

## APPROVAL CERTIFICATION

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APPROVED MAY 1, 2019

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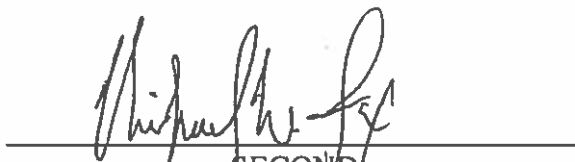
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TRAINING THE PREDOMINANTLY EAST INDIAN MEMBERS OF  
TRANSFORMATION CHURCH TO BECOME A MULTICULTURAL AND MULTI-  
ETHNIC CONGREGATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
MIDWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

OFFICE OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

BY

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KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

FEBRUARY 2019

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## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER 1: MINISTRY SETTING	1
Describing the Ministry Setting	1
Demographics	4
Project Director Information	5
Why I Chose This Topic	6
Ministry Community Information	10
Hypothetical Presupposition	14
Thesis Statement	17
CHAPTER 2: BIBLICAL RATIONALE	18
Introduction	18
Biblical Mandate	21
Biblical Evidence	25
Conclusion	35
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY	38
History of Practice	38
Review of Literature	57
Previous Dissertations	62
Conclusion on the Dissertations	67
CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	68
Thesis Statement	68
Project Objectives and Goals	68
This project has three goals.	68
Logistical Annotation	72
The Experience	73
Measurement Devices	77
Resources	78
Assumptions	78
Limitations	80
The Project Outline	81
CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION REPORT	93
Implementation Summary	93
Results of Direct Measurement	110
Results of Indirect Measurements	120
Unforeseen Causes	120
Unforeseen Effects	120

CHAPTER 6: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS	122
Introduction	122
General Evaluation	122
Ministry Setting Evaluation	123
Biblical Rationale Evaluation	126
Research and Discovery Evaluation	128
Implementation Evaluation	130
Summary Analysis	135
Recommended Revisions	136
Prospects for Future Study	137
APPENDIX A: ILLUSTRATION	138
APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS OF NEW CASTLE COUNTY	139
APPENDIX C: VISION	142
APPENDIX D: TRANSFORMATION CHURCH LOGOS	144
APPENDIX E: STRENGTHS FINDER TEST	145
APPENDIX F: MINISTRY OUTSIDE CHURCH WALLS IN ACTS	146
APPENDIX G: CHURCH BUILDING WHEN LEASED	149
APPENDIX H: CHURCH BUILDING DURING RENOVATION	150
APPENDIX I: CHURCH BUILDING AFTER RENOVATION	151
APPENDIX J: PRE AND POST TEST QUESTIONS	152
APPENDIX K: TEACHING TEMPLATE FOR PASTORS	153
APPENDIX L: TEN SESSION NOTES FOR PROJECT	154
APPENDIX M: SIGNATURES OF WILLING PARTICIPANTS	167
BIBLIOGRAPHY	168

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for saving me. I thank my family—my wife, Jyothi and our two children, Ruth and Jason. They have always been cooperative and encouraged me. I would like to thank all my professors and especially my first and second chair, Dr. Steve Thompson and Dr. Michael Fox. Both have been so patient with me. When I was stuck at some points, they helped me get out of those predicaments and guided me. I would also like to thank our church members of Transformation Church for walking with me in this journey.

Thank you one and all for traveling with me on this tremendous journey. You have all earned this degree with me. I will ever be grateful to you.

## ABSTRACT

Transformation Church in Newark, DE is made up predominantly of East Indians. We try to uphold the truths of the Scripture. There is one area that needs attention, however. The members invite only Indians to the church. According to the Bible, a church is composed of people of all races, colors, and cultures. There is a scriptural and practical imperative for members to reach the local people. The geographical location of the church demands that the gospel needs to start with the local area. The church cannot afford to stay ethnic, but needs to embrace non-Indians as well. In compliance with its vision, the church needs to embrace and welcome people from other cultures. The mindset of members must therefore change. Their attitude and behavior needs to be transformed by being educated about this proposed change.

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry project is to educate a selected group of church members in the biblical essence of diversity in the church. The plan was to identify the current mindset of the group through a pre-test. After the pre-test, the group were trained biblically in ten sessions on the essence of the need for the church to become multicultural. The post-test determines the change in the mindset of the selected group. The idea was to train a group of members so that they in turn would cascade that vision to the congregation. The scope of this project is limited to fifty days.

## CHAPTER 1

### MINISTRY SETTING

#### **Describing the Ministry Setting**

I aim to implement this D Min project at Transformation Church, Newark, DE. This church was started in February 2015 and is currently primarily attended by East Indians. It is my desire to bring diversity into the church, i.e., initiate a change from a predominantly ethnic to a multicultural and multiracial congregation. At the outset I would like to clarify the difference between a multicultural and multiethnic church. In *11 Innovations in the Local Church*, Warren Bird writes as follows:

Multicultural churches are not the same as multiracial. Most of the churches identified as multicultural do not evidence multiple cultures; instead, they are attended by people who are different races. For example, one prominent church is often called multicultural, but the reality is a little different. Asians, Hispanics, African Americans, and Anglos in the area are all young professionals. They work together, listen to the same music, go to the same restaurants and are actually part of the same culture—regardless of their skin color. Being multicultural is harder. It can mean engaging in Asian styles of relationships, African American approaches to worship, Hispanic approaches to teaching, Anglo approaches to conflict, or a mix and match. That takes more work. Though some Christians value a multicultural church, most nonbelievers do not share the same passion.<sup>1</sup>

Though Bird suggests that the effort required to transform a church into a multicultural one is harder, I do not believe this is true in the case of Transformation Church, because it is basically made up of East Indians. East India is a subcontinent in

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<sup>1</sup>Elmer L. Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 192-193.

itself, with a variety of languages, cultures, and traditions all very different from one another. It is nevertheless very possible for such members to worship and fellowship together. Transformation Church has people from three different states in India worshipping together, for example. I believe the biggest challenge that Transformation Church faces is to make a breakthrough into a multiracial composition.

The local church needs to minister to local people. I do not believe there is a place for an exclusively ethnic church in the Bible. When I say “church,” I am referring to the local church and not the universal church. While Wayne Grudem defines “church” as both local and universal,<sup>2</sup> I believe there are distinctions and common features applicable to either or both. A believer is a part of the universal and the local church equally. Warren Wiersbe offers an example: “Peter was a Jew, but through his faith in Christ he had become a Christian. Because he was a Christian, he was part of the church and in the church, there are no racial distinctions” (Gal 3:28).<sup>3</sup>

Thus while “church” can be either universal or local, here I am talking about the local church. God’s people are one people, even though they may be divided into various groups. Any practice on our part that violates the Scripture and separates brother from brother is a denial of the unity of the Body of Christ.<sup>4</sup> The local church should have people from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds in it as a replica of the picture of

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<sup>2</sup>Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 857-858.

<sup>3</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989), 694.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

heaven provided in Revelation 7:9. The church should be patterned after the template of heaven, and should be seen as God sees it.

As a pastor/leader of Transformation Church, I am convinced that the church should be composed of people of various nationalities, cultures, ethnicities, etc. This is the clarity I have and what I would like to share with the church. Having regional or national affinities with people who look like us, talk like us, behave and believe like us, when we are miles apart, while ignoring the neighbors who are totally unlike us, is not the Great Commission Mandate that has been given to the church. Unfortunately, this is the comfort zone in which most churches thrive, and Transformation Church is no exception.

In pursuing the goal of transforming the ethnic composition of Transformation Church into one that is multicultural and multiracial, I will administer a pre-test to the whole church. From within the congregation, I will select a committee of seven members. This committee will go through ten teaching sessions. After the sessions, the committee and the congregation will be administered a post test (Appendix J). The teachings of the ten sessions will be tested to identify the change in the post test (Appendix J) of the select group. One of the tools that I intend to use is a measurement tool, known as Nelson's formula, taken from the book *How to Change Your Church Without Killing It* (Without Killing It) to gauge of the willingness of the church to change.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Alan E. Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church Without Killing It* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishers, 2000), 183-226. Chapter 8 describes a formula for change or transition.

## **Demographics**

Wilmington City is in the northern part of Delaware and the southern part of Philadelphia, PA. Wilmington City, Newark and Bear are the major cities in northern Delaware. Delaware is quite a diverse cosmopolitan state with whites being in the majority. The focus area of the church is Wilmington, Newark and Bear. Various types of jobs are bringing people of different nationalities into the area. Wilmington City is a financial hub, which is one reason why almost every bank in the United States has a presence in Wilmington City. The financial institutions have made Wilmington their headquarters, since one can register an organization there in a short span of three hours.<sup>6</sup> According to the United States Census Bureau's demographic estimates for 2010 (Appendix B), 32.6 percent of Whites, 58 percent Afro Americans and 1 percent Asians live in Wilmington City; while 50.5 percent Whites, 34.5 percent Afro Americans and 4.2 percent Asians live in Bear; and 82.4 percent Whites, 6.7 percent Afro Americans and 7.1 percent Asians live in Newark.<sup>7</sup>

As one keeps going south in Delaware, the population of Afro Americans thins out. Newark is populated predominantly with Whites. The highest numbers of Asians also live in Newark. Asian Indians are counted as Asians in the census and East Indians are not a separate category. Since most Asians and Whites live in Newark, where the

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<sup>6</sup>Transformation Church was registered within three hours. On February 19, 2015, the application was filed at 12 noon and the church was approved as a registered religious organization at 3 p.m. on the same day.

<sup>7</sup>US Census Department,  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/1050670,1004130,1077580,10>.

church is located, I believe that Newark is the “Jerusalem” of Transformation Church according to Acts 1:8.<sup>8</sup>

It is our goal to have the community represented in the church, although this may not be practical right away. As noted in the multi-author *Effective Church Growth Strategies*: “Students of church growth have noted that growth usually accompanies homogenous relationship. Although churches are meant to be expressions of the heterogenous body of Christ, evangelism most readily takes place between people who have things in common, and people are attracted to churches in which they feel most comfortable.”<sup>9</sup> There is nevertheless a definite starting point and the further pages of this thesis will show how such an entry into a multiracial setting can be maneuvered.

### **Project Director Information**

Whether in India or in America, I have lived all my life in cosmopolitan cities. My father was in the national police department, called the Central Reserve Police Force, which meant that we were always surrounded by people of all religions, languages and cultures. In India, I grew up on a campus where people of various states lived. My classmates were from different states. We moved to various states within India and everywhere the whole gamut of Indian culture was always around us.

I came to Oklahoma City, OK in the United States to pursue my Master’s degree in Theological Studies in 2006. After I completed my MMin in 2008, I found a job as

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<sup>8</sup>The sequence in Acts 1:8 of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the world is intentional. The gospel spreads to the rest of the world in the same order. A church should thus begin reaching the people from their local area.

<sup>9</sup>Gene A. Getz, et al., *Effective Church Growth Strategies*, Swindoll Leadership Library (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000), 110.

Missions Pastor in First Baptist Church of Yukon, OK, a Southern Baptist Church. My task was to start an Asian Indian Church in Yukon, OK. After much research and prayer, we started a church plant called “International Baptist Mission.” I had to build the core group to start the church. Working with Indians is difficult, since India has several languages. Sticking to one particular language would be alienating for those who do not speak the other language, and thus it was wise to stick to worshipping in English. Though the church plant was named “International Baptist Mission,” the sending church pushed for bringing East Indians into the church. In Yukon, OK the Indian population is very sparse and so IBM failed. In other words, I failed. When we started Transformation Church, I was careful not to repeat my mistakes. I had learned my lesson. I realized it was important to reach out to the locals as well as the ethnic denizens.

### **Why I Chose This Topic**

Arriving at the topic, “Training the predominantly East Indian members of Transformation Church to become a multi-cultural and multiethnic congregation,” has been a long journey. Originally, my desire was to write a dissertation on a very prominent church in India called Hebron. I was saved and baptized at Hebron in 1990 and have always considered it my mother church. It has a great heritage: the founder was Bhakt Singh, originally from a Sikh community in India. When he was overseas for his studies, he was converted and started this church, which now has thousands of branches all over the world. Unfortunately, the same church is today engulfed in legal battles. The cause of the litigation is purely administrative: there are two groups, one supports the establishment of a “Society” and the other supports a “Trust.” During 2012, a “Trust” was in charge of the church, but now the court will now decide which group

should be in charge. It is a pathetic situation and I offered to bring both groups to reconciliation as part of my project, desiring to resolve, or at least attempt to resolve the conflict between the two groups. I did not find integrity in either of the groups, however.

After I received approval to begin my project implementation, I wanted five members from each group (with each group was having the freedom to pick their representatives). I wanted to conduct classes and bring a resolution to submit to the Senior Pastor (the Senior Pastor himself belongs to one of the groups). The Senior Pastor would then have had the discretion to implement my recommendation or ignore it. I was willing to pay my own cost to go to India and work with this church for a period of three months. My project faced a setback, however, when I came to understand there was no integrity on either side, as the following lines reveal.

When I asked the group to pick five members to represent them, both were willing to do that. They enquired what exactly I was trying to do. I explained the process: that I would conduct classes with the representatives of both groups and at the end of three months try to bring a resolution to submit to the Senior Pastor. The “Society” said they were excited and would be willing to participate in the project, but were skeptical about the sincerity of the “Trust.” Similarly, the “Trust” showed interest in the project, but were skeptical about the trustworthiness of the “Society.” Upon further enquiry, my qualms were confirmed when I was told that they would come for the first one or two meetings and then abandon the commitment. This capricious attitude would jeopardize my project. I would be left high and dry after spending a lot of money and time traveling to India. Therefore, unfortunately I had to abandon this proposal. I wanted to do something for the church where I had been born again, but to no avail.

I had another setback in choosing my proposal. In the last seminar of my D Min program, my term with First Baptist Church of Yukon, Oklahoma ended. Through God's providence, I moved to New Jersey, where Pastor David Bulka of First Baptist Church of Caldwell, New Jersey, graciously allowed me to stay in the church parsonage free of cost. In return, I had to take Bible Studies in the church and also do door-to-door evangelism every Saturday (I was not on the staff). During 2013, I shared with the pastor about my continuing education at our school. I realized that FBC Caldwell did not have a vision statement. The church's history goes back to 1848. I did not know if there was a vision in the past but when I was there, I asked the pastor if I could help the church come up with a vision statement. I had studied the church for close to a year. Having worked with the pastor hand-in-hand, I realized that the church had many activities, but did not seem to have a vision.

I asked the pastor if the church had a vision statement and he suggested I look for it in the Baptist hymnal. My intuition was to question why a Baptist Hymnal would contain the vision of a local church. Yet, I looked for the vision. There was none. So, without offending him, I asked if he would find ten volunteers who would be a part of my project proposal as participants in the program. I had written enough material to submit to my chair and second chair. He was willing for me to submit the written work, but hesitated to give me ten volunteers to participate in the project. Since the pastor showed his disapproval of me working on the vision for FBC Caldwell, I changed the topic once again to "Enabling First Baptist Church of Caldwell to grow numerically by evangelizing the local community," since we conducted door-to-door evangelism every

Saturday. Even here the pastor was not willing to yield his members for a span of three months to implement the project. That was the second setback to my achieving the goal.

In 2014, I moved to Wilmington, DE to start a church plant. I continued to try to work on my thesis, making a fresh start. My next proposal was to work with selected members of International Outreach church in order to evolve a vision for the church. I felt IOC needed to know what its driving force was and what it would look like in the future. In 2015, my board members staged a coup against me and fired me as their pastor and I had to restart my topic once again.

The rest of the congregation retreated with me, however, and thus we began Transformation Church. My time and resources were then mostly devoted to rebuilding the church. I was working on my proposal, but progress was slow. After consulting my Chair and second Chair, I became refocused and started working vigorously, but in August 2017 I was diagnosed with diabetes and a heart murmur. My hospital visits increased from the end of October. I could not spend time on my thesis nor could I take an interrupted status. I resumed work in the early part of 2018.

In my journey in pursuit of completion of this degree, I have faced disappointment and discouragement time and again. There were days when I reached impasse. But I was encouraged by reading the life stories of some Christian leaders who faced setbacks in their lives. Chuck Colson writes, “It’s easy to become discouraged, but the Christian has neither reason nor the right, for history’s cadence is called with a confident voice.”<sup>10</sup> Another inspiration to strive hard was the need to keep up my

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<sup>10</sup>Dwight L. Johnson, *The Transparent Leader: Spiritual Secrets of Nineteen Successful Men* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Executive Books, 2001), 26.

testimony in my family. I did not want to give my family the bad example of leaving something incomplete in life.

### **Ministry Community Information**

Most of the members in Transformation Church work are very cooperative in ministry. Whenever I cast the vision, they stand behind me to support the cause of the vision. The members do not encourage dissent. This is because Transformation Church was originally International Outreach Church, comprising more than fourteen families, although four families staged a coup and took away the legal paperwork and a large sum of money, whereupon the remaining families suffered and experienced bitter days. Three out of the four members were office bearers when the church was registered with the State. Ironically, I was the president, and they fired me for defying State Directives and the constitution of the church. The time was short and within a couple of days, I had to make a decision about how to continue with the rest of the congregation who had put their trust in my leadership.

Because of such a bitter past, lack of time and uncertainty, I could not pick a few people in the church with whom to start the vision-building process. So I wrote down the vision myself and presented it to the church (Appendix C). Though it was written in a very short time and presented to the church, I was conscious of the direction I wanted the church to take. Even when I pastored IOC, my ministry ideals were the same. My desire has always been outreach, so while I had not written it down for the previous church, I had always articulated it through sermons and meetings. My vision never changed. I have always believed that vision has power. It can move people to action. As Aubrey Malphurs puts it: “It is that compelling challenge that penetrates the deep

resources of the mind and touches the human spirit. And the challenge serves the vision by pulling people out of the pews and into the arena of effective, passion-driven ministry.”<sup>11</sup>

Vision plays an important role in forming the direction a church must take: “Our vision is our ministry snapshot.”<sup>12</sup> Aubrey Malphurs describes the importance of vision in *Advanced Strategic Planning*, writing that a vision provides energy, creates a cause, fosters risk taking, legitimizes and energizes leadership, sustains ministry and motivates giving.<sup>13</sup>

Although it did not have a written form, I carried and was implementing the same vision at Transformation Church. Was I at fault in starting the church without writing the vision down? How does one start a church without a written vision statement? The authors of *Leading Congregational Change* assert,

[A] congregation does not need to have a vision statement to understand God’s ideal. The ideal, which we refer to as mission may reflect powerful biblical mandates like the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40), other key passages (such as Luke 4:17-19), or one of the powerful creeds of the early church (Apostles’, Nicene). Regardless of the specific passages that we might use, the New Testament principles of worshiping God, loving other human beings, and making disciples are unarguable mandates.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2005), 152.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 152.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 146-149.

<sup>14</sup>Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James Harold Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 35.

Though it would have been an expedient act, I had no chance to follow the church planting principles outlined in the literature. I did not have the time and opportunity to involve the church members in building the vision of the church. This is what I did instead: I designed the logo of Transformation Church, which includes the mission of the church (Appendix C). I also believe that the vision of the church expands. After I had presented the written vision statement of the church, and after careful observation, I did a few more things that helped the members see the vision in terms of certain symbols in the church. Vision need not solely be written; it can be communicated by various other means as well. These means include formal and informal conversation, stories, the bulletin, a framed poster, a church brochure, training materials, a slide-tape presentation, audio and videotapes, skits and dramas, a newcomers' class, and a newsletter.<sup>15</sup>

Since vision can be communicated in a myriad of ways, I bought a world map and had the Great Commission verse from Matthew 28:19-20 written in large letters in the fellowship hall. If a visitor came to our church from a different country, I would buy the flag of their country and place it on the wall of the sanctuary. Whenever they revisited the church, they would be excited to see their country's flag in the sanctuary. As of today, apart from the Christian flag and the American flag, we have the flags of Ethiopia, Bulgaria, Nigeria, Botswana, Pakistan, and India. On the wall of the sanctuary facing the congregation, I had one of our church members decorate huge candles with the words "Love," "Life," and "Light" written in henna. The reason for this was that I wanted the church to know that 1) there must Life in the word spoken in the church; 2)

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<sup>15</sup>Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 161.

there must Love among the church members; and 3) we need to be a Light to the Gentiles. According to the vision-casting philosophy, this approach may not be right, but I believe it was appropriate. In writing the vision, I took an autonomous style. Occasionally, it is also necessary to use an autonomous style of authority. When the nurturing approach confronts attempts at emotional manipulation, the nurturer-coach ought to adopt an autonomous style.<sup>16</sup> This brought about another new beginning.

Transformation Church began with zero dollars and no name on February 15, 2015. With no resources and only a few months old, the church faced a faith challenge. When we had no money at all, but God gave me a burden to host a National Christian Youth Conference.<sup>17</sup> Nearly 150 youth from fourteen states came to the conference. We put the attendees in hotels free of charge. We had five sessions from Friday night till Sunday afternoon. When the church saw the crowd and God's provision, everyone was encouraged. After the "blessed subtraction," the faith of the individual members grew.<sup>18</sup> Though we started with zero dollars, because of the financial commitment to tithing, the church is becoming stable and we have leased a building for five years.

There are some members with a good Christian heritage, and who were quite active in the church in India. The majority of church members fall in the age group of thirty to forty, with many working in Information Technology, and with children

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<sup>16</sup>Charles H. Cosgrove and Dennis D. Hatfield, *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 86.

<sup>17</sup>This Youth Camp was held from October 2-4, 2015 with no money and was a major event with 150 youth coming from fourteen states. Board and lodging was free.

<sup>19</sup>I coined this word to describe the way the church is free from suffocation and is now growing since the departure of those who have left.

studying in elementary schools. As young parents, they exhibit an interest in learning the Word and being faithful to God and the church.

### **Hypothetical Presupposition**

Transformation Church is primarily composed of East Indians. Occasionally people from other races do visit the church. Some of them walked into the church because of the friendships I developed with them. These members do invite their friends to the church. Inviting people to church should be an active part of the life of the church and should be the responsibility of both pastor and lay people equally. Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson mention that sometimes a pastor does not expect enough from people and can be guilty of trying to do too many things himself. It is difficult to achieve a healthy balance between conducting ministry as a good example of servanthood and doing the ministry that laypeople should be doing. Pastors need to examine their hearts and actions to determine whether they are really willing to give away ministry responsibilities to others.<sup>19</sup> Members do invite others, but leave the follow-up to me. It is by invitation that most people attend churches. According to a survey by Schaller: “3 to 8% walked in on their own initiative, 4 to 10% came because they liked the program, 10 to 20% joined because they liked the pastor, 10 to 25% joined in response to visitation evangelism, 3 to 6% came because of the Sunday school, 60 to 90% were brought by some friend or relative.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2007), 139.

<sup>20</sup>Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, ed. C. Peter Wagner, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 165.

Since it is even empirically proven, it is encouraging to know that efforts to invite people of other cultures can be effective. Church members are in a comfort zone of reaching out to East Indians only. Whenever non-East Indians come to the church, members welcome them and make them feel at home. They mingle with people of other races very well. Yet the members rarely reach out to Whites, Afro-Americans, or Hispanics. It seems they need some orientation or intentional training to discover and overcome the inhibitions associated with reaching out to people of other cultures and races. In order to understand this, first we need to understand why we are different. In other words, why are cultures different and what exactly is culture?

Gary L. McIntosh takes a journey through the initial pages of the Bible to explain how culture develops. In Genesis 3, Cain and Abel have different occupations; in chapter 4, different trades came into existence; in chapter 10, the three sons of Noah spread out and each creates his own distinctive sphere; in chapter 11 different languages originate. McIntosh says that culture is the symbols, rites, values, customs, languages, and idioms that are transferred from one generation to another. It is the manner of thinking and perceiving that a group of people has in common. Such aspects of cultural heritage are owned by a specific group of people in a specific location at a specific time in history.<sup>21</sup>

In his book *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*, Kevin Vanhoozer gives a clear meaning of what culture is. He mentions Kathryn Tanner's *Theories of Culture* in which she calls culture "the meaning

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<sup>21</sup>Gary McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 124.

dimension of social life.” While building an argument about culture and what a cultural text means, he writes that “culture is a world in the sense that cultural texts create a meaningful environment in which humans dwell both physically and imaginatively. Culture is the lens through which a vision of life and social order is expressed, experienced, and explored; it is a lived worldview.”<sup>22</sup> It would be helpful to clarify what a “worldview” is at this point. David Hesselgrave defines worldview as “the way people see reality. It is instructive that in Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, English and certain other languages, one meaning for the word ‘see’ is ‘know.’ A worldview is the way people see or perceive the world, the way they ‘know’ it to be.”<sup>23</sup> He writes a further chapter on the function of culture, mentioning four things a culture does: Culture communicates, orients, reproduces, and cultivates. This definition clearly portrays the experienced truth of the dichotomy of cultures in different countries and in different contexts. There is no way two cultures can be similar, and out of this diversity, a vision of accepting and inviting people of other cultures must be implemented.

A church that wants to grow must adapt to the local culture, especially when it is in a different country. Adapting does not mean compromising biblical values and principles. A better word might be contextualization. When we carry the message to people of other cultures by relating to them, we tend to win them over. Being rigid in the matter of retaining one’s culture creates barriers. Gary McIntosh discusses the ministry of Jesus and Paul and shows how they were culturally relevant. Jesus speaks to

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<sup>22</sup>Kevin Vanhoozer, *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*, Cultural Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 26.

<sup>23</sup>David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 197.

Nicodemus in John 3 in abstract terms, but speaks to the woman at the well in John 4 using the language and topics usually spoken about at the well: husbands and water. In Acts 17, when Paul is in Berea, he uses the Scripture to speak to his listeners there, but in Athens on Mars Hill he uses philosophy to address the world's greatest brains. McIntosh writes that the outcome is not important, the important thing is to remain biblical. A church that desires to grow biblically will incarnate the gospel message in the style, language, aesthetics, and music of the people it is seeking to win to Christ. It will become a missional church, in effect, that is, one that is understanding and adapting to a culture much like a missionary does in another land.<sup>24</sup> In 1 Corinthians 9: 22 Paul writes he is willing to "become all things to all men so that by all possible means [he] might save some." The word "become" indicates Paul is intentionally making an effort. Transformation Church needs to make that effort also.

### **Thesis Statement**

Because Galatians 3: 28-29 indicates it is God's will that all class distinctions or barriers between Christians be removed, this candidate believes he should be training the predominantly East Indian members of Transformation Church to initiate a process of change in order to become a multicultural and multiethnic congregation.

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<sup>24</sup>McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, 129.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL RATIONALE

#### **Introduction**

The biblical basis of this project is founded on the clarification that Paul gives in Galatians 3:28-29: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Paul eliminates any kind of bias, prejudice or discrimination against any community, gender or class of people. He strikes down every kind of discrimination between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, and declares an equal emancipated status for everyone. In this world, people begin their journey in some class, pocket or section of society with its own uniqueness. But, in Christ, there is no place for discrimination and this elimination of discrimination culminates in the picture of heaven that is found in Revelation 7:9, where people of all nations, tribes, people and language are standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.

Prior to a Jew believing in Christ, he had to follow the Law. The Law created differences and distinctions not only between individuals and nations, but also between various kinds of foods and animals. Jesus Christ came not to divide, but to unite.<sup>1</sup> He came to keep the church united. Just as a Jew who believes in Jesus Christ is incorporated into the body of Christ, a Gentile sinner who believes in Jesus Christ and puts his or her faith in Him is also incorporated into the same body of Christ. Both are

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<sup>1</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Free: Exchange Legalism for True Spirituality*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), Kindle Locations 8249-8250.

children of God and thus incorporated into the body of Christ. Thus, all believers, whether Jews or Greeks (Gentiles) are addressed as “Sons of God.” All the “Sons of God” are baptized into one Spirit. They are all “in Christ.” What does it mean to be “in Christ Jesus”? In Galatians this idea is expressed in various ways: “in Christ” (1:22; 2:17), “in Christ Jesus” (2:4; 3:14, 26; 5:6), and “in the Lord” (5:10). Sometimes the “in Christ” expression means nothing more than “by Christ” (2:17; 3:14; 5:10), and once it conveys the special relationship a group of local churches has to Christ (1:22).<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, there is no distinction between them. Is this true? Do people change after they accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior and become His children. Even as a child of God, their external identity remains the same. The color, ethnicity, gender etc. all remain the same, but in their redemptive identity the outward distinctions disappear and no longer have significance in God’s sight. Douglas J. Moo writes that the distinctions that “matter” in the world we live in are to be left at the door of the church.<sup>3</sup> The church also should eliminate such biases. Though people come from various cultures, but are now “in Christ,” their ethnicity, life station, or gender is no longer relevant to their redemptive identity. Outward distinctions remain, of course: Jews do not become Gentiles, and women do not become men, but these distinctions no longer hold the significance in God’s redemptive program that they once did.<sup>4</sup> Another pointed

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<sup>2</sup>Scot McKnight, *Galatians*, The NIV Application Commentary Vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), Kindle locations 3837-3839.

<sup>3</sup>Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Dallas, TX: Baker Academic, 2013), Kindle locations 6937-6938.

<sup>4</sup>Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, eds., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), Kindle locations 8954-8956.

issue that must be addressed is why Paul mentions the three divisions—nationality, position in society, and gender. Probably, there is not much reasoning required for Paul’s identification of these three classes, since Paul mentions two of the three groups in other Scripture passages too. We find the classes—Jews or Greeks and slave or free—mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Colossians 3:11 also.<sup>5</sup> The only division he does not mention in the other Scripture passages is the male and female classification. There is probably no specific reasoning behind mentioning the classes except for emphasis on equality among the members of the body of Christ who have come from various backgrounds. Another approach is to acknowledge the fact that such thinking is deeply rooted in Jewish culture. Scholars have often observed that a Jewish blessing that was prayed daily by some Jews is reversed here: “Blessed be God that he did not make me a Gentile; blessed be God that he did not make me ignorant [or a slave]; blessed be God that he did not make me a woman” (*Tosefta Berakoth* 7:18).<sup>6</sup>

Based on the above mandate, there is no place for discrimination in the church among members. All are equal. All are important. All had the same beginning to the Christian journey at the cross. All have the same ending at the throne of God. In Christ, all distinctions are erased. Therefore, a church should not even be ethnic. It should be a picture of heaven on earth.

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<sup>5</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, Kindle Locations 6870-6872.

<sup>6</sup> McKnight, *Galatians*, Kindle Locations 3852-3855.

## **Biblical Mandate**

When Jesus was ascending into heaven, he commissioned his disciples to go to the whole world with the gospel and teach and baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is popularly called the Great Commission. He assigned this task to the disciples and this was a completely new concept for them. There are two concepts embedded in the Great Commission. The first is proselytizing and the second is that this proselytizing needs to happen across ethnic lines. The disciples were already Jews but now they had to preach the good news of salvation that comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ. It was extremely difficult for them to implement the Great Commission, because in Judaism there is no mandate to proselytize. Even today, if somebody wants to become a Jew, there was and still is an elaborate process of at least two years, after which there is a religious ablution. The religious ablution consummates the conversion process. The person interested in Judaism takes the initiative and is willing to be converted on his own and nobody can coerce him.<sup>7</sup>

I believe the largest hurdle for the Jew in sharing the gospel with the Gentiles would have been prejudice. Though not all the Jews were Pharisees, they would have been mostly legalistic. It is possible to say this, because they raised objections to situations when they could not think outside the box or would not go beyond the traditional lines, proving themselves to be legalistic. The legalism of the Jews came

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<sup>7</sup>Discussion with Rabbi Abby Jacobson from Emmanuel Synagogue, Oklahoma City, June 2012.

from the Mosaic law and also from practices built over a long period of time. In other words, there was a sense in which acceptability was a primary goal for the Jews.

Another concept that Jesus initiated but did not elaborate upon much was the “church.” He did not give details, but wanted the disciples to experience the Holy Spirit and then work under the direction of the Spirit. For legalistic Jews, transcending acceptable lines for the sake of building the church represented a paradigm shift.

When it came to the Great Commission, the proclaimer had to take the initiative. In Acts 1:8, Jesus laid out a plan of action for the spread of the gospel. There was a clearly defined starting time and point. The starting time was Pentecost, though Jesus did not specify when the Holy Spirit would descend upon them. The geographical sequence of propagation was clearly defined, however. Beginning from Jerusalem, and because of the persecution, the gospel spread to Judah, Samaria, and to the Gentiles. The disciples were willing to share the gospel boldly with fellow Jews, but the problem arose when they had to cross ethnic lines to reach the Gentiles. The disciples had not had any experience or exposure in reaching out to the Gentiles. When they were given the Great Commission, they did not understand what they were being ushered into. They had to carry the gospel to a perishing world.

The Book of Acts is arranged to show the way the Great Commission was implemented, as is evident by the correlation of Acts 1:8 with the content of the rest of the book. The apostles’ witnessing ‘in Jerusalem’ is recorded in Acts 1-7, “in all Judea and Samaria” in Acts 8-12 and “to the ends of the earth” in Acts 13-28.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Gene A. Getz, et al., *Effective Church Growth Strategies*, Swindoll Leadership Library (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing 2000), 15.

Spreading the gospel had to begin in Jerusalem; next Judea; later Samaria, and ultimately to the ends of the earth. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The gospel begins to be proclaimed in Jerusalem in Acts 2. By Acts 8, the gospel has reached Samaria. Acts 9 is the calling, election, and selection of leaders to the Gentiles, although I believe that the gospel to the Gentiles began when Peter visited the house of Cornelius and shared the gospel. Peter’s visit to Cornelius’ house raised a big storm. I will discuss how and why this storm was raised and how it was calmed.

As a part of its growth, the church must include people of all nations, tribes and languages. This is the picture of heaven described in Revelations 7:9: “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.” All efforts must be made for the church to become a microcosm of heaven. It is easy to pick and choose people to associate with from the same background irrespective of the distance. The church must reach out to local people, however. Instead of being ethnically-minded and having a burden for someone who is miles away, but looks and talks like us, a church must not ignore people in the nearby vicinity. As in Acts 1:8, when the disciples are advised to wait for the Holy Spirit, the world is about to open for them so that they could share the good news of Jesus. Of course, it starts with Jerusalem, but eventually it reaches the ends of the earth.

Presumably the disciples did not understand the complexity of the situation they were entering. They then had to share the gospel with non-Jews. During his time on earth, Jesus kept giving demonstrations of going beyond ethnic lines. For example, in John 4, He meets the Samaritan woman at the well. Ethnically, Jesus is a Jew, but is willing to associate with a Samaritan. He appreciates both Jews and non-Jews regarding their faith.

To understand church growth, it is necessary to go the starting point of the gospel sharing with the Gentiles. The challenge of the Great Commission is to leap beyond one's comfort zone. The mandate of the Great Commission engulfs people of all nations. Yet unfortunately there are people who are not willing to mingle with other people groups. The topic of traversing to the other ethnic groups is moot. The skeptics can raise several objections to the need for reaching out to other ethnicities. The ritualists might have a problem with sacrificing their identity for the sake of accommodating a different group of people. We nevertheless have to come to the same conclusion that Peter reached after he visited Cornelius' house. The essence of the story is that God shows no favoritism (Acts 10:34) and makes no distinction between races (10:20.29; 11:12; 15:9). He gives the same Spirit to all, irrespective not of faith, but of circumcision.<sup>9</sup> If God treats all people equally, no one should discriminate and withhold the gospel from other nationalities, races or people groups.

In the following discussion, I look at the challenges that Peter faced in accepting the invitation to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Because he took the gospel to the

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<sup>9</sup>John R W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the World*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 196.

Gentiles, he faced the wrath of his own people group. He reiterated his vision and the working of the Holy Spirit to which not even the Jews could object, hence the “Gentile Pentecost,” which happened when Peter preached in Cornelius’ house.<sup>10</sup> This experience was prefaced by the vision that Peter had, although later Peter faced the wrath of his fellows. He replied to the objection of his fellow Jews. Next, I will examine in detail the vision, the objection and the clarification that Peter gave.

### **Biblical Evidence**

#### **Vision**

While God was manifesting His work and preparing the heart of Cornelius, He was simultaneously working in the heart of Peter. The reason Peter, the apostles and the “circumcised believers” were not able to object after the explanation was that this paradigm shift originated with the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, when 120 people were waiting in prayer (Acts 1:15), it was the Holy Spirit who began a new era in the life of the apostles and the other attendees. Similarly, the inclusion of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God through the gospel did not have its origin in the human will. In fact, this is made abundantly clear with the vision that Peter received. In the vision, Peter saw heaven open and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners descending to him and being let down to the earth. “In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air” (Acts 10:11,12). Peter was asked to kill them and eat. Peter saw there were unclean animals and he refused to obey the voice. He clung tenaciously to the Jewish law that he had followed

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

all his life. In response to Peter's refusal to kill and eat the creatures in the sheet, the voice corrected him and told him not to call unclean what God had called clean.

According to the *Scofield Reference Bible*, the animals and birds represent both Gentiles ("unclean" according to the law) and Jews (ceremonially "clean"). They were present together in this sheet let down from heaven and then caught up to heaven. It is possible to put more emphasis on the unclean animals, since Peter's reply mentions only the unclean ones. Yet the sheet contained "all kinds" and this means there were clean animals also. It is interesting that Peter raised an objection to killing the impure or unclean ones, even though there were clean animals also. Surprisingly, Peter did not become selective in arguing that he would pick only the clean ones. Even if he had chosen to do that, the theme of the vision would not be altered. Ultimately, Peter refused to kill and eat the creatures on the sheet. The fact that it happened three times implies emphasis.

Was God asking Peter to change his diet habits? The vision could suggest this possibility. Yet the incidents that followed made the vision clear to Peter. I believe that Peter did not understand the meaning of the vision right away. As soon the vision had passed, there were Gentiles waiting at the gate of his house, and as he conversed with them, the Holy Spirit told him to go with them without hesitation. This is probably when Peter understood the meaning of the vision. It became clear to him what those clean and unclean creatures in that large sheet meant. Peter grasped that the clean and unclean animals (a distinction Jesus had abolished) were a symbol of clean and unclean, circumcised and uncircumcised persons. As Rackham puts it, "the sheet is the church,"

which will “contain all races and classes without any distinction at all.”<sup>11</sup> I agree with Rackham that now the composition of the church had to include people from all nations.

Peter was not new to the working of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, he himself had stood and proclaimed the gospel and about three thousand people were saved and baptized. In that group were Jews from various countries. Now God was changing the paradigm. Peter had already seen how God had worked among the Samaritans through the pioneering work of Philip, the evangelist (Acts 8). Peter and John had gone to Samaria and laid hands on the people and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter was vividly seeing the gospel travel in the same pattern and sequence that Jesus had told them. After Samaria, it had to go out to the “ends of the earth.” The “ends of the earth” probably meant the Gentile world. It might be conjecture, but it definitely is convincing to mention that Peter was seeing Acts 1:8 being fulfilled.

The first case of public preaching ministry to the Gentiles occurred in Cornelius’ house and Peter was the preacher. Furthermore, it was Peter who spoke to the crowd gathered together in Jerusalem at Pentecost when about three thousand people were saved and baptized. In both the cases, Peter gave the gospel as turning points in the history of Christendom. Was it God’s will that it was Peter that was to reach the Gentiles or to change his heart in support of Paul’s ministry? Perhaps both. God used a vision to explain to Peter the paradigm shift he needed to make. Following the vision, there were Gentiles waiting on the door step. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and spoke and became the inaugural person to share the gospel with the Jews. From that day on, the gospel started growing and moving to new people groups. It is interesting to

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<sup>11</sup>Rackham, quoted in Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 194.

note that God used Peter again to lay the foundation of spreading the gospel and this time to the Gentiles. This could be because Jesus had said on this foundation he would build the church. Exploring why Peter was chosen to bring the good news would be a digression from the topic, however. My focus is on finding a biblical basis for the assimilation of different people groups into the church.

There were two things that were happening simultaneously: Peter pondering about the vision and the arrival of the Gentiles at the doorstep of Simon the tanner's house. This was definitely orchestrated by the Holy Spirit, and Peter was told by the Holy Spirit not only to associate with the visitors, but also to go with them "without hesitation." Peter's hesitation in killing and eating the unclean animals that he saw in the vision was playing out in real life. The role of the Holy Spirit was of paramount importance in the episode of Peter's vision. Now Peter had to pass the same gospel to the Gentiles.

### Objection

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea came to know that Peter had gone to Cornelius' house. In Acts 11:1 it is written that they heard the Gentiles had also received the word of God. Yet when Peter returned to Jerusalem they criticized him for going into the house of a Gentile. There was no excitement among the brothers that the gospel had reached the Gentiles. They were more concerned that Peter had gone into the house of a Gentile. What exactly was their objection? The common practice was that a Jew should not associate in this manner with someone from another nation. Such an act was regarded as "unlawful." This term means something not permitted or allowed. The idea of indecency shows the term's emotive implications. Open association with the

Gentiles is prohibited, because of the fear that Gentiles are unclean.<sup>12</sup> Peter returned from Cornelius' house, and was questioned about why he had gone to them. The larger criticism, however, was that he had eaten with them.

Peter went to Cornelius' house and the circumcised believers were upset that he had visited a Gentile. The important question to discuss is why the circumcised believers were upset with Peter visiting the Gentile. He had stayed in Cornelius' house for a few days. It is obvious that when he stayed in the house of a Gentile, he would have had food and fellowship with the family. What triggered the objection of the circumcised believers? Was it the food or the fellowship or both? In terms of the Jewish law, having food with Gentiles was definitely taboo, so in order for the major shift of taking the gospel to the Gentiles to be possible, there was a need for a new paradigm. This paradigm shift happened with Peter's experience in the house of Cornelius. Peter preached to the audience in Cornelius' house, who were all Gentiles. The Jews do not associate with the Samaritans, not much less the other Gentiles. We shall discuss the reasons for which the circumcised believers criticized Peter further. Did they feel they owned Jesus and the gospel so much that they did not want to share Him with the non-Jews? If they owned Jesus and the gospel so much, why was there a need for the Jews also to be evangelized? Why were the Jews so acidic about welcoming the Gentiles who were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit? From the Jewish point of view mingling with the Gentiles would perhaps have been thought to have polluted Peter. Alternatively, it might have to do with a sense of competition over who received the gospel first. These

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<sup>12</sup>Darrell Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), Kindle Location 9876.

are some of the questions that need to be answered. The bottom line, however, is that on the whole the Jews were unwilling to share the gospel with the Gentiles.

### Food or Fellowship or Both?

The concern for the Jews was that a person would become unclean during a visit with a Gentile who had had contact with unclean food and other sources of uncleanness as identified in the Torah. Some contact was allowed, but to visit and eat with Gentiles, as Peter did here, was prohibited.<sup>13</sup> Is it written in Mosaic Law that a Jew should not eat with a Gentile? God certainly gave clear instructions to the Israelites not to intermarry with those from heathen nations (Dt 7:3-4). The question here is not a long-term familial relationship, however. It is merely about eating with a Gentile. The relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans provides a further example of this issue surrounding the Gentiles. In John 4, a Samaritan woman mentions to Jesus the taboo of Jews associating with the Samaritans. Here the discussion concerns the dynamics of Jews associating with other Gentiles. Ariel HaNaviy calls this exclusivity the enjoyment of special status, and not mingling with the Gentiles he calls ethnocentric Jewish exclusivism.

If the rabbinic literature that survived the destruction of the 2nd Temple is any indication of the pattern of religious life in 1st century Israel, then the Judaism of Peter's day held to the common belief that Jewish Israel held an exclusive place among the righteous peoples of the earth. The poison of Ethnocentric Jewish Exclusivism that permeated the first century Jewish society erected a wall of separation between your average Jew and your average Gentile (read Eph 2:14 with this view in mind). Because of this social view, many religious Jews sought to keep a measured distance away from most Gentiles, believing the

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<sup>13</sup>Bock, *Acts*, Kindle Locations 10280-10281.

average Gentile to be intrinsically “unclean,” capable of transmitting ritual impurity to Jews, and or leading Jews away into idolatry.<sup>14</sup>

I agree with this author, since this self-made elevation created walls between the Jews and many other communities. Since Peter violated this acceptable norm, there arose a conflict between certain circumcised believers and Peter. Can there can be fellowship without food? I. H. Marshal notes that the problem is one of both food and fellowship.<sup>15</sup> The circumcised group’s understanding would be that Gentiles need to observe the law, keep away from unclean food, and also be circumcised, to show their participation in the covenant (Gn 17:9-14).<sup>16</sup> I do not believe one can separate food from fellowship. When a person goes as a guest and has food with a family, it is understood that food brings about the fellowship. When the circumcised group raised objections, they were concerned that Peter might have eaten unclean food. Whether it was the food, or the fellowship, or both, the circumcised group criticized Peter as noted in Acts 11:2. Peter then had to defend himself against this criticism.

It is interesting to note that Peter did not raise this topic. The apostles and the other believers had already heard a report about Peter’s visit to Cornelius’ house. As is common knowledge, when information is passed down through an unconnected person and not from an actual person who was there on the ground, there is the possibility of

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<sup>14</sup>Arial Ha Naviy, E Bible.com, <https://ebible.com/questions/14659-why-did-peter-in-acts10-28-say-that-it-is-an-unlawful-thing-for-a-man-that-is-a-jew-to-keep-company-or-come-unto-one-of-another-nation>.

<sup>15</sup>I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 5 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 195.

<sup>16</sup>Bock, *Acts*, Kindle Locations 10280-10281.

the truth or facts becoming distorted. Since they had already heard the news, Peter wanted to make sure they had heard his version and not an inaccurate one. He therefore began his discourse.

### Clarification

Before I explore the conviction with which Peter acted, it is worth remembering that he himself had a struggle over going to the house of a Gentile. In his reply, Peter mentioned the vision in which he was asked to kill and eat the unclean creatures. Peter objected to the suggestion, based on his Jewish beliefs and upbringing. Yet the voice spoke to him again to kill and eat, not once, but three times. The very fact that the message was given three times establishes the veracity and essence of the paradigm shift that God was leading Peter into. There is no substitute for an argument of this kind. God took the initiative for this new work. God's action resulted in repentance. The remaining questions were about the law and circumcision, and are treated in Acts 15.<sup>17</sup>

By calling the unclean animals pure (unclean from the viewpoint of the Jews), God was changing Peter's DNA of belief. The change meant Peter could eat them. Peter interpreted the provision of food in the vision as freeing him to associate with the Gentiles, since their dietary habits were one of the Jewish concerns about purity, especially being hosted in a Gentile home.<sup>18</sup> Peter did not understand the meaning of the vision right away, but when the men sent by Cornelius knocked on his door and the Holy Spirit convinced him that those three men had come to see him because the Holy

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<sup>17</sup>Bock, *Acts*, Kindle Locations 10280-10281.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Kindle Locations 9901-9903.

Spirit had sent them, he underwent a paradigm shift. I strongly believe that Peter had a hint of what was impending, for when he visited Cornelius' house, the truth rolled out. Interestingly, his conviction is proved beyond doubt in the fact that he did not consult any other person before he headed out to Cornelius' house.

After Peter was personally convinced that this new "Gentile Pentecost" was the initiative of the Holy Spirit, he went to Cornelius' house and preached to the Gentile crowd there, and saw the Holy Spirit reinforce his conviction. Even before he had finished speaking, the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles. Impressed by this great avenue that God Himself had opened, Peter called for baptism of those who had been saved in Cornelius' house. Once Peter saw the vision and later the descending of the Holy Spirit upon the people, he could not resist or oppose the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, he presented his monologue, through which the conflict was resolved. Peter's monologue contained an interplay of 1) his personal encounter with God's plan through the vision; 2) the work of the Holy Spirit; and 3) the teachings of Jesus.

Peter presents the incident in a very logical sequence. He knows that he is talking to his fellow Jews and therefore begins his narration with an allusion to clean and unclean animals as mentioned in the Mosaic Law in Leviticus 11. There are three strong components which the hearers had to struggle with: The Mosaic Law, the voice from heaven and the Holy Spirit. The clean and the forbidden creatures are mentioned in the Mosaic Law. Peter explains that the voice from heaven told him to kill the creatures and eat; and the Holy Spirit fell upon the people who heard Peter speak. Since this was the act of the Holy Spirit, Peter's report convinced the critics. The early church did not

oppose the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, they were experiencing the power of God through the Holy Spirit.

The next important thing that Peter said was to remind them, in v. 16, of what Jesus had told all the disciples: Jesus had said “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Jesus had spoken these words and the disciples could not deny the reference he had made to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter’s narration of the incident was very convincing. Peter yielded to the work of the Holy Spirit when he mentioned that he had no right to oppose God. He could see God was expanding his grace to the non-Jews. “God brings various ethnic groups into one in Christ. This message is important in Acts. Jesus brings reconciliation not only with God but also between people. The new community will be diverse in make-up, equal in status, and called to reflect peace with one another” (Eph 2:11-22)<sup>19</sup>

Peter did not advocate or impose any type of legalism upon the Gentiles. He presented the gospel to them. There was no discussion about circumcision. He did not mention the legal aspects of the Jewish religion.

This reconciliation worked itself out with cultural sensitivity. Gentiles did not need to become Jews, nor Jews Gentiles, apparently. According to Paul’s letters and some of the differences he tried to arbitrate, Paul’s position was this: if the issue did not touch on the core of the gospel, then let each do what was appropriate for their own conscience. ... For example, care must be exercised not to invert the mistake of the first century by insisting that Jewish believers become like Gentiles. This is a decision of the believer’s conscience with regard to practice once one has responded in faith to the gospel. Similarly one should be sure that when one ministers cross-culturally, practices that are Western but not necessarily specifically Christian are not imposed on others, and vice versa. Perhaps in our culture the choice of where and how to educate children is a

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<sup>19</sup>Bock, *Acts*, Kindle Locations 10290-10292.

similar kind of decision. Not everyone needs to do the same thing in this matter.<sup>20</sup>

In chapter 1, I implied that the failure of Transformation Church to reach out to those of different races and cultures is a ministry challenge. In the biblical rationale of chapter 2, the scriptures not only invite believers to be challenged and show readiness to include those of all races, colors, cultures and languages in the vicinity of the church, but positively require people to do so. If the exclusivity of only a specific ethnic group is maintained, it also begins the demise of that group, and we should therefore reach out to other communities. Though Peter was vociferous about the inclusion of Gentiles, a little later he was rebuked publicly by Paul for the hypocrisy he displayed in eating with the Gentiles. It is astonishing how quickly Peter was able to recant something he had been so firm about. In *Contextualization*, David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen write about the end result of exclusivity. Some early believers could not imagine that the gospel should go beyond their boundaries. For some, the prospect of a missionary outreach which went beyond or even by-passed the traditional Jewish institutions was unthinkable. As a result, many of the early believers resisted reaching out to the Gentiles. This not only threatened to stifle the expansion of the church, but led to serious contention within the church.<sup>21</sup> I therefore conclude that this project will address a genuine ministry need for Transformation Church.

## **Conclusion**

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Kindle Locations 10299-10306.

<sup>21</sup>David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 8.

When there is reluctance in the church to accept people from other nationalities, any criticism has to be handled under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God clearly had no desire for discrimination to exist in the church. This truth can be seen in the make-up of the church in Revelation and God clearly desired that this discrimination would not exist in the church on earth, in accordance with Galatians 3: 28-29, which indicates that God has removed the earthly barriers in His church; His church should continue to follow His lead. Discrimination should be eliminated altogether from a church. Discrimination has been a constant problem, starting from the days of the early church and continuing even to the present day. Each country has a different problem with discrimination. It shows up in various forms in each country and in each individual. For example:

...in the form of racism (color prejudice) nationalism (my country, right or wrong), tribalism in Africa and casteism in India, social and culture snobbery, or sexism (discriminating against women). All such discrimination is inexcusable even in non-Christian society; in the Christian community it is both an obscenity (because offensive to human dignity) and a blasphemy (because offensive to God who accepts without discrimination all who repent and believe). Like Peter, we have to learn God does not show favoritism (10:34).<sup>22</sup>

God was spreading the gospel to the world. In the very beginning there was opposition. Since the work was done by the Holy Spirit, none of the contenders had any further contradicting viewpoint. Eventually the church of Jerusalem was willing to say that “God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).<sup>23</sup> They all

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<sup>22</sup>Stott, *The Message of Acts*, 197.

<sup>23</sup>McKnight, *Galatians*, Kindle locations 3865-3866.

acceded to Peter and a new chapter began. Based on the pattern we see in the New Testament, all churches today should be free of all forms of discrimination denounced in the New Testament.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY

#### **History of Practice**

I am the founding pastor of Transformation Church. This church is a breakaway from International Outreach Church, of which I was also the founding pastor. As the founding pastor, I designed the logo of the church. The logo speaks volumes about the desire of the church to be an outreach center. Unfortunately, some of the members did not have the heart for evangelizing anybody. I was advocating the Great Commission and they were more interested in developing a social club. They were happy with just a few people they knew well coming together for church services. This is where the difference in ideology came in. After fourteen months, these few church members effected a division in the church. The rest of the congregation invited me to be the pastor of the new church, which we named Transformation Church. International Outreach Church was inwardly focused (after my exit) whereas Transformation Church became outwardly focused. This I say with confidence, because it has been three and a half years since the two churches parted ways. At the end of three and a half years, International Outreach Church has disbanded, and the members have scattered. In the last three and a half years, until its death, the church still had its four original families. That church has now ceased to exist. This is a serious lesson and a warning for Transformation Church and for any other church: if a church is inwardly focused it will eventually die.

Transformation Church, on the other hand, has several new families, despite losing many members. These losses have been because Transformation Church, like any church made up of immigrants, has experienced the transience of church members who

had to move to other states because of their jobs. Most of the members are immigrants, living in this country on visas. Their jobs are contingent upon the visas. If a project in a company comes to an end, and in order to maintain their legal status, the employee may have to move to another state or wherever the company dictates. Many times, the move is at a very short notice (sometimes just a week). Thus, the church also suffers the loss of that person or family. Yet even with such losses, Transformation Church has had several new families join from the time it was established on February 15, 2015.

People join Transformation Church because we try to reach out to any new family that comes to town. When new families move here from another state, some find out about our church from the Internet, and some would give their details to me and we reach out to them. We also continue inviting non-Christians to events. The other church members feel comfortable talking to people of Indian origin. Nevertheless, the church ought to evangelize and invite people from non-Indian origin as well Indians. It should be the responsibility of every church member to share the gospel and invite people to church. The current members of the Transformation Church do indeed invite new people, unlike the erstwhile members of International Outreach Church. Yet to say the current members are better than the “blessed subtractions” does not excuse them. Because there is potential among the members, and with a little encouragement they can reach out, why not mobilize and train them to reach out to people of other cultures?

In their jobs, church members do interact with people of other cultures. They do not lack opportunities for meeting people of other cultures. After all, East Indians are immigrants in this country and cannot avoid the local people. When they do interact and work with people of other cultures in the work place, there is no reason why they should

not reach out to those other cultures with the gospel or invite them to church. I see a potential for mobilizing church members to open up new avenues, and thus I would like to train them to reach out to people of other cultures with the gospel.

In order to understand how a church can become multinational, I researched Chantilly Bible Church, Virginia (hereafter CBC). From the early 1980s, the congregation at CBC started integrating with other cultures. There were some Chinese Christian immigrants who used to meet at people's homes during the weekends. As their numbers grew, they looked for a building and then started meeting on Saturdays in the church building that belonged to CBC. The Chinese fellowship group did not have an ordained pastor, and they therefore requested the Anglo pastor to preach on the Saturdays they met while someone translated the message into Mandarin. This was a good way of incorporating intercultural diversity into worship.

As time passed, CBC acquired a new building and in order to accommodate the Chinese fellowship group, they allotted certain rooms for them to worship in while the English service was taking place on Sundays. Experiments were made with several different styles of combined services, sometimes with translation and sometimes without. Of the three services, two would be strictly in English and one would be with translation. The service with translation into Mandarin would also attract people who did not know Mandarin. Such attendees probably attended that service for the convenience of the timing. Ultimately, CBC decided to cut the number of services down to two. Since translation of the messages was taking a lot of time, they decided to use technology and have the messages translated into Mandarin, not from the pulpit, but directly into the ears of those who had in-ear systems (these were given out to those who

needed them at the beginning of the service). They thus saved a lot of time. In the middle of the week, the Chinese fellowship had their own meetings. As the number of Chinese members grew, CBC appointed a Chinese pastor who was bi-lingual to cater to both first and second-generation attendees. Following a very similar pattern, Spanish speaking groups then joined CBC. This formula has definitely been proven and is successful.

In *The Color of the Church*, Rodney Woo describes the transition of Wilcrest Baptist Church—located in Alief, a racially diverse suburb in southwest Houston—from a predominantly White congregation into a multiethnic one. The story of this church is similar to that of CBC. The interesting difference is that the White congregation invited a non-White pastor to lead them. This church was already an established church, though predominantly White. As of today, WBC has members from nearly forty-four nationalities in their church. How they achieved this is similar to the story of CBC. They moved one step at a time. Rodney Woo describes the journey in the form a hand model that the church adopted. In this hand model, each finger represents a category of people.

On the far right are advocates of prejudice who want to maintain the purity of the separate divisions between races and cultures within the religious or church context and will utilize whatever means necessary to keep these divisions intact.<sup>1</sup> This group is resistant to change. They become even more resistant when there is a possibility of people from other races mixing with them. They are afraid the mixing of other cultures or races will contaminate their purity or identity.

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<sup>1</sup>Rodney M. Woo, *The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches* (Wheaton, IL: B&H Academic, 2009), 145.

In the second category, we find people who are willing and unwilling at the same time. Rodney calls them “Homogenous Advocates,” which sounds like a paradox. Members of this group see nothing wrong with churches of different races and even encourage their separate existence, but refuse to cross racial lines and interact with different people groups.<sup>2</sup> While maintaining their distinctness by not mingling with other cultures or races, they are willing to validate the other groups, but are not be willing to mix with them. Many of the churches fall into this category. CBC was in this category and so too WBC. The Afro American church and the Chinese groups met in the same building but not together with the White congregation. Woo does not agree with stopping at this stage. He has a vision of heaven where people of all races, cultures, languages are together and not in groups. Woo mentions that the Southern Baptist Convention believes this very strongly.

The reasons why SBC believes this, he says, is because “They need their own place”; “They worship differently than we do”; “They need freedom to express themselves without any restraints”; and “They speak a different language.”<sup>3</sup> I partially agree with this. In my first church plant, International Baptism Mission in First Baptist Church, Yukon, OK, this was the model. The church wanted an Indian congregation meeting in the building. There were no attempts made to find a possibility of combining the congregations and worshipping together. Though there is distinction, it is not

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<sup>2</sup>Woo, *The Color of Church*, 146.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 147.

absolute. There are churches like Transformation Church that are willing to accept people of all cultures in their churches.

The third finger of the model represents “Seekers,” and this group includes people who come to our church looking for something different from their homogeneous congregations. They feel that something is missing in their Christian and church experience. They see or hear fragments of Christianity from other cultures and deduce that not everything from these separate Christian groups can be totally wrong. They question why there are racial lines of demarcation at all, especially in light of what the Bible says about reaching all nations. These seekers discover and experience the crossing of racial lines in work, school, and community, and are perplexed why the church refuses to cross these blatant barriers.<sup>4</sup> At WBC, the families that fit in most easily were those that had inter-racial marriages. The couples in interracial marriages look for acceptance and tend to be the Seekers.

The other reason for WBC to transition and become Seekers is because the previous method of the Homogenous Advocates failed. The demographics were changing and the church had suffered a ten-year decline. This was thus the best option to float. Among the gamut of reasons why certain people are Seekers, the Southern Baptist Convention provides a classic reason, for though it is officially multiracial, it is not the definition of the SBC that concerns Woo. According to Woo, the SBC is multiracial, but the churches are racially exclusive. There might be a Hispanic, Chinese or Afro American Church, but there is no intermingling. I agree with Woo. In our State and

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<sup>4</sup>Woo, *The Color of Church*, 149.

General Conventions, there are separate ethnic church lunches. The moment we stay ethnic, we are not being interracial.

The fourth finger or group represents “Fully Integrated Believers.” Seekers need to be taught scripturally the need for and blessedness of being multiracial. It is a slow process. Through intense spiritual growth and the process of time, they now adopt God's heart for all the nations as their own. During this process, they expose themselves to biblical texts, experiences, and models of what it means to be part of a multiracial congregation.<sup>5</sup> The members at WBC caught and embraced the multicultural vision. One way of overcoming the mindset of homogeneity is by going on mission trips. In these mission trips, people go beyond their racial boundaries. They might also place themselves in places where they are minorities, and thus try to break the homogeneity.

The last digit of the hand model is that of the Missionaries. This group of people become pioneer workers in a new environment. They are not comfortable simply being in a multicultural setting. They would like to create one where one does not yet exist. This is how church multiplication of multiethnic churches can happen. The model WBC has worked with and implemented is that when people see all races in one place worshiping together, serving together, and loving each other, they are personally encouraged that this can happen, and divinely convicted that this should be happening in more places. If the God of all the nations can draw all the different people groups together at WBC, there is evidence that what will happen in heaven around the throne can happen here on earth.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Woo, *The Color of Church*, 152.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Based on the Hand model, CBC has reached the fourth finger, i.e., Fully Integrated Believers, while WBC already has reached the Missionary stage. It took both churches more than a decade to reach their current stage. The Hand model is very encouraging Transformation Church faces a challenge. First of all, Transformation Church is a church plant. It needs a lot of time to reach the Seekers stage. Secondly, there is a difference between an Anglo Church assimilating people from other cultures and an immigrant church trying to assimilate other immigrants or the local Anglos. The Anglo church had more advantages and more possibilities for assimilating other people groups. This could be because they were already an established church with staff, a building etc. While this may just be an opinion, I would like to say that it is also my conviction. Of the many East Indian churches that are here in the United States, only a very few have their own building.

This gives rise to another question based on my opinion/conviction, i.e., whether or not a church is established if it owns a building. I do not believe that the question of whether or not the church is established is the issue here. Nevertheless, a church that has a building has a lot of advantages. Transformation Church met in a school and for the last three years has been meeting in a leased building. Each type of meeting arrangement has its own advantage. When we used to rent the school, a lot of church members gave their time to the church on Sundays to come early to set up and also helped to pack up. The media equipment underwent a lot of wear and tear, plus we were strictly time bound. If the weather was bad, the school would announce a closure and we would not be able to meet that Sunday. Meeting in the school building thus had its challenges, but the church grew more strongly bonded during that time. During the week, the church

had no presence in the community, however. When we moved to the current building, the church's signage gave us a presence in the community. We leased a warehouse as is (it was in very bad shape). The church members cleaned, scraped, painted, constructed etc., and made the sanctuary very beautiful. Since we were already in the building, we simply had to come early and turn on the equipment (there was no lifting or moving the stuff). We were able to do a lot of ministry because of the building—ladies' retreats, VBS, special meetings, etc. We would like to accommodate other churches in our building during, after or before hours. When we began the church, a lot of established churches helped us. Now that we have leased a building, we would like to help other churches meet in our building to worship. Ultimately, it is our desire to buy a church building in the not too distant future.

My focus on the possession of a building highlights the fact that such churches have the ability to accommodate another church group, or any small group for that matter. This leasing/renting of space can eventually develop into a bonding relationship between the host church and the renting group. This is not the case with churches made up of immigrants. Just like any church plant, new immigrant churches have to find a place to worship. They might begin in the basement of a house of one of the church members, or in a rented school facility, or space rented from an established church. There is difficulty renting space from another church, however. The timing becomes difficult and the renter is not normally be able to have a morning service, since the host church usually meets during the morning hours.

Certain changes have to be made in order for a church to move from being a predominantly ethnic church to one that is multinational and multicultural. Also, certain

tenets have to be kept untouched and uncompromised. At the same time, some practices have to be discarded. Elmer Towns writes: “As the culture changes and manifests different needs, the church must update its techniques to accomplish the goal.”<sup>7</sup> There are questions concerning what needs to be discarded, and what should be retained. How much of a cultural change is acceptable, and what role does culture play in a church? I am specifically talking about ethnic Indians accepting or inviting people of other cultures. There is also the question about whether Indians have to understand the American worldview in order to accomplish the goal of becoming multicultural, for the Indian and American worldviews are vastly different.

However different the cultures might be, I believe we can create oneness of mind by addressing the emotional and the spiritual issues. An encouraging thought is that any church that wants to grow must emphasize Christ not culture. God is not bound to any one culture, but is transcultural.<sup>8</sup> It is a utopian expectation that people will love one another in agape love in spite of one another, and is definitely not practical. So, in order to reach the spiritual goal of oneness we have to also reach the emotional side of people. Irrespective of the race or culture a person comes from, a few things are common. If we want to know what people really want, we have to learn about their emotional lives. Happiness is the result of getting what the heart craves. Discouragement is the emotional response of the heart when the things one lives for move farther away. People’s hearts

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<sup>7</sup>Elmer L. Towns, “You Can’t Use Old Tools for Today’s Job and Be in Business Tomorrow,” *Fundamentalist Journal* 3, no. 6 (1984), 51-52, [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/towns\\_articles/9](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/towns_articles/9).

<sup>8</sup>Gary McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 130.

are filled with fear when they suddenly lose what they are convinced they need. In short, our emotions reflect what we worship.<sup>9</sup> It might be very difficult, but it is worth trying to motivate church members to channel their emotions in line with the Scriptures in order to invite people of other cultures so that we can celebrate cultural diversity. There should be a real celebration of cultural diversity. Warren Bird says there should not be “cultural tolerance,” but instead people should experience camaraderie.<sup>10</sup>

Cultures differ in various respects—food habits, dress, meeting schedules, worship styles etc. Lawrence M. Mead has written an article for *Society* entitled, “Immigration: The Cultural Dimension,” in which he explains in detail the contrast between American culture and the non-West. He includes American culture with European culture, since American culture is derived from Europe. In this article, he makes observations about American culture and contrasts it with non-European culture. The mention of non-European culture might be too broad for this study, since I am more concerned about Indian and American cultural differences and not the rest of world. However, Mead notes that American culture is individualistic:

Western culture above all is individualist. It presumes that ordinary people are assertive, able to choose their own goals and realize them in the world. The non-West, however, is far more collective-minded. Most people are adaptive, not assertive. They take their cues from their environment, from what other people or the authorities expect of them. Like no other country, America celebrates

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<sup>9</sup>Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*, Resources for Changing Lives (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 196.

<sup>10</sup>Elmer L. Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 195.

individualism. Life is seen optimistically as a project, not a trial. The prize is to achieve success for oneself and one's family, often over years.<sup>11</sup>

Mead also mentions how the Westerners, in particular Americans, deal with moral issues:

A second major difference is about morals. Western culture is moralistic. Most people internalize ideas of right and wrong as general principles that they expect themselves and others to observe. In the non-West, in contrast, morals are far more conformist or situational. Order depends much more on external enforcement. Largely, people do what others regard as right, including immediate associates and the authorities.<sup>12</sup>

Being an Indian by birth, and having lived in India almost all my life and in America for the past twelve years, I concur with Mead's observation. Though he speaks of the "non-West," I can appropriate the broad non-West description to India and find it aptly fits the observation. Mead goes on to say that non-Western cultures have a strong community sense. I also believe Americans tend to be more logical, while Indians are more emotional.

In the appendix of his book *Transforming Worldviews*, Paul Hiebert delineates the difference between American and Indian culture. He explains how the American and Indian worldviews are vastly different as follows:

Americans believe in empiricism, absolutes, naturalism, linear times, order and immutability whereas Indians rely on maya, relativism, supernaturalism, cyclic time, mutability and unpredictability. Americans believe in a particularistic and dichotomized world, equality and individualism whereas Indians believe in continuum, hierarchy, specialization and interdependence. Americans believe in natural or moral management, science and technology, self-reliance and sending out missionaries whereas Indians follow karma, pilgrimage and relative morality. Americans operate on self-reliance, expanding good, oriented toward

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<sup>11</sup>Lawrence M. Mead, "Immigration: The Cultural Dimension," *Society* 53, no. 2, (April 2016), 116-122. DOI: 10.1007/s12115-016-9986-7.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

achievement and associational groups whereas Indians believe in dharma (functional responsibility), limited goodness, ascribing orientation, caste system and moksha.<sup>13</sup>

When two worldviews are so diametrically opposite, it is difficult to find a common denominator. I would go a step further in portraying the assimilation of other cultures, not as a matter of tolerating one another, but one of celebrating the cultural differences. In *Courageous Leadership*, Bill Hybels mentions this: “Those who had more shared freely with those who had less until socioeconomic barriers melted away. People related together in ways that bridged gender and racial chasms and celebrated cultural differences.”<sup>14</sup>

When talking about differences in moralities, the issue is beliefs that are internal rather than those that are external, such as dress, music style. In spite of any differences, the church should be in unity of thought and mind. In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis writes that when one examines the moralities of different cultures and religions, certain differences do stand out. But Lewis was more impressed by the basic, underlying similarities:

Think of a country where people were admired for running away in battle, or where a man felt proud of double-crossing all the people who had been kindest to him. You might just as well try to imagine a country where two and two made five. Men have differed as regards the people you ought to be unselfish to—whether it was only your own family, or your fellow countrymen, or everyone.

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<sup>13</sup>Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 337-344.

<sup>14</sup>Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 17.

But they have always agreed that you ought not to put yourself first. Selfishness has never been admired.”<sup>15</sup>

Selfishness is one danger. In the church, there are other differences between churches in their appearance, operational styles and even music. Even within a particular country there are differences between churches in worship styles based on age and denomination. Since worship style is the most controversial difference, with differences at every stage, I shall use Scripture to discuss how unity of thought can be brought about in an ideal environment.

For example, there is much disagreement about what kind of music is appropriate in a church. Worship patterns and practices differ from one church to another. In *Holy Roar* by Darren Whitehead and Chris Tomlin, the authors describe the seven types of praise mentioned in the Bible. When I read this book, I started looking at these seven praise styles from a cultural perspective and began correlating cultural or an ethnic group in terms of their worship and praise styles. I realized that all churches fell into one of the seven praise styles mentioned in the Bible. This gave me a strong conviction that a worship style could be embedded in a culture and that one cannot separate culture from a style of praise. Each culture reflects its presence in at least one of the seven praise styles.

The seven praise styles are as follows: The first is called יָדָאָה or Yâdâh, yaw-daw, which means to revere or worship with extended hands, or to hold out the hands.<sup>16</sup> This

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<sup>15</sup> Cited in Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 41.

<sup>16</sup> “3034: yâdâh, yaw-daw’; a prim1. root; used only as denom. from 3027; lit. to use (i.e. hold out) the hand; phys. to throw (a stone, an arrow) at or away; espec. to revere or worship (with extended hands); intends. to bemoan (by wringing the hands):—

type of praise is mentioned in Psalm 67:3 3: “May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.” This type of praise can be associated with a culture that is not highly expressive. Contemporary churches have people raising their hands in worship during the singing. This type of expression of praise is prevalent in almost every church, except some of the more traditional ones. “Yâdâh is an active posture of praise expressed by those who adore God. It is an act of praise for all the people of God, whether charismatic, conservative, nondenominational, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, or Presbyterian.”<sup>17</sup>

The second type of praise that the authors discuss is לָלַל or halal. The definition, according to Accordance Bible Software, is that it is “a primitive root; to be clear (orig. of sound, but usually of color); to shine; hence, to make a show, to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; causatively, to celebrate; also to stultify:—(make) boast (self), celebrate, commend, (deal, make), fool(-ish, -ly), glory, give (light), be (make, feign self) mad (against), give in marriage, (sing, be worthy of) praise, rage, renowned, shine.”<sup>18</sup> Tomlin and Whitehead offer the following condensed definition: “HALAL Hâlal, haw-lal’: To boast. To rave. To shine. To celebrate. To be clamorously foolish.”<sup>19</sup> Psalm 149:3 mentions this style of praise: “Let them praise his name with dancing and

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cast (out), (make) confess (-ion), praise, shoot, (give) thank (-ful, -s, -sgiving).” James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible*, Volume 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2009), 47; Chris Tomlin and Darren Whitehead, *Holy Roar: 7 Words That Will Change The Way You Worship* (Brentwood, TN: Bowyer & Bow), Kindle Edition, 123.

<sup>17</sup>Tomlin and Whitehead, *Holy Roar*, 17.

<sup>18</sup>Accordance Bible Software.

<sup>19</sup>Tomlin and Whitehead, *Roar*, 31.

make music to him with tambourine and harp.” This kind of worship can be found in Afro-American churches irrespective of the denomination. If this style of praise is to be associated with a specific denomination, then it would certainly be Pentecostal churches where there are few inhibitions. “Hâlal is the primary Hebrew word for praise. It is the word from which we derive the biblical word hallelujah. It’s an exuberant expression of celebration, a word that connotes boasting, raving, or celebrating, and carries with it the notion of acting in a way that is ‘clamorously foolish.’ True hâlal involves ‘laying aside your inhibitions and killing your self-consciousness.’”<sup>20</sup> While the Pentecostal church definitely fits this style of praise, it is doubtful it would be suitable for East Indian churches, for East Indians are full of inhibitions.

The third type of praise is called זָמַר or zamar. Here the meaning of the Hebrew is “properly, to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument, i.e., play upon it; to make music, accompanied by the voice; hence to celebrate in song and music:—give praise, sing forth praises, psalms.”<sup>21</sup> Except for the Church of Christ, almost every denomination uses musical instruments. This is thus a common thread in almost all the churches all over the world. This type of praise is found in Psalm 144:9: “I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you.” Transformation Church places a lot of importance on music in the worship service. For this reason, if there is any other ethnic group that values music in the church, Transformation Church will definitely strike chord with them, although the style of music that would be played would in itself be a matter for discussion.

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<sup>20</sup>Tomlin and Whitehead, *Holy Roar*, 31.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 43.

The fourth type of praise that Tomlin and Whitehead identify is called תודה or Tôwdâh, to-daw, meaning an extension of the hand, thanksgiving, confession, a sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving for things not yet received, and a choir of worshippers.<sup>22</sup> This kind of praise can be found in Psalm 56:11-12, which reads: “Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God; I will render praises to You.” When describing Tôwdâh, the authors emphasize the point about praising God for things not yet received. The word also means a choir, and this is the part of the definition I would like to highlight. In several churches, choirs are considered old fashioned. These days many contemporary churches have bands. Yet irrespective of denominational barriers, the mainline churches have choirs even to the present. Transformation Church music is a blend of band and choir. The idea is to be more inclusive and have more people involved in the music ministry. If there are people of other ethnicities or people groups who would like to emphasize either the band style or the choir style of worship, Transformation Church would not need to make any changes. As of the present day, assimilation could happen without any need for change.

The fifth type of praise is called פָּרַךְ which in English transliteration is Bârak: this means to kneel; and by implication to bless God (as an act of adoration). Instead of calling this a style of praise, it would be better to describe it as a posture. It is referenced in Psalm 72:15:

And He shall live;  
And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him;  
Prayer also will be made for Him continually,  
And daily He shall be praised.

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<sup>22</sup> Tomlin and Whitehead, *Holy Roar*, 55.

Our God is worthy of such Bârak praise. The twenty-four elders bow down to Him, and one day every knee shall bow. This posture of praise should thus not create barriers in worship and praise. This posture is prevalent across all denominational lines also. No cultural or ethnic group should have a problem with praising God in a Bârak way. Almost all the adherents of the religions in the East sit on the floor in religious places and Indian churches are no exception. The members of Transformation Church are used to kneeling to pray and worship. When we meet, especially in homes, almost all members kneel to pray and worship.

The sixth type of praise is called תְּהִלָּה which is pronounced tehillah. Tehillah actually means “laudation; specifically (concretely) a hymn:—praise.”<sup>23</sup> This type of praise is mentioned in Psalm 22:3: “But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.” Transformation Church has grown over a period of time. When Transformation Church was the erstwhile International Outreach Church, I was determined to conduct the worship services in English only. I did this with the purpose of including people of all cultures into the church. Fortunately, we did not have conflict over the kind of songs or worship should we conduct, whether traditional or contemporary. The reason behind this ease was the fact that I had to teach some traditional hymns to the congregation to begin with. They were not ready for contemporary worship. We did not have enough musicians to lead a band in contemporary worship. After more than four years since inception, we now have a mix of traditional and contemporary worship. We do sing hymns. If there are visitors who show an interest in becoming members based on the

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<sup>23</sup>Hebrew Dictionary in Accordance Bible Software.

music at Transformation Church, this can be done with great ease as we do sing traditional hymns.

The last kind of praise that the authors discuss is called ‘שָׁבַח or shabach ; a primitive root which means to address in a loud tone, i.e., “(specifically) loud; figuratively, to pacify (as if by words):—commend, glory, keep in, praise, still, triumph.”<sup>24</sup> This type of praise is found in Psalm 145:4: “One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts.” This refers to loud celebration. Praise should not be quiet. At Transformation Church, I am the worship leader and I encourage people to join in the worship and sing loudly.

In all, Chris Tomlin and Darren Whitehead discuss seven different types of praise, namely - יָדָה YADAH; הָלַל halal; זָמַר zamar; תִּוְדָּה. tôwdâh; בָּרַךְ bârak; תְּהִלָּה tehillah; שָׁבַח shabach. Transformation Church definitely falls into these categories. In the above discussion I tried to contextualize each praise style in terms of what happens at Transformation Church. In other words, I wanted to show that when praise styles are biblical, cultural differences can and should be easily overcome. In other words, while I am vividly aware that I hail from India (it is a widespread belief especially in India that Christianity is a foreign religion) and the way we worship in Transformation Church is not something peculiar or different from the way the worship is conducted in the rest of the churches. We are open to the styles or pattern of worship and are thus accommodating. We are not doing something strange that people of other cultures cannot fit in. In the war between culture and Scripture, I very strongly believe that Scripture should prevail. This perspective is easy for an immigrant church to adapt and

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<sup>24</sup>Hebrew Dictionary in Accordance Bible Software

adopt, since the members have seen both countries—their native homeland and the country in which they are currently living. When I present the case between culture and Scripture, Transformation Church would definitely be on the side of Scripture.

In this chapter, I have noted there are many cultures, both in the world and in the church. When members with different worldviews come together, there should be no belligerence about whose culture should prevail in the church in the pattern and practice. The church is not the place for culture wars. Aubrey Malphurs defines church culture as follows: “Church culture has to do with the ideas, values, assumptions, distinctives, and so on that are essential to your vision. Remember that what we are trying to define is what culture God wants to prevail in your church, not just a consensus of what people want.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Review of Literature**

The first and foremost thing Transformation Church needs to analyze and define is exactly what are we seeking to do through this process. The church is already almost three years old. The pastor gave a vision statement and we are trying to follow that vision. So, what are the changes being wrought? In order to put the situation in perspective, in *Reinventing the Church* Brian McLaren defines a few terms that denote change in the church. He mentions “a renewed church,” which means a church that has lost touch with its own people but now is going through a process of change. “A restored church” makes its way back to the first century church in order to find its

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<sup>25</sup>Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: a New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 172.

original vigor. I believe Transformation Church is to be categorized as a “reinvented church,” which McLaren defines as follows:

[A reinvented church] comes up with a new philosophy of ministry that prepares it to meet whatever unforeseen changes are to come. To use the contemporary jargon, it is “reengineered”; it discovers “new paradigms.” In biblical terms, it seeks not only new wineskins, but new wine—which includes a new attitude toward wineskins in general. The church decides that it loves new wine so much, it will never again be so attached to wineskins of any sort. Then, when the wineskins need to be discarded, they can be with a minimum of anguish. Then an old church thus reinvents itself, it is born again as a new church, like a caterpillar entering its cocoon and emerging as a butterfly. In doing so, the church has maximized discontinuity.<sup>26</sup>

The main goal of this project is the transformation in the mindset of the members to adapt to a new paradigm. The church must be willing to change. In order to change and look different, one has to make adjustments. Does this mean compromise the biblical principles? In *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, John MacArthur writes: “We must be willing to grow and adapt and try new things—but never at the expense of biblical truth and never to the detriment of the gospel.”<sup>27</sup>

In agreement with John MacArthur, I suggest this analogy: Every building has foundations, pillars, beams, and walls. The foundations should not be touched at all. If the pillars and beams are moved, the building will collapse. But one can move or remove the walls. Moving the walls does not cause the building to collapse. The church

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<sup>26</sup>Brian D. McLaren, *Reinventing Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 23.

<sup>27</sup>John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 188.

should not abandon the centrality of the Word of God, the primacy of preaching, and the fundamentals of biblical truth in order to be fresh and creative.<sup>28</sup> It is apparent that the early church was so successful that even after many centuries, the book of Acts is still the principal guide for church growth. The early disciples were strongly grounded in Acts 2:42, which mentions four fundamental uncompromising pillars of the church—the apostle’s teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and fellowship. Any church, irrespective of ethnicity, cannot afford to undermine these tenets.

Change and adaptation are not easy. When reviewing the book *Becoming a Multicultural Church* by Laurene Beth Bowers, Michael Granzen from Drew University makes a valid observation. While calling the transition thorny, Granzen reports as follows:

Such change does not happen without pain and intentionality. Demographics help. Leadership is critical. The author describes the unfinished journey as the fruit of charismatic leadership, dialogical planning, redistribution of power relationships, and audacious faith in the divine surprise of multicultural witness for a diverse but strangely segregated society.<sup>29</sup>

Though Bowers’ book addresses the issue of a White congregation trying to become a multicultural one, the principles are also applicable to Transformation Church, which is predominantly East Indian. I strongly believe that to initiate such a change “charismatic leadership” plays a vital role. Such leaders do not enjoy and promote the

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<sup>28</sup>MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, 188.

<sup>29</sup>Michael Granzen, “Review of Laurene Beth Bowers, *Becoming a Multicultural Church* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006),” in *Theology Today* 64, no. 2 (2007) <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.libproxy.mbts.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=11&sid=40fcc0c1-01c5-4a84-a3e4-73890065508c%40sessionmgr101>.

status quo, but desire to bring about positive change for the growth of the church. I may be called a charismatic leader and a change agent.

Our church building is another classic example of leadership. We leased a warehouse in “as is” condition. The floors had grease on them, the walls were decrepit, there was a broken ceiling etc. After we moved into this building, within a month our church members had done all the work and turned it into a beautiful sanctuary. None of the members had prior experience in building, painting, construction or any of the remodeling requirements. My task was to provide the vision and the design, and the members put their hearts and souls into the work. Of course, a lot of experiments were made, but ultimately, the sanctuary was renovated (see photographs in Appendices G, H, and I). This is one of the examples where I could be called a “transformational leader.” I am not afraid of the unknown future. Thus, I have grown as a transformational leader.

Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James Harold Furr offer a definition of a transformational leader, and I strongly feel I qualify for this definition:

The transformational leader helps followers embrace a vision of a preferred future. Leaders inspire and empower followers to achieve new levels of personal and corporate performance. They encourage individuals and support innovative ventures. Followers gladly commit to a future they help to create. Because transformational leaders are trusted and respected, followers tend to internalize the spirit and goals of the organization.<sup>30</sup>

A couple of years ago, I took a personality test of my strengths (Appendix E), based on the book *Now, Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton. The test in this book is based on a study and research by Gallup. The test

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<sup>30</sup>Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James Harold Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 97.

results showed my five personality strengths in the given order: 1. Strategic 2. Learner 3. Achiever 4. Responsibility 5. Belief. In 2007, I took the same test, but the results were different. 1. Achiever 2. Strategic 3. Deliberative 4. Connectedness 5. Competition. We were administered this test with the disclaimer that the results might change if and when taken later. Currently my strongest personality strength is that I am strategic. I believe this trait will help me in taking my team through this process of training so that they can present the proposal to the church. Buckingham and Clifton suggest that a person with a strategic personality will be cautiously watching around the corner while not letting the situation fog with confusion. Once the strategy falls in place, it will be ripe for implementation.<sup>31</sup> Based on my DISC profile, I am a high D, and more of a task-oriented person. For the sake of reference, I am presenting below the positive and negative qualities that people with high D scores possess as mentioned in *The Leadership Playbook* by Henry Klopp.

Positive qualities	Negative Qualities
✓ Imaginative and innovative	✓ Have extremely high expectations of others. Can become critical when their standards are not met
✓ Excellent problem solvers	✓ Often lack patience
✓ Self-confident	✓ Often lack empathy
✓ Like difficult tasks and challenges	
✓ Excellent at taking responsibility	
✓ Quick in thought and action	
✓ Persistent <sup>32</sup>	

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<sup>31</sup>Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, Professional Development Collection (New York: Free Press, 2001), 115.

<sup>32</sup>Henry Klopp, *The Leadership Playbook: A Game Plan for Becoming an Effective Christian Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 31.

While advocating the need for a multicultural church, I can be vociferous in promoting the idea that it is God's plan that a church should be multicultural. In his thesis, "Biblically Informed Best Practices for Planting a Multicultural Church," Luther Stohl describes the sociological and theological essence of a multicultural church as follows: "Sociologically we need families; theologically God created us as His offspring (Acts 17:28). The fracture along racial, cultural, and ethnic lines in the church is therefore a mockery of the intent of God that we live as reconciled children of God, fully involved and engaged in the fellowship which the Holy Spirit inspires in the members of God's family."<sup>33</sup> I fully agree with Stohl that the church in Acts 2 was formed at Pentecost and was composed of people of several nationalities.

### **Previous Dissertations**

There have been a number of dissertations written on multiethnic churches. I have read a few of them and present the following summary:

1. "Developing a Strategy for Multi-ethnic unity at First Baptist Church, Forest Park, Georgia" by C. Stephen Robbins.<sup>34</sup> The neighborhood of this church went through drastic changes in the dominance of one ethnic group over another through

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<sup>33</sup>Luther Stohs, "Biblically Informed Best Practices for Planting a Multicultural Church" (DMin diss., Western Seminary, Portland Oregon, 2012). ProQuest ebrary. Theological Research Exchange Network (Series); #002-0904. Web.

<sup>34</sup>Stephen Robbins, "Developing a Strategy for Multi-ethnic unity at First Baptist Church, Forest Park, Georgia" (DMin diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), <https://files-swbts-searchmobius-org.libproxy.mbts.edu/tren/mbts/e-diss/053-0572.pdf>.

three decades. I did not find enough material in the biblical rationale, but the author nevertheless discussed a few doctrines. His model falls very much in line with my attempts. The common feature between Robbins' and my approach is the involvement of the congregation in the process. Though his model is slightly different, the approach is the same. Robbins wanted to do a review of various models of multiethnic church ministry strategies and studied nine of them. One of them was a DMin project by Jim Burton, titled "Developing an Intercultural Church Growth Strategy for Sugarloaf International Fellowship, Suwanee, Georgia." After studying nine models, Robbins picked the model described in the book *Church and Ministry Strategic Planning: From Concept to Success*.

He then picked a Strategic Planning Team (SPT) from the church staff and leadership and presented this model to them. This SPT were to present the model under discussion to various committees and teams in the church. One of the sessions with SPT was held in the presence of the congregation during a Sunday night meeting. At the end of the sessions, the Deacon committee was presented with three recommendations:

1. Develop a Sunday morning welcoming ministry so that guests and first-time attenders feel welcome and want to return.
2. Develop a follow-up program so that church members will be able to build relationships with visitors and lead them to the Lord and, hopefully, membership at First Baptist Church
3. Develop an outreach program in order to reach the community for Christ as well as build the base of visitors to First Baptist Church.

The vote was unanimous.

2. Jeremiah D. Greer wrote his dissertation titled “A Multiethnic Church Planting Strategy for First Baptist Church, Duluth, Georgia,” presented to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in December 2014.<sup>35</sup> The project emanated from a suggestion by the North American Mission Board to FBCD. Looking at a 4.5 mile radius, Greer observed that there were many Asians in the area and thus wanted to start a church plant with a multiethnic emphasis. In his research, he studied various church planting strategies, although his dissertation was more oriented towards calling a church planter. The SBC assessment tests were administered, and resumes looked at in the process of selecting the church planter. Since the emphasis was not on multicultural or multiethnic churches, I did not find this paper of much use to my study.

3. Wayne W Wible Jr. titled his DMin dissertation “Building Fergusson Road Baptist Church into an Indigenous Multiethnic Church in a Multiethnic Community in East Dallas” and presented this to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in December 2011.<sup>36</sup> Fergusson Road Baptist Church had declined over a period of time. As time passed, Wible realized that because of immigration and globalization, the city of Dallas was inviting people of all nations with jobs and short

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<sup>35</sup>Jeremiah D Greer, “A Multiethnic Church Planting Strategy for First Baptist Church, Duluth, Georgia” (DMin diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, December 2014), <https://files-swbtbs-searchmobius-org.libproxy.mbts.edu/tren/mbts/e-diss/053-0585.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup>Wayne W. Wible, Jr. “Building Fergusson Road Baptist Church into an Indigenous Multiethnic Church in a Multiethnic Community in East Dallas” (DMin diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), <https://files-swbtbs-searchmobius-org.libproxy.mbts.edu/tren/mbts/e-diss/049-0562.pdf>.

commutes. He found the opportunity to capitalize on the need. In his paper he discusses the multiethnic concept of Acts 13 and 17. He also provides a detailed study of how the gospel was spread beyond the Jewish community. His focus on the concept of church comes mostly from Wayne Grudem who called the church as the “third race.”

Wible picks up Joseph Henrique’s five strategies of interaction and successful cultural relations, i.e., assimilation, separation, integration, marginalization and mutual accommodation, from the book *Cultural Change and your Church: Helping your Church Thrive in a Diverse Society*, coauthored by Michael Pocock. In order to reach a multi-ethnic community, Wible’s proposal was to build and operate the church like a multiplex.

4. Timothy Ray Baker submitted his dissertation titled “Multiethnic Ministry in the Northwest: Developing a Strategy for Northwest Baptist Home Mission,” to Western Seminary, Portland, Oregon, in March 2015.<sup>37</sup> Baker’s goal was to create a training manual. His methodology was to review the literature and study the different definitions of terms followed by intense research on case studies. Northwest has a vibrant influx of international students and workers. Therefore, his biblical rationale is on migration in the Bible up to chapter 12 of Genesis. From the New Testament, he mentions Acts 8 and 13, which take place in an international setting. Then the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 is all about inclusion of other people.

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<sup>37</sup>Timothy Ray Baker, “Multiethnic Ministry in Northwest: Developing a Strategy for Northwest Baptist Home Mission” (DMin diss., Western Seminary, Portland, OR, 2011), <https://files-swbtsearchmobius-org.libproxy.mbts.edu/tren/mbts/e-diss/002-0925.pdf>.

When there are people of other backgrounds that come together, the most obvious ministry that needs to be addressed is the worship, and hence he talks about finding an acceptable worship style for the multiethnic congregation. In order to build a multiethnic congregation, a church must have the following core commitments: 1) embracing dependence; 2) taking initial steps; 3) empowering diverse leadership; 4) developing cross cultural relationships; 5) pursuing cross-cultural competence; 6) promoting a spirit of inclusion; and 7) mobilizing for impact. One of the case studies was of Antioch Bible Church, which made the presentation as simple as ABC, with A standing for Attitude towards worship; B standing for Building intentional relationships; and C for Cross-cultural leadership.

5. Gloria Young-Eun Kim Fowler submitted her thesis titled “Planting, Transitioning and Growing Multiethnic Churches” to Asbury Theological Seminary in May 2015.<sup>38</sup> She is from a United Methodist Church background. The desire of the churches to become multiethnic falls across all denominations. Fowler focuses her biblical rationale on comparing and contrasting how the confusion of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 becomes a blessing on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. She picks up the “homogenous” principle of Donald McGavran. She focuses on the worship aspect, which is a vital confusion causing factor, in order to streamline unity in a multiethnic environment. The research questions are divided into sections: planting, becoming and

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<sup>38</sup>Gloria Young-Eun Kim Fowler, “Planting, Transitioning and Growing Multiethnic churches” (DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2015), <https://search-proquest.com.libproxy.mbts.edu/docview/1756675699/fulltextPDF/671A5BBF5E4575PQ/5?accountid=137450>.

growing as a multiethnic congregation. She collects data and, in her research, she picks the strategies followed by churches.

She is very clear about the need for a church to be outwardly focused and about the need for financial stability. Of course, the need for a clear vision almost goes without saying. A church wanting to become multiethnic must have diverse leadership. Since she grew up in multicultural and multiethnic environment and is married to an Anglo, she has first-hand experience of the need for and possibility of a multiethnic church.

### **Conclusion on the Dissertations**

The above four dissertations focus on Georgia, Texas and Washington states. All of them have one thing in common. The changing demographics played a crucial role in the transition of the churches from being ethnic to becoming multicultural. The church must adapt itself to the societal make up, otherwise any resistance to change could plunge the church into decline (e.g., Wilcrest Baptist Church as discussed in “History of Practice”). In Dallas, the ethnic composition changed because of changing job opportunities. These opportunities brought people of all cultures and nationalities to the city. In the Northwest, it was the vibrant influx of international workers. When the neighborhood’s demography changed, the church also changed. The church should reflect the community.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

#### **Thesis Statement**

Because Galatians 3: 28-29 indicates it is God's will that all class distinctions or barriers between Christians be removed, this candidate believes he should be training the predominantly East Indian members of Transformation Church to initiate a process of change in order to become a multicultural and multiethnic congregation.

#### **Project Objectives and Goals**

This project has three goals.

1. The candidate will assess the current level of readiness of his church for transformation into a multicultural church by using results from a pre-test given to both a select group and a control group in the church prior to the implementation of the project.
2. The candidate will train the select group in the biblical understanding of what it means to be a multi-cultural church.
3. The candidate will use a post-test with the select group and the control group to determine the amount of change that has occurred in the select group's readiness for transformation into a multicultural church after training the select group in the biblical understanding of what it means to be a multi-cultural church.

The project objectives and goals are to see and show the tangible vision of transforming an ethnic church into a multicultural congregation. Before going into

details, I would like to clarify that Transformation Church intends to go through a change and not a transition. As Lynn Anderson notes in his book *Navigating the Winds of Change*, there is a difference between “transition” and “change.” Anderson quotes William Bridges, the author of *Managing Transitions*, in saying that that “change” is external, and “transition” is internal.<sup>1</sup> He means that the internal process begins because of an external change that facilitates psychological reorientation to the new arrangement. Understanding the term “transition” is not difficult in a Southern Baptist Church. When a pastor resigns, the church usually invites a senior and seasoned pastor to be their “transition pastor.” This transition is performed smoothly in order to usher in the new pastor. The church’s boat is not rocked even if the previous pastor has left under adverse conditions or has caused adversity. Having defined what transition and change are, it is emphatically clear that Transformation Church intends to go through “change” and not “transition.”

In order to accomplish this task, I shall

1. Give a pretest (Appendix J) to the congregation.
2. Select a committee from within the church to be trained and taught for six weeks on the topics of biblical mandate, disadvantages of staying ethnic, the need, readiness, adjustments, cost and fruitfulness of becoming multicultural, and awareness of Caucasian and Afro American Christians. We will watch a movie together to discover common ground for the common good.

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<sup>1</sup>Lynn Anderson, *Navigating the Winds of Change* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 1994), 181.

3. Give a post-test to the committee and the congregation (the congregation being the control group).
4. Assess the results of the post-test of the selected team.

Since the discussion is about the readiness of the church to become multicultural, I shall obtain the results from the group by administering Nelson's Change Formula as follows: "Four importance factors will determine the effectiveness of the change process in your church. Determining a number value for each of these factors and working the equation, which we call the Nelson Change Formula (Appendix L), will help you predict the effectiveness level of the transition plan. They are how long the change will take place to implement, the amount of change, the capabilities of leadership, and the readiness within the organization. The result is Delta Factor.

$$\frac{\text{Time} \times (\text{Leadership Capacity} + \text{Congregational Readiness})}{\text{Delta factor Change Impact}} = \text{ }^2$$

Time: No change can be successfully implemented suddenly. Large organizations take a lot of time to maneuver, whereas a small organization needs less time. A church plant such as Transformation Church, which has a membership of around forty people, does not need much time. It is also true that implementation of any change should not be dragged out too long. "Taking too long to implement change can backfire and result in further entrenchment."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Alan E. Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church Without Killing It* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishers, 2000), 184.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 184.

Change Impact: In the above formula, “change impact” is in the denominator. According to Nelson, any increase in “change impact” will decrease the effectiveness, especially when time is limited. If the change proposed is immense, it takes more time. This change is expected to impact the whole church. So, though Transformation Church is a relatively small church, the impact will be on the whole church. If the impact were only on a particular ministry, it would be lot quicker and easier to implement. Nelson and Appel simplify the process by giving an analogy of health to explain this. They put the common cold as Level 1, for which over-the-counter medication is sufficient, but a heart transplant is needed at Level 5, and that would equate to transformational change.

Leadership Capacity: This is another important factor in the equation. A strong leader is one who can cast a vision, and when the members buy it, expedite the change. Another key factor is the magnitude of trust that the members have in the leader. In a multi-staff church, all have to be on the same page before the proposal is taken to the church. In a church like Transformation Church, which is a single elder church, I will have to go directly to the church members along with the team after their ten sessions.

Congregational Readiness: While we might get the results of the readiness of the church for change by looking at the numerical digits from a survey, such feedback can be deceptive. “The key is not how many but who many. Improvement issues affect people in different degrees. A better strategy than surveying is to look at who will be impacted most by the changes and whether or not they support the improvement.”<sup>4</sup> Impact levels on people will vary greatly. It all depends on the interests of the members.

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<sup>4</sup>Nelson and Appel, *How to Change Your Church without Killing It*, 186.

There will be those who will be supportive as well as unsupportive ones. Some will be impacted more and some less.

### **Logistical Annotation**

#### **Research of Appropriate Methodologies**

I would like to create a committee of seven people from the congregation. Of course the committee and the rest of the church will be involved in this process. Initially, the committee and the congregation will be given a pre-test to discover their readiness for and comprehension of becoming a multi-cultural congregation. A total of ten sessions will be needed with the committee. After the pre-test, I will lead the committee in seven teaching sessions about the mandate, disadvantages of staying ethnic, need, readiness, adjustments, cost and fruitfulness of becoming multicultural. In addition to the seven sessions, pastors of two different ethnicities, namely Caucasian and Afro-American, will take two sessions. These two pastors will educate the committee about the cultural aspects of their respective congregations. For the tenth session, the committee will watch the movie, Remember the Titans to explore how two teams found a common denominator and thus became one. This will help the committee study the negotiable variables and we hope to find a common denominator to eliminate cultural extremism in the ethnic congregation.

At the end of the ten sessions, the committee and the congregation will take a post-test. The pre and post-test results will be compared. The comparison between the pre-test and post-test will determine the efficacy of the teaching of the ten sessions given

to the select group. This will determine the readiness of the select group to campaign for the church to become multicultural.

### **Group Description**

I would like to include the following people in this project:

1. Doug Dubois (Director of Evangelism, Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware) will be the Caucasian representative
2. Dennis Marshal (Retired Pastor and Pastors' Training Consultant) will be the Afro-American representative
3. Hemanth Lymon (55, male, Navient Technologies, Loans Division)
4. Ramesh Rangaram (34, male, Guidewire Insurance, Team Leader)
5. Jyothi Rudrapathi (40, female, Citibank, Process Analyst)
6. Sanjay Pita (35, male, Capital One, Team Leader)
7. Abhilasha (33, female, German Corporation, Team Leader)
8. Sudhir Mikkili (47, Citibank, Business Analyst)
9. Mohan Arja (33, male, Capital One, Developer)

### **The Experience**

The team shall be composed of members of Transformation Church. I have chosen these members since some have prior ministry experience in India; some have great potential to be effective leaders; one is a deacon, and another is under observation to be ordained as a deacon. I have also included women on the team so that we can get their perspective too. I believe they aptly fit the description that Bill Hybels gives when he says, "people who are supernaturally gifted must yield themselves fully to God. They

must cast powerful, biblical, God-honoring visions. They must build effective, loving clearly focused teams. They must fire up Christ followers to give their absolute best for God.”<sup>5</sup> Most of the proposed members of the committee work in the IT field. It is a challenge for them to dedicate time for an extended period (a span of three months). I shall request the Chair and the Second Chair to permit the completion of this project within eight weeks. I will teach five out of ten sessions. I will be taking Bible Studies and will use a lecture format with handouts and use certain books like *How to Change the Church (Without Killing It)* where the willingness-to-change formula is given. The lecture format will evoke discussions in the committee. My pastor friends will be the facilitators for one session each. The visiting pastors from different ethnicities will also use the lecture format. The committee will watch a movie and take notes, with an emphasis on finding the common denominator and on resolving cultural conflicts. Each session will be for a span of one hour except for the movie, which runs for two hours and which will be followed by a discussion for forty minutes.

Apart from all the printed formulae of change, one important factor that must be considered is there must be enough communication. Any conflict can be preemptively mellowed by communicating sufficiently. Communication is meaning exchange, not word exchange.<sup>6</sup> The sequence of communicating is linear. It begins with me as the pastor to the team of seven people, who will in turn take the message to the church with

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<sup>5</sup>Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 27.

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth O. Gangel and Samuel L. Canine, *Communication and Conflict Management in Churches and Christian Organizations* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 16.

a proposal to usher in the change. Since there are layers of communication before the message reaches the church, the essence of the message should not be diluted or lost. The teachings and the discussions should be a time to open up, ask questions and give clarifications. Communication is thus the key.

Apart from communication, another binding factor is Christianity conceived in terms of a worldview. David Naugle says that Christianity possesses a remarkable power to foster personal transformation and positive spiritual change in the lives of believers. And through these transformed Christians, there is remarkable potential to foster transformation and change in the church.<sup>7</sup> This change seems to be progressive, contagious with a cascading effect.

In order to enhance communication, another important factor to ensure proper implementation is a sense of urgency. Jesus shared the gospel with a sense of urgency. “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near’” (Mt 4:17), and “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown” (Rev 3:11). God’s work must not be done with a lackadaisical attitude. Yet the moment the word “urgency” is heard, it is perceived as a harbinger of disaster. “It elicits strong reactions, and in many cases the associated images are negative. The short answer is that urgency is absolutely necessary in congregational transformation. When used properly, urgency is a positive driver for change.”<sup>8</sup> John P. Kotter says it is not

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<sup>7</sup>David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2002), 343.

<sup>8</sup>Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James Harold Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 34.

wrong to create an artificial crisis. “Real leaders often create these sorts of artificial crises rather than waiting for something to happen.”<sup>9</sup> It is easy to call this manipulation, but when one recounts the possibility of the church becoming complacent and reaching a plateau over a period of time, especially when such a gradual decline is avoidable, I find creating an artificial crisis is expedient. This artificial crisis will become a part of the long-range goal and vision. A total consensus by the team and the church, will demand action based on commitment and accountability, which is the purpose of the whole project.

### Logistics of the Sessions

All the sessions of teaching, including watching the movie, shall occur at the church. From the time I am given permission to start the implementation of the project, I will meet with the committee every Sunday night at 6.30 p.m. and Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. for six weeks. Each session will be held for an hour and a half. For the teaching sessions, the church recently bought round tables. These tables will help the members to have good eye contact during the discussion. The church has the equipment to project the movie with a good sound system.

The Schedule of the ten sessions with the team will be as follows:

1. Session 1: The whole team shall watch the movie “Remember the Titans.”
2. Session 2: My coach, Doug Dubois, shall address the team about Anglo cultural aspects. He has preached at our church quite a few times and therefore knows the ethnic and cultural fabric of our church.

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<sup>9</sup>John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, Professional Development Collection (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 46.

3. Session 3: Dennis Marshal is an Associate Pastor at Solid Rock Baptist Church, which is predominantly Afro-American. He has attended our church worship service couple of times. He will outline the cultural composition of Afro-American churches.
4. Session 4: I will address the team about dealing with members of other people groups. This session will be based on my study of Peter's visit to Cornelius' house in Acts 10.
5. Session 5: I shall teach about the role of the Holy Spirit in the integration process based on Acts 11.
6. Session 6: I would like to discuss the power of Vision. Since I will be casting the vision for integrating people of other cultures, I would like to discuss Nehemiah's vision of building the wall.
7. Session 7: As a part of the teaching about vision, I shall discuss how to address the inevitable opposition, very similar to the way Nehemiah faced opposition.
8. Session 8: Every God-given vision has God-given provision. I shall teach about how God backs up his vision with his provision, based on Nehemiah's story.
9. Session 9: Based on Nehemiah's accomplishment of the vision, I shall teach the principles of the fulfilment of the vision.
10. Session 10: I shall lead the team in assessing the formula of the "Church's readiness to change" based on Nelson's formula.

### **Measurement Devices**

The committee and the congregation will be given a pretest and a post-test (Appendix J). The congregation will be the control group. There will be two external

resource persons from different ethnic backgrounds who will take one session each with the committee. They will educate the committee about the culture of typical Caucasian and Afro-American churches.

### **Resources**

Since we will be using the church building for the sessions, there is no extra cost for the meeting place. This teaching session falls into the vision of the church and therefore the use of the equipment, the building and the cost of the utilities will be borne by the church funds. The visiting resource persons are my friends and have agreed to teach the session free of charge. I will bear the cost of printing and the needed papers.

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions have to be made for the project to be successful. I am competent to teach in such a way that I can initiate change in the attitude and behavior of the committee members. The committee members will cooperate in terms of attendance and participation till the completion of the implementation, to ensure the project does not fail. One might call this confidence on my part.

I would like to be a good change navigator. Good change navigators help people to “own part of the development of the vision, so they can see what it will be like on the other side of the river. [This] also diminishes their fears since they retain some feeling of control over their destiny.<sup>10</sup> In all faith, I believe the committee will be honest in responding to the questionnaires. The committee members are competent to participate

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<sup>10</sup>Anderson, *Navigating the Winds of Change*, 185.

in the teaching sessions. Also, the measurement tools will do exactly what they are intended to do.

In spite of my best efforts, the process of change might fail. I should not be blindsided about any undercurrent resisting change. Some may be upset. There might be opposition not only in the church but also in the team I would be working with. If such a situation arises, dissent could cause unrest among the members and since Indians are deeply emotional and relational, it could have a severe effect on the future of the church. A good analysis of such a situation suggests that there are two aspects to any crisis—the act and the relationship of the members. In their book, *Church Conflict*, Charles Cosgrove and Dennis Hatfield write how such crises can be resolved. They suggest we treat the church as a family. It is very true of Transformation Church that we have always handled situations as a family and the family stays together. There have been disturbances; people have left the church for a short time, but every time there has been a restoration of fellowship since we always consider the church a family. As Cosgrove and Hatfield put it: “Conflict management depends on getting people to voice their real concerns and to act rationally. One of the great advantages of a family systems approach is that it helps identify the issues that are masked by the stated issue.”<sup>11</sup> If and when such a situation arises, I believe it is time to talk more and openly with the church members so that they can open up and discover the underlying current of thought of the whole church.

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<sup>11</sup>Charles H. Cosgrove and Dennis D. Hatfield, *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 21.

In any crisis, the pastor plays a major role. I am doing this vision casting and if it fails, and as long as I do not take the rejection personally, the transition process remains healthy. Some of the members of the select group might not be ready for the church to become multicultural. Some might be upset and even leave the church. Nelson and Appel comment that “anyone who studies change inside or outside the church will tell you, it’s part of the Channel of Chaos.”<sup>12</sup> As a vision caster and leader of the church, I have to stand strong in unfavorable circumstances. “One of the hardest parts of the ministry is when people you have poured your life into leave the church. But when you set the vision and stay the course, you determine who leaves.”<sup>13</sup> If the select members of the group do not give unanimous consensus, I will respect their desire but will definitely continue to hold the torch for the church to become a multicultural church. I am willing to work with the dissenting members and work with them for some more time in the long run for the church to have one vision. My desire is to see the church as multicultural—a picture of heaven.

### **Limitations**

1. This project is limited to the members of Transformation Church.
2. This project is limited to eight weeks - from the third week of December, 2018 till the last week of January, 2019. I would administer the pre-test before December.

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<sup>12</sup>Nelson and Appel, *How to Change Your Church*, 275.

<sup>13</sup>Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 127.

3. This project is limited to the topic of “Training the (predominantly east Indian) members of Transformation church to initiate the process of change in attitude, behavior and knowledge in order to become a multicultural congregation.”
4. This project is limited to three instructors on the topics of biblical mandate; the disadvantages of staying ethnic, need, readiness, adjustments, cost and fruitfulness of becoming multicultural; and cultural comprehension of Caucasian and Afro-American Christianity.
5. The project is limited to the physical and mental abilities of the selected members.

### **The Project Outline**

The primary goal of this project is to assess the possibility of the members of Transformation Church transitioning to a different church paradigm, Carl George calls this phenomenon “Meta Church.” He explains what this term means as follows:

The term Meta-Church signifies both a change of mind about how ministry is to be done and a change of form in the infrastructure of the church. Meta and “huge” don’t necessarily go together. Meta-Church principles lead to a recognizable organizational framework, a social architecture without inherent expansion limits. If implemented properly, very large growth can result. But any size church can begin the transformation into a Meta-Church.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, it is not necessary to see change happen overnight or quickly. Though Donald McGavran does not advocate slow growth only, I have experienced through the situation in my former church where a coup was staged that slow growth is better. In the first year of inception, we raised \$106,000. This was a remarkable

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<sup>14</sup>Carl F. George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Tarrytown, NY: F.H. Revell, 1991), 57.

achievement. Within fourteen months, the church had split with a coup against me. The current church, i.e., Transformation Church, began with no money. The growth has been slow and steady. Also, when I spoke to Dr. Thompson and Dr. Sundeen about the approach to making Transformation Church multicultural and multi-ethnic, they both advised that such a transformation will definitely take a long time and thus evaluating the results would be difficult. This slow growth is in accordance with church growth guru Donald McGavran's statement that "it is true that after seed has been sown, time for germination and maturation must be allowed. In the world of farming, harvest usually comes four months after sowing. In world evangelization, it should be no surprise that some years should elapse between sowing and harvest."

I would like to present the project outline in the form of a biblical mandate for the change; the need for change; readiness of the church for change; adjustments that the church needs to make in order to achieve the goal; counting the cost the church has to pay for the change; and the fruitfulness of the change in an ethnic church becoming a multicultural one.

1. Biblical mandate: I believe that Chapter 2, where the biblical rationale is discussed, is the biblical mandate for the change that Transformation Church intends to make.

2. Need: A church needs to obey the Great Commission. As a strong proponent of a multiracial church, I believe it is imperative for the church to make a concerted effort of intentionality to include people of other races. I believe that growth in a monoracial church is impaired. While the church growth school argues that the comfort of a homogeneous racial atmosphere is conducive to church growth, the growing presence of

Americans who are comfortable with people of all races suggests that it is monoracial and not multiracial churches that may struggle to grow.<sup>15</sup>

In obedience to the Great Commission, the local church needs to reach out to the people in the city. We cannot be an internet church having influence on people using technology alone. The church must have a physical presence in the community. That community, especially in the United States of America, is a melting pot. We find people from every nationality in America, and the cities in Delaware are no exception.

The Great Commission has multiple purposes, including growth and inclusiveness of other nationalities. Here is an interesting observation from an article on Donald McGavran by Tim Stafford. After living in India for several years and studying the culture of India, McGavran makes a very powerful statement, one that challenges my attempt at this project.

“People like to stay with their own people. Let them do so.” Most missionaries had viewed India’s hundreds of languages and castes as an impediment to a church in which there was “no Jew nor Gentile, no slave nor free.” They wanted to encourage one multiethnic church. McGavran came to believe that this laudable goal meant, effectively, barring men and women from Christ. In India, most Christians came from the untouchables; when people from other groups became Christians, they joined the untouchable church and became, in a sense, untouchables. Indian people movements, McGavran believed, made effective evangelism because enough people became Christians at the same time to allow them to stay within their original social group. They did not have to shed their cultural identity. They remained part of their community. The church, McGavran saw, did not spread out like ink in water; it usually grew along family lines, or at least within societal boundaries. As an American raised on individualism and the “melting pot” theory of culture, he came to a profound respect for the differences between peoples.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>George A. Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), Kindle Locations 297-299.

<sup>16</sup>Tim Stafford, “The Father of Church Growth,” *Mission Frontiers*, 1986, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-father-of-church-growth>.

Might it be possible to attempt something against the advice and observations of a church growth giant like Donald McGavran? If one can keep the geography and times in mind, this attempt can definitely be made. What encourages me to continue to pursue my project is that I am dealing with the same Indians in the Western World. The geographical location is different. The family ties are weaker here in American, even for Indians. It is very difficult for the parents or grandparents to influence their children because of the geographical distance. Also, one needs to remember the cultural environment in which immigrant Indians are living. The other important factor is that the world, including India, has changed a great deal in the last two decades. There is so much westernization of urban India. Most immigrants to America are from the urban sector. With no disrespect to McGavran, I believe there is a need to look at Indians in America differently from the way one looks at Indians in India. My goal is to see the church grow and therefore one should have growth with intentionality. Although it may be difficult, it is biblical and contextual to reach people from different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities without neglecting the immigrant Indians.

A church needs to grow both numerically and spiritually. In other words, there must qualitative and quantitative growth in the church. These are like two wings of the bird. A bird cannot fly with only wing; it needs both to fly and perch. Giving priority to one over the other is detrimental to church growth. In *Understanding Church Growth*, McGavran shows the need for a balance of quality and quantity in the church. He writes, “Some earnest Christians reject multiplication of churches as today’s chief task because they pin their hope on quality rather quantity. What use, they ask, to make more Christians unless they are better Christians? Through much of the world they affirm that

education of believers is more important than evangelism.”<sup>17</sup> It is true that once a person is saved he or she must be disciplined, which is like paying attention to the quality aspect of growth, but this cannot be done at the cost of finding more people to join the church.

While numerical growth is important, it can be the result of “transfer growth,” that is, attendance may increase because believers transfer their membership from other churches. Thus, an increase in members may not necessarily reflect true outreach.<sup>18</sup> It may not reflect “true outreach,” but this statement begs a question. When people come in as a result of “transfer growth,” if there was no spiritual food, why would they even join a particular church when there are multiple other churches in the area? That church probably has something special that attracts the new incoming members.

Of course, people join churches for various reasons. The growth pattern in Transformation Church has been through “transfer growth,” but after the members have come they have grown spiritually. Some of them were not baptized, but after they joined the church they have witnessed in the waters. There is, therefore, a spiritual thirst that a church satisfies, and which justifies the spiritual quest, even in transfer growth. Ultimately, the church must grow with the purpose of winning people to Christ, assimilating them into local churches, and equipping them for ministry.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed., ed. C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 33.

<sup>18</sup>Gene A. Getz, et al., *Effective Church Growth Strategies*, Swindoll Leadership Library (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000), 19.

<sup>19</sup>Gary McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Grand Rapids, MI Baker Books, 2003), 17.

If the church only has transfer growth, what is the way to get new converts?

There are several methods, but one of the best and most proven methods that Tom Stebbins mentions is that “gospel spreads most effectively across an existing network of trust relationships.”<sup>20</sup> Would a person of one culture trust another from a different culture? Trust does not depend on color, race or origin. I believe it is a heart issue. How can Transformation Church members build trust among people of other cultures?

The workplace is the best place to build friendship and trust. Ed Silvos has made a profound study of which evangelistic methods are more effective.

Acts records 40 major supernatural actions, many of which are dramatic power encounters. It is interesting that only one of them took place in religious setting: the healing of the lame man at the Temple gate called Beautiful (see Acts 3:1-10). This highlights the fact that the Early Church was not confined to a building or to a prearranged schedule of meetings. In Acts, the Church was movement that shook or took cities.<sup>21</sup>

This tells us that reaching out to people has to be in the marketplace. To be practical, lunch time conversations are one means of helping people make a polite entry into the lives of others. Unfortunately, the church and the workplace have been undergoing a strong disconnect. Many believers want to isolate their Christian experience to church and have a different functional system in the office. By saying this, I am not criticizing or judging people, or saying that they are immoral in their office life. What I mean is that the chasm between the church and the office is a major impediment in reaching people. The tragedy is that the church is not able to capitalize on the people available

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<sup>20</sup>Tom Stebbins, *Friendship Evangelism by the Book: Applying First Century Principles to Twenty-First Century Relationships* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1995), 72.

<sup>21</sup>Ed Silvos, *Anointed for Business*, 2nd ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2006), 103.

right in the front of their eyes. Laura Nash and Scotty McLennan mention this type of predicament in their book, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christians Values with Business Life*:

For regular church goers and unchurched nonpracticing believers alike, career maturity has not necessarily brought equivalent spiritual maturity. They express feelings of radical disconnection between Sunday service and Monday morning activities, describing a sense of living in two worlds that never touched each other. When they are deeply involved in business affairs, they long for the settings that have in the past occasioned deep spiritual faith and certainty about what is right from a religious standpoint. But when they retire to an overtly sacred state of mind, they are unable to see a way to carry out the real-world goals they feel are important. The changing world of business poses problems their religious upbringing never touched on.<sup>22</sup>

The project implementation is centered on reaching people of different ethnicities even in our workplaces. An intentional target audience would give the congregation focus. Instead of being, staying within the community, they need to go beyond their comfort zone and build that trust.

3. Readiness: The readiness of the church for change can be assessed by Nelson's formula which is explained in Appendix J.
4. Adjustments – How much should a person or a church change in order to accommodate people of other cultures? How much is good enough? Is it necessary even to change at all? No individual is free from his or her culture. We all grow up in a particular environment. When a new person from a different background comes in association with him, should the chemistry change? It is true that we need to be contextualized. But when two people from two different backgrounds come together

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<sup>22</sup>Laura L. Nash and Scotty McLennan, *Church on Sunday, Work On Monday: the Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 7.

there has to be certain level of compromise. I would like to consider this vision of accommodating the people of other cultures and ethnicities as a mission of Transformation Church. The word “mission” is not to be misunderstood as traveling outside the city or country, but is to be considered as a dedicated task. One has to make place for oneself and accommodate others too. While analyzing how missions are to be done, I have picked up a principle from Paul Borthwick that is true and apt in the concept building of oneness. “When we build a great outward focus, our fellowship groups begin to function like teams on a mission. We care for each other so we can be more effective in fulfilling our role in the world.”<sup>23</sup>

There has to be cultural adjustment also. In order to accommodate people of other cultures (since that is the goal of Transformation Church), changes are needed. We need to determine if the changes should be in worship style, worship order, songs, dress, etc. Even after such changes are made, will people of other cultures find the church accommodating? Would such changes attract the people of other cultures? Such changes brought into the church are in a sense changing the tradition of that church. It is like pressing an air pillow. When you press on one end, the other side pops and vice-versa. Every church has its own culture and tradition.

In her book *Worship Evangelism*, Sally Morgenthaler discusses the issues of accommodation that surround a church culture when new members, especially those from a different culture, start visiting. She writes, “Traditions are a dangerous but persistent fact of life. Just when we think we have rid ourselves of them, we have

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<sup>23</sup>Paul Borthwick, *A Mind for Missions: 10 Ways to Build Your World Vision* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1987), 101.

already formed new ones. The problem, which ones do we discard, which ones are ‘keepers’ and what do we do with the ‘keepers’ to preserve their significance?”<sup>24</sup> By discarding one culture or tradition, we are creating a new one. So, the big question concerns which culture is right for Transformation Church, so that people of other ethnicities come and join the church. If any change is going to bring a new culture and tradition, the best and the most acceptable culture should be the Christian/biblical tradition. Yet when we say biblical tradition, we could fall into the danger of the Judeo Christian tradition with some legalists even wanting to follow Jewish customs. Thankfully, Acts 10,11 and Acts 15 have given a clear mandate on how to manage cultural diversity, yet remain a Christian.

Another question that has to be addressed concerns whether it is the external things or the spiritual, internal things that would most help people become assimilated into the host church. Any superficial change might attract people for a time, but if the church is not spiritually inclined, the visitors will fall away. If one changes the style of dress to look like the visitors, the problem becomes intense when people from yet other cultures start coming in. Each culture has its own style of dress. Therefore, changing the style of dress will not attract people from other cultures. How many churches have seen growth in their churches because of their dress? I do not consider dress style matters.

5. Cost: Gene Getz makes the following point:

Some church members say, ‘We will make our church comfortable for me and mine.’ Most church members are not interested in making their pastor famous or in assuring that their pastor is respected by his peers. They are more concerned that their church is ministering to their children and that their church experiences are enjoyable. Often church members want to see their church grow so long as it

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<sup>24</sup>Brian D. McLaren, *Reinventing Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 51.

doesn't change too much. They don't want to lose their influence; they like knowing everyone in the church; and they like having a lot in common with most of the people in the church.<sup>25</sup>

A church that wants to include people from other nationalities and cultures must be a welcoming church. There must be openness in receiving the new ones. It is not just about receiving people, the entrant must also feel safe. Duane Elmer, the author of *Cross-Cultural Servanthood*, defines openness as “the ability to welcome people into your presence and make them feel safe.”<sup>26</sup> He also encourages readers by saying that this is an ability, and an ability can be developed through practice and need not be inherent. Openness is directed toward people—others like us and, most importantly, others who are unlike us. He gives an example of a group of Eastern Europeans who had come to the United States on a brief study leave. They attended an Afro-American church where the people were “huggers.” They would hug their visitors at least eight times. This might sound embarrassing or strange to a visitor. Yet what really encouraged me was the comment that even though the worship style was unlike their own, “they enjoyed the warmth and goodwill of the Salem people.”<sup>27</sup> What stood out to the European visitors was the warmth and love of the people. If a church practices the fruit of the Spirit, as we read in Galatians 5:22, 23 and 23b, “against such there is no law.” Miroslov Volf writes that “the will to give ourselves to others and ‘welcome’ them, to

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<sup>25</sup>Getz et al., *Effective Church Growth Strategies*, 2.

<sup>26</sup>Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), 38.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying with them in their humanity.”<sup>28</sup>

If a church wants to change from being an ethnic to a multicultural one, the members need to learn about the cultures around them. As a part of the learning curve, I have requested two preacher friends—a White and an Afro-American—to take a session each with the team I will be working with, to give us opportunities to ask questions. When they share their cultural background, it will be authentic and first-hand, instead of me studying their culture and then teaching our team. Though we cannot learn everything about a culture in just an hour or so, our observations about a culture can be clarified and consolidated by people who belong to that culture. This will help us to learn some do’s and don’ts for when others start visiting the church.

One powerful conclusion has come out of this discussion. There are absolutes and non-absolutes, and these are to be determined by the Scriptures. “We must carefully observe the extent to which New Testament ‘activities’ and ‘teachings’ are repeated, verified and expanded, and reinforced through the lens of the Scripture. It’s an exciting, ongoing process and incredibly freeing in being able to do God’s work in God’s way. Once we understand this process, it enables us to be biblical and yet contemporary.”<sup>29</sup>

In conclusion, this is my vision for Transformation Church in the future. It falls in line with George Yancey’s seven principles of successful multiracial churches. While embedding the multicultural aspect this is how my dream has evolved.

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<sup>28</sup>Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood*, 41.

<sup>29</sup>Getz et al., *Effective Church Growth Strategies*, 27.

1. The worship must be inclusive: There must be place for both traditional and contemporary styles of worship.
2. Diverse Leadership: In the leadership, there must be staff and lay people from various races.
3. Overarching goal: Members must make this their own goal on a daily basis.
4. Intentionality: Members must make a concerted effort to mingle with people of other cultures.
5. Personal skills: The goal of being multiracial should be above personal interest. To this end, people must strive hard to be inclusive in their personalities.
6. Location: Currently, Transformation Church is on a business road. The lease on the current building will expire in December 2020. We have already started praying and preparing financially to buy a building. It is our desire to buy a popular warehouse so that the address itself becomes a landmark.
7. Adaptability: As the church grows in appearance and size, current members must adapt to keep up the racial unity together.<sup>30</sup>

All this preparation is for me to pass the torch to the team, so that they might go to the church and campaign for the church to become a multicultural church and I believe this will lay a historical foundation in the life of Transformation Church.

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<sup>30</sup>Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit*, Locations 645-670.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

#### **Implementation Summary**

The project consisted of ten teaching sessions. I taught four of them, the visiting pastors taught one each; we watched a movie in one session and the last session was finding the values for the Nelson Change Formula (Appendix L). We watched the movie “Remember the Titans,” in the first session. The four sessions that I taught were lessons from the Bible. The first session was from Acts 10 (Peter’s interaction with Cornelius); the second lesson was from Acts 11 about the way Peter refuted the objection raised by the Jewish brothers in accepting the Gentiles into the Lord’s fold. The third session that I taught was from the Book of Nehemiah. It consisted of the birth of a vision, while the last session was the dynamics of implementation of the vision. The visiting pastors taught one session each. They delineated their culture, especially from the church’s standpoint. The last session was to identify if the church was ready and, if yes, how much change to undergo as a multicultural church.

The project did not go exactly as planned. We needed to make some changes and accept some alterations.

1. The composition of the team needed to undergo a few changes. I had originally thought of including seven, but I added one more brother to the team. I had been observing him and he was a recent addition to the church, yet I chose to involve him in the team. One of the candidates who could have been part of the team expressed difficulty in committing to the schedule of the team meetings. Another

person who should have been in the team had to move to Florida as his job location changed. Two members did not attend the fourth meeting (Acts 11) for personal reasons. One of the members of the team had to go to India to visit her ailing mother. This lady could thus not continue to attend the sessions any more. I allowed her to join for the last session to take the Nelson Change Formula (Appendix L) and I was confident her answers would be very different from the other members. She formed a cusp between the team that had the full exposure of ten sessions and the control group.

2. Regarding the visiting pastors, I had requested Doug DuBois to teach sessions as the Anglo pastor. Just a couple of weeks before the implementation, he informed me that he would not be able to teach the session because of his job responsibilities. That is when I requested my pastor friend, Jon Boulet, to fill in. He readily accepted. During the session with Pastor Jon Boulet, the members discovered some issues that needed to be addressed. Another resource person that I had to replace was the Hispanic pastor. Pastor Jose Echevarria had committed to teach, but he backed out stating family reasons. I called up another pastor friend, Jorge Altieri, to fill in. He too readily accepted. Pastor Dennis Marshal was asked to highlight the Afro-American culture, but he spent very little time and slight emphasis on the questions in the questionnaire, and explained instead how a church could become multicultural (from his point of view). Compared to the other pastors' teaching sessions, we felt we lacked some authentic information about Afro-American culture. In order to compensate for the lack of knowledge about Afro-American culture, I requested another pastor

friend of mine, Derrick Parks, for information. Since, we would not have time to have him teach a class, I requested that he answer the questions in written form so that I could give those answers to the team. Unfortunately, I haven't received the written answers from Pastor Parks.

3. Use of appendices: I used the questionnaire for the pre-test and post-test. I also used the Nelson Change Formula (Appendix L) on the last day. I had created a template (Appendix K) for all the resource pastors to follow. The questions were same for all the pastors. Thus, when we took notes, we could compare the answers to the same question for all four cultures we had learned about. I also created a questionnaire for the lessons that I had taught, including the movie that we watched. In order to keep the project objective, I gave the questions to the members of the team so that we retained the perspective of the session.

The details of the ten sessions are as follows:

#### Session 1

##### **Remember the Titans**

This was the first session. The session started late since there was a wreck on the highway and almost all the candidates were late. We watched the movie which is 1 hour and 53 minutes long. Following the movie, we had a discussion based on the questionnaire. We answered the following seven questions.

1. What were the characteristics of the conflict?
2. What is the leadership style of Coach Boone and Coach Yoast?
3. How did Coach Boone handle the rebellion from the White kids?
4. How did Gary Bertier and Julius Campbell react against their own counterparts?

5. What was the turning point in the movie?
6. What do you think brought the racial reconciliation?
7. If you had to identify with any character in the movie, who would you identify with?

All the participants were able to remember the names of the characters and relate to the topic in the questions: What do we need to do be transformed into a church that is multicultural?

## Session 2

### **Teaching based on Acts 10 (Cornelius and Peter's Vision)**

I led this session. I had asked the members of the team to study Acts 10 so that we could discuss Peter's paradigm shift. The members were able to identify the working of the Holy Spirit in bringing Cornelius and Peter together. Each member gave his/her viewpoint based on the questionnaire below.

1. What is the divine role in the connection established between Cornelius and Peter?
2. Peter's Vision
  - a) Literal
  - b) Symbolism explained
3. Scriptural backing for Peter's denial.
4. Divine role in Peter's conviction for his readiness to go with the three men to visit Cornelius.
5. Peter's address in Cornelius' house.
6. The role of the Holy Spirit in Cornelius' house.

### Session 3

#### **Teaching based on Acts 11 (Peter's explanation to the brothers at Jerusalem)**

1. What was the Jerusalem brothers' complaint against Peter?
2. Why do you think the Jerusalem brothers objected?
3. Describe Peter's discourse to the brothers in Jerusalem.
4. Role of the Trinity in the conviction of Peter (creating willingness to accept the Gentiles) and Cornelius (being added to God's kingdom).
5. Why could Peter not object any more to the Holy Spirit?

### Session 4

#### **Pastor Jon Boulet (Anglo Christian culture)**

Pastor Jon Boulet, the Senior Pastor of Sycamore Hill Baptist Church, Hockessin DE, is my good friend. He agreed to educate the team about the Christian culture of the Anglos. It may be erroneous to take his understanding of Americans as representative description of all-American culture. The goal was to have someone who is from the original culture and can share their first-hand experiences of the Christian dynamics in a church. There were twelve points on which he spoke. These twelve points were addressed by pastors from all the four cultures. This was done in order to maintain uniformity in approach by all the four pastors. The following is the description given by Pastor Jon Boulet from the Anglo Christian point of view.

1. Dressing to go to church: It is age specific. There is no definite dressing style. It can range from formal suit and tie to casual khakis and jeans among men.  
Women might dress up in formal wear or come in casuals.

2. Timing and punctuality: They respect time. Being ten minutes late coming to a meeting is extremely late and disrespectful to the members of the meeting or the congregation.
3. Worship style: This is once again age-based. Most of the Seniors like a traditional style of worship, but the younger generation has a propensity towards a contemporary style. The gap between these two styles of worship is so vast that some of the younger music pastors do not know any hymns at all.
4. Preaching personnel: The pulpit is quite limited to the general public. In a Baptist church, women are not given any opportunity to preach to men. They might preach to women and children. Even among men, though not mandatory, possessing a biblical/theological education is preferred. This preference is more marked in a church where the congregation is better educated.
5. Length of the message: Irrespective of whether it is a traditional service or a contemporary one, the normal length of time for a sermon on a typical Sunday morning is thirty-five minutes. This must be maintained strictly in the churches where there are multiple services. Overshooting the message time causes logistical problems in maintaining the time for the next service. It is disrespectful to the congregation who has to be kept waiting to enter the sanctuary for the next service.
6. Lord's supper: In Sycamore Hill church, this is observed every other month. As in any church, and even in a typical Anglo church, the frequency of this observance varies. I believe it depends on the church leadership, who determine

the frequency of the Lord's Supper. There are few occasions when it is always celebrated, such as Christmas Eve and Easter.

7. Fellowship pattern: Sunday School during Sundays is one way of fellowshiping. Meeting at homes for Bible Study is not much in practice.
8. Role of Food: Food fellowship is not so frequent. The word "potluck" is considered old fashioned.
9. Role of women: Women have their ministry opportunities. They have teaching opportunities in small groups. They are very active in children's ministries and hospitality.
10. Children's ministry: I was shocked to hear when Pastor Jon Boulet said that the children are worshipped in the Anglo culture. The calendar revolves around the children's lives. When it comes to ministry AWANA, the young children's church receive prominence.
11. Cultural taboos: Not respecting time.
12. Celebratory points: Women's Bible studies are the high points. Men's monthly breakfast is very well attended.

The prejudices of Anglos against attending or joining an Indian church are as follows:

1. Immigrants are close knit and do not readily receive people of other cultures into their groups.
2. Immigrants are not relational, but transactional. An Indian businessman is more interested in the money of locals, and does not develop a relationship with his customers.

3. If Anglos were to join an Indian church, they would become a minority.
4. The strong smell of Indian food is a major deterrent to their desire to join an Indian church.

## Session 5

### **Pastor Dennis Marshal (Afro American Pastor)**

Pastor Dennis Marshal, Associate Pastor of Solid Rock Baptist Church in New Castle, Delaware had visited our church twice in the past. Since he had seen us and also worshipped with us, I felt he would be a good candidate to relate to us and explain the Afro-American culture to us. One remarkable thing that he mentioned about our church was that he felt welcomed at every step of his visit with us in the church. He experienced the warmth in discussions, sharing of food and also our getting to know him. When I asked him to share about Afro-American culture, he was willing to do so gladly.

1. Dressing to go to church: varies from casual to business dress.
2. Timing and punctuality: varies from early and prompt to late.
3. Worship style: varies from charismatic to somber; sometimes preceded by devotional songs, Scripture, prayer and testimonies.
4. Preaching personnel: Limited to the pastor and the preaching style varies from strong driving to lecturing or instructional style.
5. Length of the message: ranges from ten to fifteen minutes to as long as forty to sixty minutes.
6. Lord's supper: varies from first Sunday to occasional. Usually, the elements are wafers and grape juice.

7. Fellowship pattern: varies from periodic fellowship with other churches to none.
8. Role of food: normally used for special occasions to increase fellowship with others or in celebration.
9. Role of women: varies from all roles to available selected roles.
10. Children's ministry: varies from existent to non-existent.
11. Cultural taboos: varies depending on the church's culture. Whether it is walking, talking, kneeling, standing or access controlled by ushers, any act that draws attention to oneself is considered a taboo.
12. Celebratory points: varies but typically Easter, Mother's Day, Christmas and some may include Father's Day, MLK Celebration and Black History Month.

Apart from these, Pastor Dennis also mentioned the Christian education methods that their church employs, such as sermons, Sunday School, Bible Study, Vacation Bible School, Home Study groups or sermons only.

## Session 6

### **Pastor Jorge Altieri (Hispanic Pastor)**

Pastor Jorge Altieri is the pastor of Iglesias Bautista Fargo de Garcia in Dover, DE. He explained the Hispanic cultural background and noted is important to understand the following particulars of each individual Hispanic culture. Spanish speaking people are not from the same country. Thus, there are variations between each country, which all have their own culture, music, food habits and differences in the roles of men and women. For example, Mexican women are dominant but those from Guatemala and El Salvador are docile. There is racism even among Hispanics. Having

gained a little understanding about Hispanics, I now address the following pointers based on the explanation given by Pastor Jorge.

1. Dressing to go to church: There is no specific way to dress, but people are expected to dress modestly.
2. Timing and punctuality: This is a very big issue. People are very prompt and punctual at their offices and work places, but never on time for church. Some even come an hour after the church service has started, but this is considered normal.
3. Worship style: Worship is mostly emotional and sentimental. The style also depends on the denomination. Baptists are ordinarily modest in their expression. Pentecostals are highly expressive. Each country has different rhythm patterns and genres of music.
4. Preaching personnel: It is primarily the senior pastor who preaches on a normal given Sunday. Women are not encouraged to preach to men. The preaching on a typical Sunday is often in Spanish. Since, the second generation are comfortable speaking English with an American accent, it becomes a challenge for them to sit through the worship service when the preaching is in Spanish. Preaching in any other language than Spanish is not viable. If there is an English speaker, the pastor translates the sermon into Spanish. Thus, the first- and second-generation members have to be balanced with Spanish and English.
5. Length of the message: Since there is a whole gamut of people from various backgrounds, e.g., Catholic, or sometimes of no theological background, the teaching sessions need to be around an hour. On a typical Sunday, the sermon

can last from fifty minutes to an hour. During the week, it is difficult to gather people for weekly meetings since their work schedule do not allow them to take the time during the week. Therefore, the teaching given on Sunday morning is the only teaching on the Scripture for the whole week.

6. Lord's Supper: They observe the closed form of the Lord's Supper usually once every two months. The Lord's Supper is given before the worship service begins. It has been slowly moved to the middle of the service for the last year, because the pastor wanted the other people in the congregation to also understand the efficacy of the Lord's Supper.
7. Fellowship pattern: The Spanish people like to hang out, but meetings in homes is not encouraged or practiced. One of the reasons is that the family might have subleased their house to some other families, so having a Christian meeting becomes inconvenient in the houses. The logistical reasons of not having their own building poses a big problem for meetings and spending more time after the church service. But they observe good fellowship two times a year. Whenever this is done, it is a potluck meal.
8. Role of Food: Because of the different cultural backgrounds of the people, food is a very sensitive topic. There have been fights among families because of food. Mexicans don't like to eat Guatemalan rice and vice versa. The pastor has had to counsel certain women in the church because of the unrest over food.
9. Role of women: There are no female elders or deaconesses. The women are hard-working but not so active in the church.

10. Children's ministry: This has a crucial position in the ministry. The challenge is that the first-generation parents speak Spanish whereas the children are mostly Americanized. Therefore, Sunday school must be held in English. In order to teach Sunday School, the church compulsorily enforces the teachers/workers to have a background check.
11. Cultural taboos: Domestic violence is always on the rise. Talking about sex is a big turn off. Parents do not like to provide children with sex education at all.
12. Celebratory points: Birthdays, Anniversaries, Graduations and baptisms are celebrated with grandeur.

One major reason why Spanish Christians will not even attempt to attend an Indian church is because of the language barrier. They don't like to establish any relationship with East Indians. Though they are friendly, they do not mingle with people of other cultures.

## Session 7

### **Pastor Jesse Arce (Good Shepherd Church, Filipino Pastor)**

With a little bit of understanding of Filipino culture, I can offer the following pointers. The Philippines has nearly seven thousand islands with a population of one hundred million, but more than one hundred dialects spoken in the country. The country has a huge catholic population.

1. Dressing to go to church: Though age is a big factor in this matter, there is one common denominator that is maintained by all Filipinos. Their logic of dressing for church is based on the understanding that they are going to meet the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. To meet a dignitary, one wears the best dress. Even in

dress, due respect is to be given to God. Whether it is formal or casual, they wear their best to the church.

2. Timing and punctuality – Filipinos do not maintain time at all. They are very bad with timing and punctuality. Those who come early do not get offended because of the latecomers. Instead, the early comers use this time to socialize with one another. There is another social aspect to be considered. Since the Philippines were colonized by Spain their colonizers always came late to the meetings to highlight their prominence. Their cultural belief is that those who arrive late are prominent people.
3. Worship style: The worship style mostly depends on the denomination. The traditional Baptists sing hymns, while the second generation enjoy a contemporary style of worship.
4. Preaching personnel: Usually, it is the Senior Pastor who preaches. The church encourages deacons to preach on special occasions. Women are not encouraged to preach to men.
5. Length of the message: A typical Sunday sermon lasts close to an hour.
6. Lord's Supper: This is celebrated once a month. It is a closed event.
7. Fellowship pattern: House gatherings are greatly encouraged. Weekly Bible studies and small group meetings are willingly hosted by church members in their houses. Every Sunday, the church provides lunch to all the church members.
8. Role of Food: Filipinos gather around food and make it an integral part of their lifestyle. Food becomes a bonding agent, and also, they very strongly believe it

is biblical to eat together often. The pastor mentioned how Jesus fed the people on several occasion while meeting their spiritual needs.

9. Role of women: Though they do not preach to men, women play an important role in church activities. In Good Shepherd Church, women count the weekly offerings, teach in the student ministry and also the ladies. The church encourages women with special teaching gifts to teach in small groups with men in attendance.
10. Children's ministry: The church has regular Sunday School, VBS and also Christmas VBS and thus it becomes an outreach.
11. Cultural taboos: Filipinos do not like confrontation. They do not like to handle or address the problem. They would rather avoid a problem and leave the church rather than addressing it biblically and resolving the situation. They do not like to talk or hear any negativity. They take exception to things very easily.
12. Celebratory points: All social celebrations like birthdays and anniversaries are centered around the church members. Mother's Day and Father's Day are celebrated with enthusiasm.

The main reason why Filipinos do not like to join other ethnic churches is because they are too close-knit and do not feel comfortable mingling with people of other cultures.

## Session 8

### **The Power of Vision**

1. How was Nehemiah's vision born? What are the characteristic features of the birth of a vision?

Nehemiah's vision had its origin in the burden he had for his people. He enquired about the welfare of the people on his own. When he heard about their situation, he had compassion. He showed selflessness and expressed great zeal in redeeming their disgrace by constructing the wall. Travelling from Nehemiah 1:3 (state of disgrace) to Nehemiah 6:15 (the completion of the wall) required prayer, purpose, planning, preparation and personnel.

2. How does the vision of Transformation Church relate to the story of vision in Nehemiah?

In this discussion, one of the team members asked why are we looking at a multicultural congregation and not just Indians? To answer this question, I explained the biblical mandate of the project from Revelation 7:9 and Galatians 3:28. In finding a connecting link between the vision of Transformation Church and the vision of Nehemiah, I asked each member to give their burden for multicultural people (saved or lost). Each of them gave different numbers on a scale of one to ten. After gathering the numbers, I asked another question about whether they gave the numbers for the burden they have or for the desire. The unanimous answer was that the numbers they gave was for desire. Almost none of the team members acknowledged they had a burden. They instead showed that they wanted to stay in their comfort zone of reaching Indians only. I further asked how many Indians they had shared the gospel with or invited to church. Some have not invited a single Indian. I, therefore, encouraged them to move out of their comfort zone and picture our church as the picture of heaven as in Revelation 7:9.

Another important question was raised by another member. Would you emphasize a multicultural church if we were in India? This was my answer: A multicultural church is biblical. To my knowledge, there is no ethnic church in the Bible. In India, we would not import people to make the church multicultural, but the biblical principle would be same whether it is in India or America. The success rate might be very minimal in India. Because Transformation Church is located in the USA, which is a melting pot, the scope for the church becoming multicultural is higher because of its geographical advantage. The church should capitalize on this advantage.

## Session 9

### **Implementation and Accomplishment of Vision**

1. Who should be involved in the implementation of the vision?

Based on the approach of Nehemiah, all people must be involved in the vision, but must be involved in stages. Not all the people can be introduced to the vision right away. Nehemiah began with a few people, but later on in chapter three, he involved everyone.

2. What is the role of conflict in the implementation of the vision?

Conflict has a very important role in the implementation of the vision. There will certainly be those who will oppose the vision. Nehemiah ignored threats, discouragement, and opposition and stuck to his task. At last, he was able to accomplish the task. In fact, conflict often strengthens vision.

3. Where does the God-given vision get its provision?

Nehemiah received permissions and grants from the ruler. Since the king favored Nehemiah, he received all that he needed to build the wall. This principle is true and is

applicable to anyone. When a vision is God-given, the provider is God Himself, and man must cooperate.

#### 4. The joy of celebrating of the vision

After the wall was built, Nehemiah and all the people of the country celebrated its completion. Since they were all united in heart, it was built in fifty-two days. The celebration silenced enemies and critics.

### Session 10

#### **Nelson Change Formula** (Appendix L)

I used the Nelson Change Formula for the team members to get the empirical results in one session. There is no prior work to be done to get the results from the formula. Based on each church's situation, different components of the formula have a few questions to answer and thus arrive at a number. After calculating the corresponding numbers for each factor of the formula, the readiness of the church was identified. I gathered the values the members reached, based on their calculations.

$$\frac{\text{Time} \_\_\_ \times (\text{Leadership Capacity} \_\_\_ + \text{Congregational Readiness} \_\_\_)}{\text{Change Impact}} = \text{Delta factor}$$

There were eight team members. The values of the members are as follows:

Abhilasha Medithe – 6.75

Jyothi Edla – 8.3

Sanjay Pita – 6.12

Samson Gattu – 7.05

Mohan Arja – 6.37

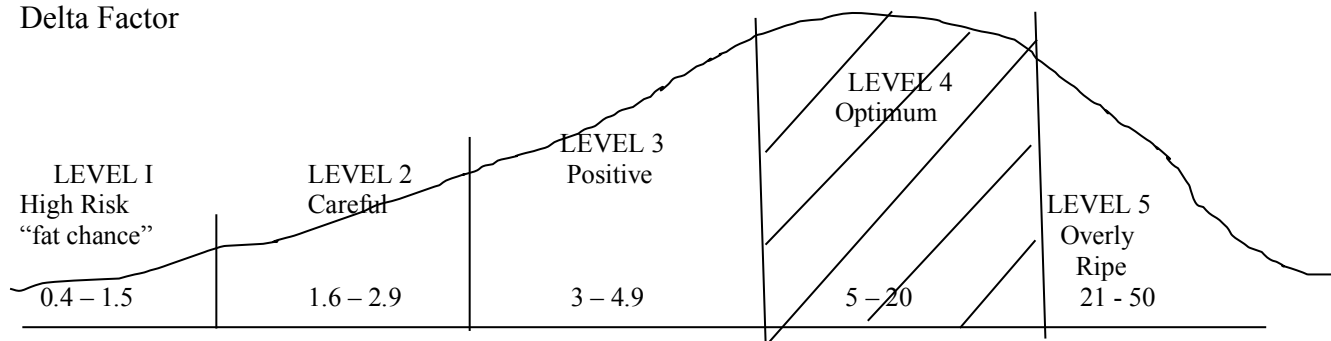
Ramesh Rangaram – 6.01

Alice Lymon – 6.2

Hemanth Lymon – 8.3

The graph below shows where Transformation Church team falls in terms of its readiness to change and become a multicultural church. All eight members had values which fell in the optimum level.

Delta Factor



Delta Factor:

Level 1: (0.4 – 1.5) High Risk

Level 2: (1.6 – 2.9) Careful

Level 3: (3.0 – 4.9) Positive

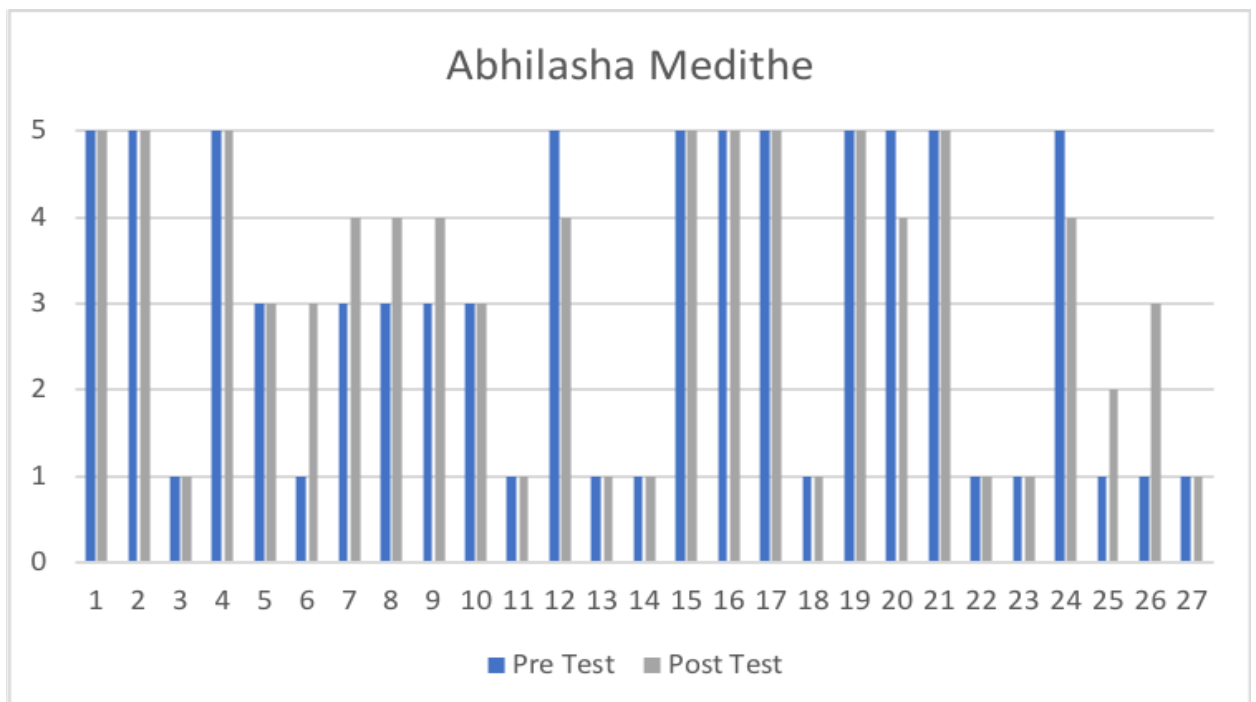
Level 4: (5.0 – 20) Optimum

Level 5: (21.0 – 50) Overly Ripe

## Results of Direct Measurement

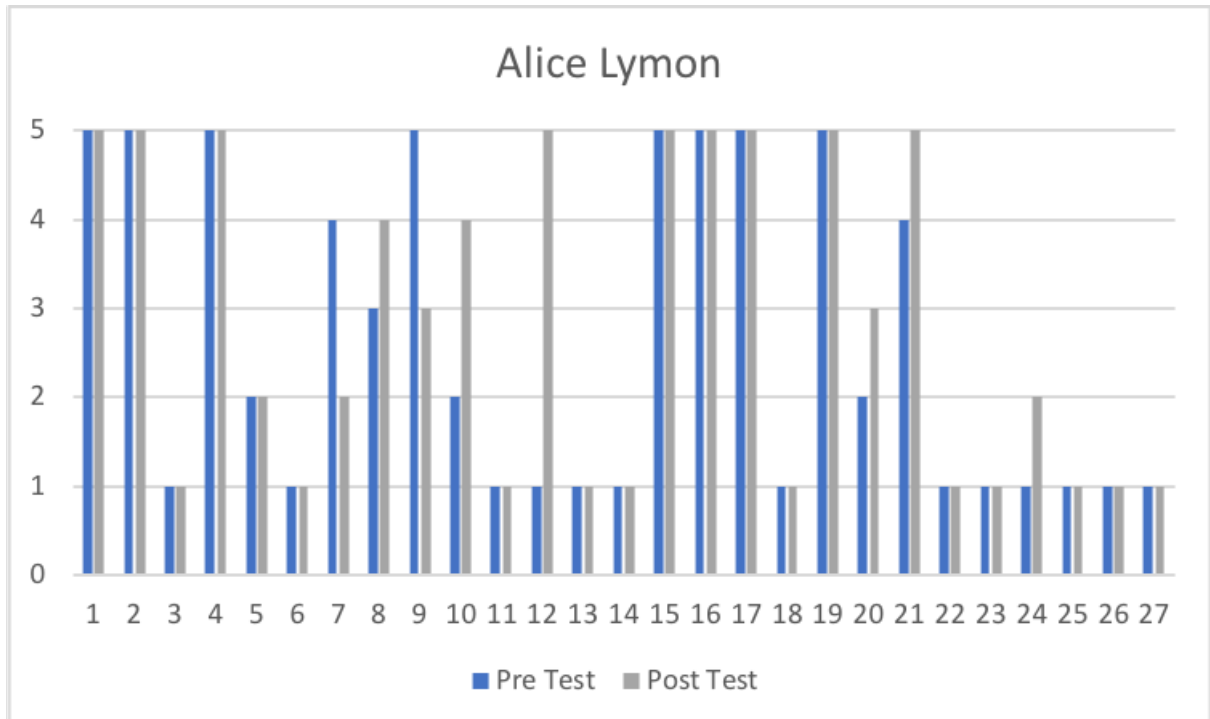
### Standard Tests

I gave the pre-test and post-test (Appendix J) to the members of the team and also to the congregation. Here are the results and analysis of each of the member's data. The interesting observation from the answers to the questions is that for the biblical questions almost all of them agree with the biblical teaching. The difference can be observed in the attitude and acceptance of people from other cultures.



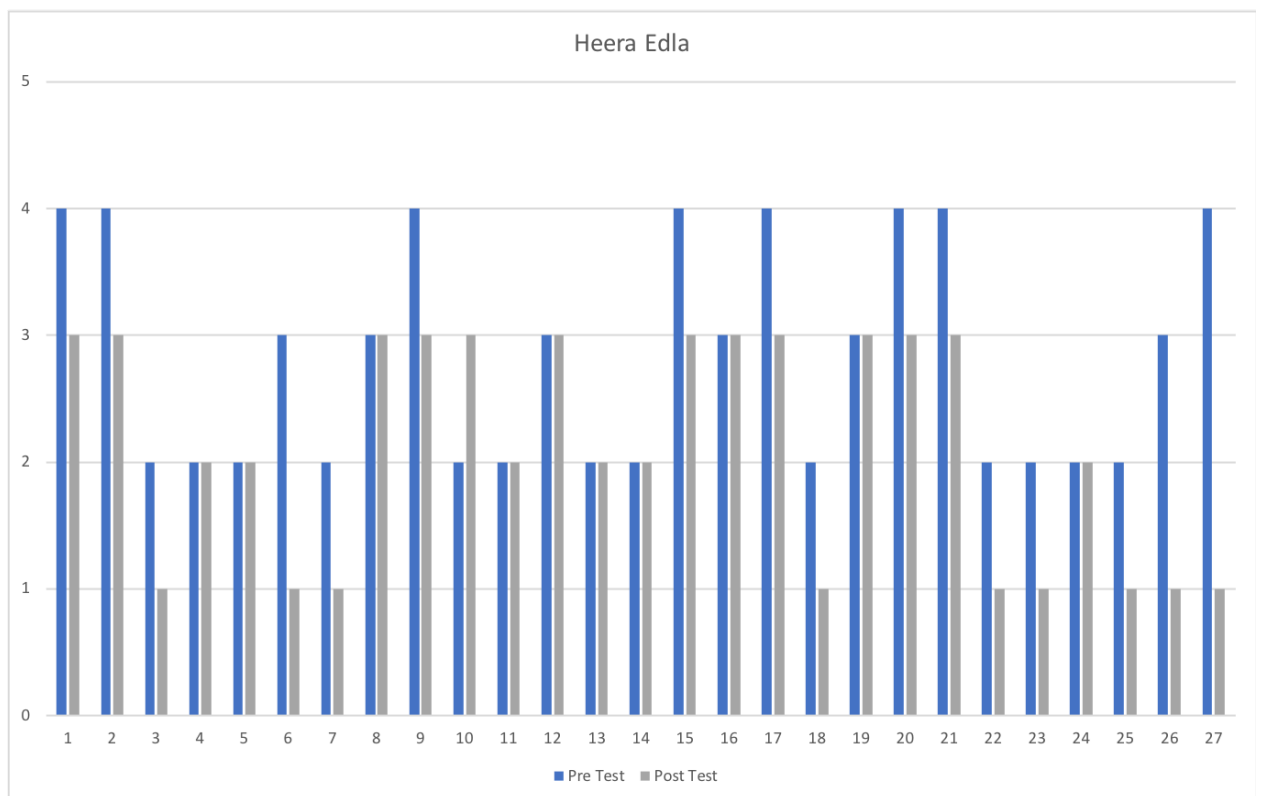
We shall look at the differences in the data to understand how much the candidate has had an impact in the thinking process. Based on the graph above, Abhilasha, mother of an elementary school boy, who works from home and does not have any colleagues, understood that there is a possibility of our children worshipping with us when we become multicultural. Her rigidity in retaining our cultural heritage

was diluted. She is willing to admire the worship of other cultures. She had fears that people of other cultures might cause problems when they join the church. These fears were diminishing, however. There was not much of a change in her thinking about the financial stability of the church from the inclusion of people from other cultures.



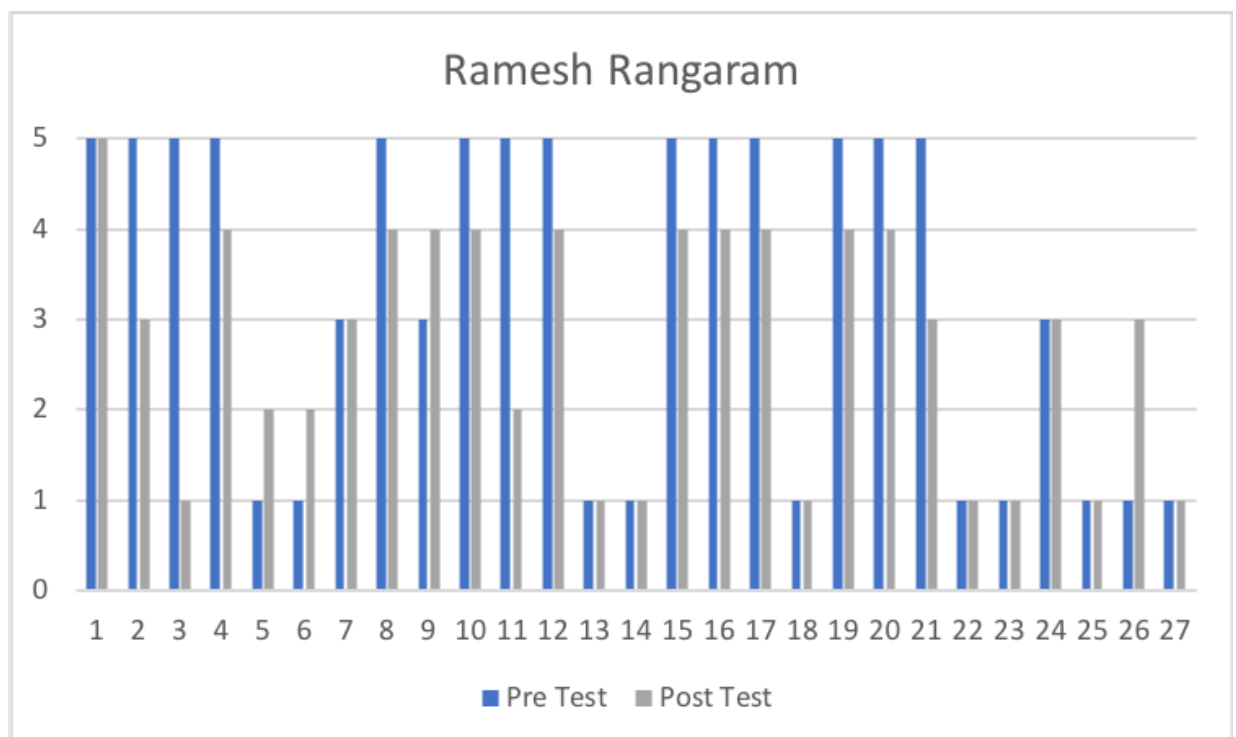
Since we are discussing only the differences, here is the summary of Alice Lymon's results of the tests. Alice, the daughter of a Bible College founder, has lived mostly in cosmopolitan cities. She is confident of mingling with people of other cultures. She agrees that our children may not worship with us if we stay ethnic. She believes we should not be adamant about our culture. She wanted to give people from other cultures the cold shoulder. In the post-test, she was totally against this. She moved out of a comfort zone of reaching out only to immigrants. She changed her stand about the supremacy of our worship style and became more accommodating. Her fears

lessened with regard to people of other cultures bringing problems with them. We are not to reach out to locals just to keep the church steady at the expense of immigrants, since their stay in the city could be transitory.



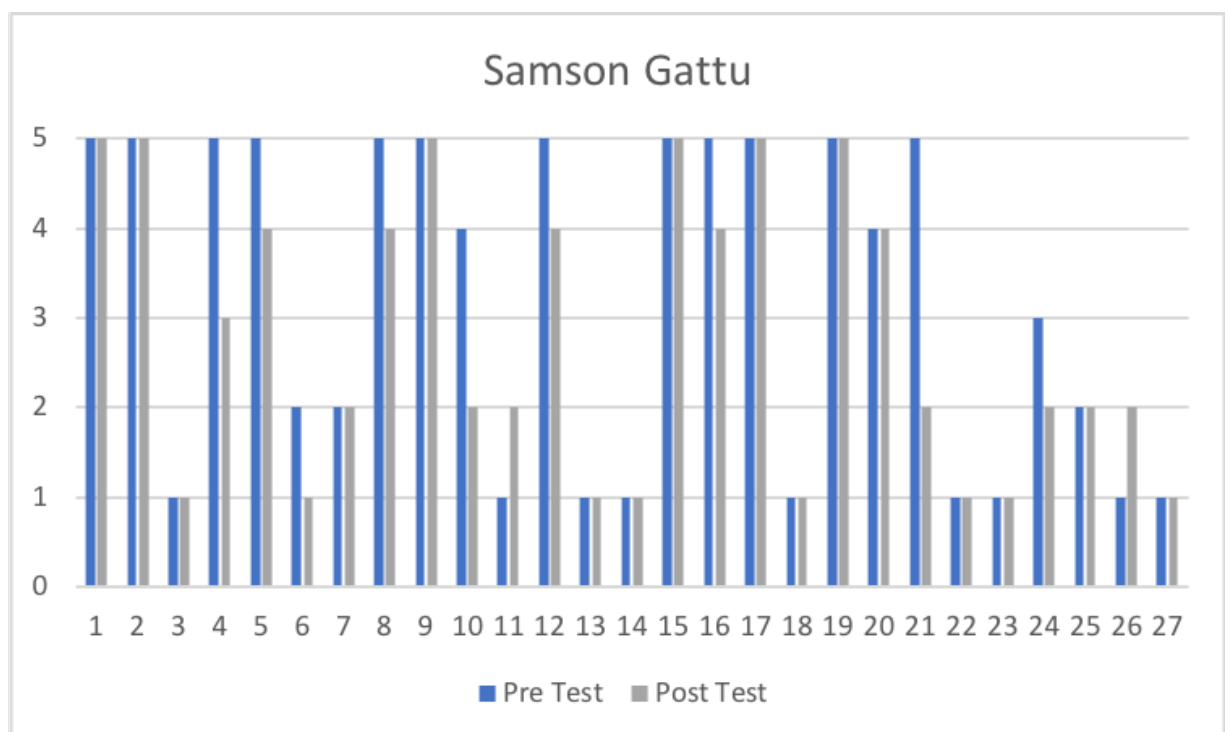
Heera Edla is my wife. She was out of the country for most of the sessions. She came back for the last session of the project. She missed five sessions in all. None of her answers were on the extremely negative side. As seen in the graph, no question was assigned 5 on the scale. Almost all her answers had just one grade different, except for three questions. Some of her negative answers moved to a neutral position. Her fanaticism about our culture did not change. Since America is a melting pot and there is greater scope for assimilating people from other cultures into the church, she showed great propensity for this. Some of the key issues have remained the same with her, e.g.,

giving a cold shoulder to people of other cultures, and retaining our cultural heritage in our religious beliefs. At the same time she showed willingness to lose our exclusive identity in order to accommodate people from other cultures. She is the only member of the team who gave different answers in the pre-test and post-test in relation to the biblical demand to reach out to the people of all nationalities. The fear of people of other cultures bringing in problems lessened. Initially, she was of the opinion that the church could discriminate between people. But in the post-test, she clearly indicated that such discrimination was not acceptable.



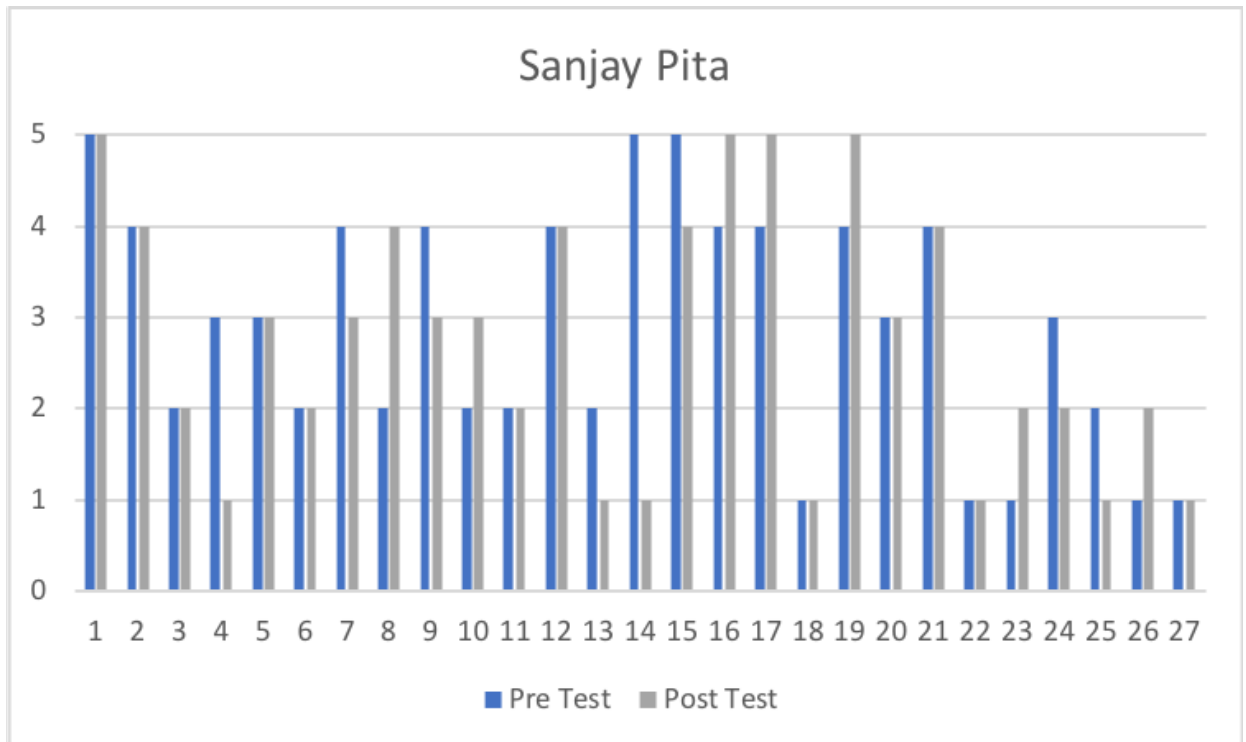
Ramesh Rangaram is a young believer, but growing steadily in his spiritual life. He has taken a great leap into multicultural thinking. He had inhibitions about talking to people of other cultures, but after the sessions, he has become more open to interacting with other cultures. His fanaticism about our culture decreased and he has become more

moderate. The big leap forward was in becoming open-minded by accepting people of other cultures. There is more moderation in the approach to reducing the staunchness of our culture. His inhibitions because of accent decreased. He took a neutral stand on inviting the locals in order to keep the church stable. Initially, he thought the locals were not needed at all, but moved to a neutral stand in adapting to people of other cultures since similar adaptation occurs in the work place.



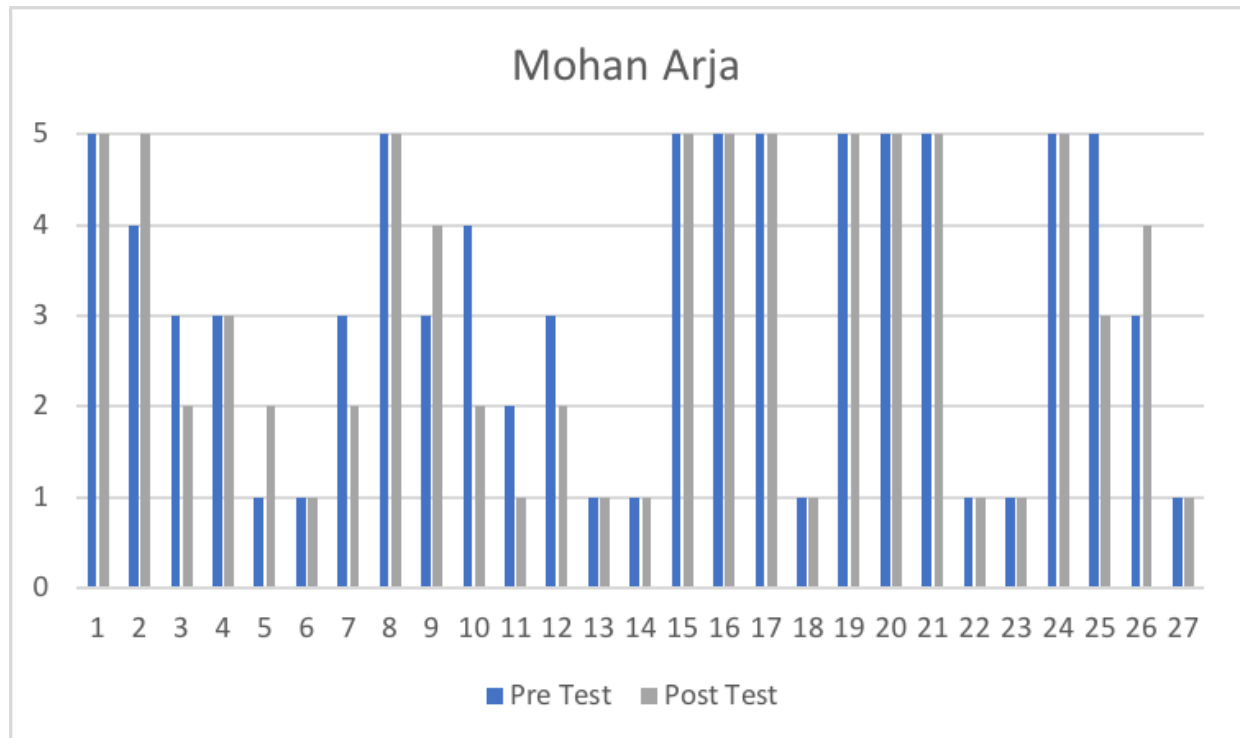
Samson Gattu is a strong believer. He has had some theological training in the past. The first big difference was that he was previously very fanatical about his culture. After the sessions, this staunchness dissipated. He agrees that reaching out to the locals would stabilize the church both in numbers and financially. Initially, he was not in favor of finding a common ground with immigrants, but later he was. It is encouraging to

know that we continue to strive to retain people from other cultures even though we have failed in the past.

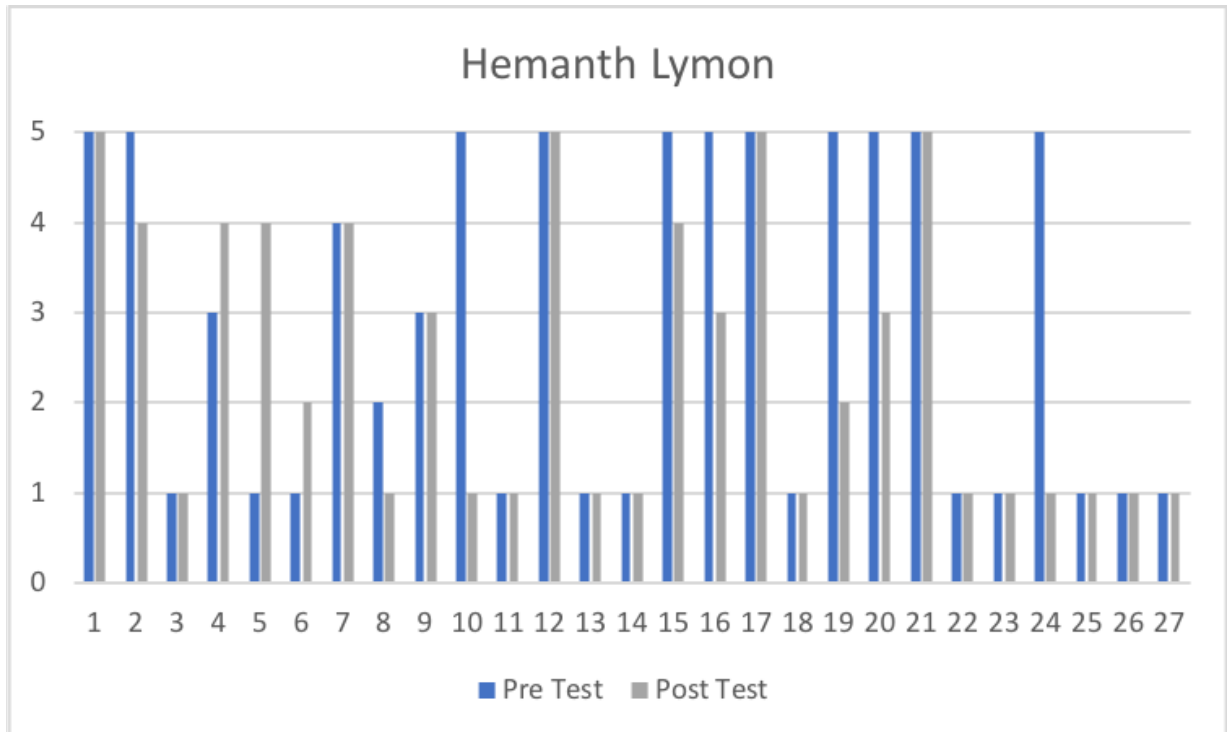


Sanjay Pita has been in the church since its inception. There are some high points of observation from Sanjay's data. He revealed a drastic change in terms of not being rigid about retaining cultural elements in the worship. He showed interest in not just reaching Indians, but opening up to people of all other nations. There is a great difference in looking for lost people based on their lostness and not their nationality. He was not in favor of spreading the gospel to the other cultures in the pre-test, but he changed his mind drastically and has fully accepted the vision. Concerning the suggestion that we could implement the Great Commission within our community, he disagreed, and later disagreed vehemently. Different accent is no longer a reason to

disallow people from other cultures into the church. Ministries will grow and financial stability can be attained with the influx of people from other cultures.

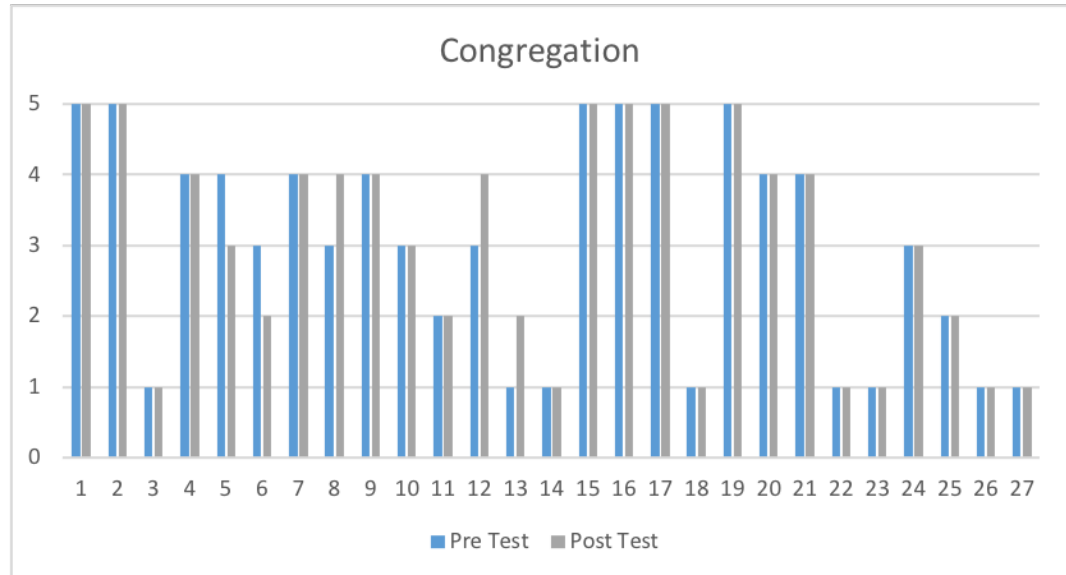


Mohan Arja also has been a member since the beginning of the church. He has grown spiritually in the last couple of years. From his graph, we don't see much of a difference but there are some significant ones. His scope for accepting people from other cultures has grown. His comfort level in communicating with people of other cultures has also improved. Fanaticism about Indian culture has diminished. Concerning giving the cold shoulder to people of other cultures, he was initially neutral, but later changed his mind not to do so. He was not willing to be close-minded. He saw that youth and children's ministries can improve immensely if we have people from other cultures in the church.



Hemanth Lymon is the deacon of the church, where he has been a faithful steward. After the sessions, Hemanth took a big leap forward in thinking more of people from other cultures than our own. He is inclined to lay emphasis on reaching out to immigrants. He took a neutral stand after being totally against continuing to be an ethnic church, since we have not been able to retain any of the visitors from other cultures. He had fears of people from other cultures causing conflict, but these decreased after the sessions. He is of the strong opinion that there should be locals in the church for the sake of achieving stability.

### Control Group: The Congregation



In the following graph, I took the average of the data input of the congregation.

Almost all the questions reveal very little significant change. Only five questions produced a grade difference between the pre and the posttests (Appendix J). The congregation was not comfortable in the past about sharing the gospel, but became neutral in the post test (Appendix J). A church being neutral about sharing the gospel is not a good outcome. In the matter of assimilating people from other cultures, there was a small difference. The congregation moved from being neutral in a positive direction. Though there was improvement in views on retaining the Indian cultural heritage in the worship style, it was not sufficient, since the move was only to a neutral position. Similar progress was made in the matter of giving the cold shoulder to other people, which moved from disagreement to neutrality. The congregation showed an improvement in terms of seeing the lostness of the person more than of the culture. In

summary, the change in the attitude and mindset was fairly drastic. Here disagreement moved to from neutral or agree to strongly agree. There was big swing in the mindset.

### **Results of Indirect Measurements**

Apart from the pre-test and post-test (Appendix J), I also administered a formula generated by Alan Nelson in his book, *How to Change your Church (Without Killing It)*. Based on the Nelson Change Formula (Appendix L), each member had to answer the questions and assign a number to each question. After calculating the corresponding numbers for each factor of the formula, the readiness of the church was identified. I gathered the values the members produced based on their calculations.

$$\frac{\text{Time} \times (\text{Leadership Capacity} + \text{Congregational Readiness})}{\text{Change Impact}} = \text{Delta factor}$$

There were eight team members. The values of each of the members are as follows.

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Hemanth Lymon – 8.3

Another noteworthy point is that I had a control group for the project. The church was the control group. On December 2, 2018, the entire church (26 adults) took the pre-test including the team. Nobody in the church had any prior idea about the project. None knew about the questionnaire. It was administered randomly. The church (14 adults) also took the post-test on February 3, 2019. Most of those who were present on December 2 were not present on February 3. Though the church was administered the test, the real intention behind was to let them know the direction that the church is planning to take.

### **Unforeseen Causes**

The participants were all co-operative. Some could not attend a session because of personal reasons. The team had good discussions. For some sessions, we stayed for nearly three hours discussing the topic. If there was a question that was not understood, the other members complemented one another and thus helped each other learn or understand the question. We met at the church for all the sessions. I gave an honorarium to the visiting preachers. We stuck to the assessment tools in the form of pre-test and post-test. We also induced values for the Nelson Change Formula (Appendix L) to determine the readiness of the church to change.

### **Unforeseen Effects**

One of the strongholds of the church is food. Most of the members were previously unwilling to yield to any changes to the food type or schedule during the fellowship time. After Pastor Jon Boulet mentioned that a strong Indian food aroma might be a deterrent preventing Anglos from joining the church, the team started a

discussion. They did not come to a conclusion, but from what I observed, the wheels were moving. Since this point was raised by almost all the pastors of other cultures, the group started giving thought to making changes and removing food as a hindrance to people joining our church.

On the first Sunday of January, I went to church in khakis. I wore semi-formal dress to church on Sunday morning. Usually, I wear a suit and tie on a typical Sunday morning. Since the dressing pattern also matters to people of other cultures joining the church, I was willing to change my pattern of dressing in a particular way on a Sunday morning.

## CHAPTER 6

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS

#### **Introduction**

Did the project director achieve what he set out to achieve? It is with a great pleasure I can say that I have achieved the desired goal. The team unanimously bought the vision I was casting. Though there were some inhibitions, resistance in the beginning, and even challenges to the very vision of the church needing to become multicultural, at the end of the sessions all the members of the team were vociferous in their support, and more became intentional (in their attitudes) to reach out to non-East Indians.

#### **General Evaluation**

Project preparation: Care was taken to ensure the project was implemented as planned. Ten sessions of cultural, biblical and data-based instructions were planned for the team. Four pastors of different cultural backgrounds were invited to educate the team about their worldview. They explained their beliefs, taboos, strengths, weaknesses etc. A movie highlighting the integration of people from varied cultural backgrounds set the tone for the project implementation. The team understood what the goal of the project was.

Effectiveness of project implementation: The project had its uncertainties. Resource persons had to be substituted and the team had to be rearranged. In spite of reconstituting the team and the resource persons, the original plan was not affected. On

the last day of the project implementation, all of the team members shared their experience orally.

Post project change was brought about in the ministry setting: There was an immediate change in the attitude of the team members. Though we have not implemented those changes, the first step in altering the minds of the team members was successfully achieved. The entire team, after exposure to various cultures, understood the need to go the extra mile to find ways to retain our visitors to become church members. We have to respect their cultures also. We have to make certain adjustments to our church operation to enable us to retain the people of other cultures. Based on the Nelson Change Formula (Appendix L), all the team members indicated the change the church must go through falls in the optimum range in the graph. It will be a healthy change.

### **Ministry Setting Evaluation**

Real challenge and need identified: Transformation Church is a very loving church. The people are very cordial. Ever since the church was started, most of the visitors have been Indians. There have been quite a few non-Indians too. Whenever anybody from any country comes to the church, we buy their flags and put them up on the wall. If they ever came back, we use these flags as a connecting point to show them how much we respect their country. The flags also become a reminder to the church to understand the need to reach out to people of other nations. But there is a problem. The visitors hardly ever come back. We do not have frequent visitors. We have tried to analyze the reason why people of other cultures are not staying. There is no doubt that those non-Indian visitors came to the church because somebody in the church invited

them, but the problem is that they do not return. Perhaps, they are church shopping and we are not the right fit for them. We recognize there is a problem. Why are people of other nationalities not returning for visits after their initial visit? Buying the flags did not help. Those who invited their friends did not ask why these visitors never came back. Even if the visitors, if asked why they did not visit the church again, our members were not equipped to address those issues.

Establishing a legitimate need, challenge or opportunity: During the project implementation an important question was raised by one of the team members. The question was, why do we need to reach out to other nationalities when we can reach Indians in the community and there are plenty of them? The church is not just made of a single people, but should be made up of people of all nations, languages, tribes, colors etc. The Great Commission should be not modified to suit our limitations. The Great Commission was given to us to reach all nations. How can we justify just trying to reach Indians? It is not so important to gather people simply for numbers. Even if that were the case, not all the Indians in the church have invited other Indians along. There are so many members who have not invited anyone since the beginning of the church. In order for the church to be how God wants it to be, as stated in Revelation 7:9, a variety of people must become a part of the church. Can an immigrant pastor of an ethnic church achieve the goal of that church becoming multicultural? The success or failure of this ambitious project is not the matter of concern. What is important is to know whether the approach and effort is biblical or not. The desire to include people of other cultures is not for financial stability, nor for a numerical count. It is to be done with the biblical mandate in view. I have been very strongly pointing out that a church should not be

ethnically-based. There is no ethnic church in the Bible. We need to stay biblical by inviting people of other cultures into the church.

Hypothetical presupposition analyzed: The biggest challenge in reaching the goal is the disparity between cultures. Different types of inhibitions are also a reason why church members do not invite people of other cultures to the church. There is a definite need for people to overcome these inhibitions. One way of doing it is to understand the worldview of other cultures. Since every culture is different, it is imperative we understand those other cultures. The church must make an intentional effort to reach people of other nations. To this effect, some training is essential. With the four pastors visiting and sharing their worldview with the team, the team's understanding of other cultures changed. Now, they have started looking at other people's points of view. Instead of expecting visitors to adapt, we understood we need to make some adjustments to make these others feel welcome and comfortable. What is good in Indian culture may not be good for others. That was a great revelation that the team had.

We had pastors of four different cultures share their worldview with us—Caucasian, Afro-American, Hispanic and Filipino. The same questionnaire was given to all the resource faculty. We took notes at all four culture exposure sessions. Each culture is so unique, as indeed is Indian culture. Thus, can we retain people of other cultures in the church in light of our own culture? This is difficult; however, the understanding of these other cultures is important. In this way we learn to respect one another. We learn how not to offend one another. But above all the different cultures, one binding factor is

the Biblical culture. When I say Biblical culture, I do not mean the Judeo-Christian culture. I am not emphasizing the ceremonial law, but the moral law.

### **Biblical Rationale Evaluation**

The Biblical basis of this project is founded on the clarification that Paul gives in Galatians 3:28- 29, that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” In this passage Paul eliminates any kind of bias, prejudice or discrimination against any community, gender or class of people. He strikes down every kind of discrimination between a Jew and a Greek; slave and free; male and female and declares an equal emancipated status to everyone. Keeping this mandate in view, this project that was implemented in Transformation Church aligns with the Biblical rationale. Transformation Church has been endeavoring to be a multicultural church. Though the desire is Biblical, the church has been unaware how to achieve it. A lot of exposure to the worldview of other cultures was thus important. The blindside is that sometimes inadvertently we have discriminated against or ignored people of other cultures when they have visited our church. The discrimination was not consciously done, but was more the result of inhibition. Irrespective of the reason, Transformation Church has not been able to retain people of other cultures. The project was implemented to understand and learn about other cultures, their likes and dislikes, taboos, church practices etc. Based on the above mandate, there is no place for discrimination in the church among members. All are equal. All are important. All had the same beginning to the Christian journey at the cross. All have the same ending at the throne of God. In Christ, all distinctions are

erased. Therefore, a church should not even be ethnic. It needs to be a picture of heaven on earth.

Hermeneutical standards for the biblical interpretation: I did not learn Greek or Hebrew in my Masters. I do not have an MDiv. I have a Master's degree in Ministry and a pre-doctoral degree, which was considered equivalent to an MDiv. My concentration was in leadership. Therefore, because of my lack of fundamental Hebrew or Greek, I could not employ a detailed word study in some cases. However, with the knowledge gained from research and reading, I was able to relate to some words that I used in my paper. I learnt about the relevant Hebrew words from the book *Holy Roar*, and I studied the meanings of words that denote various types of praise. Further reading helped me understand the different forms of praise.

As far as textual interpretation is concerned, I was looking for a Scripture passage that matches the project. I realized that the project had to originate from the Scripture in the form of a Biblical mandate. The project, thus, originated in the mandate found in Galatians 3:28-29. Exegesis helped in understanding these verses. Another Scripture passage used in the project was from Acts 10 and 11. In order to keep things simple and objective, I divided the chapters thematically and taught them that way in the project implementation. The third scriptural portion that I used was from the book of Nehemiah. I focused on the vision of Nehemiah and how he accomplished his vision in fifty-two days.

Justifying the project Biblically: The project was completely Biblically founded especially in terms of being based on the rationale. The Biblical rationale was founded on the passage in Galatians 2:28-29 which argues against any type of discrimination in

the church. Revelation 7:9 describes a picture of heaven, with people from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. Based on this, Transformation Church, which is currently purely ethnic, has a dire need to become multicultural in order to remain Biblical. The project included Biblical teaching sessions on Peter's paradigm shift towards associating with the Gentiles; Nehemiah's vision in accomplishing a difficult task; a movie based on a true story of two different teams from different cultural backgrounds becoming assimilated into one; and four visiting resource pastors who taught about their cultural background. All ten sessions were focused on training the team to become open-minded and make the necessary adjustments to accommodate people of other cultures in the church.

### **Research and Discovery Evaluation**

History of the ministry's impact on project results: When a church is inwardly focused on people who look like us and talk like us, it is more likely to disintegrate. That is proven from the plight of International Outreach Church. Transformation Church is a break off of IOC. Chantilly Bible Church, Virginia, assimilated people from Chinese and Hispanic origin and ultimately, after several years, is now a multicultural church. Wilcrest Baptist Church, Houston, began as a predominantly white congregation, but later became a multicultural church. This happened as the church took one step at a time. Transformation Church members are used to interacting with people of other cultures in their work places. Thus, the inhibitions against making friendships with people of other cultures can be easily overcome. Just as Chantilly Bible Church and Wilcrest Baptist Church became multicultural, the Transformation Church team expressed a strong desire to become multicultural. Based on the hand model of WBC,

Transformation Church has moved two steps forward in becoming multicultural. We were originally located on the far right of the model (unwilling to mix with other cultures), but after the training sessions we could be called Seekers (looking to become multicultural, while questioning the racial divide). The team members also take the plight of IOC as a warning.

Every culture is unique, reflecting various differences. Cultures differ in a range of aspects: food habits, dress, meeting schedules, worship styles and morals. In spite of this cultural disparity, it is possible to find a common ground so that people of other cultures can worship God together. Not only should the goal be to accommodate other cultures, but also to celebrate the variety.

Serendipity: The greatest discovery that was made during the project was the beauty of each culture. The same questionnaire was used for all four cultures that we learnt about—Caucasian, Afro-American, Hispanic and Filipino. The answers to those questions revealed the variety and the beauty in celebrating those cultures.

Further scope of the project: This project can definitely be carried out in other contexts or situations. The Biblical rationale is the basis. The various forms of worship mentioned in the book, *Holy Roar*, can be found in any church. All that will be different is the method, but the principle is the same. There is no place for discrimination in the church based on position, nationality or gender. Instead of trying to stay ethnic, a church should be intentional in becoming multicultural. Even if not every church does so, at least immigrant churches should be able to do such projects. During the sessions with the pastors, we found many common situations between Indians, Hispanics and Filipinos.

Such commonality speaks for itself. This model can thus be attempted with churches filled with immigrants. In fact, a medical doctor from Massachusetts General Hospital has asked me to write a book based on my project. He suggested that such a book would be useful for pastors and lay leaders, especially immigrants. They could be educated in how and why we should reach people of other nationalities.

### **Implementation Evaluation**

Lessons learnt: The selected members definitely absorbed the desired objective of the project. Initially, some members were opposed to the idea. There was fanaticism about their own culture. Some did not want to transcend their comfort zone. Some wanted to modify the Great Commission for the Indian community alone. Some even questioned the need to invite people of other cultures into the church. I would like to submit here the written response of each of the team members after they had the teaching in the ten sessions. Apart from the empirical results, I have reproduced their responses below.

Hemanth Lymon

“After listening to different ethnic pastors and sessions on our church [having] a multi-cultural church vision, personally it has enriched me a lot and has redirected my mindset to appreciate, accommodate and assimilate our church to a multi-cultural one.”

Samson Gattu

“When I first heard of the project, I thought this is a very radical idea, which could be possible only in heaven after God wraps up things in his time. I thought God Himself created ethnicities and scattered people away so [the] Gospel can reach the ends

of the earth. It is quite normal for people to form groups and try to stick to the groups they like and people they can relate well to. Even though I am a strong proponent of Church being beyond cultures, always actively welcoming people of other cultures to the church, I thought a church should not have multi-culture as the guiding vision. But considering the fact that “Seeking God first” is the guiding vision of the Church and that seeking God is beyond cultures, consciously working towards being a multi-cultural church will only fit well into the Church’s ultimate vision that God created. Besides the challenges involved in co-existing of cultures as we know today made me think we may be setting ourselves up for greater problems which we have not handled before. But after series of sessions by Pastors from various cultures and our Pastor’s thought process and passion, I realized that these challenges appear to be [born] out of ignorance of other cultures. The more I learned about other cultures, the more confident I am that we can make it. And given the geographical advantage where multi cultures meet, I am all the more convinced that we have to make a conscious effort to become a multi-cultural church and by doing it God’s name is glorified.”

Alice Lymon

“The session we had as part of Pastor Chandra’s doctoral project and input from many pastors from multicultural backgrounds were eye opening to me in understanding how this vision stems from biblical principles of our God whose love is toward all nations and peoples. We gained new insight into other cultures and the knowledge of how our church could effectively implement this vision backed by the burden that follows prayer, planning, risk-taking and other aspects.”

Abhilasha

“The D Min project has been a wonderful experience and an eye opener as well. Prior to the sessions, I had my reservations that I would not be welcomed into the Anglo or Black community as I was ethnic (which was echoed by the Hispanic or Filipino pastors) and did not belong there. I would be reserved and would be careful what I talked [about] with them. But after the sessions, it was surprising to know that they feel the same about us and how they had concerns to mingle with us. It taught me that together we had to work on compromising some things to make each other welcome.”

Sanjay Pita

“The sessions help me observe and understand the various cultural worship and fellowship patterns. I was amused to find synergy and similarities between different ethnic groups. It opened my perspective and broadened my horizons to worship, share and invite other cultural people. As we plan to head into making our church a multi-cultural, we should be ready to adjust and accept the change with humility and Christ centered objective. I understand that the progress might be at a slower pace and take time for the trust, transparency and comfort to kick in such diversity.”

Ramesh Rangaram

“It is really an amazing experience to understand different cultures and understand the things that we need to cut down to accommodate our brothers in different cultures. I was personally touched with the vision of Peter and the words God spoke to him: “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean,” and also the way God connected things between Peter and Cornelius (like speaking to both of them through

visions, and confirming that it came from God). Jews mingling with Gentiles was a huge thing for Jews, but God used the first century church to reach so many different cultures and people. God's ways are mysterious.”

Mohan Arja

“After these ten sessions—I had missed one though—my perspective towards transforming from ethnic church to a multi-cultural church had changed. The session where we discussed Acts 10 was eye opening for me, and session on Nehemiah, motivated me to become involved in making it happen.”

Heera Edla

“I had to go to India in the middle of the sessions. I was very skeptical about the project initially. Though not fanatical, I cherish my culture, and was apprehensive if we could make such a transition at all. But while the sessions were being taught, I found the vision biblical and after attending Pastor Jon Boulet's session, my perspective started shifting towards trying to understand other cultures too. Then I missed most of the other sessions since I had to leave for India for some time. But I was in time for the last session. On the last day, I realized that I had missed some powerful sessions. This I know because my confidence levels were very inferior to the others who had attended the sessions, but I concur with Pastor Chandra's project and the vision.”

The Congregation

Assessment of the congregation's strengths and weaknesses with a view to seeing the challenge, need or opportunity that the project plans to address: The church was aware of the strengths of multiculturalism. Transformation Church will go out of its

way to make the stay or visit of a person very warm, irrespective of their nationality. The challenge is in bringing that person into the church to worship with us. The challenge is more outside the church building than inside. After the selected team had been through the teaching sessions (the entire church was not involved in the teaching sessions) the team had itself moved to a positive mindset about the potential to become multicultural. The team believes it is a doable project. Everyone is convinced. Were it not for the teaching sessions, their mindsets would still be closed.

Strategy for the goal: The church did not have a strategy but was excited to join the leadership of the pastor in the project. As a leader, the pastor took initiatives and none of them, including in the past, were sabotaged or canceled because of non-cooperation. Since the project was successful, each of the selected team members decided to reach out to two or three families and cascade what they learnt in the sessions. They have been impacted immensely and want to carry forth the vision.

Did we implement the strategy adequately? Though there were hiccups in consolidating the project, it was implemented to satisfaction and beyond. All the sessions were on schedule. Though the timings had to be adjusted sometimes, none of the members of the team were put to inconvenience. The right audio visuals were provided for the movie. For the teaching sessions, all members, including the resource persons, were given a template (Appendix K) to follow. Scriptural interpretation was done within the context. When the tests were administered there was interaction among members if they did not understand. At the end of the sessions, the mindset of the members of the team had altered to accept people of other cultural backgrounds. It is now my desire and the desire of the team to achieve the target of inviting people of other

cultures, and more than that, to see that they are retained in the church. In order to achieve this goal, I will be implementing this project beyond the selected team to the whole church. I will be inviting the four pastors who came to teach the four sessions about their cultural background to visit the church again, only this time to teach all the church members. Since the team is now ready to accept people from other cultures, I would like to extend this approach to the whole church.

### **Summary Analysis**

I believe I have achieved the desired results in the implementation of this project. Eight people from within congregation were chosen to be in the selected team and the rest of the congregation were considered a control group. (I wanted the rest of the church also to be aware of the project through the pre and post questionnaire given to all.) The pre-test questionnaire was administered. The project was then implemented. The project was comprised of ten sessions: watching a movie and analyzing it with application to a church environment; four teaching sessions by pastors of different cultural backgrounds; four sessions from the Bible; and finally, the Nelson Change Formula (Appendix L) to determine if the church is ready to undergo the transition from ethnic to multicultural. After the ten sessions, a post-test questionnaire was administered. In the implementation of the project, there were several hiccups and thus alternate solutions were needed. With all the necessary changes, the project was successfully implemented.

The need for Transformation Church to transition from being an ethnic church to a multicultural one was identified. This need or challenge was established based on the biblical mandate. The possibility of celebrating various cultures in a church was

welcomed by the selected group of members (though initially the idea was considered counter-productive). The basis of this project is founded on Galatians 3:28,29. Paul states there is no place for discrimination among God's children. Also, Revelation 7:9 portrays the picture of heaven with people from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne. This is what Transformation Church needs to become on earth.

Several other churches have tried this ambitious task in the past. I picked the examples of Chantilly Bible Church, Chantilly, VA and Wilcrest Baptist Church, Houston, TX. These two churches have been successful in inviting and retaining people of all cultural backgrounds into their church. Thus, Transformation Church could follow their example and find success in the common goal. At the end of the sessions, I asked the selected members to give their feedback in writing, which I have added to my project evaluation summary. The whole team was unanimous in the desire and decision to become multicultural. Thus, the teaching sessions brought an enormous change in the mindset and attitude of the team.

### **Recommended Revisions**

The biggest mistake that I made during this project was to assume that everything would go as planned. Just because the selected members signed the document to attend every session, we had people who could not come for a few sessions. Another person missed five sessions out of ten. I strongly believe that while the vision is strong, during the implementation, one must have some leverage, although without compromising with the vision as a whole. We could not start the first session on time because of city-wide traffic issues. East Indians are notorious about not keeping

time. The fear I had on the first day was that we were violating the very idea of keeping the time. The problem was traffic, but the fear was attached to the culture. I was too utopian in my thinking regarding the implementation.

### **Prospects for Future Study**

Since the selected team members have consciously agreed and decided to intentionally reach out to people of other cultures, we would like to implement the same training in the church. I picked the same model for my project that our church was endeavoring to become. I would like the whole church to be exposed to what the team went through. Though the congregation functioned as the passive control group, it is time that the whole church is exposed to the beauty in every culture. I would like to invite all the four pastors again to teach the entire church about their cultures. We don't want to merely accomplish this vision on paper for the doctoral project, but also in reality, as part of the very life and purpose of the church.

During the Christmas season (the same time I received permission to implement the project), I was encouraged by a doctor from Massachusetts General Hospital to write a book for immigrant pastors, based on the project I implemented. Most immigrant pastors try to reach their own ethnic congregations. Very rarely does one find a multicultural church with an ethnic immigrant pastor, especially in a church plant. I believe my experience and the project molded into a book will equip and enable more ethnic churches to become multicultural, if and when such a book by an ethnic immigrant pastor is published.

APPENDIX A  
ILLUSTRATION



## DEMOGRAPHICS OF NEW CASTLE COUNTY

140

American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (e)	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.9%
Asian alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	X	X	X	5.6%
Asian alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	4.2%	7.1%	1.0%	4.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (a)	X	X	X	0.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, April 1, 2010 (a)	Z	Z	Z	0.2%
Two or More Races, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	X	X	X	2.6%
Two or More Races, percent, April 1, 2010	3.7%	2.3%	2.6%	2.9%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015) (b)	X	X	X	17.6%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, April 1, 2010 (b)	14.2%	4.8%	12.4%	16.3%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, July 1, 2015, (V2015)	X	X	X	61.8%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, April 1, 2010	45.1%	79.4%	27.9%	63.7%
<b>Population</b>				
<b>Characteristics</b>				
Veterans, 2011-2015	1,038	1,302	3,324	20,108,332
Foreign born persons, percent, 2011-2015	14.4%	10.4%	6.7%	13.2%
<b>Housing</b>				
Housing units, July 1, 2016, (V2016)	X	X	X	135,697,926
Housing units, April 1, 2010	7,466	10,475	32,820	131,704,730
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2011-2015	67.2%	56.7%	46.2%	63.9%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2011-2015	\$177,800	\$268,100	\$167,500	\$178,600
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2011-2015	\$1,435	\$1,631	\$1,319	\$1,462
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2011-2015	\$682	\$466	\$475	\$468
Median gross rent, 2011-2015	\$1,309	\$1,072	\$910	\$928
Building permits, 2016	X	X	X	1,206,642
<b>Families and Living Arrangements</b>				
Households, 2011-2015	6,945	9,935	28,881	116,926,305
Persons per household, 2011-2015	2.66	2.57	2.38	2.64
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2011-2015	64.5%	64.6%	81.2%	86.1%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2011-2015	22.9%	13.7%	14.1%	21.0%
<b>Education</b>				
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2011-2015	86.3%	95.5%	83.2%	86.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2011-2015	26.1%	55.7%	26.4%	29.8%
<b>Health</b>				
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2011-2015	7.1%	4.7%	9.8%	6.6%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	△ 12.7%	△ 6.0%	△ 10.9%	△ 10.5%
<b>Economy</b>				
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2011-2015	69.4%	50.1%	62.3%	63.3%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2011-2015	62.5%	46.6%	60.2%	58.5%

Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	15,408	176,966	169,234	708,138,596
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	8,751	1,384,659	968,967	2,040,441,203
Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	D	276,405	D	5,686,729,632
Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	25,719	117,467	767,729	5,208,023,478
Total retail sales, 2012 (\$1,000) (c)	173,540	921,425	862,822	4,219,821,871
Total retail sales per capita, 2012 (c)	NA	\$28,468	\$12,103	\$13,443
<b>Transportation</b>				
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2011-2015	26.9	22.4	21.5	25.9
<b>Income and Poverty</b>				
Median household income (in 2015 dollars), 2011-2015	\$61,924	\$54,187	\$40,465	\$53,889
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2015 dollars), 2011-2015	\$25,941	\$24,454	\$25,951	\$28,930
Persons in poverty, percent	▲ 14.3%	▲ 25.6%	▲ 24.5%	▲ 13.5%
<b>Businesses</b>				
Total employer establishments, 2015	X	X	X	7,653,936
Total employment, 2015	X	X	X	124,085,947
Total annual payroll, 2015 (\$1,000)	X	X	X	6,253,488,252
Total employment, percent change, 2014-2015	X	X	X	2.5%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2015	X	X	X	24,331,403
All firms, 2012	666	2,579	7,942	27,626,360
Men-owned firms, 2012	417	1,260	4,217	14,844,597
Women-owned firms, 2012	367	745	1,973	9,878,397
Minority-owned firms, 2012	358	407	2,129	7,952,366
Nonminority-owned firms, 2012	572	1,950	4,402	18,987,918
Veteran-owned firms, 2012	108	261	723	2,521,682
Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012	621	2,045	5,691	24,070,685
<b>Geography</b>				
Population per square mile, 2010	3,391.3	3,424.5	6,487.7	87.4
Land area in square miles, 2010	5.71	9.19	10.90	3,531,905.43
FIPS Code	1004130	1050670	1077580	00

▲ This geographic level of poverty and health estimates are not comparable to other geographic levels of these estimates

Some estimates presented here come from sample data, and thus have sampling errors that may render some apparent differences between geographies statistically indistinguishable. Click the Quick Info icon to the left of each row in TABLE view to learn about sampling error.

The vintage year (e.g., V2015) refers to the final year of the series (2010 thru 2015). Different vintage years of estimates are not comparable.

- (a) Includes persons reporting only one race
- (b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories
- (c) Economic Census - Puerto Rico data are not comparable to U.S. Economic Census data
- D Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information
- F Fewer than 25 firms
- FN Footnote on this item in place of data
- NA Not available
- S Suppressed, does not meet publication standards
- X Not applicable

## APPENDIX C

### VISION



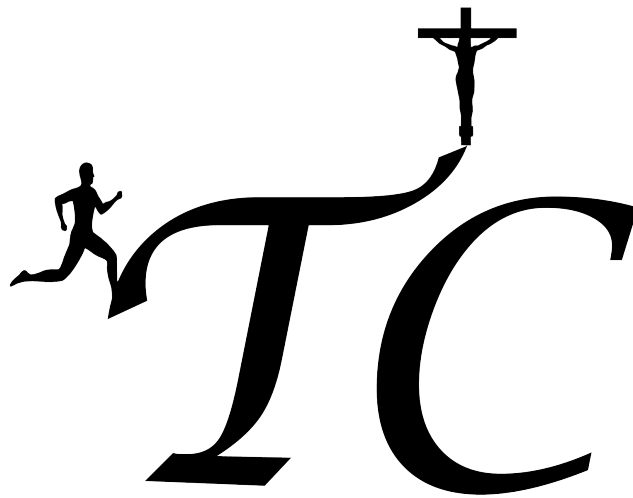
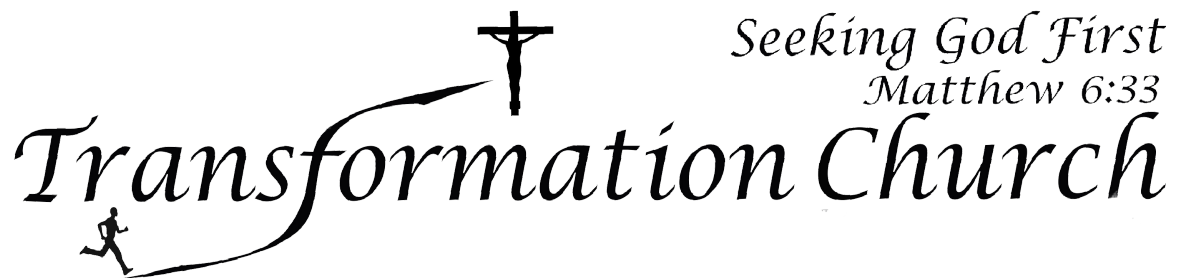
*2401 Ogletown Rd, Newark, DE 19711*  
*[www.transformationchurchde.org](http://www.transformationchurchde.org)*

### Vision

- We, the members of Transformation Church, foresee sharing the good news of the life, death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the young families of Wilmington, Bear and Newark, DE from every nation, tribe, people and language.
- We endeavor to infiltrate the gospel into our neighborhood and our work places using dialogue evangelism in order to evangelize the lost and assimilate those who not regularly attend any church into Transformation Church
- We shall emphasize in depth expository study of God's word and thus focus on spiritual growth, nurturing, spiritual maturity, disciplines including prayer, holiness and personal devotion. We shall prioritize our daily lives with utmost devotion and prominence to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- We envision new believers being 'plugged in \_ to church life and growing into maturity to become teachers and leaders in the area of their giftedness.
- We believe in the pattern of growing from being a trainee to a trainer (Discipleship) and ultimately become a mentor in the area of one's giftedness. We look forward to a strong Sunday school for all ages that will help the young families build their lives on biblical foundation
- We envision having our own building and simultaneously support other upcoming churches with the use of our facility. We foresee the church running its own day care thus serving the community and also a ministry of the church.
- In fulfilling the Great Commission, we shall focus on evangelism, outreach and impact local community and then the rest of the world.
- We shall use technology to spread the gospel to other parts of the world.
- We envision generosity in our giving to missions, both local and global.
- The church desires to teach the youth and adults the value of being privileged in this country by taking them on short-term mission trips to the needy parts of the world.
- We shall yearn to plant churches with Transformation Church as the mother church.

APPENDIX D

TRANSFORMATION CHURCH LOGOS



APPENDIX E

STRENGTHS FINDER TEST



Rudrapathi Chandrasekhar <thelordschandu@gmail.com>

**Your Top Five Strengths**

<strengthscenter@gallup.com>  
To: <thelordschandu@gmail.com>

Wed, Nov 25, 2015, 6:15 AM

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GALLUP Strengths Center

**CONGRATULATIONS, Chandra!**

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Read Your Strengths  
Reports

Watch the Learning  
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For inspiration, subscribe to our YouTube channel to hear how others are using their strengths. And follow us on Twitter to track our latest strengths-based news and events.

## APPENDIX F

### MINISTRY OUTSIDE CHURCH WALLS IN ACTS

The Kingdom, the Church and the Marketplace 103

a religious setting: the healing of the lame man at the Temple gate called Beautiful (see Acts 3:1-10). This highlights the fact that the Early Church was not confined to a building or to a prearranged schedule of meetings. In Acts, the Church was a movement that shook or took cities. The 39 supernatural actions that took place in the marketplace are listed below.

#### Divine Interventions from the Book of Acts

Here are the 39 major divine interventions, or supernatural events, that happened in the marketplace or nearby. This roster from Acts is quite impressive.

Acts Reference	Divine Interventions	Location
2:37-41	Three-thousand men were pierced to the heart by Peter's preaching and were then baptized.	City streets
4:30-31	An earthquake served as an echo for God's amen to the disciples' first recorded corporate prayer.	Believers' gathering
5:12-14	There were signs, wonders and salvation for many at Solomon's Portico.	Public square
5:15-16	Streets turned into healing venues.	City streets
5:19	An angel set Peter free from prison.	Prison
7:56	Stephen received a celestial vision.	City streets
8:5-8,13	Philip performed signs and wonders, cast out demons and healed the sick, bringing much rejoicing to Samaria.	City streets
8:18-24	Peter had a power encounter with a magician.	City streets
8:26	An angel gave directions to Phillip.	City streets
8:39	Supernatural transportation was provided for Phillip.	Desert road
9:1-9	Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus on a public road. The Lord spoke in a vision to Ananias.	Damascus road

Acts Reference	Divine Interventions	Location
9:10-16	The Lord spoke in a vision to Ananias.	Home
9:18	Scales fell off the eyes of Paul upon receiving the Holy Spirit.	Home
9:32-35	The entire population of Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord as a result of Peter healing Aeneas.	City streets
9:40-43	Dorcas was raised from the dead and many people in Joppa believed in Jesus.	Home
10:1-6	The vision of an angel was given to Cornelius.	Home
10:9-16	Peter fell into a trance while praying in the home of Simon, a businessman, and received specific guidance from the Lord.	Home
10:44-48	The Holy Spirit fell on God-fearing Gentiles in the home of a Roman centurion.	Gentile home
12:1-19	The hand of the Lord was with some of those who fled Jerusalem after Stephen's death, and many pagans came to the Lord for the first time. An angel delivered Peter from jail again.	Prison
12:23	An angel struck Herod dead.	Palace
13:6-12	Paul had a power encounter with a magician.	City streets
13:48-50	Great crowds assembled to hear the Word, and many Gentiles believed as the gospel spread over an entire region.	City streets
14:1-5	Signs and wonders were performed to validate the message of the Apostles.	City streets
14:8-11	A lame man was healed in public in Lystra.	City streets
16:9-10	A vision was given to Paul.	Home
16:16-18	A power encounter occurred in the marketplace; it resulted in the deliverance of a slave girl from a divining spirit.	Public square

Acts Reference	Divine Interventions	Location
16:26	An earthquake set Paul and Silas free from prison and led to the salvation of the jailer and his family.	Prison
17:5-9	Wicked men of the marketplace failed to kill the apostles.	City streets
17:17	Paul turned the marketplace into a classroom.	Public square
19:10	Paul turned a school owned by Tyrannus into a staging ground to saturate Asia with the gospel in the next two years.	Lecture hall
19:11-13	Extraordinary miracles were performed by Paul.	City streets
19:17	Jewish exorcists were publicly put to shame by demons.	City streets
19:18-20	Many magicians got saved and afterwards burned their demonic paraphernalia.	Public square
19:23-41	A marketplace rebellion orchestrated by Demetrius and his union was foiled.	Public square
20:6-12	A young man was raised from the dead	Home
23:11	The Lord appeared by Paul's side inside the Roman barracks, and comforted him.	Prison
27:23-26	An angel delivered a message to Paul who preached it on the deck of a ship.	Ship
28:1-5	Paul overcame the bite of a viper.	Beach
28:8-10	A nobleman was healed, followed by many others from all over Malta.	Home

### Make the Boardroom Your Pulpit

We can expect God to show up in the marketplace. This is why today the boardroom should be to those anointed to serve in the marketplace what the pulpit is to pastors, and the people in their sphere of influence

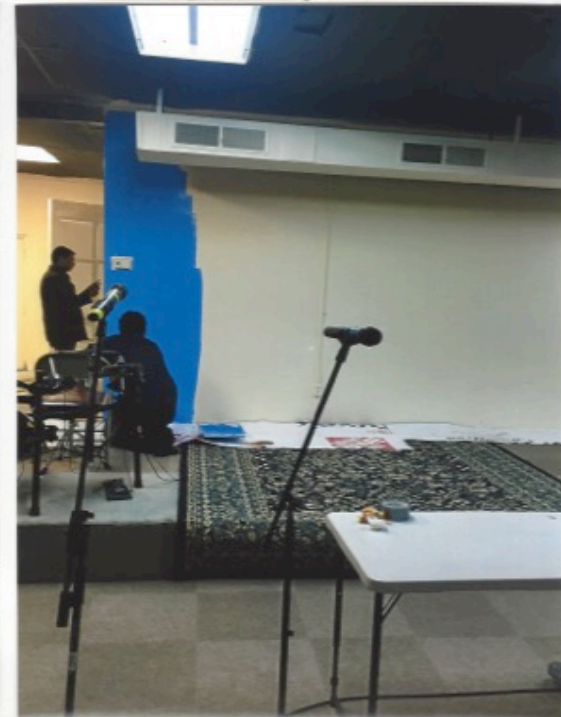
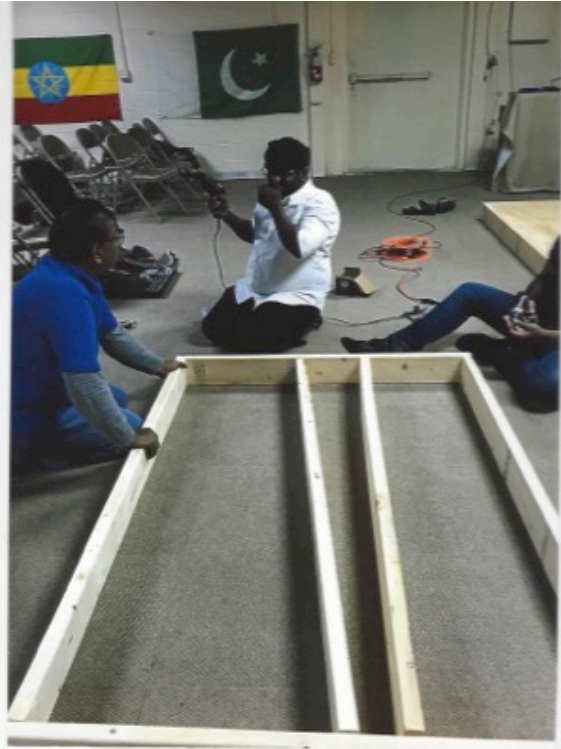
APPENDIX G

CHURCH BUILDING WHEN LEASED



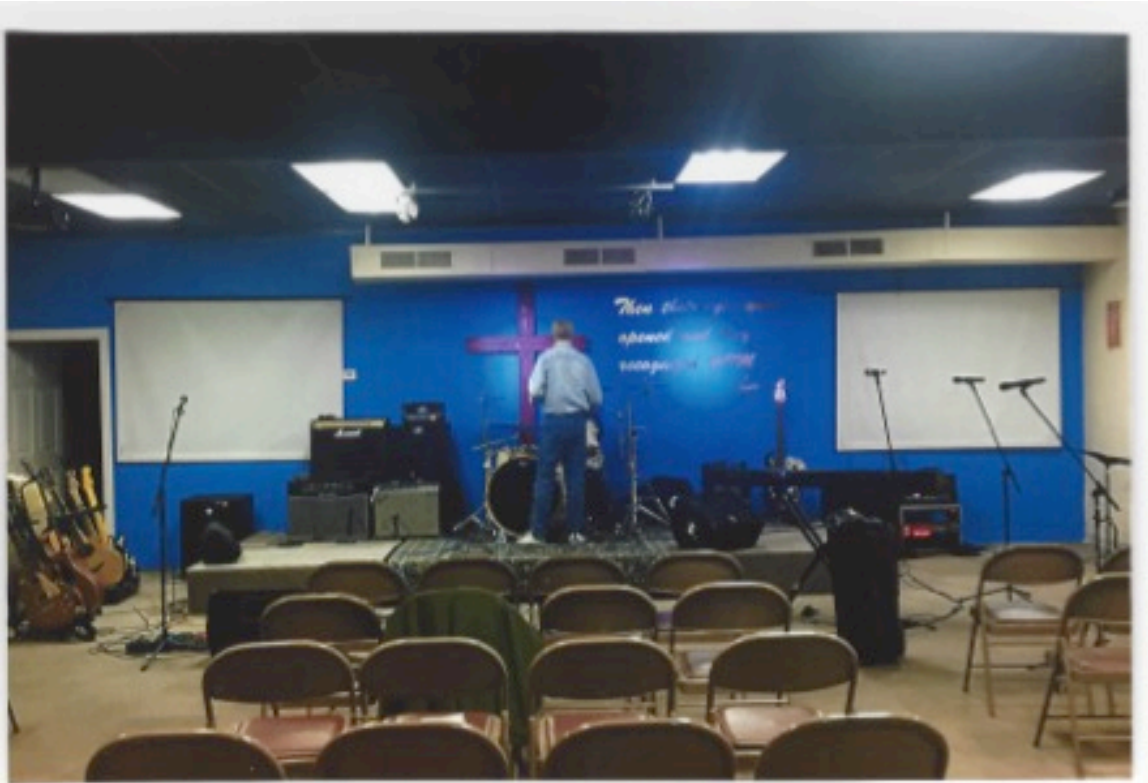
APPENDIX H

CHURCH BUILDING DURING RENOVATION



APPENDIX I

CHURCH BUILDING AFTER RENOVATION



## APPENDIX J

### PRE AND POST TEST QUESTIONS

27 questions

Strongly agree – 1, Agree – 2, Neutral – 3, Disagree – 4, Strongly disagree – 5

1. The Bible suggests that we invite people to church only those who look like us and talk like us?
2. We will grow as a church only if we have Indians with us
3. I am comfortable talking to people of other cultures?
4. I am very fanatic about my culture
5. I feel comfortable sharing the gospel with people of my culture
6. Since we live in the US, which is a melting pot, it is better to assimilate people from other cultures
7. Our children, who are second generation immigrants, will find the cultural disparity and therefore may not worship with us.
8. We need to retain our cultural heritage even in our religious beliefs and worship style
9. Our beliefs and worship are better than any other culture we have seen here in America.
10. India is a diverse country and it is better to find a common ground as immigrants here in the country
11. We might become close minded by restricting our church membership if it is composed of Indians only
12. We will give a cold shoulder to anybody from a different culture if anyone wants to join the church
13. We need to see the lostness of the person more than culture

14. Bible and the gospel should reach every culture
15. We will lose our identity if people from other cultures join our church
16. We better continue to be an ethnic church since we could not retain people from other cultures who visited us
17. We have always been Indian church, so let us continue to be the same (we will implement the Great Commission within our community)
18. The Bible expects us to reach out to people of other nationalities
19. My accent is my inhibition so I don't want people from other cultures in our church
20. I am afraid the other cultures might bring conflict within the church
21. Since most of the immigrants believers in the church are on visas who may move to other states for work, it is better to have the locals to keep the church stable.
22. We will show Christ like love to anybody who walks into the church irrespective of their culture
23. I am ready to yield my position to any incoming member from other cultures if he/she is more gifted than me (both have the same gifts)
24. The church will be more stable and stronger financially if we invite people of other cultures
25. Having people of other cultures in the church will help the youth and kid's ministry
26. We need to adapt to the other cultures in the church since we are able to adapt to people of different cultures in our work place
27. A church should never discriminate between people

APPENDIX K  
TEACHING TEMPLATE FOR PASTORS

Guideline questions/pointers for the visiting resource persons for the project of Chandra Rudrapathi

1. Dressing to go to church
2. Timing and punctuality
3. Worship style
4. Preaching personnel
5. Length of the message
6. Lord's supper
7. Fellowship pattern
8. Role of Food
9. Role of women
10. Children' ministry
11. Cultural taboos
12. Celebratory points

After discussing the above points, the resource person shall answer questions from the team members if they have any.

## APPENDIX L

### TEN SESSION NOTES FOR PROJECT

#### **Lesson #1 - Questions based on 'Remember the Titans.'**

1. What were the characteristics of the conflict?
2. What is the leadership style of Coach Boone and Coach Yoast?
3. How did Coach Boone handle the rebellion from the White kids?
4. How did Gary Bertier and Julius Campbell react against their own counterparts?
5. What was the turning point in the movie?
6. What do you think brought the racial reconciliation?
7. If you had to identify with any character in the movie, who would you identify with?

## Lesson # 2 – Pastor Jon Boulet (Anglo Pastor)

Church growth principle –

Anglo  
Pastor Jon Boulet

Guideline questions/pointers for the visiting resource persons for the project of Chandra Rudrapathi

- Age factor
1. Dressing to go to church – Casual / formal
  2. Timing and punctuality – High priority
  3. Worship style – Moving towards contemporary, Denomination based
  4. Preaching personnel – Pulpit is close (Biblical qualification not culture)  
women – No ;
  5. Length of the message – 35 min
  6. Lord's supper – Christmas Eve, Easter, Every other month
  7. Fellowship pattern –
  8. Role of Food –
  9. Role of women – Active,
  10. Children's ministry
  11. Cultural taboos
  12. Celebratory points – Men's / Women's

Prejudices

After discussing the above points, the resource person shall answer questions from the team members if they have any.

1. Immigrants are close knit – too closed
2. Not relational; just transactional
1. Don't want to be minority (if they join the church)
2. Food (Spicy)

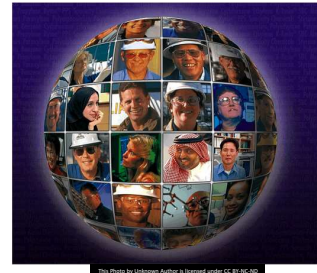
## Lesson # 3 – Pastor Dennis Marshall (Afro American Pastor)

1/13/2019

### Apostle John saw diversity in heaven

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Revelations 7:9



3

### Guideline Questions - Blacks

1. Dressing to go to church – **varies from casual to business dress**
2. Timing and punctuality – **varies from early, prompt, to late**
3. Worship style – **varies from charismatic to somber; sometimes preceded by devotional songs, Scripture, prayer, testimonies**
4. Preaching – **varies from strong driving to lecturing or instructional**
5. Length of the message – **varies from 10-15 to 40-60 or longer**
6. Lord's Supper – **varies from 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays to occasional; waver & grape juice**
7. Fellowship Pattern – **varies from periodic fellowship with other churches to none**
8. Role of Food – **varies - normally used for special occasions to increase fellowship with others or in celebration**
9. Role of women – **varies from all roles available to selective roles available**
10. Children's ministry – **varies from existent to non-existent**
11. Cultural taboos – **varies depending on the church's culture – walking, talking, kneeling, standing, access controlled by ushers**
12. Celebratory points – **varies, but typically Easter, Mother's Day, Christmas, and some may include Father's Day, MLK Celebration, Black History Month**
13. **PLUS** - Christian Education methods – **Sermons, Sunday School, Bible Study, Vacation Bible School, Home Study Groups, or Sermons only**

4

2

## Lesson # 4 – Pastor Jorge Altieri (Hispanic Pastor)

Racism among Hispanics

Jorge Altieri  
P P P Baptist P P  
P P P P P

Guideline questions/pointers for the visiting resource persons for the project of Chandra Rudrapathi

1. Dressing to go to church – Modesty
2. Timing and punctuality – Big issue
3. Worship style – Emotional, Romantic, Sentimental,  
Balance of classical and contemporary, Expressive moderately  
Genres of music
4. Preaching personnel – Pre preaching sessions
5. Length of the message – Teaching sessions needed since the members  
don't have church background 55 min - 1 hr
6. Lord's supper – Closed Lord's supper  
Before the service – Every 2 months [ Gospel exaltation is  
the reason for changing  
the schedule
7. Fellowship pattern – 2 meals a year Potluck, unbelievers show up  
Right Schedule
8. Role of Food – Service team
9. Role of women – Some strong some submissive  
NO female elders
10. Children's ministry – Background checks
11. Cultural taboos – Domestic violence, sexuality (don't talk about it)  
Live ins
12. Celebratory points – Birthdays, Anniversaries, Graduation, Baptism,

After discussing the above points, the resource person shall answer questions from the team members if they have any.

Sub lease  
cottage meetings  
not so much

Will not even attempt to establish a relationship  
with Indians  
– Language barrier  
Friendly

## Lesson # 5 – Pastor Jesse Arce (Filipino Pastor)

Representation of the community  
in the leadership

Denomination  
Catholic

Pastor Jesse Arce  
Good Shepherd Baptist Church

Guideline questions/pointers for the visiting resource persons for the project of Chandra Rudrapathi

1. Dressing to go to church – <sup>20 yrs ago</sup> Best dress to church, Due respect to God, Seniors these days  
Younger generation is more diverse
2. Timing and punctuality – Struggles, Philippines – Traffic problem, Early comers enjoy fellowship till all others come, Colonized by Spain (late comers are prominent)
3. Worship style – Based on denomination Baptist – Hymns, Cereally-mixed, 2nd generation – contemporary
4. Preaching personnel – Senior Pastor, Deacons on special occasions  
Baptist – no women
5. Length of the message – <sup>majority</sup> 45 min to 1 hour
6. Lord's supper – Frequency (once in a month)  
closed in some places
7. Fellowship pattern – Home <sup>meeting</sup> encouraged, Sunday School, Lunch every Sunday
8. Role of Food – Bonding, Biblical
9. Role of women – Student ministry, Counting offering, Teaching ladies,
10. Children's ministry – SS, VBS, Christmas VBS,
11. Cultural taboos – Take exception too easily, avoid the problem, Don't like negative
12. Celebratory points – Mother's Day, Father's Day, Birthday celebrations in the church (Basically church community)

After discussing the above points, the resource person shall answer questions from the team members if they have any.

Observations –

1. Language other than Tagalog offends
2. Too closed culturally

### **Lesson # 6 : Study on Acts 10 – Cornelius and Peter’s Vision**

1. What is the divine role in connection established between Cornelius and Peter?
2. Peter’s Vision
  - a. Literal
  - b. Symbolism explained
3. Scriptural backing for Peter’s denial
4. Divine role in Peter’s conviction for his readiness to go with the three men to visit Cornelius
5. Peter’s address in Cornelius’ house
6. The role of the Holy Spirit in Cornelius’ house

**Lesson #7 – Acts 11 (Peter's explanation to the brothers at Jerusalem)**

1. What was the Jerusalem brothers' complaint against Peter?
2. Why do you think the Jerusalem brothers objected?
3. Describe Peter's discourse to the brothers in Jerusalem
4. Role of Trinity in the conviction of Peter (creating willingness to accept the Gentiles) and Cornelius (being added to God's kingdom?)
5. How could Peter not object any more to the Holy Spirit?

### **Lesson #8 – Power of Vision**

1. How was Nehemiah's vision born? What are the elements of the birth of a vision?
2. How does the vision of Transformation Church relate to the story of vision in Nehemiah?

### **Lesson #9 – Implementation and accomplishment of Vision**

1. Who should be involved in the implementation of the vision?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is the role of conflict in the implementation of the vision?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Where does the God given vision get its provision from?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. The joy of celebrating the accomplishment of the vision

## **Lesson #10 - Nelson Change formula**

### *1. Time*

How long do you plan to take to fully implement this new idea? Place the appropriate number (1 to 5) in the space below, which corresponds to your time goal.

1. 0-6 months (Immediate)
2. 6-12 months (Fast)
3. 12-24 months (Assertive)
4. 24-48 months (Modest)
5. 5 years or more (Cautious)

Your improvement plan time factor: \_\_\_\_\_

### *2. Pastor's Leadership Capacity: (Give ½ point for each "yes")*

1. Do you have the gift of leadership specifically (versus the role as leader)?
2. Have you been at the church less than three years?
3. Do you plan to stay at this church more than ten years?
4. Are you willing to risk failure?
5. Are you willing and able to handle conflict well?
6. Do you have a clear idea of what you want the church to become?
7. Are you an effective communicator?
8. Are you intentionally developing leaders around you?
9. Have you started any new ministries in the last year?
10. Do you have the ability to staff the needed changes once they are made?

Total leadership capacity factor: \_\_\_\_\_

*3. Congregational readiness: Pastor's understanding of the committee*

How will this person respond to the improvement you are recommending?

1. Will resist/sabotage the idea
2. Will discourage/not support the idea
3. Will allow the idea
4. Will encourage/support the idea
5. Will drive/promote the idea

Total all the values and come up with an average by dividing the sum total by the number of influencers considered. Place the numerical average in the space below.

Your congregation's readiness factor: \_\_\_\_\_

*4. Influence level indicators*

If

1= low influence

2= medium influence

3= heavy influence

Multiply each influencer's response estimate (value 1-5, whether they are for or against an improvement) by the influence indicator (value 1-3, degree of influence weight).

Add the totals

Then divide the sum total by the number of influence units

Your congregation's more exact readiness factor: \_\_\_\_\_

### *5. Change Impact*

1. Level 1: Cosmetic. This may be something as simple as redecorating, adding an age-group ministry, or changing church names. While Level 1 changes can still create some friction, they are rarely sufficient to catalyze growth. This tends to be a managerial, maintenance, incremental sort of impact.
2. Level 2: Modest. This is more than cosmetic but will not significantly impact anyone. Depending on what the change is, many people may not even be aware of it. Major overhaul of facilities, making sub ministry program changes, and staff expansions are all within the Level 2 boundaries.
3. Level 3: Minor. If you leave what you have in place while adding new styles or ministries, you are probably looking at Level 3, primarily because you're not really asking people to give up much. You are seeking permission for them to allow new ideas to take root in the church.
4. Level 4 Significant. People are bound to notice this impact because it will change the feel, look, sound, and self-image of the congregation. People will have to give up something for these new ideas to be born. This improvement is sufficient to transform the congregation over time while being built upon the foundation of the past. Starting a seeker-type service, rearranging the current worship format, and replacing Sunday evening service with small groups are usually significant changes.
5. Level 5: Major overhaul. This can be viewed as transformational or even a restart. In other words, soon after the change is made, the primary essence of the

church will be different. People who visit after the improvement will not recognize the church as the same one they attended prior to the change, other than possible physical features (building, location, people).

Your improvement/change impact estimate: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. DELTA FACTOR: TRANSITION EFFECTIVENESS

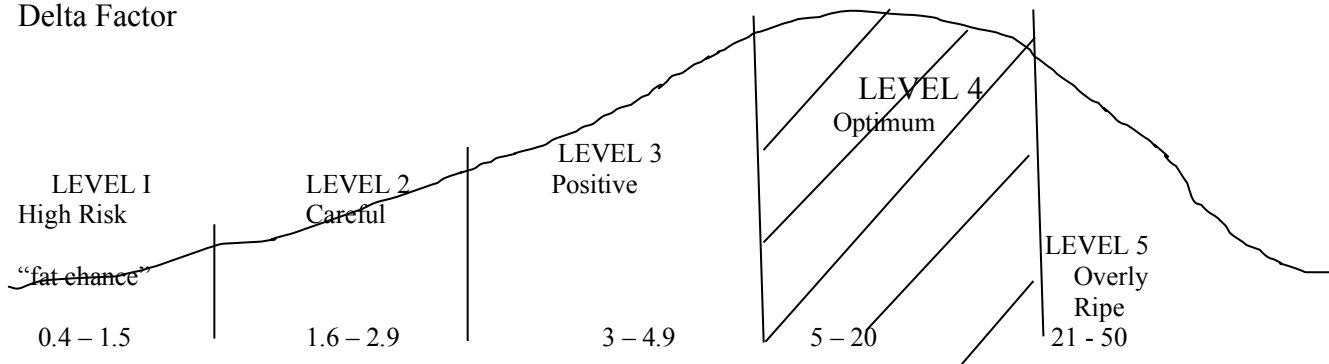
Time\_\_\_\_\_ x (Leadership Capacity\_\_\_\_\_ + Congregational Readiness\_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_\_ = Delta

factor

Change Impact

Delta Factor



Delta Factor:

Level 1: (0.4 – 1.5) High Risk

Level 2: (1.6 – 2.9) Careful

Level 3: (3.0 – 4.9) Positive

Level 4: (5.0 – 20) Optimum

Level 5: (21.0 – 50) Overly Ripe


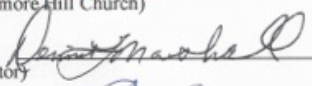



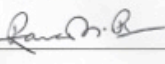
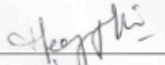

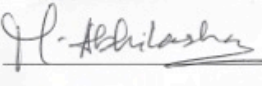


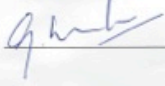
## APPENDIX M

### SIGNATURES OF WILLING PARTICIPANTS

**Annexure**

**Signatures of the team showing willingness to participate in the Project Implementation**

We, the following are willing to participate in the Project Implementation of Pastor Chandra Rudrapathi's Project Proposal to be submitted to Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. We shall attend all the sessions and take active participation.

1. Jon Boulet -   
(Anglo Pastor, Sycamore Hill Church)
2. Dennis Marshal -   
(Afro American Pastor)
3. Jesse Arce -   
(Filipino pastor)
4. Jorge Altieri -   
(Hispanic pastor)
5. Hemanth Lymon - 
6. Ramesh Rangaram - 
7. Jyothi Rudrapathi - 
8. Sanjay Pita - 
9. Abhilasha - 
10. Alice Lymon - 
11. Mohan Arja - 
12. Samson Gattu - 

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