹ This unique Gospel also has a unique ability to speak to the racially and economically divided church.

⁹² *ibid.* Pg. 97

⁹³ Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20

⁹⁴ John 13:1-17

⁹⁵ Matthew 6:9-13; Mark 11:25; Luke 11:1-4

⁹⁶ John 17

⁹⁷ Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27;

⁹⁸ John 14:35

⁹⁹ Powell, Mark A. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009. Pg. 187. Print.

When reading the Greek text, it is apparent that the Gospel of John begins with a finger pointing back to Genesis, “ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning.” By echoing the words in the first chapter of Genesis this Gospel declares to us that Jesus was there in the very beginning—because Jesus is himself God. So as we are reading the Gospel we should hear the echo of Genesis 1, “in the divine image God made them.” As we continue to read on in the first chapter of John’s Gospel we are promised that those who welcome Jesus, those who believe in Jesus’ name, have been authorized to become God’s children, “born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God” (1:12-13). When we welcome and believe Jesus we are part of a new family. The image bearers are now children of the one in whose image they were created. In John’s gospel Jesus is the gate that the sheep enter and are saved through, but it doesn’t end there because Jesus came so that the sheep could have a full life,¹⁰⁰ “The main focus of John’s Gospel is on the way that Jesus affects quality of life in the here and now.”¹⁰¹

When the hour had arrived for Jesus to leave this world and go to the Father, Jesus and the disciples gathered to share the evening meal. During the meal Jesus got up and began washing the disciples feet. This was an astonishing action, and one that Peter reacted to by declaring, “No, you will never wash my feet!” It was an astonishing event because the washing of feet was done either for yourself or by a slave. A master or teacher would never wash the servant or student’s feet. The situation was made more awkward when Jesus removed his clothing, further indicating that he was assuming the role of a slave, “Foot washing was an act of hospitality offered to guests after a journey, normally performed by slaves or by the guests themselves. By washing his disciples’ feet, Jesus combines the role of slave and host...the step-by-step narration of Jesus’ removing his clothes, putting on a towel, washing the feet, and wiping them with his towel suggest the humility of the slave.”¹⁰² After he washed their feet,

¹⁰⁰ John 10:9-10: “I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.”

¹⁰¹ Powell, Mark A. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009. Pg. 184. Print.

¹⁰² O’Day, Gail R, and Susan Hulen. *John*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006. Pg. 137. Print.

Jesus told the disciples that as his disciples they were to do as he had done and wash one another's feet, and then declared, "I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do" (vv. 14-15)

When Jesus finished, he gave Judas the opportunity to leave and do quickly what he was going to do (v. 27). Once Judas left, Jesus told the eleven remaining disciples he was about to go where they could not come, and then he gave them a new commandment, "Love each other as I have loved you. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other" (vv. 34-35). Jesus has defined all of his disciples with a royal "we." Everyone who follows Christ is his disciple, and this membership is made known by the way the disciples live together as "we." Jesus has now given his disciples a new way of living and being in relationship with one another. Disciples of Jesus do things different than those outside the sheep pen, and in fact it is this way of living together that will indicate to the world whose sheep they are, "Jesus' new command has taken on additional significance following the foot washing. The close association of love with the foot washing and Jesus' death conveys the implication that Jesus was charging his disciples to love one another even if such love requires that they lay down their lives for the community."¹⁰³ This sheep pen is different from other fences; this sheep pen embraces all sheep who enter as part of the collective "we," no matter what color their wool is.

Twice as Jesus continued to teach the disciples he told them that if they loved him they would obey his commandments. First Jesus tells them that if they love him they will keep his commandments and he will ask the Father to send a companion who will be with them forever (14:15-16). Next Jesus tells the disciples that if they abide in him as he abides in the Father they will be fruit bearers. He tells them that as the Father has loved him, so he has loved them, and then he instructs them to remain in his love. He then promises them that, "If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love" (John 15:10). Making sure they have not forgotten what that commandment is, "This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you" (15:12). This is not fickle love, this is not a flighty love, this is a hard kind of love that Jesus takes time to define for them,

¹⁰³ Culpepper, R A. *The Gospel and Letters of John*. Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1998. Pg. 208. Print.

“No one has greater love than to give up one’s life for one’s friends” (15:13). Jesus tells them that they are his friends when they do what he commands them (15:14). Jesus has already been demonstrating this kind of love by coming and living among us (1:14), by showing the disciples what it looks like to live in obedience to the Father’s commands (15:10), by washing their feet, and now he is going to show it by dying on the cross, “The very coming of Jesus is a demonstration of this love, and through his death on the cross Jesus reveals divine love at an unprecedented and unimaginable level: ‘Greater love has no one than this’.”¹⁰⁴ Jesus is not calling them to just any kind of love. This is a love that is sacrificial to the point of death. Jesus is not calling them to follow something that he has not done himself. Jesus is calling them to love one another in the same way he has and will continue to demonstrate.

When Jesus finishes teaching the disciples he prays first for himself, asking the Father to glorify him so he can glorify the Father (17:1), and then he specifically prays for the disciples—not the world—but for the disciples, asking the Father to make the disciples one, as Jesus and the Father are one (17:9-11). “In this prayer Jesus does not pray for ‘the world,’ but only for his followers. Jesus’ request for the disciples is that the Father protect them and that they may be one...the unity of the believing community will be based on the unity of the believers with Jesus.”¹⁰⁵ Finally Jesus prays for those who will believe because of the disciples,

I’m not praying only for them but also for those who believe in me because of their word. I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. I pray that they also will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I’ve given them the glory that you gave me so that they can be one just as we are one. I’m in them and you are in me so that they will be made perfectly one. Then the world will know that you sent me and that you have loved them just as you loved me (17:20–23)

Jesus begins the prayer focusing on his own unity with the Father and then he prays for the unity of the disciples, then Jesus prays for us (those who believe because of the disciples) to be one as Jesus and the Father are one. Now Jesus turns to the world, finally we get the “so what” part of Jesus’ teaching. Jesus says that when his followers are one the world will believe that God sent him, “The community is ‘one’ because they share together in the relationship of God

¹⁰⁴ Powell, Mark A. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009. Pg. 184. Print.

¹⁰⁵ Culpepper, R A. *The Gospel and Letters of John*. Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1998. Pg. 220. Print.

and Jesus. The community is shaped by Jesus' glorification of God in the events of his hour, his death and resurrection. The community's oneness serves as a witness to the world."¹⁰⁶

There it is, the mission. When the world looks to the church and sees how we love one another they will either see unity and believe or they will see a divided church and turn away, "What Jesus intends for us (the local church), then, is clear: we have been called to be one for the sake of the Gospel. It may not be easy, but it is biblical, and it is right."¹⁰⁷

How we live together, how we love one another, the extent that we are willing to die for one another, will witness to the world whose we are, and will then witness to the world who Jesus is. Love and unity are central to the gospel of John. Jesus says that he is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, the good shepherd who knows and is known by the sheep, "They will listen to my voice and there will be one flock, with one shepherd" (10:14–16). The body of Christ is called by one shepherd, to one single flock, and is united by their love for the shepherd as well as the sheep, "The oneness of the Father and Son is grounded in love and expressed in giving for the sake of others. Jesus makes this strikingly plain as he washes the disciples' feet out of love for them and then goes to his death out of love and obedience to the Father."¹⁰⁸ All the sheep listen for the call of the same shepherd, and they do so as one flock. They have left behind their various "us" categories and now are part of Christ's "we." This new "we" is characterized and known by the self-sacrificing love they have for one another. A church that is divided along racial, social, economic, gender, and generational lines goes against everything that John's gospel tells us about Jesus, and is in direct opposition to the command and mission that Christ has given to us.

The Multiethnic Church

As the lead pastor and I continued our discussion we talked about the concept of the multiethnic church as a witness to the hope of the kingdom of God for our broken world. We discussed the fact that church attendance continues to decline while the world seems to be

¹⁰⁶ O'Day, Gail R, and Susan Hylen. *John*. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006. Print. Pg. 165.

¹⁰⁷ DeYmaz, Mark. *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley, 2007. Pg. 9. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰⁸ Koester, Craig R. *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2008. Pg 202. Kindle Edition.

getting more desperate for some source of hope. We discussed the fact that the homogeneous unit did not provide an answer to the division in our world, but the gospel message does. As a result of this dialogue, I developed a case for the multiethnic church as a community of hope for our broken world.

It has been over 40 years since McGavran and Wagner led the Church toward the growth movement and homogeneous unit principle. Even though there is so much about their ideas that many have found disagreeable, if it had worked we could at least find reasons to continue to pursue their ideas. However, the church has continued to decline in its membership, while reconciliation in the church has made very little progress, and racial tensions in the world continue to dominate the news. Unfortunately, what the church growth movement did accomplish was to turn the church into a consumer product that must please the customer in order to maintain their market share. This has led to a watered down gospel and an environment that reflects the world outside rather than the Kingdom of God. “For most of its history (but particularly in the last fifty years), American evangelicalism has more accurately reflected the values, culture and ethos of Western, white American culture than the values of Scripture.”¹⁰⁹ And we are again reminded of Dr. Kenyon, Dr. King, and Rev. McCracken’s warning that the church needed to show the world “new ways of living.” If the only thing the church has to offer is a different version of what can be found outside the church walls, why do people need us? In fact, if the church says that they have a better way of living and yet all she offers is a similar product as the world—what they actually end up seeing is hypocrisy and more reasons to stay away than to come be a part of.

The church must take Jesus’ teaching in John 13 seriously and live together as disciples to witness to the world. The church must take seriously Jesus’ prayer in John 17 that asks for his disciples to be united as one body so that the world will see us and believe. The church must embrace the work done by Christ, described by Paul in Ephesians 2:14, “God made both Jews and Gentiles into one group. With his body, he broke down the barrier of hatred that divided us.” The church needs to spend as much time and effort on developing the multiethnic church as it has on the church growth movement over the last 50 plus years.

¹⁰⁹ Rah, Soong-Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism: Releasing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009. Pg. 20. Kindle Edition.

Jesus did call us to make disciples of all people, but making disciples is not simply getting people in the door and feeling comfortable with those around us. Making disciples actually says that because of Christ “us” and “them” can become the Kingdom of God “we” in all of our diversity. Making disciples includes the great command to love one another and it also includes the instruction to put aside all selfishness.¹¹⁰ “We are not called just to make individual converts. We are called to make disciples who create corporate social change as a part of a new kingdom community that loves the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and loves their neighbor as themselves.”¹¹¹ I believe that if the world were to look inside the church and witnessed us loving one another and living together in a unity that embraced our diversity we would then be offering a gospel message worth embracing. “A corporate witness to the reality of reconciliation is a perfect demonstration of the gospel. Our unity in the midst of our diversity is one of the most powerful ways we reveal the reality of what Jesus accomplished on the cross.”¹¹²

Instead of only seeing the church as evangelistic, we can see the church as offering model of community. In a world that is torn apart day after day by our racial, gender, and economic differences, the church has an opportunity to offer the world what Walter Brueggemann calls an “alternative community.” The alternative community offers a new way of being, “it is the task of the alternative community to present an alternative consciousness that can energize the community to fresh forms of faithfulness and vitality.”¹¹³ If the church can be that alternative community that demonstrates to the world that the Gospel message transforms people and communities, evangelism will be only one of the exciting outcomes. However, this alternative community cannot be a cute surface community that never deals with hard realities, it has to be authentic and it will be messy. George Yancey says it well, “This model cannot be one of superficial relationships where members of different races merely tolerate each other...In the church we should find people of different races who worship

¹¹⁰ Romans 8:12-14: So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it isn't an obligation to ourselves to live our lives on the basis of selfishness. If you live on the basis of selfishness, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons and daughters.

¹¹¹ McNeil, Brenda Salter, . *A Credible Witness : Reflections on Power, Evangelism and Race*. IVP Books, 2008. Pp. 17-18. Kindle Edition.

¹¹² Ibid. Pg. 16.

¹¹³ Brueggemann, Walter. *Prophetic Imagination Second Edition*. Augsburg Fortress, 2001. Kindle locations 1129-1130. Kindle Edition.

together and can illustrate love for each other.”¹¹⁴ Returning to 2 Corinthians 5:18, Paul declares that all the new things are from God, “who reconciled himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” Since the process begins with God, happens through Christ, it is going to take a commitment to God and to prayer, so that we always remember who it is that is leading. If real change is going to happen we must remember what Paul instructed back in Romans 12:9-11 which states, “Love should be shown without pretending. Hate evil, and hold on to what is good. Love each other like the members of your family. Be the best at showing honor to each other. Don’t hesitate to be enthusiastic—be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord!” As my definition of reconciliation declares, this process is an intentional, ongoing, spiritual journey with God. In order to model the alternative community of God we must be devoted to our relationship with God, with each other, and with our community.

¹¹⁴ Yancey, George A. *One Body, One Spirit : Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. Pg. 47. Print.

Outcomes

At the conclusion of this thesis project, I discovered several important lessons. First, I learned that because of a lack of interest it did not work to focus on the whole congregation. The focus on the staff seemed to be a better way to effect change in the local church, however this work was also derailed. Ultimately what I discovered is that without the full support of the person in authority, I was unable to be fully successful in implementing change. In order for change to be effective in an organization, the senior authority figures have to own and support the new initiative. To do this must see how that change can help them to achieve their overall vision for the organization. These themes are explored in more detail in the following section:

The Importance of Leadership

An important principle learned from this project is that any change must be endorsed and authorized by the lead pastor who is fully persuaded that the new initiative is one that s/he owns and values. As I began my redesigned project, focused on my circle of influence, the lead pastor was the key to opening the door. Initially, I gained access to training the staff because of his conviction that the church needs to become multiethnic, and he wanted to give me an opportunity to gain experience. Although that was enough to get in the door, I discovered that it wasn't enough access to create real change.

The lead pastor's invitation provided the opportunity for reconciliation training, however I was actually convincing the lead pastor as much as anyone else that this training was necessary. I was not speaking on behalf of the lead pastor with his full authoritative weight behind me. In many ways, I discovered that I had a small Circle of Influence, and if this didn't change I would need to move on. In retrospect I realize that I should have spent more time assessing the group and determining where their starting point really was. In her book *Leading Change Step by Step* Jody Spirio states, "Assessing readiness before embarking on your change

strategy will help you diagnose what is needed to move forward and plan how to do so.”¹¹⁵ This would have given me a better idea of what would have been helpful for them to learn, and then build from that point.

Change is not easy for anyone and leading change can be an overwhelming challenge. For people to accept change they need to believe it is essential. Gordon Allport posited that people change if they believe it is essential to their survival.¹¹⁶ John Kotter suggests that for groups to accept change a sense of urgency must be felt, “By far the biggest mistake people make when trying to change organizations is to plunge ahead without establishing a high enough sense of urgency.” He goes on to say that because of past successes or a lack of visible crisis people are complacent and therefore resist change, “Without a sense of urgency, people won’t give that extra effort that is often essential. They won’t make needed sacrifices.”¹¹⁷

However, no matter how much effort is put into assessing readiness and then creating a sense of urgency, change will not happen without the full support of the leader,

It is imperative that the leadership team supports the vision of multicultural ministry. They need to know that the leader is completely committed to diversity. The team must know that the strategy employed will be radically and culturally inclusive. While everyone on the team may not be as committed to multicultural ministry as the leader, it is important that they understand the vision clearly and are willing to grow in their racial journey.¹¹⁸

This is exactly what limited my ability to fully implement the reconciliation training with the staff. While most members of the staff believed that it was important for the congregation to become multicultural, including the lead pastor, when resistance was voiced after the 4th lesson, instead of the lead pastor stepping up and declaring that he believed the training was important, he capitulated and declared we will come up with another way. John Kotter explains when a person or group is given the task of leading change, but not given authority from the leadership they do not have the credibility to lead the change and will find it very difficult if not impossible to complete their task, “Without that credibility, you have the equivalent of an

¹¹⁵ Spiro, Jody. *Leading Change Step-by-step Tactics, Tools, and Tales*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011, pg. 25. Print.

¹¹⁶ Allport, Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub 1954, pg 24 Print.

¹¹⁷ Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School, 1996, pg. 4. Print.

¹¹⁸ Anderson, David A. *Multicultural Ministry Handbook: Connecting Creatively to a Diverse World*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2010, pg. 16. Print.

eighteen-wheeled truck being propelled by a lawn mower engine.”¹¹⁹ I did not have the full weight of the lead pastor’s authority behind me, so that when there was a moment of dissent, the movement forward stalled.

Thankfully all is not lost. Although the training with the staff ended before it was fully completed, it did convince the lead pastor that the process is important and the conversation must continue. As Church X moves forward and redefines who and what their staff is, the training will be part of that new structure. As a result of the project, I have learned that when we begin with the new team of people I will assess where we are starting from, will communicate a sense of urgency, and I will insist on the full authoritative support of the lead pastor.

Connecting the Vision with Recategorization

A second lesson I learned is that I need to connect the lead pastor’s heart for evangelism and his vision for the kingdom of God to an understanding that churches grow and diversify through recategorization. For this lead pastor, evangelism is a top priority. He attended seminary during the height of the church growth movement, and was trained with the values that came with it. For him the homogeneous unit principle was “standard operating procedure,” and nothing was more important than evangelism. Now He sees that the neighborhood does not match the congregation, and he understands that the U.S. is becoming multiethnic. It is therefore clear to him that the homogeneous unit principle does not make sense. Since evangelism is still important to him, it was important to help him see that the church must become multiethnic in order to be an authentic witness to the Gospel message.

George Yancey, in his book *One Body One Spirit* reviews the different reasons that churches are becoming multiracial. He observes that leadership is essential in this diverse context, and the lead pastor comprises two of the different types described in this book. The first type is the “Evangelism Multiracial Church.” These churches “become integrated because of winning members of other races to Christ. The second type is the “Demographic Multiracial Church” in which churches become “multiracial because of demographic changes that have

¹¹⁹ Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School, 1996, pg. 54. Print.

happened in the neighborhood surrounding the church.¹²⁰ The lead pastor at Church X is aware that the neighborhood is multiethnic, and he has already led one ethnic couple to a relationship with Christ. This awareness, coupled with an understanding of decategorization and recategorization, will help him to lead the congregation to a new way of thinking. When the congregation begins to decategorize and recategorize it will begin to interact with people who are different and thus create the basis for the congregation to change by developing an increased number of relationships in its surrounding community.

¹²⁰ Yancey, George A. *One Body, One Spirit : Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. InterVarsity, 2003. Pp. 55-56 Print.

Conclusion

I began this project from a macro perspective, focusing on the whole congregation with my initial question, "Can a focus on reconciliation in the local church lead to an increase of social and cultural engagement by its congregants that produces positive change in the surrounding community?" I quickly learned that the answer is "no." My research revealed that a focus on reconciliation in the local church did not cause any change in the ethnic diversity of the congregation, because of a lack of vision and motivation regarding this subject.

This caused a shift in focus that led me to revise my question to the following inquiry, "Can a focus on reconciliation with the staff of a local church lead to changes that produce an increase in the ethnic diversity of their congregation?" I discovered that although the staff is convinced that the church needs to be multiethnic, it became apparent that without the full weight of the lead pastor in support of this change initiative it was unable to be successful. Finally, as a result of this project, I realized that the focus of my efforts needed to be on the lead pastor. Through this I discovered that an exploration of social psychology's theory of categorization has direct implications for increasing the senior leaders role in developing a multiethnic congregation. Whether this leads to actually developing a multiethnic congregation is yet to be seen. However, the conclusion of this research project indicates that the senior leader must fully embrace the change initiative and empower the staff to model the diversity that is desired in order for it to become a priority in the larger congregation. These principles have implications for how dominate culture, Evangelical churches might move forward in their desire to become multiethnic congregations.

The Bibliography

- Addington, T. J. *Leading from the Sandbox : Develop, Empower and Release High Impact Ministry Teams*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2010. Kindle Edition.
- Allport, Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. 1979. Print.
- Anderson, David A. *Multicultural Ministry Handbook: Connecting Creatively to a Diverse World*. Downers Grove, Il: IVP, 2010. Kindle Edition.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Creation and Fall. 1st ed.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004. Print.
- Brewer, Marilyn B., *When Contact Is Not Enough: Social Identity And Intergroup Cooperation*. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Vol. 20 No.3/4 (1996).
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Prophetic Imagination Second Edition*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001. Kindle Edition.
- Cleveland, Christena. *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart*. Intervarsity Press, 2013. Kindle Edition.
- Covey, Stephen R. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: RosettaBooks, 2004. Kindle Edition
- Culpepper, R A. *The Gospel and Letters of John*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998. Print.
- DeYmaz, Mark. *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley, 2007. Kindle Edition.
- Donovan, Vincent J. *Christianity Rediscovered. 25th An ed.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003. Print.
- Dovidio, Jack. *On the Nature of Prejudice Fifty Years After Allport*. John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Print.
- Emerson, Michael O, and Christian Smith. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Kindle Edition.
- Emerson, Michael O, and Rodney M. Woo. *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2008. Print.
- Fong, Bruce W. *Racial Equality in the Church : A Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle in Light of a Practical Theology Perspective*. Lanham, Md.: U of America, 1996. Print.

- Furnish, Victor Paul. *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Print.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: Crossroad, 1992. Print.
- Kassin, Saul M. *Social Psychology. 7th ed.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Print.
- King, Martin L, and Clayborne Carson. *The Papers: 6*. Berkeley [u.a.: Univ. of California Press, 2007. Print.
- Kittel, Gerhard,. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol 2*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964. Electronic Edition.
- Koester, Craig R. *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2008. Kindle Edition.
- Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School, 1996. Print.
- Lane, Patty. *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. Kindle Edition.
- Law, Eric H. F. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb a Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993. Kindle Edition.
- Leong, David. *Christ, Culture and Context, Christian Formation in Mission*, Seattle Pacific Seminary, Tuesday September 9, 2009.
- McCracken, Robert J. *Putting Faith to Work*. New York: Harper, 1960. Print.
- McGavran, Donald A. *The Bridges of God : A Study in the Strategy of Missions. Rev. ed.* New York: Friendship, 1981. Print.
- . *Understanding Church Growth*,. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. Print.
- McNeil, Brenda Salter. *A Credible Witness : Reflections on Power, Evangelism and Race*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008. Kindle Edition.
- McNeil, Brenda Salter; Richards, Rick. *The Heart of Racial Justice: How Soul Change Leads to Social Change*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004. Kindle Edition.
- Myers, David G. *Social Psychology. 4th ed.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993. Print.

Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Open Secret : An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995. Kindle Edition.

O'Day, Gail R, and Susan Hysten. *John*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006. Print.

Peck, M. *The Different Drum: Community-making and Peace*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1987. Kindle Edition.

Pettigrew, Thomas F. *When Groups Meet The Dynamics of Intergroup Contact*. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis, 2013. Kindle Edition.

Powell, Mark A. *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009. Print.

Rah, Soong-Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism : Releasing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009. Kindle Edition.

Spiro, Jody. *Leading Change Step-by-step Tactics, Tools, and Tales*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

Wagner, C. *Our Kind of People : The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America*. Atlanta, GA: J. Knox, 1979. Print.

Wagner, C. *Your Church Can Grow*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1976. Print.

Wall, Robert W.; Wright, N. T. (Nicholas Thomas). ; Sampley, J. Paul. *The New Interpreter's Bible. Volume X, The Acts of the Apostles, Introduction to Epistolary Literature, the Letter to the Romans, the First Letter to the Corinthians*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002. Print.

Wright, N. T. *After You Believe : Why Christian Character Matters*. 1st ed. New York, NY: HarperOne, 2010. Kindle Edition.

Yancey, George A. *One Body, One Spirit : Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. Print.

All Biblical References from *The Common English Bible: Holy Bible : A Fresh Translation to Touch the Heart and Mind*. Common English Bible. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2011. Print.

Appendix I: Initial Project Lesson Outline

Jodi's Definition of reconciliation:

Reconciliation is the intentional, ongoing spiritual journey with God, who makes all relationships new, this journey restores one's relationship with God, self and others, and results in justice.

Lesson One: What Is Reconciliation?

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-13
2 Corinthians 5:16-17

Learning Goals:

- A quick and simple definition of reconciliation:
 - The Old and Broken relationships {God, Self, Others} recreated new in Christ

Lesson Two: Why It Matters to Christians?

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
Ephesians 2:11-22
John 17

Learning Goals:

- Recognize that God has called each of us to be reconcilers
- Discover God's vision for one unified body

Lesson Three: Made in God's Image

Scripture: Genesis 1
1 Corinthians 12:12-27
1 Corinthians 13

Learning Goals:

- Recognize that every human is made in the image of God, and therefore has value
- Recognize that in our differences we can discover more about God
- Recognize our need to be in relationship with people who are not like us

Lesson Four: Relationship with Self

Scripture: Psalm 139

Learning Goals

- Knowing ourselves is essential to knowing and relating to others in a godly way
- Steps to knowing yourself
- Telling your story

Lesson Five: Relationship with Others

Scripture:

Learning Goals

- How to enter into relationship with others in a way that allows one to hold onto themselves while allowing others to hold onto themselves.

Lesson Six: Beyond Charity

Scripture: Matthew 25
Ephesians 2
Luke 4

Learning Goals

- The hope of Christ is for all people, and as the body of Christ who is living out that hope we have been sent to our neighborhood.
- Discovering our call as God's people to live out the hope of the gospel among the "least of these"
- What does healthy living with the "least of these" look like?

You're Invited!

*What is reconciliation
(and why it matters to
Christians)?*



Sundays at 9:00
January 12- February 16
Church X

RSVP to
aaa@bbb.ccc

Appendix III: The Lesson on Romans 12

ROMANS 12
A Living Sacrifice


Organizational Culture Is:

The unspoken ethos of a group of people, including its beliefs, social behaviors, practices, attitudes, values, and traditions—all of which contribute to a collective way of thinking and practice


- beliefs
- social behaviors
- Practices
- attitudes
- values
- traditions

ARE WE

Following Christ...



... Or Building A Monument



IF WE ARE FOLLOWING CHRIST WE TAKE OUR INSTRUCTION FROM CHRIST NOT OUR CULTURE.

Romans 12

So, brothers and sisters, because of God's mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN
FOR US TO OFFER
OUR BODIES AS
LIVING SACRIFICES?

Romans 12

² Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world...

WHAT ARE THE
PATTERNS OF THIS
WORLD?

Romans 1:18-23
6:1-14

Romans 12

... but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.

OUR SACRIFICE
ACTUALLY MAKES US
MORE ALIVE

Romans 12

³ Because of the grace that God gave me, I can say to each one of you: don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think.

HOW SHOULD WE THINK OF OURSELVES?

Romans 8:12-14

Romans 12

Instead, be reasonable since God has measured out a portion of faith to each one of you.

Romans 12

⁴ We have many parts in one body, but the parts don't all have the same function. ⁵ In the same way, though there are many of us, we are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to each other.

Romans 12

⁶ We have different gifts that are consistent with God's grace that has been given to us. If your gift is prophecy, you should prophesy in proportion to your faith. ⁷ If your gift is service, devote yourself to serving. If your gift is teaching, devote yourself to teaching.

Romans 12

⁸ If your gift is encouragement, devote yourself to encouraging. The one giving should do it with no strings attached. The leader should lead with passion. The one showing mercy should be cheerful.

PUZZLE EXERCISE

Tell me
about your
puzzle piece



READ

ROMANS 12:9-21

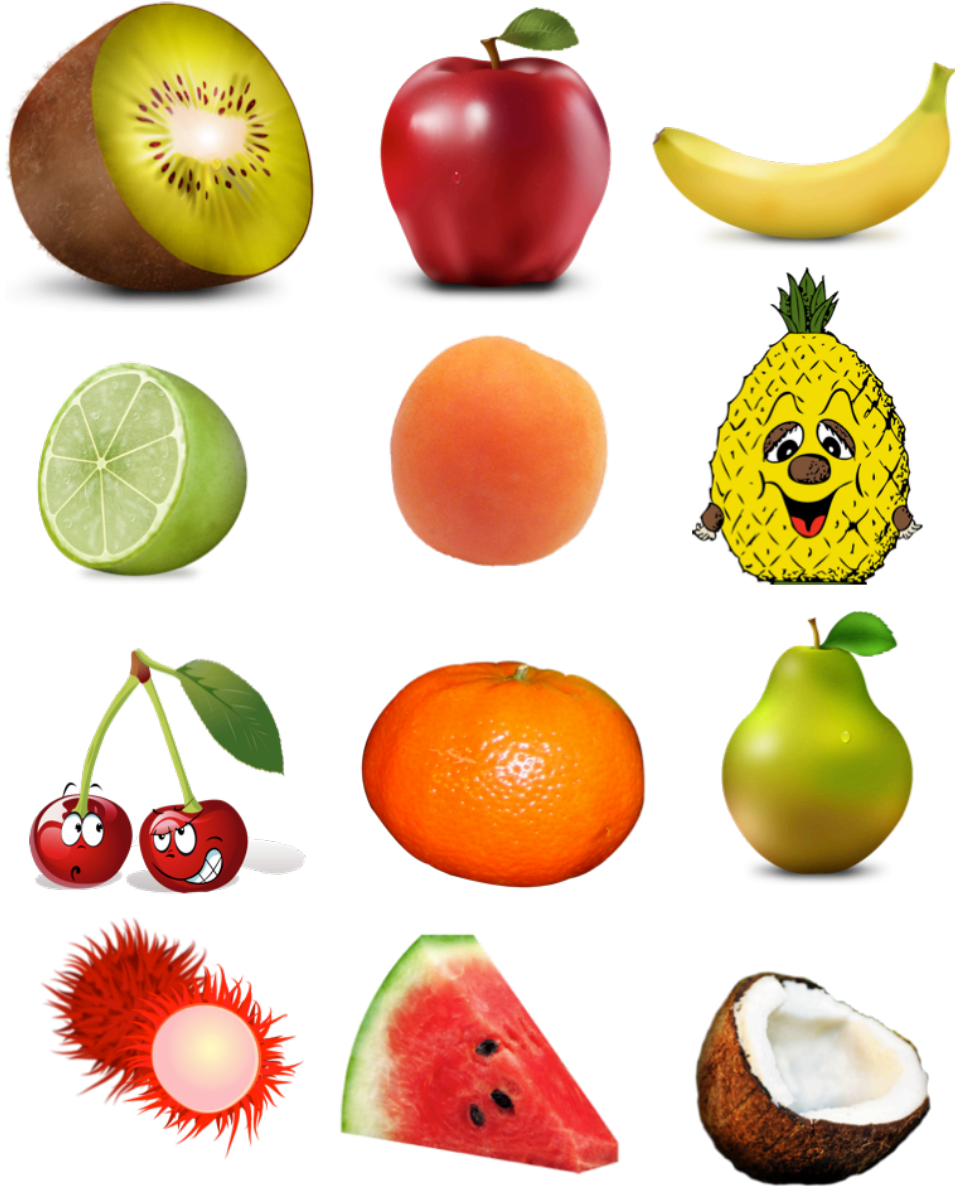
Develop a list of cultural characteristics that are found in the community of God's people.

How Do The Characteristics of Romans 12 fit into this list?

- beliefs
- social behaviors
- Practices
- attitudes
- values
- traditions

Appendix IV: Categorization Object Lesson

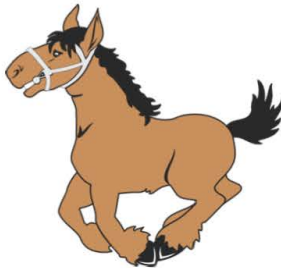
For this object lesson the objects were cut into individual pictures, mixed up and placed in an envelope. After the exercise the staff was questioned about the number of pictures. The consensus was that fewer pictures would not have achieved the desired outcome.

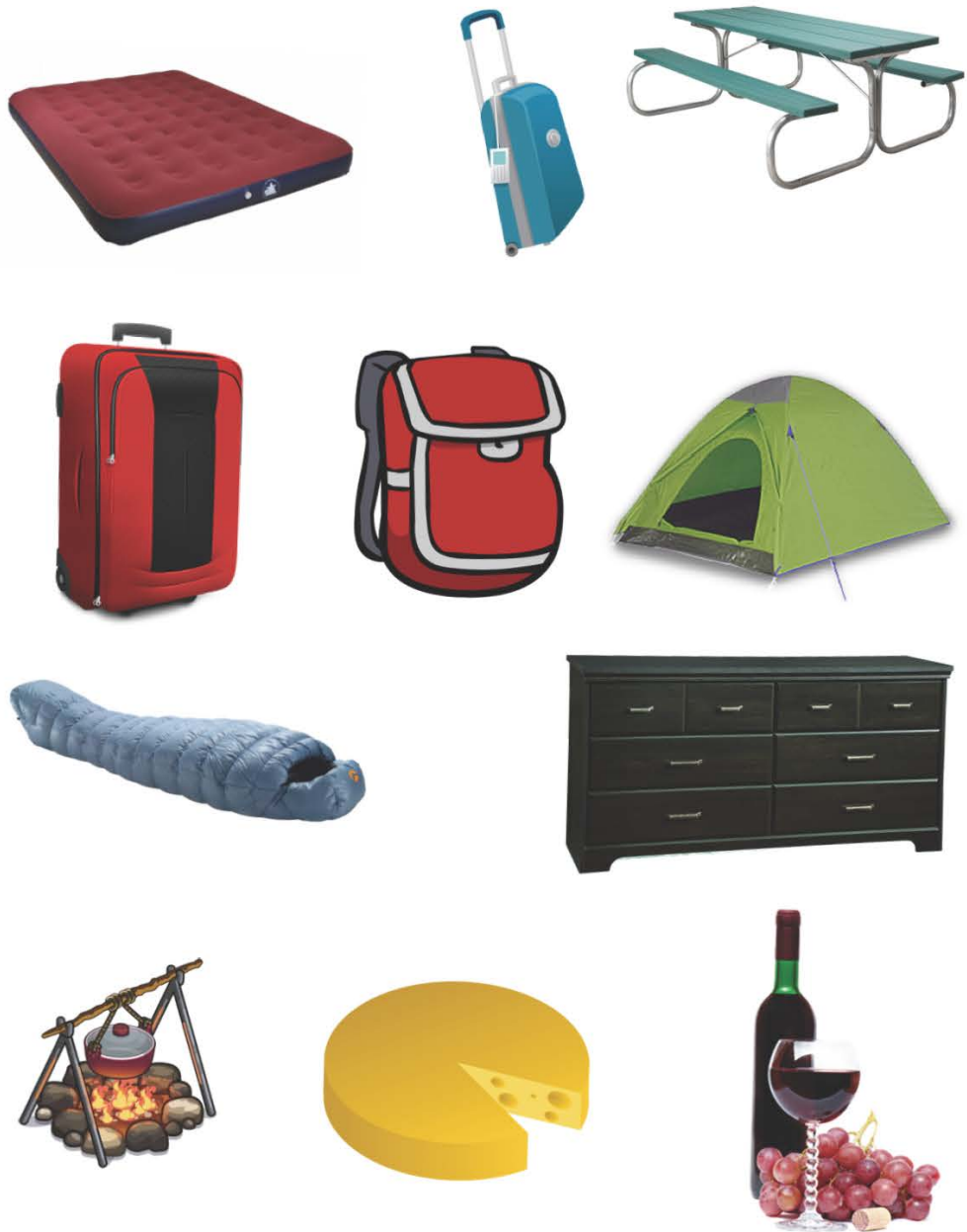


















Appendix V: The Lesson on the Nature of People

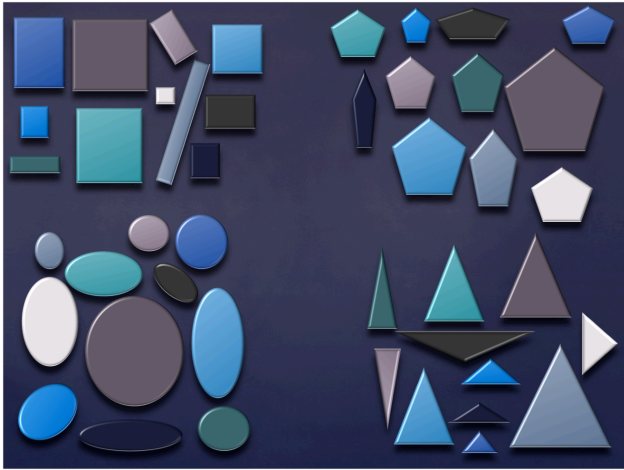
The Nature of People

{ Trying to Understand Why We Do the Things We Do

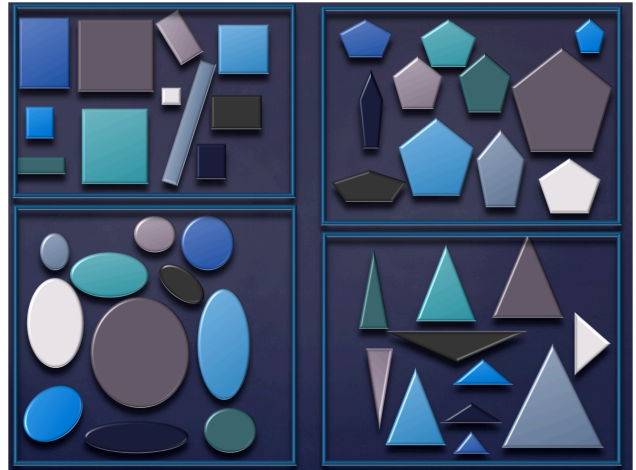
{ The World is full of lots of
different kinds of people



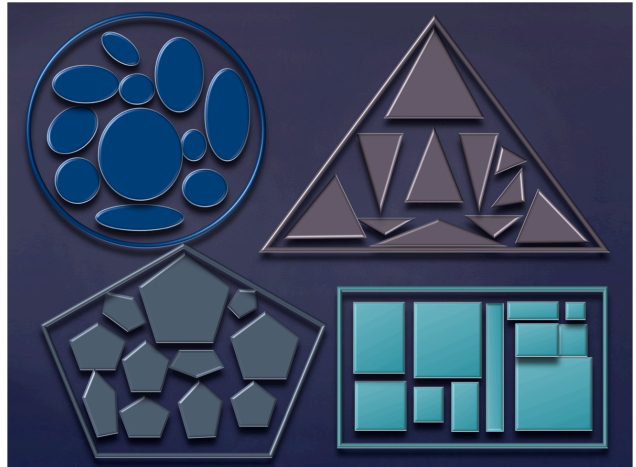
{ Who separate into groups
of like people



{ Once separate we build a
{ fence around our group



Inside our group we become
{ less open to other points of
{ view



{ We see our group as "us"
{ And their group as "them"

{ And then we defend our fences

{ I am right
{ Therefore you must be wrong




{ Can we
{ And should we
get back to:




Appendix VI: The Lesson on the Image of God and The Body of Christ

THE IMAGE OF GOD
&
THE BODY OF CHRIST




A Theology of
Decategorization

GENESIS 1:26-31



What does it mean that we are all created in the image of God?


1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27



What does it mean for us that the body of Christ is made of many different parts?

IMAGE BEARERS

Every person born or ever will be born has value




EVERY MEMBER HAS A PLACE

- Every member is valuable
- Every member is necessary
- If one member is missing the body is not complete
- If the body is all the same part the body cannot function



IMAGE BEARERS

- The image of God is vastly dynamic
- We need those who are not like us in order to have a better understanding of God



EVERY MEMBER HAS A PLACE

- The body is dependent upon the different members to play their role.
- If every member is going to play their part, they need to embrace who God has created them to be.
- Every member belongs to the other

