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Charisma Life Church: An Integrative Approach Towards Being a Multiethnic Church

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This ministry focus paper entitled

CHARISMA LIFE CHURCH: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TOWARDS BEING A MULTIETHNIC CHURCH

Written by

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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

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Date Received: June 1, 2019
CHARISMA LIFE CHURCH: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TOWARDS BEING A MULTIETHNIC CHURCH

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

ALAN DIONSON
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ABSTRACT

Charisma Life Church: An Integrative Approach
Towards Being a Multiethnic Church
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Doctor of Ministry
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary
2019

Multietnic ministry in the North American context is often a binary issue between Black and White congregations. In the parlance of Asian-American multiethnic ecclesiology, Filipino-American ministry is hardly mentioned. This study is about this lacuna and uses Charisma Life Church, a Filipino-American congregation as a case study of multiethnic ministry. An existential crisis has occurred the last two years as it is losing its members, but also an opportunity has opened, as new attendees are coming from different ethnicities.

The senior pastor, staff and core leaders have all agreed that the church needs to transition to become a multiethnic church. The transition is in its earlier phase and responses have been wide-ranging from reluctance, eagerness, and to some sheer unfamiliarity of the direction it is pursuing. Research on Filipino-American churches becoming multi-ethnic churches is nonexistent. In lieu of this, a comparative approach with other races, cultures and ethnicities that went through this transition were used in order to achieve the purpose of establishing a multiethnic congregation. This research hopes to produce a training course for church leaders teaching them the process of transitioning to a multiethnic church through sociology, theology, ecclesiology and qualitative survey.

The paper will cover three important sections. Part One assesses the ministry context of the church from its historical, cultural and social setting and how this is connected to the church’s hesitancy towards transition. The second part of the paper covers theological reflection from Scripture and literary sources that are engaged in transitioning towards multi-ethnic churches. A distinctive literature review is focused on research from other multiethnic churches, leaders, and research engaging in this specific area of ministry. Part Three provides theological, practical steps and principles, which are designed to equip leaders towards this ecclesiastical shift.

Content Reader: Dr. Cindy Lee, PhD

Word Count: 290
To my best friend and wife, Elaine. Thanks for your love, encouragement, counsel, partnership and guidance the last twenty-five years.

To my father, Narciso and my mother, Sonia, thanks for demonstrating to me how to live like Christ and to love His church.

Andrew, Simon and Megan…

“Non est ad astra mollis e terris via”
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend expressions of gratitude to my senior pastor, Dr. Fred Mendoza for his support in allowing me to do research of the congregation whom he has served for over three decades. I also offer words of appreciation to all the pastors, staff, leaders and members of Charisma Life Church of Pomona, California who have shown great encouragement during this whole process.

Sola Deo Gloria.
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PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION

Multiethnic ministry is a recent movement in the Church that is extremely important and not to be ignored. One-out-of-five American Christians now attend a multiethnic church.\(^1\) In an extensive study, multiethnic churches have grown 66 percent compared to monoracial churches.\(^2\) However, in addressing race problems in the United States, the subject is still quite a binary issue between Black and White. The latest interest in multiculturalism, postmodernism, postcolonialism and immigration policies have given Asian Americans both a seat at the table and a voice that needs to be heard. The global phenomena of K-pop, *Gangnam Style*, Manny Pacquiao, *Fresh Off the Boat* and *Crazy Rich Asians* in popular culture are harbingers of things to come. Although delayed and partial, Asian-American religious studies are slowly showing progress as more academic research and the changing ministry landscape are making them more noticeable in the mainstream.

However, in the schema of Asian-American studies, Filipino American inclusion is trifling. Despite the fact that Filipinos came to American soil in 1587 (thirty-three years earlier than the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth Rock), they are considered the

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forgotten Asians in the US, as they are oftentimes unheeded and invisible compared with
their East Asian counterparts.3 This reality is lamentable as one Filipino scholar says,

In April (2016), The New York Times released a video on Asian Americans, as
part of their “Conversations on Race” series. The film featured 12 Asian
Americans of diverse ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Korean, Indian, Vietnamese, etc.)
talking about their experiences with race and racism. Not one Filipino American
was included. While Filipino Americans are the second largest Asian American
ethnic group (comprising about 1 out of 5 Asian American), this exclusion
symbolizes that we are still forgotten in many ways.4

This exclusion continues within the background of religious studies. The
Philippines is the cradle of Christianity in Asia as it was the only country colonized by
Spain. The archipelago has three-hundred years of Roman Catholicism and one-hundred
years of Protestant missionary movement. For most Filipino immigrants, being in the US
exposes them to the familiarity of Christianity, and yet again, there is a lacuna of
listening to their voice within the larger Asian-American ministry context. Ed Stetzer in
Christians Today writes on the growth of Asian-American pastors entitled, “5 Asian-
American Preachers Not Named Eugene Cho or Francis Chan . . . And a Couple Who
Are.”5 Yet again, not one Filipino or Filipino-American pastor is mentioned.

With Filipino-American immigrants growing, ethnic churches are being planted at
significant rates in the US. Due to the hybridity of Filipino culture, interracial marriage
and colonial influence, these churches have a proclivity to attract non-Filipinos.

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3 Kevin Nadal, “Why We Celebrate Filipino American History Month,” Huffington Post, October
6, 2016, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-we-celebrate-filipino-american-history-
month_us_57f564a7e4b087a29a54856a?fbclid=IwAR1CMT1Vd8qbWnToxsiByz5O37SNxqfxiagFDDjvty
-n7PnaFUlqWChTsas.

4 Ibid.

5 Ed Stetzer, “5 Asian-American Preachers Not Named Eugene Cho or Francis Chan . . . and
Motivated by these factors, there is a growing enthusiasm of Filipino-American churches to become more multiethnic. However, the lack of resources, structures and theology have made these transitioning churches perplexed as to how they can make this happen. Filipino-American churches attempt to follow White and Black churches who are leading in the field and have produced growing multiethnic churches. However, some of these churches have done so through assimilation and colorblindness. Colorblindness as it pertains to church ministry is the denial of the uniqueness of one’s color, race, and aims for equality. Although the effort is laudable, it does not fully reflect the eschatological vision of John who saw the multitudes with their distinct qualities of nationality, ethnicity, race and language intact in the age to come (Rev 7:9). A multiethnic church is not a quota of ethnic members attending a church, nor it is a collection of people from different races. A multiethnic church is a community of Christ-followers who are living Kingdom principles by worshipping, interacting, sharing, relating and destroying the walls that the world has placed upon them.

Although, first-generation immigrant churches tend to integrate, they have the propensity to continue maintaining their cultural, ethnic identities. However, these churches also have the predisposition towards changes as their lot is one of constant transition (for example, immigration, language, employment, status). These congregations are not as rigid and more open compared to ethnic communities in the US who have been in the country for several generations. A few notable Asian-American

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7 Ibid., 23.
churches have had great success in establishing multiethnic churches like Evergreen Baptist Church in Rosemead, CA; Quest Church in Seattle; Newsong Church in Santa Ana, CA. But a Filipino American church transitioning to become a multiethnic church is hardly documented partly due to their unique heritage, culture, paternal relationship with the US and the influence of different colonizers.

This study is significant because it addresses this requisite. Charisma Life Church is a thirty-three-year-old monoethnic congregation transitioning to become a multiethnic church. The church was established as a first-generation Filipino-American immigrant congregation in 1989 with fourteen pioneers, but has grown today to a church of nearly eight hundred members. However, in 2014, the church started to dwindle as some members retired or relocated to other affordable counties, while a few more left to attend other megachurches. But after this hiatus, the church has seen a major increase of people coming from different ethnicities. Baptismal candidates, first-time guests and membership classes are attended by different ethnicities who have made Charisma their home church. With 22 percent of the church comprising different ethnicities from twenty-two different countries, Charisma Life Church is now statistically a multiethnic church.\(^8\)

But this status is fragile as this was not intentionally by design, leaders were not fully informed and members not engaged in this transition. The influx of multiethnic attendees is a new undertaking, which has varying responses from church leaders and members ranging from reluctance of losing the church’s cultural identity to openness due to the changes occurring in mainstream society. Furthermore, the resources for Filipino-

\(^8\) Ibid., 15.
American churches transitioning to multi-ethnic churches are a new field that has not 
been properly documented and studied. To gain a panoramic and specific perspective of 
this study, a comparative approach with other Asian-American church contexts and 
principles are used in order to achieve the purpose of establishing a multiethnic 
congregation. This research hopes to produce a case study of how a first-generation, 
monoethnic Filipino-American church can transition into a multiethnic congregation. It 
will also provide a training course for church leaders equipping them in the process 
through the study of relevant sociology, ethnography, theology and ecclesiology.

The paper will cover three important sections. The first part assesses the ministry 
context of the church from its historical, cultural, social and geographical setting. It also 
evaluates the different challenges of transitioning towards a multi-ethnic congregation. 
The second part of the paper covers theological reflection from Scripture and literary 
sources that are engaged in transitioning towards multi-ethnic churches. A distinctive 
literature review is focused on this subject by other Asian-American churches, leaders 
and research who are engaging in this field of ministry. The last part of the paper 
provides theological, practical ministry and principles designed in the context of seminar-
workshops to equip the pastors, ministry leaders and members towards this imminent 
ecclesiastical shift.
CHAPTER ONE
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHARISMA LIFE CHURCH

The Gospel of Mark is a moving Gospel. It is known for its directional and geographical focus on the ministry of Jesus from the serene and coastal enclave of Galilee to the hectic capital setting of Jerusalem.¹ Jesus could have stayed in the towns, shores and villages where He touched the lives of many people. Instead, the Messiah is always moving forward to where the next phase of His ministry awaits.² On the other side of the lake, a diverse people with different needs were touched by His message. It says, “When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him” (Mk 5:21).

Charisma Life Church is also at a critical crossroad in their remarkable history. They have a choice of maintaining their current locus or pursuing an opportunity that has tremendous potential for the mission, vision and the future of the church. After all, St. Augustine was right when he said, ekklesia semper reformanda. Throughout Christian


² Mark uses the language of crossing to the other side distinctively compared to other Gospels. (Mark 4:35; 5:21; 6:45; and 8:13).
history, the church constantly needs to reexamine its theology and ecclesiology in a
changing society. This is too fundamental for Charisma Life Church to ignore due to its
immense environmental and internal transformations.

**Church History of Charisma Life Church**

Fred Mendoza, voluntarily and sacrificially gave up his high-paying ministry
position as principal of Asia Theological Centre and as an associate pastor of the 5,000-
member Calvary Charismatic Center in Singapore where he was a missionary from 1982-
1986.³ Inspired by their experience as missionaries, Mendoza, his wife, Perla and their
only daughter, Naomi withdrew $30,000 from their $80,000 home equity, and used it as
seed money to plant a church on October 6, 1986 with only ten people that met as a Bible
Study group in the living room of Grace Ghent in Hacienda Heights, CA.⁴ The name of
the congregation was *Filipino-American Christian Center* and the motivation was to
reach Filipino immigrants who are one of the largest Asian populations in California.⁵ In
a couple of years, Joel Sarmiento, one of the sons of the founding members, told
Mendoza that the name was too exclusive, restricting its scope only to Filipino-
Americans. Inspired by the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements during the 1980s and
the emphasis on inclusivity, the name Charisma Life Church was adopted by the growing
congregation.

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³ Fred Mendoza, personal interview. Pomona, CA, July 31, 2018.
⁴ Ibid.
The church grew through the faithful prayers, generous tithes and free will giving of its maturing believers. For the next eight years, Charisma moved around the region to Covina Assembly of God (Covina), Mount San Antonio College (Walnut), Pomona Worship Center (Pomona), Little Flowers Chapel (West Covina) and the Hacienda Heights Congregational Church (Hacienda). In 1993, Charisma bought the Faith Chapel in West Covina from the Assemblies of God for $275,000, which was used five years later to purchase the West Covina Church of the Nazarene, which the church bought for $1 million and sold for $2.2 million.

Charisma outgrew the worship center, and it was expedient to expand to a bigger facility. The search to find a facility led Charisma to merge with the dwindling 48-member Pomona Valley Life Center, a predominantly Caucasian church that had declined due to the changing demographics of the city. Charisma invested approximately $7 million of improvements in the campus including a brand new 35,000 square foot Friendship Center, which cost $4 million.

From its humble beginnings thirty years ago with only ten members, the church has multiplied with 745 adherents attending the four different weekend services offered in English, Tagalog, Spanish and Thai. With only Mendoza and his wife as pioneering staff, today, the church has twelve full-time and part-time pastoral staff dedicated to team leading, managing and equipping. At 80 years old, Mendoza is getting ready to prepare the church for its new leadership and the vision of the church for the future.

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6 Mendoza, personal interview.
Mission, Vision and Values of the Church

Charisma Life Church has a membership manual called “Pathway to Sustainable Growth.” It articulates the mission, vision and the core values of the church. The mission of the church states: “We exist to worship God heartily, evangelize people globally, and disciple believers deeply. (John 4:23-24; Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20).” The vision of the church has been modified to include a substantial emphasis on becoming a multicultural community: “Build a blended community of Christ followers. (Revelations 7:5-9; Mark 8:34-38; John 13:34-36; 1 Corinthians 10:32-11:1).”

Following the mission and vision is the strategy of the church which stipulates:

“1) Prayer to God beyond all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20; 6:18);
2) Invite people to experience full and new life in Christ (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17);
3) Embrace people into the church fellowship (Acts 2:36-42);
4) Equip people to serve, and to grow up into Christ (Ephesians 4:7-16);
5) Engage people in the ministries of the church (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 2:10-11).” The church strategy is organized with fulltime and part-time pastoral staff who oversee the areas of Praying, Inviting, Embracing, Equipping and Engaging (otherwise called the PIEEI). Charisma Life Church also stipulates their core values as follows:

God First: Our ultimate value (Matthew 22:37-38; 1 John 4:19)
The Rock: Our spiritual foundation (Matthew 16:13-18; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11)
God’s Word: Our source of wisdom (Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 4:5-7)
People Matter: Our ministry motivation (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9)
Blended Community: Our grand design (Galatians 3:26-28; Revelations 5:4-10)

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8 Ibid.
Changing Demographics

The church experienced continual growth during the merger until 2013. However, in the last few years, there is a significant decline in both active adherents and weekly worship attendance. Although attendance has been affected, giving has steadily increased. In analyzing the reasons behind this decline during exit interviews, the most common reasons expressed were: people not finding a sense of community, conflict with leaders and other members of the church, people having moved to another area and cultural differences.

Table 0-1. Comparative Attendance, Adherents and Giving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adherents</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Weekly Attendance</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Weekly Giving</td>
<td>$19,537.98</td>
<td>$19,534.52</td>
<td>$19,292.82</td>
<td>$19,101.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though previous members have left the church, a new people are regularly attending and assimilating in the church. Among them are Blacks, Mexicans, Caucasians, Chinese, Sri Lankans, Cambodians, Vietnamese, Jamaicans, Thais and Brazilians. This

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10 Ibid.


multiethnic representation is reflected in Sunday morning first-time guests, water baptismal candidates, sign-ups for membership classes and participation in the quarterly New Members Luncheon. Mendoza believes that Charisma Life Church has already reached its saturation point in reaching the Filipino-American immigrant population at least in Los Angeles, due in fact to an increase of Filipino American churches and the decreasing new immigrants coming from the Philippines.

Table 0-2. Reasons for Absences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry availability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not find community</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on weekends</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with leaders/members</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement abroad</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unresolved issues</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending other churches</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining health</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military service</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved out of area</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this reason, leadership of the church at its Annual Planning Retreat designated 2018 to be a year when the church becomes a blended community. This was conveyed through the purpose statements of the church and verbalized in the senior pastor’s sermons. Concurrently, the church has added on Sunday’s Spanish, Thai and Indonesian speaking services. In September 2018, the church held its first ever “Global Sunday” with
a theme “One God, One People” to celebrate its diversity through multiethnic worship, cultural shows, international cuisine and fine arts.

Although this is a desirable pursuit, the transition is more of a lofty vision that is not fully comprehended by its leaders and members. After Global Sunday, ethnic enclaves are still visible. There is a sparse number of non-Filipino attendees joining small groups, singing on the worship team or recruited for different ministry opportunities in the church. The transition is a challenging task due in part to a tentative knowledge of the Filipino-American historical, cultural and colonial fundamentals that are difficult to change. Moreover, with non-existent or documented Filipino-American church models to base from, the church has embraced Western ecclesiastical philosophy and methodology to make things work. Soong-Chan Rah, in his book *The Next Evangelicalism*, posits that the Western ecclesiastical framework does not work in the increasingly postmodern, post-colonial, multicultural, multiethnic and multigenerational makeup of the American church landscape. The contextual challenges of Charisma Life Church are not only due to this Western cultural, colonial and ecclesiastical mindset but also due to the inherent Filipino culture that has made them reticent in becoming a multiethnic church. Through careful historical, cultural and sociological analysis, the next section of this paper addresses the Filipino-American issues that serve as hindrances in transitioning towards becoming a multiethnic church.

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13 Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 16.
CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGES OF BECOMING A MULTIETHNIC CHURCH

Social Challenge of Maintaining Filipino-American Culture

Filipino immigrants go through significant adjustments as they settle in the US. They experience a process of disillusionment over their decision, culture shock and anxiety of being strangers in a foreign land. They no longer have the support system they used to have back home. Different social and family dynamics with unfamiliar expectations perturb them. In most cases, Filipino job-seekers like nurses, engineers, teachers and members of the armed forces migrate as individuals to test the waters and eventually petition for their spouse and children to join them. Since the Philippines was a US colony from 1898 until 1946, America has been the unipolar destination for Filipino immigrants and migrant workers, otherwise known as Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs). Even before the days of the Immigration of Act of 1965 until today, Filipinos were oftentimes described as family-less and an ethnic group with a preponderance of a

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single people.\textsuperscript{2} The process of petitioning family members is financially and legally onerous due to hefty immigration and lawyer fees. The procedure can also take many years resulting in a breakdown of support for the nuclear family. Due to this factor, the Filipino-American Church becomes the fulcrum of cultural, social and spiritual support for these immigrants. Like its other Asian-American counterparts, these immigrant churches provide the following support: worship in the heart language; maintenance of homeland culture; the importance of fellowship, community life and social networking; the provision of social services; the restoration of social status.\textsuperscript{3}

One’s vernacular is the language of the heart. Eighty-seven percent of Filipino-Americans still speak their regional dialects.\textsuperscript{4} Being in a Filipino-American Church where one can speak Tagalog, Cebuano, or Ilocano is comforting as it provides connection and community. Although Filipinos can speak the English language due to the colonial presence of Americans, the regional dialects are ubiquitously spoken in many Filipino church communities.

The Filipino American church also provides an avenue to celebrate homeland culture. Religious, national and traditional holidays are regularly observed. One of these is Simbang Gabi (Evening Worship), a tradition of twelve dawn services before Christmas Day. The family brave cold winter mornings for prayer, reading of sacred passages and the singing of Christmas songs. The observance is followed by traditional

\textsuperscript{2} Valentin Aquino, \textit{The Filipino Community in Los Angeles} (Thesis, University of California, 1952), 66.

\textsuperscript{3} Rah, \textit{The Next Evangelicalism}, 16.

food like the *bibingka* (rice cake), *tsokolate* (hot chocolate), *salabat* (ginger tea), *pansit* (noodles) and *arroz caldo* (rice porridge).

The Manny Pacquiao Pay-Per-View boxing matches in the US are not just a sports event, but also a cultural celebration and national pride for many Filipinos. Churches and Bible Study groups gather for food, friendship and fellowship. Due to the fact that Filipinos do not live in geographical enclaves, the Sunday morning worship services are usually followed by a very lavish meal as each family contributes to a *fiesta* potluck. Ladies converge and talk about the latest plot of the Filipino telenovela shown from *The Filipino Channel* (TFC), while most men try to reconnect with their cultural roots after a week of labor within a multicultural setting. Churches are also sources of social services. Recommendations for work, referral of a suitable immigrant lawyer, affordable apartments, part-time jobs, tips on passing the driver’s license examinations and carpooling are readily provided. Filipinos are sensitive of *hiya* (shame) and *dangal* (honor) and would rather get help from one another than be in public taking advantage of social services.

One of the most significant functions of the Fil-Am\textsuperscript{5} church is the preservation of social status. For many Filipino immigrants who worked white collar jobs in the Philippines and were reduced to lowly labor in the US, joining a Fil-Am church provides the preservation of their social status. Rah comments about the loss of social status among immigrants: “Immigration is traumatic in many different ways. One of the most significant traumas is the downward mobility of being part of a majority group and

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\textsuperscript{5} Abbreviated form of Filipino-American.
having a higher social status in one’s home country to being ignorable, invisible immigrant. The immigrant church, therefore, becomes a place where social status is restored."

In Fil-Am churches, doctors who have become vocational nurses are still addressed as doctors and sought for their medical advice. Lawyers are still called attorneys and sought for their legal advice regarding immigration issues. The preservation of culture, the consolation of this status and the social support that is interrelated with security and identity is difficult to relinquish for the Fil-Am church. This is definitely a huge reason many monoethnic churches find it difficult to let go of their immigrant churches as this is closely tied to their status and identity.

**Facial Challenge of Shame-based Cultures**

The human face is not just a corporeal feature—it carries the individual’s persona. The face is a prevailing visual text that communicates feelings and provides disposition to others. The face conveys both context and content, two essential components of facial hermeneutics. In the context of Asian culture, shame-honor is widely accepted as part of social control, structure and communal relationships. But over four hundred years of imperialistic power under Spain, US and Japanese occupation, Filipinos carry a naïve disposition of *hiya* (shame). This trait is closely related to having an elevated level of suppression of vulnerability, which is followed by shielding one’s self-image at all costs.

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8 Ibid., 19.
just to be able to preserve one’s *dangal* (honor). Hiya as a Filipino culture appears as
timidity, passiveness, reservation and apprehension. Being bold, upfront and fearless can
lead to *walang hiya* (no shame). The fear of embarrassment, public ridicule and failure
has made Filipinos take lesser roles as leaders and risk-takers. Hiya is widespread as
first-generation Filipino immigrants assimilate and acculturate in Western society,
struggle with a new cultural identity, lack English proficiency and are treated as a
minority. Fil-Am psychologist E.J. David explains this colonial mentality:

> These findings suggest that colonial mentality is highly ubiquitous in the
Philippines, and supports the notion that the denigration of the Filipino ethnicity
and culture is commonly experienced by Filipinos in the Philippines and by
Filipino American immigrants long before their arrival to the U.S. Thus, Filipinos
in the Philippines also receive the message that anything American or Western is
better than anything Filipino very early in their lives. Filipinos and Filipino
Americans, therefore, may already begin to perceive and regard the Filipino
ethnicity and culture, and other Asian Americans or minorities who are darker-
skinned, in a negative, deprecating, and even discriminating way, and regard the
dominant White group and their characteristics in a very positive manner.

For Filipino immigrants, the role to lead in a predominantly White culture is a
trait that needs to be developed. Many Asian Americans who have an education, more
than average income, socio-economic criterion and non-ethnic identity (residence,
education, occupation, experiences, self-image and social factors) may receive
mainstream acceptance. Asian Americans still share the same commonality—they are

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9 Rolando Gripaldo, *Filipino Cultural Traits* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in
Values and Philosophy, 2005), 32.

10 Jovan Cerda, “Filipino Bill Gates Urges Entrepreneurs to Take Risks,” *Philippine Star*,
February 26, 2015.

11 E. R. David, *Brown Skin, White Minds: Filipino-American Postcolonial Psychology* (Charlotte,

members of the minority race.\textsuperscript{13} But compared to other Asians, Filipinos feel internalized suppression due to Spanish and American imperialism.\textsuperscript{14} Colonialism brought the advancement of education, science and agriculture, but it also stripped the native country of their cultural and ethnic identity.

This timidity and passiveness are not just inherent Filipino traits but also a result of eugenics, which was common during the plantation era in the American Pacific. Early Filipino immigrants were generally suited for stoop labor.\textsuperscript{15} They worked as plantation farmers, mechanics, waiters, cooks, janitors, sailors, seamstresses, cleaners and factory workers.\textsuperscript{16} Americans highly regarded Filipinos for their bravery in fighting against the Spanish and Japanese wars and called them “little brown brothers.” But to their disbelief, they were not given the same benevolence and paternalism in the US.\textsuperscript{17} Filipinos were racially discriminated for their sheer short size and dark color.\textsuperscript{18} In the early-1900s when American expatriates were expanding their business in the Philippines, their bill of lading list included goods (lumber), products (palm oil) and Filipinos, reducing them to things rather than people.\textsuperscript{19} Although the pathway to legal immigration, citizenship,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Aquino, \textit{The Filipino Community in Los Angeles}, 42.
\textsuperscript{17} Takaki, \textit{Strangers from a Different Shore}, 324.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 325.
\end{flushleft}
homeownership, and employment has changed since then, the perception that Filipinos are here temporarily and that one day they will return to their native country still pervades.20

In the entertainment world, Asians are not taken seriously for their theatrical abilities. Whitewashing is Hollywood’s practice of browning White actors to play Asian roles for the sheer reason that Asians perform subserviently compared to the dominant White culture.21 In American movies, Asians usually play the stereotypical roles like Korean grocers, gangsters, immigrants, computer geeks, Kungfu experts, foreign businessmen and not a lead role or simply the guy next door.22 The inherent hiya culture and Western marginalization affects and constrains Fil-Ams to lead social and ecclesiastical change. There has been documented research of other Asian-American churches that are emerging in multicultural church planting efforts, but the Filipino-American perspective is yet to be represented due in fact to a lack of initiative to concentrate on this emerging phenomenon.23

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20 Aquino, The Filipino Community in Los Angeles, 66.

21 A few examples of whitewashing are as follows: Richard Barthelmess (Broken Blossoms); Marlon Brando (Teahouse of the August Moon); Shirley McLaine (My Geisha); Peter Sellers (Fiendish Plot of Dr. Fu Manchu); John Wayne (Genghis Khan); Katharine Hepburn (Dragon Seed); Micky Rooney (Breakfast at Tiffany’s); and Yul Brynner (The King and I).


23 For example, D.J. Chuang in his book, Multi Asian Church presents the changing landscape of Asian-American churches and provides a resource section for those who are interested in transitioning into multietnic church ministries. His list includes the works from a Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Indian perspectives. However, the Filipino perspective is not represented despite the fact it is one of the major Asian-American populations and have a strong Christian base.
Regional and Filipino Tribalism

The Philippines is a nation composed of 7,000 islands and 187 dialects. The geographical and vernacular factors produce a *baranggay*an (tribal) culture. Filipinos are very loyal to their tribal roots due to the subculture that exists like language, food, religion and tradition. This regional and tribal tie shapes community life to one that is stronger than the corporate national identity. When Filipinos arrive in the US as new immigrants, they have a penchant for organizing themselves as one ethnic group. But as the community grows, their tribalism resurfaces and divides the thriving community. By and large, church division is universal, but with the social, cultural, regional and vernacular makeup of the Filipino culture, the probability of a split is expected.

A sociologist in Texas studied how a Fil-Am Roman Catholic community started primarily as one ethnic group. Eventually, the thriving spiritual community created subgroups divided by civic and regional affiliations (Figure 1). The community went through several splits due to the preference of their regions and subcultures (who has the best rice cake, Charismatic versus Traditional Roman Catholic, loyalty to organization, social identity, academic attainment). The church, which would have been the bastion of unity, had become the very source of disunity. One of the members of this community, Ben Ongco, the editor in chief of *Manila-Headline*, the largest Fil-Am newspaper in

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25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., 82.
Texas comments, “Filipinos can outdo the atomic physicists in splitting isotopes. They always divide their organizations.”

Figure 1. Filipino American Community in Houston, Texas

Loyalty to the barangay system is still prevalent among Filipino-Americans despite the fact that they are in a foreign land. For example, in San Diego County, around 175 Fil-Am organizations are reported. Filipino-American psychologist, Kevin Nadal, confirms this trait to divide and enumerates the different aspects of divisions among Filipino Americans: generational and age issues, social class, regional and hometown loyalty, citizenship and immigration status, faith and religious affiliation and cultural

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27 Ibid., 65.

28 Cherry, Faith, Family, and Filipino American Community, 49.


30 Ibid., 118-120.
identities. Marginalization can often lead to either greater unity or disunity, the latter seems to be the case. The implication of this pushback is important due to the fact that inherent in the Filipino culture is the propensity to divide. A common conversation within the predominantly Filipino staff in Charisma Life Church is if this vision is attainable considering the prevalent regionalism among Filipinos. Complementing the multiethnic, multigenerational, multiracial, multilingual and multicultural factors of the church, will this even be feasible.

**Generational Challenge and Different Filipino-Americans**

Filipino-Americans have different categories of adaptation, assimilation and acculturation depending on their time of immigration, motives and demographic factors. Harry Kitano and Roger Daniels pioneered a category of understanding different kinds of Asian-Americans. Using the two most important variables (assimilation and ethnic identity), they came up with these four archetypes.

**Cell A (High Assimilation/Low Ethnic Identity).** These are the assimilated Filipino Americans who are typically called by the name “coconuts” (brown outside but white inside). They are called the “visible minority” due to being fully assimilated, but by their external features, they still appear ethnic. Their language, lifestyles, worldview and ties are more conformed to American identity. These are third and fourth-generation Fil-Ams who are in Charisma Life Church and usually attend the youth or young adult service. They are functional Filipinos as they observe ethnic holidays and occasionally

31 Kitano and Daniels, *Asian Americans*, 190.

32 Ibid., 191.
eat Pinoy\textsuperscript{33} foods. This group would eat adobo (stewed pork) or pansit (noodles), but they prefer pizza, pancakes, spaghetti and tacos.

Cell B (High Assimilation/High Ethnic Identity). This type of Asian-American is fully acculturated. They are like Cell A, but still, practice and retain their ethnic identity. These people are knowledgeable about ethnicity, ethnic culture and are comfortable with strong ethnic identity.\textsuperscript{34} They would be considered bicultural as they capably traverse both cultures.\textsuperscript{35} Many of the members of Charisma Life Church are in this category. They are bilingual, proficient in both languages, and can easily adapt to either a Filipino or American culture.

Not a lot of people identify with Cell C (Low Assimilation/Low Ethnic Identity). They obtain a bit of American culture and also loathe their own ethnic identity. This cell is described as the alienated, disenchanted and the disillusioned ethnics.\textsuperscript{36} Cell D (Low Assimilation/High Ethnic Identity) Filipino-Americans are those who recently just arrived to the US. They may have a “functional level” of adaptation to the new country, but they are still comfortable with their own culture. The nine in the morning Tagalog\textsuperscript{37} Sunday service is created to address the needs of these people. The worship songs, Scripture readings and the sermon are in the Tagalog language.

\textsuperscript{33} A term generally meaning a Filipino or anything related to its culture and identity.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 192.


\textsuperscript{36} Kitano and Daniels, Asian Americans, 192.

\textsuperscript{37} The official national language of the Philippines.
It is important to note that these quadrants are not fixed. People tend to move from one category to another depending on the power, influence, condition or crisis of the situation. It is a known fact that as generations continue to flow towards the third and fourth generation, an ethnic group could most likely lose their ethnic identity, a personal or corporate catalytic event could change the assigned and assumed category. A good case study of this is the impact of Manny Pacquiao towards Filipino and Filipino American communities in the US. Joseph Bernardo writes:

Pacquiao sparked a sense of nationalist fervor rarely seen in a community prone to “assimilate.” Filipino Americans from all walks of life—radical, conservative,

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38 Ibid., 190.


40 As a point of reference, I used to have a member in the Philippines who migrated to the US as a physical therapist. He assimilated quickly and dismissed his ethnic identity. Although he was very fluent in the native language, he insisted that Filipino friends and relatives speak to him only in English. On the contrary while I was pastoring in the Philippines, a US-born Filipina returned to the Philippines to rediscover his ethnic identity and decided to study for medical school. Many more like him in medical school embraced fully identity they have lost growing up in the US.
Catholic, Protestant, Californian, Midwesterner—succumbed to Pacquiao fever. In many ways, Pacquiao’s entry into American national discourse told us about ourselves and our place in this world as much as it told us about a poor skinny kid from General Santos City.\textsuperscript{41}

There are variants of this model. Dennis Geronimo, a Filipino-born pastor in the US shares a different description of these Filipino Americans.\textsuperscript{42} Geronimo is a former pastor of Glad Tidings in Long Beach, CA and used to be the Filipino American Ministry National Director of the Assemblies of God. The first group is what he calls “Filipino-Filipinos.” These are Filipino Americans who would be considered as Cell C and D in the Kitano-Daniels quadrant. They like to attend a service with the sermon in their native tongue and worship songs sung in Tagalog. After the service, the members of the church share a Filipino potluck, which always extends the fellowship to nighttime. A number of churches in the heart of Filipinotown have this kind of service. Many members are older, some are veterans of World War II or those who just came from the Philippines due to the success of their legal immigrant petition. They go to Seafood City rather than Vons or Ralph’s supermarkets. “American-Filipinos” are Filipino Americans who would be described as Cell A and B. They are the children of Filipinos who were born in the Philippines and eventually migrated to the US in their pre-college days. They are culturally fluid between the Filipino and American cultures and zigzag across the cultural divide.\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Filipino-Americans} would be in Cell B of the Kitano-Daniel quadrant. These are


\textsuperscript{42} Dennis Geronimo, “The Harvest is Ready,” Sermon, Fil-Am Convention, Bakersfield, CA (July 4, 2003).

the Fil-Ams who are born and raised in the US. Some of the members who left Charisma Life Church are now attending multi-ethnic or mono-ethnic urban churches like Hillsong Los Angeles, Mosaic, Calvary Chapel, Free Chapel or Fearless LA.

However, a clear gap exists from this quadrant by Kitano, Daniels and Geronimo. The children of interracial marriages between Filipinos and other ethnicities are a growing subgenre within Filipino-American communities. The hapa occurrence is significant among Filipino-Americans (along with Japanese-Americans), which have the two highest number of interracial marriages among Asian Americans. The children of these interracial marriages are more challenging to categorize because they have multiple cultures, identities, ethnicities, experiences and community.

A case in point is Hannah Lee, a member and youth leader of Charisma Life Church. Hannah was born and raised in Malaysia to a Filipina mother and a Malaysian-Chinese father. When her parents divorced, they migrated to the US and her mother married a Caucasian. She grew up being exposed to Filipino, Chinese, Malaysian and American cultures. Lee is not alone as there are more children like her (Mexipinos, Japinos, Chinitos, Filipino-Canadians, Blasians, for example). Pew Research reported that around 26 percent of all Asian-Americans live in a multiethnic household. Rolando Gripaldo describes a common trait among Filipino social structures called “crab

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44 Gripaldo, *Filipino Cultural Traits*, 61.


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mentality.” The metaphor describes a pot of crabs that try to pull each other in a useless king of the hill fight. This kind of trait is prevalent in churches especially among the earlier generation (called ‘apo’ or elderly) who still keep and hold onto their leadership positions. The complex layers of culture, identity, assimilation and social structure create unnecessary tension within the typical monocultural Filipino community. If one would consider multigenerational, multiracial and multiethnic factors, the challenge could even be more overpowering.

This monocultural and multigenerational discrimination is well portrayed in the movie Crazy Rich Asians, where the pure Chinese character Eleanor Sung-Young looks down on the Chinese-American character Rachel Chu despite the fact she was a New York University economics professor. In one scene, Eleanor confronted her son, Nick Young on his relationship with Rachel as she is not kaki lang (one of our own). The movie’s plot centered on Rachel, an Asian-American trying to fit into an Asian community who tried to ostracize and marginalize her for her cultural identity. This multicultural and multigenerational factor illustrates a reality that Filipino-Americans are not alike. There are different layers, tensions and clashing of worldviews that can hinder the process of multiethnicity. This problem is not isolated as many second-generation Korean-Americans are also leaving their parent’s church and explore the belonging,

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47 Cherry, Faith, Filipino and Filipino American Community, 69.

cultural identity and community they feel in many urban churches. Charisma Life Church should carefully navigate these issues, be informed and explore opportunities to make the multiethnic church a reality.

**Financial Challenge of Beneficiary versus Benefactor**

Within Los Angeles are different enclaves spread throughout a five-mile radius. There is the famous Chinatown, close to Dodger Stadium. It is a touristy place that attracts people for their Oriental restaurants, aromatic herbs, merchandise, clothes, bakeries and large Taoist temples. A short distance from Chinatown is El Pueblo de Los Angeles or otherwise called Little Mexico. It is a 40-acre landmark, which cannot be missed because of its fresh-from-the-grill tacos, carnitas, colorful sombreros, chromatic pueblas and the festive sounds of Mariachi music. A few blocks from Little Mexico is Little Tokyo, a bustling Japanese commercial and financial district. A colony in the early-1900s, it became a ghost town when Japanese residents were persecuted after the Pearl Harbor bombings. But resilient Japanese-Americans healed the painful memories of the past and transformed this enclave into a bustling business district with multilevel buildings, hip sushi bars and steaming ramen bistros flocked by Angelenos day and night. In the 1980s, the Koreans transformed a somnolent area of Los Angeles and built Koreatown, the largest ethnic district in terms of size, population, business, diversity and robust projections for the future. Little Armenia along the Santa Monica strip is also a district known for many jewelry shops and electronic stores. Thaitown occupies six

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blocks in the Sunset strip and is home to restaurants serving satay, panang, pad thai and tom ka khai. Most restaurants only have valet parking due to non-stop costumers wanting to dine from lunch to late night dinner.

Exploring these different ethnic towns in Southern California, one can assume that Filipinotown would replicate the same achievement with their Asian counterparts especially on the basis of their larger population and longevity in the US. But the only Filipinotown in the US is located on Temple and Alvarado in downtown Los Angeles, and is hardly noticeable, or visited by foreign and local tourists. In a 1952 study, the list of businesses owned and operated by Filipinos included the following: apartment managers, barber shops, dry cleaners, laundry shops, grocery stores, newspaper stands, photographic studios, pool halls, soup kitchen and tailor shops. Since that research, nothing much has changed except for a few upgraded Philippine-based franchises like Red Ribbon Bakery, Aristocrat, Chow King and Jollibee restaurants. Within a five-mile radius, Filipinotown pales in comparison to the vibrant financial district, multistory buildings, trendy restaurants, huge cultural centers and museums of other neighborhoods.

Filipinos by nature are not risk takers. The sari-sari store business model is just one of the indicators of a tentative approach for social change. Sari-sari store is the small, convenient and neighborhood variety store. It is usually built as an extension of a house or a bamboo hut where everything is sold in lesser, rather than wholesale quantities. It

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50 Aquino, The Filipino Community in Los Angeles, 42.

51 Some of these small items include the following: shampoos sold by sachets; hotel-size bar soaps; rice sold in scoops; oil and soy sauce sold in tiny plastics; salt, pepper, and sugar placed in small containers.
lacks strategic planning, intentional advertising, capital infusion, and is restricted to microfinancing.

Figure 3. Percentage of Entrepreneurs Among Asian-Americans\(^{52}\)

A study on financial leadership among Asian Americans shows how Filipino-Americans are lagging behind other Asians. Despite being the second largest Asian-American population in the US, Filipino-American business initiatives fall in seventh place (see Figure 3).\(^{53}\) Sixty-eight percent of Filipino-Americans are compliant employees who work for someone else as nurses, physical therapists, engineers, teachers and caregivers.\(^{54}\) The positive impact of Filipinos in the field of healthcare has caused a major demand for this nationality. In so doing, Filipino immigrants perpetuate the labor force as registered


\(^{53}\) Ibid.

nurses, vocational nurses, physical therapists, x-ray technicians, pharmacists and certified nursing assistants. Personal references and family ties propagate this sector of labor.

Figure 4. How Asians See US, Japan and Asia

After five hundred years of colonialism, Filipinos still look at the US as a paternal relationship. They still perceive themselves as beneficiaries rather than benefactors in the larger socio-economic structure. This has curtailed the entrepreneurial spirit, which is characterized by passion, positivity, adaptability, leadership and ambition. The figure above clearly points this out as Filipinos rate the most positive view of the US, Japan and China, top leaders of global economy. Filipinos view American colonialism as liberating,

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56 Ibid.
pleasurable and enlightening; any attempt to understand their thoughts, behaviors, attitudes and emotions must be viewed within that context.\textsuperscript{57}

The impact of three hundred years under Spain and eighty years of Hollywood pushed Filipinos to believe that nothing existed prior to their arrival and that they owe everything they know, and even their survival to European and Western colonizers.\textsuperscript{58} Filipino culture is influenced by a conundrum of primary cultures that has stripped them of their own and left them with only a hybrid culture.

**Geographical Challenge and Mobility**

An interesting trend among first-generation Filipino immigrants is mobility. In the early-1970s, Filipinos were the largest population of Asian immigrants in the US.\textsuperscript{59} They usually live in Filipinotown or within its proximity as basic Filipino services were provided.\textsuperscript{60} They have quick access to buying Filipino food, meat, vegetables, phone cards, door-to-door delivery and worshipping at a nearby Roman Catholic parish with a Tagalog-speaking priest. These basic services are within walking miles or just a short bus ride. Affordable apartments without the constraint of background checks make it easier for new immigrants to find housing. Filipino-American war veterans, their families, and

\textsuperscript{57} David, *Brown Skin, White Minds*, 131.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{60} There are cities with high Filipino population because they have the two ethnic grocery stores, Seafood City and Island Pacific. The following are also considered emerging Filipino enclaves: Carson, Panorama, West Covina, Rancho Cucamonga, Eagle Rock, National City, Temecula, North Hills, and Chula Vista.
senior citizens have available government assisted low-cost housing. Remittance centers are located everywhere to send money back to the Philippines.

Filipinotown offers community, security, identity and support for many Filipino immigrants in transition. But as soon as they settle down, are granted immigration status and experience financial stability, the quest to live the American Dream recommences. Filipino-Americans pursue higher paying jobs, move to bedroom communities, send their children to high performing schools and frequently relocate. Homeownership among foreign-born Filipinos is higher (62 percent) than those who are US born Filipino-Americans (50 percent).61 Since many of Charisma Life Church members are first-generation Filipino immigrants, social and local migration is common as they move to other affordable suburban communities, counties or states. This is one of the major reasons of membership loss and should be an important factor to consider of the sustainability of retaining a monoethnic focus of the church.

Although Filipino Americans have the sheer size, longer immigrant residency and possess paternal relationship with the US, their unique cultural identity inhibits them to lead in church transformation. In this portion of the study, the following reasons are identified: church community preserving social status, maintaining cultural values, shame-based culture, regional tribalism, different generational categories of Filipino-Americans and a lack of risk-taking mentality. These traits and qualities do not just describe Filipino-Americans but the epitome of the dominant culture in Charisma Life Church members. Changing this requires deep theological reflection and application.

PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
The face of Christianity is changing. For five hundred years, the face has been a White Evangelical. Since then, the face of Christianity has profoundly changed to a Pentecostal who is from the Global South.\(^1\) However, much of the information of this movement is insufficient due to dominance, power, technology and academia, which are still framed within the Western and Eurocentric narrative. The Global South account is still very much invisible.\(^2\) Having a Western historical lens of the Church distorts the progress of Christianity.\(^3\) Philip Jenkins, in *The Next Christendom*, documents the unabated growth of Global Southerners, which the West has overlooked. By 2050, only one-fifth of the world’s three-billion Christians will be non-Hispanic Whites.\(^4\) He says, “The center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid. 20.

\(^4\) Ibid., 3.
and Latin America. Today, the largest Christian communities on the planet are to be found in those regions. 

This shift is significant because the growth is also not restricted to its geographical origins. Migration is a major trend that affects the future of the Church, because of this, Global Southerners are changing the Christian landscape of the West. Dyron B. Daughrity, like Jenkins, traces the amazing story of Christianity’s resurrection in the Global South and its influence on American Christianity. There are an estimated twenty-million Asian Americans; three-fourths of which are born outside of the US. The implication of this is enormous for Charisma Life Church, and even the Filipino-American church in regards to addressing cultural identities and worldview.

Asian Americans are often called model minorities and considered the wealthiest, best educated and fastest growing among minorities. The Filipino immigrant population in the US is nearly four million, trailing closely behind East Indians. Coming from a predominantly Roman Catholic faith, 89 percent of Filipino Americans consider themselves Christians. Hence, Filipino migration (and other migration) is actually

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5 Ibid., 2.


8 Ibid.

9 Lopez et al, Key Facts About Asian Americans.

beneficial to American Christianity.\textsuperscript{11} Through immigration and migration, the Western world will feel the impact of this shift.

Figure 5. US Ethnic Population Projections\textsuperscript{12}

Not too long ago the HUP (homogenous unit principle) was championed by church growth pundits as one of the principles that yield positive results. However, the US is becoming a more diverse nation; much sooner, the Church needs to embrace these immense changes that are coming. According to Pew Research Center, by 2065, the US population will grow to 445 million with a significant rise of Asian Americans from 26

\textsuperscript{11} Daughrity, \textit{Rising}, 210.

percent (in 2015) to 38 percent (See Figure 6). Furthermore, by 2050, for the first time, the description of an American will no longer be White.

In choosing literature pertinent to this research, Mark Lau Branson and Juan Martinez’s *Churches, Cultures and Leadership* provides excellent structure that assists local congregations understand the components of transitioning towards becoming multiethnic. Contrary to the cliché that love unites all, the authors address key components of cultures and possible integration with other cultures. These include communication, hierarchy, theology, conflict resolution and social obligation.

**Churches, Cultures and Leadership by Mark Branson and Juan Martinez**

Charisma Life Church is a Global South church with a long Pentecostal heritage, employing a multiethnic staff with a growing multiethnic, multiracial, multilingual and multigenerational membership. Alongside these qualities is the need to gain more insights on how the church could be equipped and engaged in the multiethnic landscape. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership* serves as a suitable source of principles to engage multiethnic churches through practice, theology and concepts of congregations and ethnicities. They posit that despite efforts to make churches more embracing of other cultures, the vast majority of churches in the US tend to be ethnically or culturally specific with their own related values and practices. Churches that classify themselves as multiethnic, multicultural and multigenerational still exhibit the dominance of one

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13 Ibid.


particular and familiar culture. This seems to be the context of Charisma Life Church. Despite their desire to transition, the default philosophy, theology and methodology have not changed. A primary reason for this is because these non-Filipino ethnicities have been the ones who have come to the congregation. But if the church is not open to reformation, this new momentum could lose its impetus.

There are no fixed templates in approaching multiethnic ministry as each ethnicity has its own specific, ethnic and ecclesiastical contexts. The task remains more challenging as most principles to elucidate the problem are confined to binary racial issues between Black and White.\textsuperscript{16} The simplistic six-category classification of race in the US fails to see the distinctives of cultures and ethnicities. The US Census first asks if one is Hispanic, Latino or Spanish. From there, the category is divided into six namely: White or European American; Black or African American; American Indian; Alaska Native; Asian American; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. This form of categorization is the subject of livid debate for years. For example, a Hispanic race could be White, Black or even Native American. Generally, Hispanic ancestry has a common language, which is Spanish. As a result, it is strategic to see Hispanic come together for worship because of a common language. A Hispanic Church could be attended by El Salvadoran, Mexican, Guatemalan and Cuban.

Asian as a category gets even more confusing because they are clearly more diverse in language and culture. The Philippine archipelago alone has 7,000 islands with more than 180 dialects. Multiethnic ministry is still an undeveloped field of ecclesiology

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 86.
and emerging resources are inept to address the range of diversity. Using binary tools to address Asian-American contexts is like using a nail and hammer to electrical, plumbing and drywall to fix home projects. The Church needs to address the assumption that there is a one-size-fit-all solution to multiethnic problems.

There are many sources from this study that originate from an Asian-American church context. However, these contexts are still within the Far-East interpretation, which is divergent from South-East Asian contexts. A good start is to see the forest for the trees. This is where the authors should be lauded for initiating doable, general, simple and applicable concepts for multiethnic ministry. When this general principle is tied to specific and Asian-related concepts, the synergy can be very promising. Daniel D. Lee’s Asian-American Quadrilateral concepts combined with Branson and Martinez is not just practical but a genuine ethnic blend of ecclesiastical concepts that can benefit Charisma Life Church. Branson and Martinez introduced an assessment paradigm with five phases namely: naming and describing the current praxis; analyzing praxis in the context of culture, influence and consequences; theological and historical reflection; personal and corporate assessment; implementation and feedback.

\[17 \text{ From this section forward, Charisma Life Church will be abbreviated to CLC.} \]
This paradigm has similarities with the concept Soong-Chan Rah uses with three major focuses of ecclesiastical change: clarification, conceptualization and confrontation.\textsuperscript{18} Clarification asks what the current issues are of the praxis. It is then followed by getting theological concepts, ecclesiastical models and historical precedence of the visualized congregation. The last part is confronting the powers, structures and praxis of the current status of the church. In comparing Branson and Martinez’s model

with Rah’s, the former is more specific, coherent and provides a flow in its approach. The latter appears to be blocked into structural dimensions. But Branson and Martinez reduced their paradigm to just three phases: practical, sociological and theological. These two concepts have similarities in achieving the process of change for the church.

Table 0-3 Lau, Martinez and Rah Concepts Combined

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Branson and Martinez provide clearer pathways by introducing a leadership process for implementing transitional principles; these three are implemental, relational and interpretive. This is important because it identifies the different roles church leaders function in transition. Interpretative leadership answers the questions: What does it mean to believe the Gospel? How do the particulars of our theological and cultural heritage help us to discern what the Spirit of God is doing? What is the environment the church should create to accomplish the intended outcomes?19 Relational leadership attends to all of the human dynamics among the participants and the world around them.20 It is concerned with the relational dynamics of families, life groups, working teams, staff, leadership, community and outreach to the neighborhood. Implemental leadership is concerned with reforming and initiating activities and structure that are consistent with

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19 Branson and Martinez, Churches, Cultures and Leadership, 55.

20 Ibid., 56.
interpretative and relational leadership.\textsuperscript{21} Perhaps the authors could have been clearer with what particular groups in the church structure should take which role. Providing macro and microsystems can reduce frustration and resistance towards this change. In the implemental portion of this research, this will be considerably discussed through the formation of a transitional team.

An important but simplified approach that monoethnic churches should consider is the multiethnic ecclesiastical context: congregational formation, spiritual formation and missional formation. These are working frameworks that shape the activities, life, priority and purpose of the church. George Yancey’s \textit{One Body, One Spirit} has expanded this framework, namely: inclusive worship, diverse leadership, overarching goal, intentionality, personal skills, location and adaptability.\textsuperscript{22} These elements will be used in the qualitative evaluation of the congregation in the latter part of this research.

Another fundamental aspect of this book is cross-cultural communication especially in the context of community worship. The authors describe the Western language as binary in structure: subject and predicate; cause and effect; agent and agent of action.\textsuperscript{23} The English language is linear in meaning, oftentimes existing with polarity and dichotomy (love-hate, it is-it is not, yes or no, right or wrong, right or left). Against this background, Filipino language is structured in spiral sense and meaning.

For example, a simple question of “Are you going to my birthday party?” is oftentimes answered in Filipino, “\textit{Tingnan ko lang} (I’ll try my best).” Sometimes it is

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} Yancey, \textit{One Body, One Spirit}, 67-69.

\textsuperscript{23} Branson and Martinez, \textit{Churches, Cultures and Leadership}, 118.
answered by “Weder weder lang (as the weather permits).” One has to understand the social, historical and even geographical context behind the answer. The complexity arises when non-native English speakers use the English language in preaching to the church. Despite the fact that the spoken word is in English, the concept, delivery and structure are influenced by Filipino linguistic patterns. This is the reason why American and Filipino humor do not work with their opposite audience. Preaching, spiritual formation or even worship could pose as huge challenges due to these differences. *Didache* and *kyregma* involve the skillful, informed and creative way of communicating the Gospel. The preaching staff needs to fully reevaluate their methods, forms, hermeneutics and homiletics of communicating the Gospel in the context of a multiethnic church. It gets even more challenging with an intergenerational audience, some of which are digital natives who are used to social media, images, stories, GIFs and emoticons. These differences are a major theme that will be reevaluated in corporate worship expressions like the homily, singing and non-verbal forms of communication.

**One Body, One Spirit by George Yancey**

The assumption that many monoethnic churches are prejudiced to minorities is not because of racism and bigotry, rather it is the failure of creating environments that are conducive to multiethnic concerns. In this book, Yancey attempts to address the distinct differences of the terms: multiethnic, multiracial and multicultural. An important definition that he highlights is that a multiethnic church happens when one ethnic group

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makes up no more than 80 percent of the church population. The rationale behind 20
percent is that this is considered to be a critical mass, large enough to influence the life of
the congregation.25 There is sociological evidence that churches with this eighty-twenty
ratio have different congregational dynamics compared to monoracial churches.26 This is
a radical definition from what was previously accepted as a fifty-fifty dissemination of
either race or ethnicity.

Yancey explains further that even though a church may have a 20 percent
multiethnic populace, this community must be involved in congregating with the main
worship service, interacting socially with the different ethnicities and not just attending
their designated ethnic worship service. The implication of this definition is fundamental
because part of the assumption CLC holds is based on having ethnic services in Thai,
Tagalog, Indonesian and Spanish. Although many of these different ethnicities join the
main service, there are still a few who strongly stay in these ethnic services. The ultimate
goal is to create a congregation that celebrates the unity of the church and at the same
time embrace the challenges of diversity.

Yancey undercuts the term multiracial in defining the synergy of the church as it
restricts the purview only on race. The term multiethnic is more accurate due to its social
dimensions and sounder scriptural basis since ethnicity and not racial groups is often
mentioned in the Bible.27 He writes:

While ethnicity is a concept that is similar to race, there is an important
distinction that has to be acknowledged. Generally, ethnicity refers to groups that

25 Ibid., 178.
26 Ibid., 15.
27 Ibid., 17.
have cultural distinctions, while race is used to denote groups that are perceived to be physically different from each other. When we talk about those with those constraining ethnicities, we are looking at the distinctions between Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, Germans and Swedish, Japanese and Chinese. Most Americans, for example, do not perceive the two groups in each of the previous pairs to be physically different from each other. On the other hand, racial differences are based on the perception that groups have physical differences.28

Another terminology he clarifies is “multicultural.” Ethnicity is described as identity based on community, kinship, history and language. However, culture is described by how a particular ethnic group responds to its environment. Culture has been used to articulate dimensions such as gender, age, sexual preference and regional differences. Yancey says that the concept of multiculturalism commonly used is too vague a term for describing parishioners in churches.29 For this research, “multiethnic” is used to describe the current vision of the church. Firstly, the genesis and eschatological community is an ethnic community as clearly stated in Scriptures as the multitudes coming from different, “nation, tribe, people, and language” (Gn 10:31-32; Rev 7:9).

Secondly, the subjects of this research are still predominantly first-generation immigrants. While there are second- and third-generation Filipino immigrants who have been assimilated or “Americanized” in the US, their ethnic identity is still profoundly Filipino. The different types of Filipino-American cultural groups still have a common denominator: Filipino (Filipino Americans, American Filipinos and Filipino Filipinos). Thirdly, culture is constantly changing while one’s ethnicity remains the same. In this research are some of the pseudonyms to describe assimilated ethnics who have a different

28 Ibid., 16.
29 Ibid., 18.
culture (coconut and banana), but they still have a strong inclination towards their ethnic roots. This applies to Filipino immigrants who embrace a different culture outside of the US (Filipino-Canadians, Filipino-Australians, Filipino-Italians) who still retain their ethnic roots. Fourthly, as mentioned earlier, multiracial is still a term associated with binary issues between Black and White relations, conflict and resolution. The binary issue has fraught racial tension between the two dominant races making Asian issues indistinguishable. This is not to say that tensions are nonexistent as indicated earlier. Woefully, there are still layers of ethnic conflicts between lighter-skinned (Far East) and darker-skinned (South East) Asians and those that are politically related tensions. The use of the term multiethnic addresses this oppression, injustice and prejudice, which is essential towards ethnic reconciliation.

The minimal format by Branson and Martinez on the multiethnic triad framework of spiritual, missional and congregational formations are expanded by Yancey in this book. He calls it the seven general principles for building a multiethnic church: inclusive worship, diverse leadership, overarching goal, intentionality, personal skills, location and adaptability. These seven core principles were used to measure the parishioner’s opinion of the multiethnic status of the church.

Inclusive Worship

Worship is a major feature of congregational life. People may neglect prayer meetings, small group meetings, discipleship seminars and Sunday school classes, but

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30 Coconut: brown outside, white inside. Banana: Yellow outside, white inside.

31 Ibid., 67-70.
they make it a point to attend a Sunday worship service. It is imperative for CLC in its goal to become a multiethnic church to have inclusive worship. A relevant and nascent idea the church should ask is how the Christian global shift influences the way they worship. Will Charisma include more global elements in worship expression, preaching, music, songs, arts and nonverbal ways of communication? Or will it continue to use Western influence in their worship? The worship songs by Hillsong, Bethel Music, Gateway Church, Jesus Culture and Elevate Music influence the worship ministry of the church. In fact, it rarely uses hymns and worship songs of the 1980s and 1990s popularized by Maranatha and Integrity Hosanna. There is even a huge deficit of Tagalog worship songs in services despite being a predominantly Fil-Am church. This will be a major challenge as it creates a worship experience that is inclusive to Blacks, Caucasians, Vietnamese, Chinese and Cambodians. Although Yancey expresses inclusivity in worship, his treatment again on the subject is incomplete as it only mentions Black and White worship genres. It would be an interesting experience to see how an inclusive Asian-initiated worship service would look and sound like.

Another area that must be considered is the preaching of the Gospel. Noting earlier the linguistic differences from English to Southeast Asian language, an inclusive preaching of the Gospel must be contemplated reflecting the ideas, emotions and symbols of different ethnicities. The church can consider the elements of storytelling, narrative preaching, arts, poetry, images, drama and other nonmusical forms of worship. This is a challenge for preaching pastors who still use idiomatic expressions, illustrations, clichés, anecdotes and jokes that still include Filipino elements.
Space and time are elements the church should also deliberate. Once again, Yancey’s sources are between the two dominant races in the US. He notes that the average length of worship service for multiracial churches is 83 minutes, which was longer than the average time for predominantly White congregations (70 minutes), but shorter than the average time for predominantly Black congregations (105 minutes). A good observation is how will this influence the length of the church service for Charisma Life Church. Currently, the length of the church service is 90 minutes long (it could take ten minutes longer at times). With the information presented above, it is important to reevaluate this structure within the larger multiethnic adherents of the church. There is feedback, especially from Hispanic and Black members, how the church is lacking more time to pray for people during the altar call. The church was established in the 1940s in a predominantly middle-class Caucasian neighborhood. Since then, Pomona has gone through a major demographic transformation with more Black, Hispanic and Asian ethnicities. Space, environment, colors, environment and decorations of the church should reflect inclusivity in order to attract the ethnic diversity of the community.

Diverse Leadership

Although inclusive worship has its impact, it is in diverse leadership that the maturity of the multiethnic church will be verified. Diverse leadership, especially in the pulpit, is what attracts inclusive worship.\[32\] A multiethnic congregation has more confidence when they feel that the pulpit and the decision making are shared by leaders

\[32\] Ibid., 87.
of different ethnicities. Mendoza should be commended in allowing different ethnicities to preach, join in the pastoral staff and serve as board of trustees outside the major ethnicity. As the church continues to mature, female pastors, deaconess and elders could add further to the inclusiveness of the church.33

Overarching Goal

An interesting fact that Yancey noted is that most of the churches in his survey did not initiate and make multiethnic ministry their primary goal. Multiethnic ministry is a byproduct of their commitment to fulfill the mission of the ministry.34 He highlights the fact that the history of the US created racism, and society is exhausted and frustrated with the lack of results in eradicating it. Politics, religion and media have proven to cause the divide even further. However, eleven o’clock Sunday morning is still the most segregated time in America. The overarching goal of multietnicity is within the frame of the *imago Dei* and the *missio Dei*. Since man is created in the image of God, the Church has the mission of God to bring restoration out of human brokenness and depravity. Hence, the Church should reflect this overarching goal of loving God and having compassion to people through reconciliation, outreach and fellowship of multiethnic communities.

Personal Skills

Yancey suggests the following personal skills that need to be developed: sensitivity to different needs, patience, empowering other individuals and relating to

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33 There used to be a faculty member of Azusa Pacific University, who was a member of the Board of Trustees. After her retirement, she returned to her native country of Jamaica.

34 Ibid., 99.
other individuals. Sensitivity has two dimensions. Firstly, it is appropriately the skill to evaluate criticism that may arise in creating a multiethnic atmosphere. Secondly, it means the sensitivity of other ethnic traditions and customs. Part of the implementation process will include a cultural competence class to develop personal skills in relating with multiethnic relations both inside and outside of the church.

Location

If a church wants to exist as a multiethnic church, then the members of that congregation should consider where they want to locate in order to reach their goal. The current demographic status of Pomona is shown in Figure 7. The data shows that the church is located in an active neighborhood full of racial diversity. However, there are surprising findings that came from the survey that need to be explored regarding where most members from Charisma Life Church reside and the implication of their mission towards the community.

Adaptability

A multiethnic church must be prepared to adapt to different ethnicities, cultures, generations and race. A monoethnic church only has one culture but several generations to adapt. However, the Asian-American church has multiple factors to consider. This is where Daniel D. Lee’s quadrilateral principle is very relevant in informing pastors and leaders in their approach to other cultures. Transitioning to become a multiethnic church is a tedious and complex process; however, the future of CLC is full of possibilities as it

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35 Ibid., 120-127.

represents early innovators of Asian-American congregations transitioning to become multiethnic. Appendix A (English) and B (Spanish) provide the questionnaire and the different elements on each of these multiethnic principles. The survey was conducted on December 2, 9 and 16, 2018 and had 172 individual responses. The results of this survey are included for analysis in the implementation section of this study.

Figure 7. City of Pomona Ethnic Representation

Many Colors by Soong-Chan Rah

George Yancey noted the importance of personal skills as important in achieving a successful multiethnic church. Soong-Chan Rah, in Many Colors, stresses developing cultural intelligence as an essential personal skill that needs to be nurtured by members of a developing multiethnic church. Developing cultural intelligence is imperative because
even well-meaning strategies could be offensive if the church does not understand its own culture and the culture in which it finds itself to reach.\textsuperscript{37}

Rah suggests three categories of culture as suggested by Western thought: high, folk and low.\textsuperscript{38} High culture is defined as influenced by European legacy. Folk culture is defined by non-Western heritage, while low are popular and hybrid cultures. This classification is problematic as it assumes that there is hierarchy in culture centering the focus on the West. For example, a “cultured” person is usually defined as someone with a cosmopolitan predisposition of Western and European standards. This bias means that Western culture often has the authority to define and shape other cultural expressions since it is superior to other cultures.\textsuperscript{39}

The superiority of this classification is critical in understanding the effects of Filipino culture by the colonists. Precolonial Filipino identity is captured in the concept of Tao (people). The Tao were the indigenous peoples that preexisted prior to the European (Portugal and Spain) discovery of the Philippines. The Tao have rich culture expressed in their language, music, alphabet, food, art, music, dances, fashion and social structures. One of the important aspects of this culture is that Tao have their own writing script called the baybayin. This system is unlike its other southeast Asian counterparts and unique to the original dwellers of the archipelago. It does not have the letter $f$, which

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\textsuperscript{37} Soong-Chan Rah, \textit{Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church} (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 23.
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\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 22.
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\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
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is why so many Filipinos pronounce \( p \) instead of the \( f \).\textsuperscript{40} Filipino grammar does not have a pronoun assigned to a particular gender (he, she, him, her, his and hers), it uses the generic pronoun \textit{siya}, which is used for both genders. This shows that the precolonial syntax holds both sexes with the same respect and regard.\textsuperscript{41} Evaluating this syntax in a gender-sensitive world today, the archaic \textit{Tao} philosophy of human identity is simply at par with the current proclivities. However, speaking English with a rich Filipino accent, and replacing the \( f \) with \( p \) is frowned upon as this does not conform with the Western sounding accent and diction. \textit{Baybayin} and other ancient Filipino texts are now gone in exchange for the widely used phonetic alphabet.

Precolonial communities were structured with a high regard to tribal leaders called \textit{datu}, leading their own \textit{balangay}, which is comprised of sixty families.\textsuperscript{42} The \textit{balangay} social structure has been integrated into the Philippines government and called the \textit{balangay} as local government units (LGUs). The LGU structure is successful as it empowers grassroots communities in implementing government policies and programs. As mentioned earlier, it has an inherent cultural nuance of Filipino tribalism. However, precolonial \textit{balangay} had one remarkable characteristic worth mentioning.

One of the ways to bring reconciliation between two disputing parties, is a practice called \textit{sandugo}. This process is done with the chiefs of the disputing tribes or personalities, cutting themselves, dripping their blood in one cup and all taking a drink

\textsuperscript{40} David, \textit{Brown Skin White Minds}, 8.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 11.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 10.
from it, making the chiefs and their *balangay* blood brothers or sisters.\(^{43}\) *Sandugo* means one blood: *san* (one) and *dugo* (blood). The blood compact as it is now called is unique and distinct to the Filipino culture and should be a reminder of how people resolve their conflicts. Even the famous Spanish explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, observed the blood compact with *Rajah Humabon* on April 21, 1521 to end their hostility as they sought to colonize the Philippines. Sadly, colonial influence has removed this significant conflict management, which has deeper meaning with regards to covenant, community and mediation.

The archaic *sandugo* also has a rich Eucharistic imagery of the blood ritual that is an expression of restored relationship between God and His people.\(^ {44}\) Pascal D. Bazzell and Aldrin Peñamora write,

> Blood, as we have seen, was a key component in Old Testament animal-sacrifice ritual and in the Eucharistic imagery, which created and restored community between God and His people. Similarly, blood was central in *sanduguan* or blood compact ritual, wherein participants wounded themselves and drank droplets of each other’s blood, which signified the creation of a community. Through the ritual, the participants were united with one another; each was expected to “bleed” for the other because from that moment on they were *isang dugo* (one blood).\(^ {45}\)

The structure of the Eucharist today in the Filipino-American church context has adapted Western expressions negating the opulent meaning of the *sanduguan*, which has sacramental, ritual, contextual and cultural nuances. Filipino-American scholar, E.J.R. David laments the loss of this cultural identity:

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\(^{43}\) Ibid.


\(^{45}\) Ibid.
The discussed history and such a presentation of the Tao’s indigenous culture and ways of life, however, are unknown to modern day Filipinos and Filipino Americans because it is either erased by colonialism, distorted by dominant historical narratives, and consequently, not readily or easily available for those who are searching for it. Such a lack of positive knowledge of indigenous Filipino history and culture makes it difficult for one to be proud of their Filipino heritage. Such a lack of positive regard toward an important and highly salient piece of one’s self can lead to many undesired outcomes such as identity confusion and even self-hate, which are highly distressing and may develop into serious psychological concerns. . . . the majority of the rich and highly admirable culture of the indigenous Tao were demonized, distorted, interiorized, and eventually erased and forgotten.  

The book highlights the fact that to understand another culture, it is essential to understand first one’s own culture. Rah emphasizes the absent-mindedness of American Christianity regarding racism and how it is important to remember one’s past. The Bible repeatedly calls God’s people to remember and this requires investigating, understanding and repeating.  

The Filipino people have a rich culture, but it has been marred and subjugated by three hundred years of Spanish colonization and one hundred years of Hollywood. Filipino culture, national identity and symbols have become amalgamated. The national fashion for men called the barong is a modification of the precolonial men’s dress with colossal influence from Spain. There is similarity between the barong with the Cuban guayabera due to Spanish influence. The Filipino staple meat adobo is almost the same as the Mexican adobo. The Filipino dish lumpia (egg roll) and pansit (chow mein) are influenced by the Chinese.

In the Philippines, skin whitening products for women is big business because of the mentality that beauty is defined by being White. A considerable debate was triggered

\[46\] Ibid., 12.

\[47\] Rah, Many Colors, 42.
when Kelsey Merritt was recruited to be the first Filipina *Victoria Secret* model. Although many Filipinos celebrated the prestigious honor, many also reacted that her beauty was considered “white passing.”\(^{48}\) Merrit is born and raised in the Philippines with an American father and a Filipina mother. The debacle is deeply rooted in the question of what Filipino identity and culture is. The same thing happened when Miss Philippines, Catriona Gray, a Filipina-Australian beauty queen won the 2018 Miss Universe, the crown jewel of beauty pageants in the world. People argued about how she can be Miss Philippines when she hardly looks Filipina at all. This begs the question, in what way does a Filipina woman look anyway? It is a colossal burden but also a critical opportunity for Filipino-Americans to understand their history and identity.

As CLC thrives to become a multiethnic church, it is important to understand the different dimensions of its cultural identity and historical intelligence. In addition, it must grapple with the ramifications of colonialism and its impact to the Filipino American psyche. If they avoid this work, they are only forcing other cultures to emulate Western culture, rather than celebrating, embracing and affirming one’s cultural identity through the revelation of the *Imago Dei*.

*Double Particularity by Daniel D. Lee*

In the previous literary reflection, I discussed the fact that Asian-Americans should be liberated from a Western ecclesiastical and missiological framework. Daniel D. Lee develops further this idea by asking the question, how does an Asian-American foster

hermeneutical tools in interpreting missiology and ecclesiology in context? Asian-American theology is complex, with layers of influences due to rich diversity, complexity, ethnic heritage, spiritual tradition, current global forces and cultural shifts that affect the Church. In *Double Particularity: Karl Barth, Contextuality, and Asian American Theology*, Lee proposes four lenses in developing a ministry context. These four lenses, which he calls, the Asian American Quadrilateral is: Asian heritage, Migration, American Culture and Racialization.

Asian-American heritage is so diverse considering its historical, geographical and vernacular boundaries. The region is separated by thousands of islands and divided by continental mountain ranges that isolate one country from another. It contains forty-eight countries, with over two thousand languages and is home to different religions and spiritualties (Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Taoism, Islam and Animism). Filipino heritage bequeaths a distinct heritage being the only country in Asia colonized under Spain and America. As previously cited, the impact of this is indeed deep in the larger cultural schema.

Inherent to Asian Americans is the impact of migration. Lee cites the different tensions Asian immigrants had to encounter including intergenerational conflict, refugee, ethnic enclaves, adoption, identity crisis, biracial identity, immigration policies, acculturation and assimilation. This was compounded with American culture, which has its own influences including the Greek/Roman heritage, postmodernism, Christendom, post-Christendom, multiculturalism and colonialism. Lastly, Asian Americans face

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racialization, which includes sensitive issues like the model minority, ethnic monopolizing, internal racism, micro aggressions and perpetual foreignness.

Lee asserts that these four lenses determine the Asian-American approach of ministry in context. The added tags in Figure 8 are the contextual factors around the four hermeneutical lenses that confront CLC in its pursuit towards establishing a multiethnic congregation. The integration of this study and tools are imperative in the application of theology, ecclesiology and praxis of the church. From a missiological context, CLC being in Los Angeles County can use this tool to educate leaders on how to effectively understand cultures and ethnicities since it has the largest concentration of Filipinos outside of the Philippines, the largest population of Thai people outside of Thailand, the largest Spanish-speaking population outside of Latin America/Spain, largest population of Koreans outside of Korea, largest population of Armenians outside of Armenia, largest concentration of Chinese outside of China and largest populations of Cambodians outside of Cambodia.

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Applying this Asian-American Quadrilateral especially in the sphere of communication, (preaching, teaching, training) is essential for the staff and leaders of the church. Multiethnic preaching demands cultural knowledge of how worldviews are similar and dissimilar. Preachers, teachers and leaders need to understand that they are the bridge from the cultural chasm that divides different ethnicities in the church.

Matthew Kim, in *Preaching With Cultural Intelligence*, asserts the importance of a broad knowledge of culture since this often determines how people behave and live.\(^{52}\)

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\(^{52}\) Matthew Kim, *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People who Hear our Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 11.
Using the two principles (Rah and Kim) side-by-side asserts the notion that Asian Americans need to employ a non-Western approach in gaining skills for cultural communication and knowledge for cultural intelligence. Using the Asian-American quadrilateral concept helps the communicator apply the didache and kyregma to the church and this can also be utilized by non-Asians to understand Asian culture in the church. This is a daunting task that requires patience and determination. In the implementation chapter of this research, more practical steps and models will be discussed.

*Beyond Color Blind* by Sarah Shin

The current attempt to plant multiethnic churches in America, for the most part, is initiated by White Evangelicals. Although credible, this fails the distinctive importance of ethnic elements like Asian heritage, American culture, racialization and migration. The usual approach to most multiethnic church initiatives is colorblindness. It is celebrated and theologized as the “neither Jew nor Greek” approach of ministry. To some extent, it
perpetuates the colonial presence, the theology and praxis of American churches. This is where Sarah Shin exposes the failure of the colorblindness approach:

Colorblindness, though well intentioned, is inhospitable. Colorblindness assumes that we are similar enough and that we all have good intentions, so we can avoid our differences . . . we are seeing instead that we are different, and those differences cannot be avoided. . . . Good intentions alone are ineffective medicine for such scars. The idea that we have transcended ethnic difference has been exposed is a mirage. We don’t live in a world that is in need of colorblind diversity because diversity that rests on colorblindness seems to lead to chaos.  

In assessing some of the leading sources of multiethnic ministry, colorblindness is prevalent. For example, in Gary McIntosh and Alan McMahan’s, Being the Church in a Multi-Ethnic Ministry, Chapter 1 is titled, “Pay Attention! The Immigrants Are Here!” The tone seems to suggest a warning of an immigrant invasion rather than the Christlike character of hospitality and accommodation. The authors must be commended in their efforts to convey awareness, define shifting demography and offer working models of becoming a multiethnic church. However, the philosophy, theology and ecclesiology offered by Asian-American church leaders emphasize the specificity and identity of the immigrant Christians. In Figure 10, Shin illustrates the lacuna towards building other cultural bridges, racial healing and social justice.

Figure 10. Ethnic Awareness Gap

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54 Gary McIntosh and Alan McMahan, Being the Church in a Multi-Ethnic Community: Why It Matters and How It Works (Saxony, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2012), 5.
She asserts the importance of ethnic awareness over colorblindness. Intergenerational immigrants by nature struggle with their ethnic identity in a foreign land. The tension between their ethnic roots in an immigrant country has produced identity deficit resulting in descriptions like coconut (brown outside, white inside) or banana (yellow outside, white inside). The tension can even be daunting for children in mixed marriages, which is prevalent in the Filipino-American culture, which has one of the highest instances of interracial marriages. At the same time, non-ethnic Americans are perplexed as how to describe the visible ethnics who have been in the US for several generations. This is what Shin calls a double deficit: the lack of cultural identity and a negative racial identity. This double deficit is poignantly addressed by Pentecostal scholar Amos Yong, an Asian American, who shares his experience of being a “perpetual foreigner,” caught between two worlds. Most White Americans treat him as a Chinese foreigner based on his physical features. Unfortunately, when he visits China, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, many local Chinese think he is one of them only to be disappointed that he cannot speak either Mandarin or Cantonese. Shin proposes that the double deficit can result in racialization, discrimination and generalization. Bringing this ethnic intentionality aids Christians who desire to lead in multiethnic congregations.


She suggested a number of practical guidelines on how to affirm ethnicity among church members like building trust, responding to conflict, prophetic justice, communication skills and recreating culture. One thing that is not clearly discussed by Shin and other Christian resources used in this research is the subject of assimilation and acculturation. These words are used interchangeably but are divergent in many ways. Both approaches affirm ethnic identity and perhaps a good point of discussion within the praxis and ethos of the church. In assimilation, one group accepts the dominant culture as superior, but in the process create a new amalgamation of cultures. Acculturation on the other hand is a two-way interaction where the two cultures do not have to change their corresponding cultures. Perhaps this could be more clarified in this book, because in a smaller community like the church, intercultural relationships like marriage, church life, sacred rites and outreach is more tangible and liminal.
CHAPTER 4
THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS OF MULTIETHNIC MINISTRY

The Scriptural Framework of Multiethnicity

Since the book *Divided by Faith* was written by Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, many efforts to address racial and ethnic divisions have been initiated. There has been a flurry of efforts to address problems through public apologies, reconciliation conferences, books, church mergers, social media groups and intentional networks calling for unity in diversity. However, there is also a pushback from this headway as the growth of multiethnic churches has stagnated and some have resorted back to monoethnic roots after navigating a turbulent transition.\(^1\) While Emerson and Smith came up with an 8 percent figure of multiethnic churches, a more comprehensive and recent study by the Multiracial Congregations Project came up with only 5 percent.\(^2\) While many are attracted to the notion of a multiethnic congregation, this is more of a utopic idea rather

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\(^1\) Yancey, *One Body One Spirit*, 30.

than practical goal for the Church. There is strong evidence that racial and ethnic alienation is still a major problem of the Church. Yancey comments:

A significant hindrance to the development of multiracial churches is the degree of racial alienation present in the United States. Generally, most racial minorities understand that this alienation exists, while many whites do not perceive how severe racial hostility still is in the United States. To appreciate the task of creating multiracial churches and assess whether it is desirable to undergo the effort needed to establish these churches, we must understand the depth of the racial divide.

In order to address this deficit of understanding, several key passages are selected from the Old and New Testament of the nature of God’s people through Israel and the Church. Although it deals with migration, immigration and the institution that contributed to the alienation, this must be addressed through the very core of the Scriptures. The Church should see the importance of understanding racial problems from social, institutional, ecclesiastical levels, and eventually to the individual level:

Racism is a social and spiritual sickness. It is the disease that separates us from each other. We sometimes see racism as a political problem that can only be solved through government intervention. While our government has an incredibly important role to play, it is powerless to deal with the spiritual pain of racism. The spiritual and moral dimension of racism makes it imperative that Christians become active in healing our nation of this illness. Part of the role of the church must play lies in the intercession and looking for wisdom from Christ. However, we also have a role in modeling racial healing. We in the church should be exhibiting how members of different races can live together.

There have been several approaches to resolve the race problem. Firstly, it is thought that through the method of institutional approach, this problem can be eradicated. Since much of racism is born of the political, national and religious structures, it is

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3 Ibid.


5 Ibid., 46.
imperative in confronting it at this level. Advocates of this method support organizations, rallies, boycotts, training, political power and sociological structures to promote justice and equity. Although it can bring change, it reduces all relationships to power, resulting in power control. Proponents mask racial equality to a public caricature devoid of personal responsibility. This is the reason why reconciliation and reparation initiatives did not produce the social outcome it was expected to yield.

A second method is the interpersonal approach. It seeks to address ignorance through interracial relationships that dismantle inequality over time. It is personal and feasible; however, it is not strategic enough to create enormous change for communities and institutions. A third option is the inner healing approach. In its simplest definition, racism is ethnocentrism—the false belief that one’s own race or ethnicity is superior to others. When one frames racism by this definition, everyone is now equally vulnerable of being ethnocentric when one claims their food, music, culture, language, community and relationships are better than others. Oftentimes, prejudice and biases are caused by hurtful experiences from one racial group to another. Hurt people can do harmful things and healed people can do healing acts of restoration. It is when one when is restored, forgiven, healed and reconciled that their worldview towards others changes. Inward healing propels people to have healthy interpersonal relationships and aids towards institutional change. Or more simply said, “Soul change leads to social change.” It is crucial to begin the healing, reconciliation and peaceful interpersonal existence to every man and woman created in the image of God.

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People, regardless of their color, race and ethnicity should be in the missional agenda of the Church. When Jesus saw the multitudes, he was deeply moved because they were, “harassed, helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9:36). Churches should be reminded that the missio Dei is deeply rooted in the imago Dei. It is sad to note that only 8 percent of churches in the US are intentionally making efforts to be integrated as multiethnic churches. Churches are still confined to the people of their own kind. A better view of understanding the value of people is to see the very nature of the people of God from the Old Testament to the New Testament. A specific focus on the migrating nature of the people of God in the Scriptures should be taken into consideration because of the context of this subject in this research, which is largely a first-generation Filipino immigrant church and how they relate to people outside of their own community.

*Imago Dei*

Multiethnic ministry is emerging because of the changing landscape of the West due to immigration and migration. Multiethnic immigrants, migrants and congregations are looking for their worth, purpose, rights and responsibilities in their new abode. It is crucial for Christians to see that each human soul has the imago Dei (Gn 1:27). A more secular view points to human dignity, substance and also worth. Christian thought however sees human dignity and worth as a divine bestowal of God’s image in each

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person so much so that people reflect these divine qualities in their lives. These include God’s moral, ethical, spiritual and emotional qualities present in each human being. People of all ethnicities inherently have virtues God possess. These qualities include having a will, intellect, emotions and soul that differentiate them from other creatures.

Secondly, the *imago Dei* also means being able to have relationships with God and others. This means, humanity has the capacity to have free will, consequently, resulting in the Fall, but also has the capacity for forgiveness and reconciliation. Lastly, this image means functional—meaning men and women have been given responsibility and directive over creation. The postmodern approach has feasted on racial and ethnic reconciliation, which is hugely important; however, reconciliation to God and being conformed to His image and likeness is the fulcrum by which other healing and reconciliation is based. It is unfortunate that racism, prejudice and discrimination are very much alive today expressed in monoethnic churches in a nation characterized by multiethnicities. With people moving from one nation to another through migration, immigration and the displacement of refugees, the goal of self-preservation is palpable. As demography shifts, the atmosphere increases in fear and contempt as other races, nationalities and ethnicities are often times viewed as a threat to the security and identity of the race, culture, church and even denomination. The situation will continue to be

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11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.
fragile and febrile in the future because the growth in America continues to be more multiethnic and multiracial.

**The Patriarchs and Joseph**

Foreigners, strangers and migration abound in Scripture. Abraham, the patriarch and his family in Genesis 11 were described as pilgrims from the land of Ur, Canaan and Egypt. Similar to many immigrants today, Abraham was pursuing a direction for his family. This direction was driven by a promise that God would bless him, and through his family, they will become a great nation (Gn 12:1-5). Abraham left his home land, crossed borders, faced resistance and encountered dangers along the journey. He knew the life of a migrant and appropriated the same hospitality and generosity to other strangers and sojourners (Gn 18:1-6). The migrant lifestyle caught on for Abraham’s son and grandchildren because they too were wandering to pursue the land promised to give them: Isaac (Gn 35:27; 37:1); Jacob (Gn 28:4; 32:4) and his sons (Gn 47:4, 9).

The plight of Joseph in Egypt is also an example of how he was displaced through migration. Although he was sold as a slave, he worked persistently for the opportunity to improve his status until he found his way to the highest ranks of Pharaoh’s office. As part of the redemptive history of the people of God, Jacob, his sons, and their families followed Joseph in Egypt. The Israelites thrived in their new country and worked at the bottom of the echelon. This passage is important for CLC to know that the US has been and still is a nation of immigrants. God has a redemptive plan like he had for Joseph to use his difficult displacement from being sold as a slave to Palestine to becoming a significant leader in Pharaoh’s palace.
Old Testament Laws on Strangers and Aliens

Subsequently due to the multiaxial nature of the people of God and their relationship with other ethnicities, God gave particular laws on the treatment of people different from them. Leviticus 19:33-34 says, “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” This is echoed again in several passages in the Old Testament: The law applies to the native born and the aliens (Ex 12:49); God looks after the affairs of the fatherless, the widow and the aliens (Ps146:9); protection of the rights and welfare of the poor and the aliens (Zec 7:10; Ez 22:7); God abhors the sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers and those who oppress the lowly including the strangers and aliens (Mal 3:5); stipulation of laws providing just wages for the aliens and not taking advantage of their status (Dt 24:14-15). Israel’s posture towards strangers and aliens was part of the larger fabric of its ethical life. It was its ethos of what it meant to be God’s people. Overall, the law gives the Israelites ethical guidelines to be fair, generous, kind and at all cost and to not mistreat people who are different from them.

Petrine Language on Strangers and Aliens

Peter’s usage of the word “strangers and aliens” is prominent in his letters (1 Pt 1:1). It is an extended description of the believers who are outside of the covenant. But in the Greco-Roman world, this word refers to real people who migrated to a new area.

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13 Caroll, Christians at the Border, 82.

14 Paroikos and parepedemos.
Like immigrants who had to wait through a long vetting process, these outsiders were not granted the rights and privileges of full citizenship and so had to endure economic, political and social limitations.\textsuperscript{15} The usage of “strangers and aliens” as it appears in 1 Peter 2:11 has a direct connotation to its original usage from Abraham. Caroll explains, “This Old Testament allusion connects the experience of the addressees of this letter (and all the believers) back to the ancient patriarch. Their sojourning is not unique. The history of the people of God is the pilgrimage of faith of those who are alienated from the world. Abraham’s sojourning was both literal and spiritual.”\textsuperscript{16} The Petrine appeal firstly has a spiritual appeal that pre-Christians are foreigners and aliens from the covenant, and it is foundational to understanding what it means to be a Christian. Secondly, Peter appeals to the Church to welcome and advocate for the strangers, foreigners, immigrants and aliens among them.

**Mobility and Migration in the Apostolic Age**

The expansion of Christianity in the apostolic age is due as well to mobility and migration during this time. The peoples in the Mediterranean region went through enormous movements accelerated by the Greco-Roman vision of global power. Some of this mobility and migration were caused by several explanations (business, economic opportunities, persecution), but for some, it was also the fulfillment of the Christian mission.\textsuperscript{17} The villages and metropolis were filled with multiethnic layers of different

\textsuperscript{15} Caroll, *Christians at the Border*, 117.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

people. The early church was facing migration effects like ethnic origins, citizenship, assimilation, personal liberty, language, native and endemic culture of their times. The birth of the Church during the Feast of Pentecost emphasizes the multietnic dimensions of the people of God. Acts 2:1-12 reads:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

The passage is commonly used by Pentecostals regarding the fulfillment of the promise of the Father to empower the disciples. After much tarrying, the disciples received the Holy Spirit, which was followed with the phenomenon of speaking in tongues. However, Acts 2:5-11 sets this event in a tapestry of people who are represented from different ethnicities, who were staying in Jerusalem in observance of the Pentecostal feast (Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene and Rome). This multietnic community witnessed the birth of the Church and a sign that brought a sense of inclusivity as they identified and understood vividly what the apostles were saying. Although these were Jews, they were

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culturally, ethnically and linguistically members of many nations, thus the Holy Spirit, upon the inception of the Church already moved prophetically into multiethnic diversity under Christ’s lordship.\textsuperscript{19}

The birth of the Church phenomenon could have occurred in Galilee where it was more ethnocentric and monoculture. Apparently, the apostolic community was commonly described as men from Galilee. However, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the people of God as witnessed by a very diverse multiethnic community. A critical interpretation by Pentecostals regarding this text is that it describes the missionary calling of the Church. Pentecostals use this as a foundational passage in building the Spirit-baptism and empowerment ecclesiology and theology. Obviously, the inductive approach of this passage and its verifying proof points out that the Spirit-baptism was like a fire that would ignite and spread all around the world.\textsuperscript{20}

However, another critical reflection about the Church as it relates to immigration and ethnicities is significant. Recently, the term “migrant churches”\textsuperscript{21} has been used to describe communities primarily composed of first-generation immigrants thriving to reach their own people and other ethnicities. The term bodes well since the apostolic church was also composed of apostles and converts who were migrants from other regions and became the center of sending apostolic assignments to different nations.

\textsuperscript{19} Craig S. Keener, \textit{The IVP Bible Background of the New Testament} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 327.


Paul’s apostolic ministry of planting churches carries the same features of a migrant community living the Christian life with other ethnicities.

**The Samaritan Woman - A Study of Multiethnic Ministry**

A populist interpretation of the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4 has been inadequate. Most of the Samaritan woman’s identity describes her sexuality, morality and gender. This description is largely due to Western semantics and excessive evangelistic focus undermining other important details in the text. The English language pattern of subject and predicate resulted in the following grammatical binaries as well: cause and effect; action and reaction; agent of action and implied action. Using this kind of hermeneutical pattern, the following has been surmised regarding the Samaritan woman: she had five husbands, therefore she was promiscuous. She came to the well at noon-day away from the scrutiny of the public, therefore, she was ashamed of her reputation. She was getting water from the well; therefore, she was ashamed of her reputation.

A common implication of this Johannine chapter concludes the theme on corporate worship. However, the Greek language and the Hebrew culture are anything but binary. Asian languages, like Greek, are explicit and layered with many meanings; not that any are superior (many times they are more complicated), but one has to take more discipline in extracting the obvious meaning.²² Western questions are usually qualified by: affirmative-negative; thesis/antithesis; Boolean formula of true or false; open and close. The story of the Samaritan woman is a classic example of how the Western hermeneutical approach is insufficient in understanding deeper meaning.

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²² Branson and Martinez, *Churches, Cultures and Leadership*, 114.
John 4 must seriously be reassessed for two reasons. Firstly, no other character in the life of Jesus took more time and passage in conversation with Jesus than the Samaritan woman. Secondly, her portrait is littered with many wrong and wild interpretations.\(^\text{23}\) The social, ethnic, power structure, gender, spiritual and moral issues that surfaced in this chapter hinge on this culturally relevant statement, “You are a Jew, I am a Samaritan woman” (Jn 4:9). Churches engaged in multiethnic and multicultural ministries must unpack the social, cultural, ethnic and spiritual layers of this passage.

**A Setback on Geography**

The first consideration is the geographical element of Samaria. John described Jesus having to intentionally go through Samaria, “Now, He had to go through Samaria” (Jn 4:4). Samaritans and Jews did not associate with each other. Their animosity is deeply rooted in their shared painful history when the Assyrians conquered the northern territory. When the war ended, some of the Assyrians intermarried with local Jewish women. These interracial marriages produced the Samaritans. The Jews, who are purists, call themselves the “chosen one” and belittled the Samaritans who are non-genuine Jews. To counter this, the Samaritans call themselves *Bnei Israel*, meaning, the Sons of Israel. Since they were denied their identity, these people occupied Samaria, a small region between Galilee and Judea. Although claiming to be Jews, they were called Samaritans because of their geographical location. However, the literal meaning of the word Samaritans means, *The Keepers* (in their understanding, keeping the law and its

traditions). Samaritans believe in a fourfold creed: One God, One Prophet, One Book and One Place. Eventually, the Samaritans morphed into a unique ethnicity that were different in spirituality, morals and culture. The animosity between the two related people escalated quickly.

When the Jews wanted to restore the temple in Judea, the Samaritans offered to help rebuild it. The Jews instead opposed and made physical obstacles along the way to hinder the Samaritans from going south to worship in Jerusalem. However, the Jews did not anticipate what the next move would be. The Jews negated the fact that Samaria is a region where most of the holy places of the patriarchs were located (Jacob’s well). As a result of this, the center of faith was divided into bipolar mountains. The Jews claimed Mt. Zion and Samaria claimed Mt. Gerizim as their new holy mountain. To make their claim authentic, they rewrote the whole Pentateuch and exchanged “Jerusalem” for “Samaria” and wrote “Mt. Gerizim” to replace “Mt. Zion.”

The changes of the Sacred scriptures and venue of worship angered the Jews, calling this act blasphemous. Samaritans eventually were known for their compromised ethics and roughness. It became a sanctuary for pagans, infidels, criminals, drifters and outlaws. As a result of this Jews travelling from Judea to Samaria would intentionally avoid this path and chose the longer route. Samaritans were pariahs to the Jews. The Samaritans would emerge as a distinct ethnic group whose religious practices were

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characterized by unfaithfulness to the covenant established by God to Israel. But the passage provides the intentionality of Jesus to reach this hybrid but evaded people. It is unfortunate that the Samaritans’ attempts to associate with the large Jewish culture, because of their shared heritage, were not given to them. But the Samaritans were not without guilt since they lived up to their reputation as fueling the bitterness of the Jews by compromising the faith, desecrating the capital of worship and harboring vagabonds and criminals in their region.

A Samaritan has a geographical setback, much like the Gypsies in Europe, the Karens in Asia or the Kurds in the Middle East. Classifying the Philippines as a third-world country assumes, there are both a first and second. The geographical setback of being from the South not from the North, or from the East and not from the West is layered with unfathomable implications. The historical narrative that the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan “discovered” the 7,000-island archipelago and named it the Philippines in honor of the King Philip of Spain assumes that the Tao did not have their own ethnic and cultural identity. Narratives and names have meanings and consequences. This is the reason that an American accent is lauded more than a Filipino accent. Whiter and fair-skinned becomes the epitome of Filipina beauty. Filipinotown in Los Angeles is not just a hub or a cultural attraction for the Filipino culture. It is a safe space for incoming immigrants to find the only immediate opportunity for transition. Some ingenious immigrants thrive to get out from this geographical trap. But for many, it is still

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a place where Filipino immigrants have not improved their economic status. But there is also growing concern due to the rapid gentrification in this region. Jennifer Velez writes, although it (Filipinotown) neighbors those hip areas, the population of Historic Filipinotown is still majority working-class, low-income, Central American, and Mexican. Areas like MacArthur Park, with its street vendors selling food and snacks around the lake, and Historic Filipinotown is full of working-class people on foot and getting around on the bus system. The area has already been experiencing new development and many locals have been bracing for gentrification for years.26

The high levels of poverty, crime, drugs, poverty and homelessness in Filipinotown are a reflection of the same part of urban America where a familiar ethnic, cultural and racial group converged. In many ways like Samaria, there are different marginalized ethnicities in Los Angeles that needs attention and focus. In a postmodern world, identity politics have driven public to spotlight invisible communities who otherwise have been voiceless in the eras past. While identity politics have also been questioned for divisiveness, it provided a platform for different voices, narratives and attention to ethnicities outside the dominant culture. It is important to note that the Church, the cradle of reconciliation, must provide this safe space for people from different ethnicities to come and be seen, heard and understood.

A Setback on One’s Ethnic Group

The Samaritan woman replied to Jesus’ request for water to drink by saying, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink? [For Jews do not associate with Samaritans]” (Jn 4:9). The passage reveals the ethnic tension and the

superior class of the Jews over the Samaritans. The Jews consider themselves as: an
ethnic-cultural group (Jews in contrast to Romans) a geographical group; (the people of
Judea in contrast to the Galileans); a tradition-historical group (descendants of the line of
Judah); and a religious-theological group (adherents to the religion of Judaism).\(^\text{27}\) As
such, they saw themselves as being a dominant culture and identity compared to the
Samaritans. Using the category espoused by Rah, the Jews prided themselves with high
culture. Christianity in fact finds the Jewish faith as the bedrock of its core beliefs as
partakers of the covenant God gave to Abraham. But this comes with a significant
identity only the Jews can claim and any racial group albeit related to them are
considered as Gentiles. Despite the Samaritans’ appeals to the Jews to be inclusive, they
were considered descending to the lowest degree of the scale according to racial purity.\(^\text{28}\)
Power and prejudice were already part of the New Testament context as the Jewish-
Samaritan conflict is well recorded in the Gospel accounts, as well as the Jews and
Greeks in Pauline writings.

Samaritan cultural identity morphed into a hybrid culture due to this racial
treatment. The Samaritan sacred writings favored the holy sites from Mt. Zion to Mt.
Gerizim. Their calendar combined the Jewish feasts with the Julian calendar and Arab
astronomical tables.\(^\text{29}\) There are major changes on the Passover, Feast of Tabernacles,

\(^{27}\) Steven Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie and Ruben Zimmerman, *Character Studies in the Fourth
Gospel: Narrative Approaches to Seventy Figures in John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans’

\(^{28}\) R.J. Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews: The Origins of Samaritanism Considered* (Atlanta: John

\(^{29}\) Reinhard Pummer, *The Samaritans: A Profile* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans
Publishing Company, 2016), 258.
Day of Atonement and the Feast of the Weeks. The Samaritans escalated racial tension by also claiming they were the original and true Israelites whereas the Jews had gone astray.\textsuperscript{30} Samaritans call Jews the erroneous ones, rebels, heretics, or people of error.\textsuperscript{31} The divisive treatment by Jews pushed the Samaritans to thrive and revise their heritage and tradition that is still directly related to Yahweh.

As mentioned earlier, multiethnic ministry in an American ecclesiastical context is confined to binary concerns between Black and White. Although ethnicity and race are complex terminologies to be defined, in general terms, race is described as a genetically distinct subpopulation of a given human species.\textsuperscript{32} In the US census the race category is classified as White, Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native and Hispanic.\textsuperscript{33} Ethnicity on other hand is defined as human groups that have a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of kinship, physical type or of customs or both.\textsuperscript{34} An ethnic group usually bears common culture, language, religions or other patterns of behavior.\textsuperscript{35}

Using this definition, it is obvious that the Jews and Samaritans are ethnically related. But historical, geographical and religious zeal created ethnic discord, hostility and prejudice between each other. The context of this definition is very important due to

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
the fact Filipino-American issues are often rooted in ethnic tensions among inter-Asian conflict, inter-generational Filipino American categories and other ethnic groups. The usage of Western binary principles in multiethnic ministry has considerable deficits regarding ethnic tensions and prejudice. An evaluation of this ethnic tensions holds valuable theological and practical insights that is helpful in applying multiethnic ministry. Figure 12 illustrates the deficit in understanding multiethnic tensions. By and large, the resources available concern Black and White racial issues. Within these two tensions is an emerging field being explored by East Asians (Chinese, Japanese and Koreans). But the Filipino-American context is largely absent in these conversations. The “You are a Jew, I am a Samaritan” statement is vital because it appeals towards a starting point of conversation, understanding, engagement and reconciliation between racial and ethnic tensions. Moreover, the added statement, “For Jews do not a with Samaritans,” only exposes the many tensions that exist among different ethnic groups.

Figure 1. Filipino-American Issues
The twentieth century has been called an ethnic century as globally tensions rise among different ethnicities, rather than racial divides (1940 miscegenation laws prohibiting Filipinos to marry Caucasians; 1970 fishing tension among Anglos and Vietnamese immigrants in Texas; 1971 Malaysian preference among local Malays versus Chinese immigrants; 1990 ethnic tensions among Tamils and Sri Lankans; the fallout of the Easter Soviet Union into different ethnic countries in the 1990s; the Serbian-Croatian War in the 1990s; the tension in 1995 among French Canadians who want separation from Canada). The belief of America being a melting pot of all cultures is becoming a myth. Economics, education, advancement and opportunity are rooted in the distinct boundaries that divide different ethnicities.

As mentioned earlier, one of the subtle forms of discriminations called double-deficit is practiced by people of the same ethnicity or close ethnicity. This is clearly seen in how the woman felt being inferior to the Jews, despite the fact she was a mixed Jew. In assessing the different categories employed by Kitano-Daniels, different categories (Cell A, Cell B, Cell C and Cell D) discriminate against each other. Stereotypes such as FOBs (fresh off the boat), bamboo Filipinos (brown outside, nothing inside), coconut Filipinos (brown outside, white inside) and white (mestizos and mestizas) versus dark-skinned Asians exists. Like how the Jews acted towards the Samaritans, they had “no dealings” with people from the other group.

36 Ibid., 1-3.

The use of the word συγχρομαί (Jn 4:9) is translated as “having no dealings or association” with someone. But the deeper meaning of this word from the root συν and χρομαί is that formerly the two were joined and working together, but the other part renders the other unusable. The term, which is added for emphasis, due to its popularity as a proverb, is a business terminology when one party rescinds an agreement and castigates the other party due to mistrust and dishonesty.\(^{38}\) The causes of racial and ethnic tension from this context are an offense that has been done. Ethnic disputes can stem from religious zeal, labor, territorial claims, policies, culture, space, social institutions, daily experiences and power. All of these integrated factors make up the summation of ethnic identity.\(^{39}\) When these balances are violated, it hits to the core of ethnic identity, and oftentimes causes ongoing tension. Churches must find creative ways to identify ethnic offenses and explore healing, forgiveness and reconciliation. Western racial and binary tools for mediation are germane but inadequate to resolve ethnic tensions.

There is another critical part of this relationship that needs to be noted. When the Jews returned from their captivity, they were jealous to find the Samaritans, whom they regarded as outsiders and lesser beings thriving and advancing despite only having used the fragments of the Torah and Mosaic laws and not the plenary writings of the prophets.\(^{40}\) Ethnic envy resulted out of this stemming from preservation of control and power. When the Samaritan woman said, “You are a Jew” first, followed by “I am a

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Samaritan,” the syntax affirms the position of power and control. Within the multiethnic and multicultural dimensions in the US are systemic structure of cultural and ethnic position of power and control. White privilege, Black Lives Matter and model minority are all social structures that expose the wounds of inequality. The multicultural and multiethnic church should be sensitive to address this and again bring healing, servanthood, reconciliation and even reparation, reflecting the Christlike ethos of humility. Jesus changed this paradigm by empowering the Samaritan woman to a position of power and control when He said, “Give me something to drink.” He placed the Samaritan, a woman, an outsider, a pariah and an outcast to a position of responsibility, power and control, something she was not used to do. Inclusivity manifested in the worship service and church leadership is a good start to the sharing of power.

It is lamentable that many church conferences today are still dominated by White Evangelical speakers despite the fact that global Christianity has shifted radically from the North to the South. It gets worse when multiethnic church ministry conferences are only dominated by speakers from one or two majority races. Another important reality in many ethnic tensions is when one party is not willing to relinquish its powers, while the other party tends to be inclusive and possess the willingness to compromise. The Evangelist does not say that the Samaritans would have no dealings with the Jews but that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Ethnic elitism or ethnocentrism is a serious roadblock towards unity and cooperation.

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The Eschatological Multiethnic Community

In trying to eradicate racism and invoke the cause of multiethnic ministry, several attempts have been made in order to create the mosaic church. Achieving unity despite diversity is an arduous and oftentimes messy process, which is easier said than done. One of the first responses in bridging the gap is segregation. The origin of segregation during the Jim Crow era of the 1800s was a desire to convert African slaves to Christianity, as the evangelical calling is about evangelism and discipleship. However, upon conversion slaves were segregated to a different pew and eventually encouraged to attend their own churches. A reason for this was that some White clergy believed African slaves lacked understanding on spiritual matters and also the control of social order. This was due to the potential that they might claim their own freedom as they learned about soteriological justification. The principle hinges on a faulty understanding of “equal but separate.”

The Sunday evening vesper service in fact was a form of segregation. Segregation was theologized and institutionalized which further increase the chasm between races. The relentless push of the Civil Rights movement put an end to segregation. It is important to note that the much of this effort came from religious leaders, in particular, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of whom Martin Luther King, Jr. was a member. It would take more effort to heal the wounds created by

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43 Ibid., 23.

44 Ibid.

slavery and segregation. Some churches and congregations to this day go to the world and preach the Gospel, but have no intent to live with and be with “others.” It is fine to go to another’s world and save him, but when he comes to live next door, sits on the next pew or perhaps dates one’s daughter, the separation is palpable. The Great Commission is read with an imperial view rather than inclusive. These churches are monoethnic by design and convenience.

Figure 2. Segregation Model

The post-racial church attempted to heal this divide, which produced the reconciliation movement. The 1994 Memphis Miracle was a reconciliation service bringing healing between Black and White Pentecostals. Many larger Christian denominations followed suit with public repentance, the washing of feet and a display of

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forgiveness and reconciliation. For the most part, these reconciliation services were patronized by Black and White leaders. Around this time, the Promise Keepers movement burst into the limelight championing the message of racial reconciliation. Stadiums in America were filled by Black and White men, holding hands with Latinos and Asians singing, praying, weeping and pledging to be a better brother, husband and father.47 During this time, a few churches became integrated and actually went beyond a public display of reconciliation and celebrated ecclesiastical life with different ethnicities.48

Figure 3. Reconciliation Model49

47 Mark DeYmaz and Harry Li, Leading a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church: Seven Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2010), 23.


49 Villegas, “Inclusion, Exclusion, Segregation and Integration: How Are They Different.”
Despite the well-attended meetings and feel-good fellowship among different ethnicities, people returned to the segregated status quo of the monoethnic congregations from which they came. One of the setbacks of the reconciliation movement is the lack of living and expressing the Gospel in the context of ecclesiastical life. This was widely promoted by the church growth movement, which taught the “homogenous unit principle.” The principle suggests that churches grow fastest when they are homogenous, in other words, people with the same ethnicity, economic status, and educational background. This is a subtle form of segregation opposed to the multiethnic coexistence of the apostolic church which clearly welcomed, worshipped, worked out and walked together despite their ethnic differences (Jn 17:20-23ff; Acts 11:19-26ff; Eph 2:11-3:6ff).

A second setback with the reconciliation paradigm is emphasis on the division between two parties rather than the root cause of racism, which is a failure of understanding on the constructed nature of race. Even when reconciliation acknowledges the differences in race issues, the responses and interpretations that one’s race perpetuates, it leads to further tensions, as it is conflict-centered rather than possessing cultural intelligence.

Lastly, the reconciliation movement lacked identification of ethnic wounds as it is drowned by the political agenda of binary race tensions. At the turn of the new millennium, research from United by Faith revealed a changing ethnic landscape in

50 DeYmaz and Li, Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church, 23.
51 Ibid., 22.
America but a church that is still stuck with segregated congregations. This research reveals that only 7.5 percent of American churches are intent on operating as a multiethnic congregation.\textsuperscript{53} More than 90 percent of American congregations are still confined to their monoethnic focus and vision.

Another way of tackling multiethnic disunity is the concept of assimilation or colorblindness. This concept is an attempt to eradicate racism by treating people equally regardless of their race, culture and ethnicity. It is a noteworthy effort to pursue unity and equality. People who are ardently against racism and prejudice might say they are colorblind. However, colorblindness only adds more blindness to an already complex problem. It is almost an escape from the reality of inequality, violence, prejudice and issues brought by race and ethnicity. Colorblindness makes racism a taboo topic, which one needs to avoid. Colorblindness undermines one’s unique ethnic qualities, cultural tradition and unique perspective. These beautiful qualities are “gray scaled” and their narratives muted. Sarah Shin comments,

How would you feel if you shared something that’s part of your Chinese, Black, Irish, or Colombian background, and someone replied, “I’m colorblind!” Blind to what? The food, stories, and cultural values that make up the valid and wonderful parts of who we are? Colorblindness, though well intentioned, is inhospitable. Colorblindness assumes that we are similar enough and that we all only have good intentions, so we can avoid our differences. . . . Good intentions alone are ineffective medicine for such scars.\textsuperscript{54}

Colorblindness may be well intentioned, but it is a cultural and theological tool that perpetuates racialization because it denies the very unique existence of each ethnic


\textsuperscript{54} Shin, \textit{Going Color Blind}, 6.
individual.\textsuperscript{55} Another problem with colorblindness is what perspective a congregation eventually will take. It is argued that colorblindness is a White, evangelical response to the race problem.\textsuperscript{56} However, any dominant culture of a congregation can be as responsible for setting their cultural and ethnic standards in a multiethnic congregation.

Figure 4. Assimilation or Colorblindness Model\textsuperscript{57}

![Assimilation or Colorblindness Model](image)

CLC, being a Filipino-American church can be culpable of colorblindness if they assume people will follow their way of running church. Below are a few reasons why dominant cultures may miss the opportunity to bring unity to a diverse population.\textsuperscript{58} Colorblindness ignores the heart language of an ethnic minority. It also misses Kingdom

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, \textit{Divided by Faith}, 90.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 89.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Villegas, “Inclusion, Exclusion, Segregation and Integration: How Are They Different.”
\item \textsuperscript{58} Paula Harris and Doug Schaupp, \textit{Being White: Finding our Place in a Multietnic World} (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 93.
\end{itemize}
 riches God intended for blessing the Church, Colorblindness misses who people really are at their core. It also assumes that everyone is ‘white like me,’ It makes the Church vulnerable to stumbling into the Acts 6 ethnic rift. Finally, Colorblindness numbs one’s hearts to the needs of other ethnic minorities.

An important vision of inclusion is one that Apostle John saw in a vision of the eschatological community. Revelation 7:9-12 says:

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. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!

In his prophetic vision, John saw God’s people assembled together in one big celestial celebration worshipping the Lamb of God. The multitudes who gathered were people from different parts of the world who were described with their unique individual features. One can assume that the coming age would usher an eschatological identity removing one’s unique earthly distinctiveness. However, this eschatological community possesses the fullest color spectrum classified by race, ethnicity and language. The description of every nation, tribe, and language was not singularly mentioned but was repeated seven more times to emphasize the multietnic, multicultural, multilingual and multiracial representation of the people of God (Rv 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15; 21:24,


59 Or any dominant culture in a specific setting.
26). Although the mandate of becoming multiethnic is not for every church, what is imperative is for the Church to be indigenous. As America is becoming a more diverse people from different ethnicity, culture and language, it is distressing to see that only 7.5 percent of congregations reflect the eschatological community that God intends. It is important that churches today visualize and actualize what the Church God wants. The clear answer is hardest of them all which is integration.

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60 Villegas, “Inclusion, Exclusion, Segregation and Integration.”
PART THREE

IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTIETHNIC PRINCIPLES
CHAPTER 5
CONGREGATIONAL FORMATION

In order to analyze the congregational response towards the vision of becoming a multiethnic church, a survey was done in December 2018, after the main worship service over three weeks. It was translated into Spanish to address some adherents who preferred the questions in Spanish and distributed to youth and Thai services. A total of 171 parishioners responded to the survey and the composition of respondents is varied in terms of ethnicities, age, culture, generation, language and length of stay in the US. These community aspects were used in analysis along with the different characteristics of a multiethnic church. Multiethnic churches are not just defined by different ethnicities attending a church. Yancey uses seven principles as a litmus test in reaching and maintaining a multiethnic church status.1 The seven areas are: inclusive worship, diverse leadership, an overarching goal, intentionality, personal skills and location.

Yancey provided survey questions that were utilized in the survey for CLC. There were twenty-nine questions grouped by the different principles of a multiethnic church

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study. Respondents also identified their ethnicity, age, language and residence.

Appendix A gives a more detailed response to this questionnaire, with results also in Spanish. It is important to note that the survey analyzes people’s opinion and not their factual belief towards the questions. An opinion is a judgment, or a view not necessarily based on facts or knowledge. This is the reason why the survey used the Likert Scale in determining outcomes since the multiethnic undertaking of the church is in its founding stage. It will be interesting to note outcome changes of this survey after the church has fully transitioned as a multiethnic church.

**Cultivate Multiethnic Worship**

For the purpose of this survey, the findings will follow the format Yancey uses, which begins with “inclusive worship.” For detailed findings of these six inclusive worship questions from the survey, refer to Appendix C. A summary of these responses is shown in Figure 17. By and large, the congregation believes that they are thriving in the area of being inclusive in worship. However, when this is divided into different segments of the worship service (preaching, arts, graphics, songs, worship style and band), preaching and music have the most favorable responses. Responses suggest that there should be more variety in racial, cultural, ethnic styles of worship in the service.

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Ibid., 168-169.
As is often said, music is a universal language. Charisma is a commuting church; as a result of this, the two major meetings are Sunday morning worship service and end of the week life group meetings. The facility is hardly being utilized during the week except for daily operations and occasional rentals from members or the community. The Sunday worship service is where congregants come together to worship and fellowship. It is absolutely necessary to invest and develop a multiethnic, multiracial and multicultural worship celebration. But worship music can also be the source of unity or division. As often is the case, music is one of the most racialized area of the church.\(^3\) For example, Gospel music is oftentimes identified with Black churches, while Hillsong and Jesus

Culture are representative of White evangelicals. As indicated earlier, Filipino is a hybrid culture and its natural bent is influenced by the West. Obviously, the music styles replicate Western style of worship like Hillsong, Jesus Culture, Bethel Music, Gateway Worship and Elevation to name a few. The church should be more trained in how to address this challenge in becoming a multiethnic church.

Develop an Innovative Worship Culture

With a renewed interest in diverse worship, there is also a renewed interest in developing a fresh philosophy of the emergence of multiethnic worship. Gerardo Marti, in his groundbreaking book *Worship Across Racial Divide*, suggests that there are four kinds of worship selection: professionals, traditionalists, assimilationists and pluralist.\(^4\) Professionals are highly-trained church musicians who desire to produce a variety of musical styles, but pursue high qualities of sound, service and style. They see church worship as one big music production. Professionalism and excellence work hand-in-hand, however, they lack emphasis on ethnic features. As one professional music pastor says, “I think that’s what’s so beautiful about music, is it’s so unifying, and the words and music touches your heart, and I don’t see whether you’re Japanese, Black or Hispanic or whatever. I don’t see where the difference is.”\(^5\)

The next type is the traditionalist. These are middle-of-the-road worship leaders who do not want to take a risk with a new musical style or worship with an ethnic dimension in it. Worship style is typically what has been handed down from one pastor to

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\(^4\) Ibid., 133-140.

\(^5\) Ibid., 133.
another. For the traditionalist, worship minimalism is what works. Traditionalists are hard to change in music style and ethnic inclusion. As long as it is appropriate, effective and blesses the heart of God and the people, then there is no need for innovation. As one worship leader quips, “Worship is worship music. We don’t cater to a cultural thing.”

A third category is the assimilationist. In contrast to the professionals and traditionalists, assimilationists are racially aware music leaders should adhere to different music styles. They also agree that worship leaders should develop cultural intelligence in addressing the unity in diversity. An attempt to solve this is trying to create a “cross-cultural” worship, or a global song, even a universal form of worship. The irony is that they disagree on the specific sound or type that is supposed to be fundamental to a worship rhythm.

The last category is the pluralists. Representation is the main core value of these worship leaders. This category accounts only for a quarter of the multiethnic church study. Pluralists are racially aware music leaders who intentionally attempt to incorporate a mix of musical styles based on the beliefs regarding what music relate to what racial or ethnic group. They are also the most vocal and precise in describing their approach in music selection for multiracial worship.

In charting these types, CLC’s worship team, music pastors and the pastoral staff need to brainstorm and develop an innovative worship culture. The four music teams are

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6 Ibid., 134.
7 Ibid., 137.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
illustrated in this quadrant developed by Marti. With White, Black, Hispanic and Asian well represented in the racial profile of the church. It is also important that the worship leaders understand these four kinds of music styles.

Figure 7. Four Kinds of Worship Teams\textsuperscript{10}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{figure7.png}
\end{center}

Relationship Over Musical Styles

Music is not neutral. It assumes one’s culture and ethnicity and will always be a major issue of the Church as it pursues multiethnic worship. Each culture and tradition feels strongly that their heart expression of worship is the best expression, sometimes even the only expression.\textsuperscript{11} The goal for the Church is to be culturally sensitive of the people in the congregation, that they are represented and heard. However, the overarching goal for the worship service is a relationship over musical styles and genre.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

In Marti’s research through thousands of interviews, surveys and visiting different multiethnic churches, churches agree that it is not the music style that binds them, instead, it is the relationship with one another. In other words, it is more about a relationship, not about rhythm.12

Relationship through worship is the gem of the multiethnic, multicultural and multiracial church. It is the biggest platform wherein a church can demonstrate love for one another. To be inclusive means a church is not just adept in rehearsing different musical and ethnic styles, but is willing to recruit members from another ethnicity even though it might shuffle the ordered tightness of a worship team. Paul admonishes this same principle in his instructions to the Corinthian church, “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1). A good example of this is the inherent quality of musical harmony. Each culture has a different focus and expression of what music is. Some cultures emphasize melody, others beat and still others rhythm. All however need harmony to bring about a powerful song. Music is a tool for the Kingdom of God that ultimately serves to bring Him glory and to reconcile humanity with Him and to each other. In multiracial worship, the Church gives the world an opportunity to see the glory of God as reconciled humanity sings in harmony.13

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13 Woo, The Color of Church, 189.
Audience of One

Contemporary worship structure is designed by stage performers in front of an audience. But in true worship using the Revelations 7:9 account, there is only one audience and the performers and singers coming from all nations, tribes, people and languages. In the case pertaining to multiethnic worship in the previous section, an enormous focus is placed on recruitment towards staging musicians, singers and programming multiple worship styles. But when a church is slightly deficit in multiethnic musicians and singers, it is fundamental to recruit worshippers representing a mosaic of singers. This will counteract, provide balance and representation. In CLC where there are not a lot of ethnic musicians, it can invest primarily in recruiting singers for the choir or backup singers during inclusive worship and other corporate celebrations. Marti calls this racialized ritual inclusion:

The recruitment of diverse people to visibly showcase diversity in church worship creates structures of diversity. This is a process I label racialized ritual inclusion. To actualize music, people are needed, and the intentional recruitment and incorporation of diverse people creates the possibility of involvement and relationships that ensures diversity happening over time. By highlighting ritual inclusion, we reframe our understanding of how music works by privileging the practical over acoustic dynamics.14

Racialized ritual inclusion provides several benefits. First, it is a visible sign of the church effort of their vision for multiethnic unity. Although the current church has multiethnic staff, not all of them are routinely scheduled to preach. The ethnic mosaic of stage personalities sends a signal of inclusivity. Secondly, worship programming, recruiting and rehearsing which happens more than twice a week is a significant activity

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that serves as a workroom for ethnic vision, relationships, communication, relationships and reconciliation. Music rehearsals become relationship rehearsals. Lastly, it also serves as visible representation of the growing diversity of the church.

**Cross-cultural Preaching**

The preaching in Charisma Life Church relishes positive feedback in a cross-cultural setting as substantiated in the survey. However, the church should be aware of the different cultures, ethnicities and generations that are represented in the church.

Figure 19. Charisma Generation Chart

The church is predominantly a first-generation immigrant church assimilated to American culture. While this is a positive feature of the church, it has morphed into the colorblindness approach in preaching. The personal stories, anecdotes, jokes and other illustrations used most of the time originate from Filipino cultures. There are times idiomatic expressions, stories, acrostics, word play and illustrations are said in the
Filipino language which draw immediate response among Filipinos, but a delayed response from non-Filipinos as the speaker has to explain first what it meant. This frequent habit by Filipinos might be tiring for some. Although personal ethnic stories are part of one’s cultural identity, the preaching staff should enhance cultural and generational intelligence to connect with its audience. As indicated below, the ethnic make-up of the church still has a large foreign-born population.

Figure 8. Ethnic Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colorblindness is the inability to see certain colors or the failure to distinguish different colors. People are capable of seeing more than a million different colors and shades of colors and it would be a great disservice to the church to only have a monochromatic approach. Colorblindness in this research can lead to ethnocentrism.

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15 A good example is, “Bato bato sa langit, ang matamaan, hindi magalit.” It is an amazing word play, which literally means, “throwing stones in heaven, whoever gets hit do not be mad.” The whole point is if someone criticizes randomly, do not react because the criticism is not really on you.

where theological, ecclesiastical, social and homiletical concepts are preconceived in the Filipino or Filipino-American framework. The preaching staff in Charisma needs to develop cultural intelligence to be effective in the changing demography of the congregation. As indicated in the survey (Figure 21), there are linguistic, ethnic and generational differences of the congregation.

Figure 21. Language Percentage in Charisma Life Church

Additionally, there is a cultural difference, which can be very fluid. A lack of cultural understanding and sensitivity has palpable consequences: the loss of members.\textsuperscript{17} Two of the four indicators of people leaving the church are due to a lack of community and cultural difference. Other data that supplements the multiethnicity of the

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\textsuperscript{17} Michael Kim, \textit{Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People who Hear our Sermons} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 7.
congregation is different languages being spoken by people. The need for culturally intelligent preaching is needed to improve the goal of an inclusive worship.

Michael Kim in *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence* suggests the ethos of multiethnic preaching. He calls this the CQ quadrant: CQ1 Drive; CQ2 Knowledge; CQ3 Strategy; and CQ4 Action. CQ1 is the drive and the most important part of the cultural quotient. He explains: “CQ Drive reflects an inner longing to better understand similar and dissimilar congregants. Loving our sheep requires getting to know them beyond simply their names and professions. Who are they? What cultures and subcultures do they most identify with? What dreams do they have and what are their fears? What beliefs do they hold closely? What causes them pain?”

The next stage is the CQ2, which is knowledge. This represents cognitive dimension around culture and their role in shaping and communicating the sermon. The critical elements in CQ knowledge are assessing one’s understanding of how cultures are similar and different and the way culture shapes people’s thinking and behavior. The third stage is CQ3, which is strategy. This is also known as the metacognitive ability of the preacher to crossover to a different culture. This requires a specific roadmap anticipating how to approach the people, topic and specific situation. The last step is CQ4, which is action or the behavioral dimension of the preacher and the ability to act appropriately in a range of cross-cultural events and scenarios. Kim writes:

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18 Ibid., 6.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
CQ Action are verbal actions, nonverbal actions and speech acts—the exact words and phrases we use when we communicate specific types of messages. Put simply CQ Action for preachers, is the test of how effectively we put into practice our CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, and CQ Strategy. Once we have implemented our cultural intelligence, we can determine whether our knowledge and strategies have been received well by our listeners.21

In applying the homiletical approach to cross-cultural preaching, Kim created a template that is workable in the context of CLC. Preaching in a multiethnic and multicultural church is a daunting task. As pastors learn what it means to preach with cultural intelligence, they will make mistakes even with the purist of intentions. But this is where the ministry of reconciliation comes in, and the church continues to learn how to be effective.

![Cross-Cultural Preaching Model](image)

21 Ibid., 8.

22 Ibid.
In the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman, it is important to note the power of the presence of God to break the cultural boundaries that separate people. The cultural differences were clear in this conversation:

Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:20-24).

Furthermore, the importance of the presence of God and the Holy Spirit in worship is the source of unity, reconciliation and restoration of broken relationships. Paul’s exhortation stipulates, “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many” (1 Cor 12:12-14). The Holy Spirit was also poured out in the context of a multiethnic gathering in the city of Jerusalem. While they were worshipping, a phenomenon occurred of the restoration of the broken, divided and distributed people in the Old Testament. Through worship, a sign was given of the imminent restoration of God’s promise not just among the Jews but to all people, tribe, language and ethnicities. Acts 2:1-11 recounts:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under
heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

Brenda Salter McNeil and Rick Richardson in their book *The Heart of Racial Justice* articulate the importance of ushering the people of God into His presence:

Christian worship involves many dimensions of the community’s work in relation to the powers. Ideally, the sermon should name them and demonstrate their perversions (racism). The offering attacks the power of money. The intercessory prayers remind us of our task to be agents of God’s reconciliation and commit us to live out our faith in Christ’s victory over the powers. The sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist give signs and seals that we participate in the triumph of Christ so that the powers have no ultimate control over us. This type of worship . . . focuses on God’s multicultural, multilingual, multinational kingdom of justice and love. Worship like this prepares our hearts to receive healing, order our souls to become like what we adore, renews our minds to envision what God is bringing and begins to make actual the kingdom that is to come.23

God reconciling His people to Himself and man being reconciled to one another is central to the gospel of Christ. The church must take thoughtful effort in this kind of worship.

Global Sunday

In September 2018, the church held its first Global Sunday. The highlight of the celebration included a multiethnic choir singing a song that was sung in different languages. The Lord’s Prayer was also recited by different people in their native tongue including Cebuano, Thai, Cambodian, Spanish, Indonesian, French and English. The senior pastor also installed new members who signed up and it was evident that new

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members are no longer representing the dominant culture. After the memorable celebration, the congregation was invited to the church gym where food from different continents was served. There were different cultural presentations like African poetry, Thai dance, Mexican mariachi worship, Filipino tinikling (bamboo pole) dance, Indonesian interpretative dance to name a few.

The evaluation of the event was that it was very successful. But those involved in leadership and production assessed this kind of event not doable every Sunday. Although there is some truth to it, Global Sunday should not only be an annual event, but a template of what the future of the church should hold. Perhaps Global Sunday is not feasible as a weekly event as it requires money, time and resources. However, transitioning to become a multiethnic church is costly and involves hard work. Yancey in his exhaustive study of multiethnic churches reported that those who fail to design a routine multiethnic worship service lose its purpose and revert back to the monoethnic and dominant culture.\textsuperscript{24} It is imperative that the pastors, church and ministry leaders do not lose sight of creating an inclusive worship service because it sends a message of commitment to the people, the encompassing presence of God in the service and the prophetic picture of the eschatological church.

Non-musical Formats of Worship

The ordinances of the church like baptisms and communion could be varied in terms of how different cultures and ethnicities observe it. As mentioned earlier in this

\textsuperscript{24} Yancey, \textit{One Body One Spirit}, 76-78.
paper, the Filipino *Sandugo* is a great symbol that has powerful meaning of how the blood compact forges peace between two belligerent people. Moreover, the symbol of the Eucharist could contextualize how the bread, the basic and lowest staple of human existence, takes form in a different culture. The use of the fine white bread has evolved into commercialized wafers that are regularly seen in many churches today. But enculturating the element takes a deeper meaning to one’s culture empathetic to the staple they grew up with. Imagine the possibilities for the Indian in understanding “I am the *chapati* of Life,” or the Filipino “I am the *pan de sal* of Life,” or the Mexican, “I am the *tortilla* of Life,” and the Vietnamese “I am the *baguette* of Life.” Bread being a quintessential food for different people is a significant staple to celebrate one’s ethnicity.

The giving of tithes and offerings could also take forms reflecting other cultures. Africans provide a lot of energy and passion in their service, while Anglos provide a lot of structure and organization. The use of personal testimonies from people of different ethnicities either in the service or multimedia format is a tangible representation of the transforming power of God in His community. Decorations, banners, foyer murals, stage, lighting, bulletins, background media clips and worship motifs are powerful tools to create multiracial worship. The use of simple greetings in their native language is also a meaningful expression of representation, accommodation and hospitality. The church can adopt a welcome greeting on weekly services and special events like Mother’s and Father’s Day, Christmas and New Year’s. The practice of corporate prayers during service


26 Ibid., 82.
with pastors and leaders from different ethnicities and also the encouragement of multiethnic small group prayers are effective symbols of inclusion. At this time, these ideas are not yet being utilized except for the Global Sunday event, which was held in September 2018. The pastoral staff and worship pastor should regularly meet to discuss the cultural components included in the Sunday morning service. Presently, CLC’s approach in weekend services is a representation of many monoethnic churches attempting to assimilate other cultures into their brand of worship. Worship seems to be open and inclusive but what it is really trying to convey is to affirm the dominant culture:

The statement “We would welcome anyone here,” is in most cases more accurately translated, “We would welcome anyone here as long as they like who we are, what we do, and how we do it.” In other words, “We welcome anyone to join us as long as they are willing to conform to our ways but don’t expect us to conform to theirs!” And nowhere is this attitude more pronounced than in a congregation’s approach to worship.27

CLC has a part-time worship pastor but does not attend the Tuesday staff meeting. Although the staff meeting is represented by Filipino, Mexican, Black and Thai pastors, it would be fundamentally critical to have their thoughts and voices included in how the multiethnic worship service could form on a weekly basis. There is a palpable disconnect of the worship service and the increasing multiethnic adherents in CLC. This gap must be properly addressed.

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The next component of implementation after congregational worship is spiritual formation. In pursuing principles towards training the congregation for multiethnic spiritual formation, this section will analyze the questions on personal skills towards people of different ethnicities. There are four statements that sought their opinion and the detailed results are found in Appendix D, but Figure 23 provides a general overview of people’s opinion on the congregation’s personal skills in multiethnic ministry.

Figure 10. Multiethnic Personal Skills of Charisma Life Church Members
Firstly, members and regular attendees were asked if they are patient with one another in matters relating to ethnicity and have developed the ability to handle setbacks with kindness and wisdom. Secondly, church members and regular attendees are asked if they have developed sensitivity to the needs of others, especially those that are ethnically different from them. Thirdly, is there an openness to empowering people who are not members of the majority ethnic group to lead and direct the affairs of the church. Lastly, they were asked if leaders of the church demonstrate the ability to communicate, understand and empathize with people of different ethnicities and cultures.

The next area that that will be analyzed with regards to forming a spiritual formation process is intentionality. Using Yancey’s principles on personal skills and intentionality are important in producing spiritual formation programs because these two measures at the grassroots level how people relate, interact and apply the reality of a multiethnic church.

Figure 11. Multiethnic Intentionality of Charisma Life Church Members
There are four questions used for measuring intentionality and a detailed result of the survey is found in Appendix E but the average of the questions is shown in Figure 24. Firstly, participants were asked if the congregation expresses their desire to become a more multiethnic church through thoughts, words and actions. Secondly, in spite of struggles and setbacks, church leaders remain committed to the goal of becoming a multiethnic church. Thirdly, they are asked if the church is spending considerable time talking about issues related to becoming a more multiethnic church throughout the year. Lastly, they were asked if church leaders have formally set becoming a multiethnic church as one of the top-level church goals. In analyzing the results, respondents view the members of the church as practicing the intentional desire to make the multiethnic vision a reality. The next part of this research will outline how it can develop church members who will be competent and have skills in multiethnic ministry.

The Importance of Small Group Ministry

As noted earlier celebration is the most convincing, visible and tangible proof of the multiethnic vision of the church; small group ministry is where the details of multiethnic life are experienced. The apostolic church has two important gatherings: “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts” (Acts 2:46). This is the two-winged church with one meeting at the temple and one at home. This can also be called the “major-minor” meetings of the church where Sunday morning is the major meeting and the small group as the minor meeting.¹ The first part of the implementation stage is

¹ DeYmaz and Li, Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church, 134.
the congregational aspect, which is worship, but the second part is in the area of creating a multiethnic community. There is a significant difference between congregation and community. Robert Wuthnow writes,

To understand what a congregation is, we must also distinguish it from the word community, which has become popular in religious circles in recent years. When pastors announce to those assembled at their churches on Sunday morning that they hope they will find community, they do so advisedly. Community in this usage, implies a supportive set of interpersonal relationships that forge a common bond of identity and caring among people. It requires interaction, give and take. A congregation in contrast connotes something more akin to gathering or an assembly than to a community.²

People can be in a congregation without really being a part of a community. The intricacies of the multiethnic church befit the prime importance of a small group where real community life is experienced through interaction, identity, sharing and where caring is happening regularly. Evergreen Baptist Church in Rosemead, California emphasized the importance of small group during their transition from being a predominantly Asian-American church to a multiethnic church. Kathleen Garces-Foley writes, “One strategy that has worked well is the use of cell groups such as Bible study, special interest, or support groups, which meets outside the Sunday worship time. By forming bonds of caring within a cell group, members feel a sense of belonging in the entire church since the cell group is a microcosm of the larger community.”³

Charisma Life Church has around 380 people attending thirty-six different Life Groups. The possibilities of bringing amazing community life are endless as multiethnic


interaction happens in the grassroots. Currently, the church has a successful equipping program and structure through Charisma School of Ministry (CSM). Since its inception in 2016, 388 students have already attended the different classes that meet on Sundays and weekdays. Many of these attending students also belong to a small group in the church. There is a consistent trend that small group members also will attend several courses from CSM. The curriculum is designed to address the training of lay leaders and members of the church. Figure 25 shows the current curriculum of CSM.

Many of these courses have been taught and more courses are still being considered for further development to address the growing needs of the congregation. There are four levels: Level 1 is for new members, Level 2 for maturing members. Level 3 for leaders and Level 4 is elective courses. The format of the classes differ from classroom settings, workshops and weekend retreats. The pastors write most courses and lesson binders are provided to students. A few courses are taken from other Christian writers and authors like Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University and Mike Gungor’s Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage.

As a result of this study, it is imperative to establish a course that trains leaders and upcoming leaders on the demands of becoming a multiethnic church. This course will be called CSM 305 Culture, Race and Ethnicity Course. The eight-week course has three learning formats through classroom teaching sessions, followed by a workshop and one field trip where the class takes a Sankofa journey. Figure 26 shows the topics and

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5 This will be discussed in detail in the latter portion of this chapter.
workshops for each session. The primary target group of this class is current Life Group leaders and their coleaders who will then teach this course in their own Life Group as part of their small group life. The principles taught in CSM 305 will be implemented in the Life Group as they go through a journey together to accomplish personal skills, intentionality, theology, praxis and ethos of a multiethnic church. CSM 305 is specifically designed for leaders in order for them to teach in their life group and go through the five phases to involve life groups in building personal, communal and cultural competence in the multiethnic church.

Figure 12. Charisma School of Ministry Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSM 101</td>
<td>Foundations Class*</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Life Group and One on One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 102</td>
<td>Values Class</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Classroom with Pastoral Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 103</td>
<td>Life in the Spirit*</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 104</td>
<td>SHAPE Class</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 105</td>
<td>The Ministry of Prayer*</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 201</td>
<td>Spiritual Disciplines</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Weekend Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 202</td>
<td>Christian Leadership*</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 203</td>
<td>Marriage*</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 204</td>
<td>Family and Parenting</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 205</td>
<td>Evangelism*</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Classroom/Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 301</td>
<td>Hermeneutics*</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 302</td>
<td>Methods of Bible Study*</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Classroom/Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 303</td>
<td>Perspectives of Missions*</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Classroom/Missions Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 304</td>
<td>Small Group Ministry*</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM 305</td>
<td>Culture, Race and Ethnicity Course</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Classroom/Workshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Asterisk indicates class that has been taught already.
Embrace

The first part people need to embrace is being a resident of their new community. Most immigrant churches continue to exist primarily as immigrant churches within their ethnic sphere. It is imperative that a new theological framework of multiethnicity must be developed. For many native churches in the Philippines, leaving the country for financial opportunities in the US is frowned upon by their own churches and they are blamed for “brain drain” and abandoning their country. In order to compensate this, many Fil-Am churches adopt a diasporic theology of paternalism, wherein they give much support to the ministry in the Philippines. Missions trips, missionary support, church planning projects, social response and compassionate ministries are being sponsored by first-generation immigrant churches. Theology is based heavily from Nehemiah being an immigrant in Persia who saw a vision about the ruined walls of Jerusalem: “I was a cupbearer to the king,” (Neh 1:11) epitomizes sacrificing the position, power, prestige, influence and wealth in favor of one’s country of origin. The result of this is to continue being a perpetual foreigner and not embracing the new country as her new home. Although generosity is commendable to a country that is considered Third World or developing, embracing an assimilation theology leads to inroads from just looking at the monoethnic focus of the church to crossing ethnic boundaries. Jeremiah had a different exhortation to the Jewish immigrants in Babylon:
This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper” (Jer 29:4-7).

Developing this kind of theology eliminates the idea that immigrants are perpetual foreigners and marginalized people. Subsequently, it also reduces the dependence of foreign support to national churches where many first-generation immigrants come from. Secondly, it also removes romanticizing the home country, which often results in ethnocentrism. The principle of embracing does not preclude one’s ethnic and cultural identity. Embrace is sensitivity and humility towards other ethnicities outside of one’s own. Lastly, embracing the new country they call home results in becoming assimilated residents and advances active engagement for social action, community development and integration.

For first-generation immigrants, churches are cultural cocoons, which restrict many adherents to see outside of their own walls. This is where some small groups are called isolationist. The trend is to circle the group with a demarcation line and cocoon themselves by culture, ethnicity, race and class. This group tends to mingle only with people who are like them. Similar to the previous category is the imperial small group. This small group looks at themselves as higher than everyone else and attempts to set their own standard for others. These small groups can become major obstacles by

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8 Ibid., 184.
retaining a myopic isolationist and imperialistic attitude towards people outside of their own. Isolationism and imperialism produce a reading such as Revelations 7:9 as ethnocentric evangelical triumphalism of trying to save the world.

The church instead needs to have an inclusive small group where they welcome others outside of their own cultural, ethnic, race and class preferences. The best way to eliminate the homogenous unit principle is through the grassroots level of social church structures—small groups. This kind of small group is effective due to the fact of its non-threatening cultural, social, ethnic and religious structures. Small groups forge new relationships through food, sharing of experiences, observing milestones and many more. As Soong-Chang Rah noted earlier, the three Western idols that needed to be demolished are racism, individualism and materialism. The church life group system can contribute a lot to rebuild a more inclusive community.

Envision

The Message version of Proverbs 29:18 reads, “If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed.” One advantage of CLC is its public statement (through its mission and vision) of becoming a blended community. One of the core values of the church states: to become a “Blended Community: Our grand design (Galatians 3:26-28; Revelations 5:4-10).” The church should continue to communicate this preferred future and apply this in small groups.

For many Evangelical Christians, reading Revelations 7:9 is a preferred picture of the eschatological church. This theology breeds a methodology that sees the church
having centrifugal force where members are viewed as missionaries, apostles, teachers
and evangelists to a heathen world. However, the postcolonial shift has changed the
multiethnic and multicultural fabric of American neighborhoods and society. In Charisma
Life Church and many Assemblies of God churches, the multiethnic vision still takes
form by observing the annual missions’ convention. The weekend event is highlighted by
White missionaries who report on unreached people groups they are reaching in Africa,
Asia or Latin America. Ethnic dances, songs and musical productions are held during the
mission banquet. After the service, a designated love offering for missions is taken to
benefit the missionaries and the task for world evangelization.

While there is a huge need to advance the Gospel to unreached people groups in
10-40 window countries, this one-sided multiethnic vision does not take into account the
changes of global migration and its direct impact to different ethnicities that are now part
of the local community. CLC needs to communicate changing imagery from a sending
church to an integrated church. The image of the people of God is not some future
celestial gathering of people lining up in the Great White Throne from each tribe,
language and nation.

The Church should balance with centripetal force that also sees the local
congregation as a realization of the Great Commission. The integrated church is not just a
missional vision; it is a realized vision of a community living the life and principles of the
Kingdom of God in the now. Moving from a monoethnic to multiethnic congregation is
not an easy undertaking. It is messy, chaotic and difficult. This is the reason why there
are only 7.5 percent among American churches pursuing this direction. But this is where
the Church’s vision, theological mandate, leadership, structure, worship and outreach
remind people of the principal conviction of this direction. Mosaic Church, a multiethnic church in Arkansas, states their doctrinal commitment through the following statements:⁹

We believe that the prayer of Jesus Christ (John 17) declares unity among believers to the greatest expression of God’s love for the world and the greatest witness to it of the fact that he himself is Messiah. We believe that the pattern of the New Testament local church reflects this unity and that in these churches, people of various ethnicities and economic means pursued God together as one. We believe that the kingdom of heaven is not segregated along ethnic and economic lines. We believe that local churches on heart should not be either.

In comparing this statement, CLC can be more specific in its statements (core values or vision) of addressing ethnic division, prejudice or racialization. This statement covers statements from a scriptural, eschatological, ecclesiastical and personal level of inclusiveness. With unrestricted time and format and informal settings, Life Groups can exercise these confessions to remind members of the goal to be a multiethnic church.

Education

One of the strengths of CLC is a fully-working equipping structure through Charisma School of Ministry. The importance of having a structured learning community cannot be negated. The formation process must fully strategize in the learning community through a socially and culturally sensitive teacher, empowering and encouraging the learning community in incarnational life. Through the “Culture, Ethnic and Race” course, CLC can empower and decentralize teaching from specialized ministers to small group leaders who facilitate the stages and phases of multiethnic community in a small group.

The authors of *A Many Colored Kingdom* add:

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⁹ DeYmaz and Li, *Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, 87.
Those who are called to participate in Christ’s incarnational ministry must seek to cultivate a *habitus Christi* throughout their lifetime, for we know that most often transformation takes place at the intersections—through mutual formation processes in which kingdom citizens together engage the dizzying array of this world’s cultural permutations. In the process, we are called to invite, to create a space for the people of God to intentionally, habitually, and holistically engage in God-given formational moments throughout all aspects of life, thereby invoking the Holy Spirit to work in the community and lives of the people of God through those transforming moments.10

**Collaborator**

A great life group leader must be able to create synergy to work together resulting in positive outcomes.11 Leaders must be fellow learners with their members. As collaborators, they need to see themselves in a journey or a pilgrimage together.12 The leader must also be a model and friend and take on characteristics of love, compassion, humility and respect.13 By empowering leaders through the “Culture, Ethnicity and Race”14 course, the leader learns to be an enabler of what they have learned from small groups, classroom or interactions directly with the congregation and the community. The leader also must be trained to become an innovator allowing members to learn through creative ways like stories, images, music, movies, case studies, media analysis, simulation, field trip and even ethnography.15 Lastly, the leader must also be a questioner.

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11 Ibid., 154.

12 Ibid., 155.

13 Ibid., 158.

14 From here on called CER course.

15 Ibid., 162.
Difficult questions should not be ignored because oftentimes, the most difficult questions are the ones with the greatest value of formation.\textsuperscript{16} Good teachers lead with vision, inspire hope and inculcate transformation.

**Curriculum**

The topics of the curriculum that will be taught in the CER course are covered in this research, but modified for a seminar-workshop format. It follows three basic steps of clarification, conceptualization and confrontation.\textsuperscript{17} The first part of the curriculum clarifies the question of what prevents the church from becoming the integrated Body of Christ. It will give students a critical overview using historical, racial, sociological facts of separation and segregation. It also critiques the failure of different approaches to integrating the Church. The second part of the curriculum teaches students the theological basis, biblical and ecclesiastical concepts and models of churches that transitioned from monoethnic to multiethnic congregations. The last portion of the curriculum is the process of confrontation or the implementation of core principles and fundamentals in forming the multiethnic church. Figure 26 below provides the sessions, title, topics and the workshops that follow.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 165.

## Figure 13. Culture, Ethnicity and Race Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 | Are We There Yet? | Race, ethnicity and cultural issues  
A survey of Christian response:  
colonialism, segregation, separation,  
reconciliation, assimilation and integration | Lego Blocks |
| Week 2 | Healing From Our Ethnic Wounds | Exegetical study of the Samaritan woman  
Understanding cultures | Kintsugi Jar |
| Week 3 | Embracing Our Ethnic, Cultural and Racial Identity | Jews as migrants  
Old Testament Laws regarding strangers and foreigners  
New Testament, Jesus and other ethnicities  
The Apostolic Church | Celebration of the Sandugo |
| Week 4 | Race, Ethnicity and Reconciliation | Jesus and conflict resolution  
Reconciliation  
Priestly prayer of Christ | Sankofa field trip |
| Week 5 | Power, Position and Structure | Theology of hospitality, humility and service | Privilege clips |
| Week 6 | Cross-cultural Mission and Evangelism | The impact of migration and immigration  
The emergence of Global South Christians  
Intentional and incarnational approach of ministry | Suwabono-Ngikhona |
| Week 7 | Cultural Intelligence and Competence | Study of culture  
Shared experiences | Isang Bagsak! |
| Week 8 | Acculturation, Assimilation and Accommodation | The birth of the church during the Day of Pentecost  
Studies of multiethnicity in the Pauline and Petrine epistles | An evening of multiethnic worship |
| Week 9 | Sharing Your Unique Story | Pauline study of multiethnic ministry: country, citizenship, culture and conversion  
Class, culture, race and ethnicity | The Sriracha Story |
| Week 10 | A Celebration of Multiplicity | Revelation 7:9ff | The Agape Meal |
Creativity

An important part of the curriculum is the creative approach for achieving an optimal group experience. It will employ visual-spatial, experiential and andragogical methods of learning. Julia Cameron writes,

The heart of creativity is an experience of the mystical union; the heart of the mystical union is an experience of creativity. Those who speak in spiritual terms routinely refer to God as the creator but seldom use the creator as the literal term for artist . . . take the term creator quite literally. You are seeking to forge a creative alliance, artist-to-artist with the Great Creator. Accepting this concept can greatly expand creative possibilities. . . . Creativity is an experience.18

Learning experiences like this leaves an indelible mark among learners. Along with the creative methods of learning are unique activities to a particular ethnicity. For example, on the topic of healing from ethnic wounds, the course concludes with students using the Kinsukuroi jar activity. Pottery is an ancient and highly respected practice in Japan, and each vessel is made with great care and thought about the piece’s balance, shape and feel. The Japanese practice in ceramic art meaning “golden repair,” broken pottery is repaired by setting it back together with an intentionally brilliant golden or silver metals. This method highlights each piece’s unique history by emphasizing the fractures instead of hiding them. The final work is even more beautiful and valuable than when the piece first came into being. During this lesson, learners are encouraged to create a pot with its repaired broken pieces and narrate some of the wounds they went through because of their race, class and ethnicity.

On the fourth week, the class will have a *Sankofa* field trip as their session. *Sankofa* is the African word from the Akan tribe in Ghana, which literally means “to go back and get it.” The principle of this powerful word is that going back and learning from the past will help someone plan for a greater future. Two movements are invoked as time passes: looking back assisting in looking forward. For this particular lesson, learners are exposed to certain parts of Los Angeles and observe critical markers that still hold the effects of racial division, inequality, discrimination and prejudice. As discussed earlier, one place like this is the five-mile radius difference of Filipinotown and its huge difference compared to Koreatown, Skid Row, Little Mexico, Chinatown, Little Armenia and Little Tokyo.

One of the *Sankofa* visits will be in the house where the Azusa Street Revival meetings took place in Bonnie Brae. William J. Seymour, an African-American, blind evangelist established his revival meetings here. The first people who attended and supported him were African-American women. They were in charge in the services and the ministry of laying on of hands. Near the venue of the revival meeting is the McNeil Construction Company where several Mexican labors stayed. It is reported that on April 13-14, 1906, there were already accounts of the first few people who had Spirit-baptism and among these were the Mexican laborers.19 In the ensuing years, the revival became the new epicenter of Christian piety, spirituality and renewal. It attracted people from different parts of the world who witnessed the workings of the Holy Spirit and brought this pneumatological phenomenon to their country of origin. The modern Pentecostal

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movement during this time already included the working of God among multiethnic audience. Being in these places during this Sankofa field trip creates encounters and new experiences for participants to look back to understand their ethnic and spiritual roots, identify the cause and effects of social injustice, lament and reflect what can be done to bring healing and justice as Christians through the church.

Encounter

Experiences are tied to factors in the past, however, encounters are new experiences that change a person’s personal judgment and opinions. Encounters are new and fresh experiences. Local cross-cultural engagement and even cross-cultural mission trips can have a lasting impact on a person. A cross-cultural event with feeding the homeless, a hospitality gift to a Muslim refugee or a conversation with trafficked women can be a powerful lifechanging encounter: “An encounter is where we risk. It is the collision of two worlds—for the multiplicity of views. It is where the two streams meet. It is the bringing together of sources that might not often be place together. This is the borderland. In these spaces, hybrid significations are created, requiring the practice of cultural translations and negotiations.”

Encounters require humility as people’s prejudice, stereotyping, simplification and generalization will be dismantled. It is not a comfortable place like Isaiah who encountered a vision of God and said, “Woe to me . . . for I am ruined!” (Is 6:5). An encounter of Peter and God in his vision on the rooftop of Cornelius’ home transformed his ethnocentric belief that salvation comes only through the Jews. The day after the

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encounter he says, “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts every nation” (Acts 10:34-35). Encounters are a way of giving power, position, place and prestige. It is listening, not merely attending. It is an invitation for reevaluation, questioning, reflection and the anticipation of conflict. Conde-Frasier writes, “Conflict is an inevitable part of our encounters. The fear of conflict is what keeps many from attempting to engage others at deeper levels. Yet the sources, causes and processes of conflicts can be turned from life-destroying to life building ends. We should not eradicate conflict. Instead, we should channel its energies toward life.”

**Engagement**

The last phase that the small group should pursue is engagement with people from different ethnicities within the church and the community. The apostle Paul was effective in engagement because of the inherent characteristics that he possessed which was valuable for his missional approach. Paul identified his ethnic background as a Jew. He said, “If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless” (Phil 3:5-6). But in terms of his culture, he identified himself as a Roman citizen who was born and raised from Tarsus, a multicultural city with influences from Persia, Greece and Rome (Acts 16:37-38; 22:25-21

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21 Ibid., 179.
22 Ibid., 184.
23 Ibid., 188.
28). But after conversion, Paul considered all of his fame and fortunate background as rubbish and took a higher identity being an apostle to the Gentiles. Missiologist, Sherwood Lingenfelter coined the term “Two Hundred-Percent Person” in describing the incarnational nature of Christ. “He was 100 percent Jew, but also 100 percent God—a 200 percent person.”

Figure 27. Pauline Tri-Identity

Although a two-hundred percent would be difficult to attain, a one-hundred fifty percent person could be more pragmatic. Like the Pauline ethnic, cultural and missional identity, many immigrant Filipinos possess one of the most hybrid ethnic identities. Filipino immigrants in the US can take advantage of this unique background in advancing the Kingdom of God. Mother Theresa poignantly described her ethnic, cultural and divine mission, “By blood I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic

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nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world.”\textsuperscript{25} The diagram below signifies the intersection of these influences for many Filipino immigrants. The Filipino-American multiethnic landscape is still in its infancy stage but is lagging behind in comparison to the development of Korean and Chinese churches and pastors who have catapulted themselves in the changing status of American spiritual landscape.\textsuperscript{26} But the Filipino identity, which has a multicultural influence, has promising potential in the changing ecclesiastical landscape of the US. From this schema, a few principles can be utilized by Fil-Ams in CLC.

Firstly, there is a need to be well-informed of one’s history and cultural identity. Due to the impact of colonization, Filipinos are oblivious of their own history and cultural identities. Although Paul grew up in a Greco-Roman culture and was missionally engaged with different cultures in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, he was astute with his ethnic background and used it to relate the Gospel with other people.


\textsuperscript{26} Ed Stetzer, “5 Asian-American Preachers Not Named Eugene Cho or Francis Chan . . . and a Couple Who Are,” \textit{Christianity Today} (September 11, 2015).
As mentioned earlier, many immigrants in the US undergo double-deficit, a lack of understanding with one’s culture leading to a lack of awareness of another culture. The Filipino culture has been exposed to colonization, oppression, racialization and generalization. But it is through these experiences and the healing and forgiveness of Christ that each of their stories can be redeemed as a starting point of meaningful conversation. Shin says,

We need to recognize what we are meant to be in our ethnic stories and identities so that we can ask Jesus to restore us. It’s not about being racially aware and sensitive so that you can be cross-culturally savvy navigator of a multiethnic groups. It’s also about Jesus redeeming and restoring our ethnic identities, which makes for a compelling narrative that causes non-Christians to ask us about our faith as they wonder, how could that kind of hope and healing be available to me. . . . Our ethnic stories rarely form in isolation; they often involve encounters and altercations with those around us. It’s knowing our ethnic stories and the ethnic

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27 Shin, Beyond Colorblind, 14.
identity narratives of those around us that helps us to realize the complexity of values, scars, trigger point, and words to avoid. It helps us know more how to sensitively share the gospel and boldly invite even those that were considered ethnic enemies or strangers to become believers.28

This is where the CSM 305 course can be very valuable as one of the sessions teaches participants to learn and write their own ethnic identity and redemption stories. Once they know they have developed this narrative, they can share and relate with others living the complexities of different cultures from home and the multicultural life abroad.29

Secondly, CLC needs to tap the culturally blended members in the congregation like those who are married interracially and those born in these marriages. A comparable chart of Asian-American interracial marriages affirms the high rate of Filipino immigrants who are married to non-Filipinos (second only to Japanese).

Fig. 15. Percentage of Asians Interracially Married30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indians</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Filipinos</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Koreans</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husbands</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wives</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the church-wide survey, the following statistics shows how many couples in CLC are married interracially. This would account for 13 percent of all married couples.

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28 Ibid., 18-19.


These mixed couples and families have a huge potential for teaching, modeling and communicating with CLC members on how to be effective in understanding and doing outreach with other ethnicities as they embody it in an organic setting. It is critical for the church to tap these couples and their children as they are distributed broadly to different small groups in the church. Lastly, Fil-Ams in CLC must develop a strong Diaspora theology. Paul’s ethnic identity\textsuperscript{31} and cultural background\textsuperscript{32} led to a very focused intentionality as apostle to the Gentiles.\textsuperscript{33} The previous chapter discussed how the worship service is integral in congregational formation; while in spiritual formation, the small groups and Charisma School of Ministry are the primary strategy of implementing

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure16.png}
\caption{Charisma Life Church Interracial Marriages}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{31} “I am a pure stock Jew. . . .a Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5-6).


\textsuperscript{33} “I have become all things to all men,” (1 Cor 9:22).
the following phases: Embrace, Envision, Education, Experience, Encounter and Engagement.

Figure 17. Core Areas of Implementation
CHAPTER 7

MISSIONAL FORMATION

Leadership

The last section of this study deals with the missional formation of the church in pursuing a multiethnic congregation. Using Yancey’s survey questions on the church leadership’s role in the formation of the multiethnic congregation, the following questions were asked: Is the church proactive and intentional when it comes to the racial, cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and lay leadership? Are leaders who are not members of the major ethnicity group in the church visible in worship and other corporate gatherings? Do the views and perspectives of different racial/ethnic/cultural groups influence the decision making of the head pastor in the church? Appendix E provides a detailed result of each of these questions, but a general average of all questions is shown in Figure 32. Comparing this set of questions to the previous ones, diverse leadership differed from the rest as it has the highest median response. Analyzing this, there is evidence that people view the leadership still lacking diversity and not proactive enough with regards to racial, ethnic and cultural intentionality. The last section of this paper will
provide principles that will guide CLC to increase the support of the multiethnic leadership.

Figure 32. Average Results on Diverse Leadership

Multiethnic Leadership Team

The present set up of the pastoral staff of the church has 70 percent from Filipino nationalities and 30 percent from different races and ethnicities being African-American, Mexican-American and Thai. The senior pastor of the church has worked hard to bring these diverse pastoral staff together through acquaintances within denominational gatherings and some who came to visit and have grown to love the church and made it their home church. The church has a board of trustees and elders who are ethnically and racially diverse. The members of this board of trustees came from the merger the church in 2003. Many of them are still original members of the corresponding churches namely
Charisma Life Church and Pomona First Assembly. They meet quarterly to discuss the business and spiritual affairs of the church.

Figure 18. Staff Ethnic Distribution

As of this writing, there is an Anglo layman working on his minister’s license and providing an active role as a pastor during the Sunday morning services. The church plans to have him be part of the pastoral staff as soon as he gets his license. Five young Filipino-American professionals are also taking online ministry courses through Global University, a ministry training school affiliated with the Assemblies of God. The church is on track for recruiting pastors, elders and board of trustees who are ethnically diverse. Moreover, it is also commendable to see that they are also training the second-generation leaders for the future.
Maintaining an inclusive leadership team has three major benefits: It facilitates maintaining the multiethnic vision of the church, it attracts potential people who are also ethnically diverse and it also promotes inclusive worship.\textsuperscript{1} The senior pastor must be lauded for attracting these leaders in supporting his vision throughout the years. There are two major areas though that needs improvement. Firstly, both the pastoral staff and board of trustees have 70 percent still representing the dominant ethnicity. This could be improved by intentionally seeking and training non-Filipino leaders. Secondly, although there seems to be a quest for meeting the quota of diverse leadership, especially at this time there is no White representation. Mendoza should be cautious in using a quota that might derail the vision if people do not have ownership of the vision. In the past, the church went through a major problem when a Hispanic pastor broke away from the

\textsuperscript{1} Yancey, \textit{One Body One Spirit}, 87.
church and started a new congregation. Not long after that, an African-American pastor preached and used the pulpit to divide the congregation. Inclusion for the purpose of a quota should not be mistaken for diversified leadership. Competent and mature leadership should still be the litmus test to include someone in a leadership position. Prayer, patience and perseverance are required in looking for additional church leadership.

Transitional Team

As mentioned earlier, the implementational structure of this paper follows the recommendations of Branson and Martinez on three major core aspects where multi-ethnicity is affected: congregational worship, spiritual formation and missional leadership. Figure 35 shows these three core areas and the different personnel that will be involved. It is recommended that assigned ministry or pastoral leaders represent these three foundations in transitioning the multiethnic church.

Figure 20. Three Core Areas of Implementation
Subsequently, this transitional team must pay close attention to the core goals of transition: interpretation, implementation and relationship. The interpretative aspect of the group is to understand the theological, contextual, social and ecclesiastical elements of the church. It asks the questions, “What does it mean to be a church? How do the particulars of our theological heritage help us to listen to God and participate in God’s mission to our context? What do we need to know about this context? What narratives and information help us to know our neighbors, ourselves and the movements of the Spirit?”

Figure 21. Three Working Dynamics of Implementation

The work of leaders includes the following: Finding numerous sources of information on the context, learning from other churches and leaders, asking leaders and

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2 Branson and Martinez, *Churches, Cultures and Leadership*, 213.

3 Ibid.
members to join in the research, weaving together the story of the Bible and the stories of
the church community and giving participants time to make observations and
connections. The implemental aspect of transition attends to creating, modifying and
working with activities and structures so that the Spirit’s provisions of meanings and
relationships are embodied in the life of the church. The work of the leaders includes the
following: Identifying programs, activities and structures during the transition; exploring
experiments and laboratories for application; shaping the community through
multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial initiatives; connecting theories into praxis;
And nurturing an inclusive paradigm and ethos.

The last part is the relational aspect of transition. This is the hardest part of the
transition since it requires room and space for mistakes. This requires connecting
relationships of leaders, friends, families, ministries, members and participants to work
out the interpretation and implementation of ministry concepts and structures. The
function of the leaders at this stage are as follows: Seeing the community through the
eyes of others; making room for conversations, feedback and the exploration of
opportunities; building trust through caring, listening and empathy; connecting theology
and methodology with ground stories of people applying the concepts; and addressing
complex issues by broadening awareness and trying experiments.6

4 Ibid., 213-214.
5 Ibid., 220.
6 Ibid., 219.
Mission, Vision and Goals

In addressing the mission, vision and goals of the church, CLC has been effectively communicating to the congregation of the multiethnic status of the church. The mission, vision and core values of the church connect these vital declarations and statements: “Build a blended community of Christ followers. (Revelations 7:5-9; Mark 8:34-38; John 13:34-36; 1 Corinthians 10:32-11:1).” Following the mission and vision is the strategy of the church, which stipulates:

1) Prayer to God can do beyond all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20; 6:18); 2) Invite people to experience full and new life in Christ (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17); 3) Embrace people into the church fellowship (Acts 2:36-42); 4) Equip people to serve, and to grow up into Christ (Ephesians 4:7-16); 5) Engage people in the ministries of the church (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 2:10-11).

Charisma Life Church also stipulates their core values as follows:

God First: Our ultimate value (Matthew 22:37-38; 1 John 4:19); The Rock: Our spiritual foundation (Matthew 16:13-18; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11); God’s Word: Our source of wisdom (Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 4:5-7); People Matter: Our ministry motivation (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9); Blended Community: Our grand design (Galatians 3:26-28; Revelations 5:4-10); Spiritual Powerhouse: Our Dream Church (Acts 1:8; 12-14; 2:1-4); Mutual Love: Our distinctive brand (John 13:34-35; Colossians 3:12-14).

The critical part of these mission, vision and core value statements is how the congregation has responded since their inception in 2016.

Using Yancey’s qualitative survey on overarching goals, the following questions were asked: Are major ministry goals within the church tied to becoming more

7 Ibid.


9 Ibid.
multiethnic? Is there a sense of a blended community vision that is easily recognized by individuals within the church; do church members and regular attendees perceive becoming a blended community as being an essential element leading to the achievement of other goals (community service, evangelism)? Is the congregation energized and hopeful when it comes to becoming a more multiethnic church. Appendix F provides a more detailed response to these questions and Figure 37 exhibits the general average of all these questions.

Figure 22. General Response on Overarching Goals

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses to the question on Overarching Goals.]

One of the glaring observations made from this research was when CLC formally became a multiethnic church. From the conversations in CLC staff meetings, Mendoza has seen the obvious influx of non-Filipinos, which helped him decide that the church had become multiethnic. This is a rather common phenomenon as part of any church
transition. Yancey noted this in his research that multiethnic churches were monoethnic by design. However, the church must have a historical marker of when the church crossed from the monoethnic barrier to the new multiethnic identity of the church. The next section of this paper provides some guidelines for the official launch of the church from being monoethnic to multiethnic.

**Launching**

Many churches go through transitions. Some churches that are prepared for these changes know how to navigate and reemerge with new vision and life. For some churches, these changes mark the end of church life. There are several church transitions: Generational transitions in which young people replace older members; economic transitions where the economic base of generous givers has moved on; geographical transitions in which the new community is changing (gentrification, white flight, first generation immigrants); cultural and ethnic transitions; racial transitions specifically coming from racial tension; spiritual transition where the church is losing its missional fervor.\(^\text{10}\) It is the duty of any church to be prepared by observing, studying, adapting and diligently finding ways it can be relevant to its purpose.

CLC understands these changes and is responding appropriately and emerging as a multiethnic church. It has identified the geographical changes of the community, the generational shift of a new generation and the economic changes that are happening due to the movement of church members. The intentionality to respond to these changes are

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\(^{10}\) Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 120.
tangible and in the survey. Questions in Section F are about “Intentionality:” Is the congregation expressing their desire to become a more multiethnic church through thoughts, words and actions? In spite of struggles and setbacks, do church leaders remain committed to the goal of becoming a multiethnic church? Is considerable time spent talking about issues related to becoming a more multiethnic church throughout the year? Have church leaders formally set becoming a multiethnic church as one of the top-level church goals. Appendix D provides a more detailed response to these questions and Figure 38 exhibits the general average of all these questions.

Figure 23. Charisma Life Church Intentionality Survey Results

![Pie Chart](chart.png)

There is a favorable estimation that the church is intending to become a multiethnic church. An essential part of this transition is when this took place and a historical marker to which the church can recall, celebrate and remember its historical narrative. The transition seemed to be banal and only occurred because of the transition. The closest event that would capture the essence of multiethnicity was the Global Sunday
event. However, no significant changes occurred in congregational worship, spiritual formation and leadership. Launching the multiethnic church is a major ecclesiastical shift that needs to happen. This might be very difficult for the dominant culture to traverse because the implication of this is yielding the power, prestige and position. But like a marriage, a wedding ceremony needs to take place as a marker to embrace the new member and status of the family. There are five stages wherein the church can launch the multiethnic church.

The first phase is intercession. This starts with leadership of the church—pastors, elders and ministry leaders. A regular time of prayer and fasting could benefit the church as they ask God to bless their vision and implementation. After intercession, it must be followed by communication. A clear vision of this transition must be clearly communicated to the congregation through the pulpit, small group meetings, campaign, newsletter and even a personal letter by the senior pastor. The missional, theological, social, spiritual and cultural basis of the transition must be clearly laid out. Major changes need to be communicated that will occur in the church. Glenn Rogers writes, “The kinds and levels of change required in each church will vary, but change will be necessary. Some of the changes will be more challenging than others, and some believers will have more difficulty making the necessary adjustments than other believers, but this is always the case. Changes must be made, even if some people resist.”

Once this is established, a formal presentation to the church in a combined service should be appropriate. This sets the moment, the historical event of when the church has

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11 Glenn Rogers, *Becoming a Multiethnic Church: Responding to America’s Growing Ethnic Diversity* (Dallas: Ministry and Missions Resources, 2007), 118.
crossed the monoethnic to multiethnic barrier. A formal part of the presentation is the congregational response, agreeing to the vision of the church. The vision, mission and value statements declared in this context will have an entirely different meaning and significance. During the presentation, the church must see the event as an apex of a long dream and vision. As such, worship, arts, print, media and other symbols must be used to communicate the vision.

It is important that the church should have a clear transitional duration to give people, program, priorities and premises time to adapt to the new identity of the church. During this time, clear and measurable goals must be established to easily evaluate the progress, albeit in small segments. For example, the church can set goals of the following key indicators: inclusive members of the worship teams; number of students attending the multiethnic classes; number of life groups that have transitioned from monoethnic to multiethnic; multiethnic visitors and attendees. Moreover, this time could also be used to identify and evaluate pockets of resistance and send people to encourage and motivate toward the vision of the church. Leaders should also use this phase to reevaluate areas that need to change, modify and delay to get more clarity. Moreover, it can also be used to plan ways to measure and assess progress that otherwise were not identified before.

The last step is for the church to come together again for celebration. Rather than a one-time event of launching, the principle here is to give more time for the church to transition. Technically, a twelve-month process could work, using celebration as the culmination of this transition. The celebration service could highlight the stories of people, the statistical growth indicators, the impact of inclusive worship, the added
multiethnic leaders and pastors in the staff and ministry of the church. The steps are summed up as shown in Figure 39.

Figure 24. Transitional Phases

Location

If a congregation desires to become multiracial, then the members of that congregation should factor in where they want to locate their church to reach that goal.\textsuperscript{12} In studying Pomona’s demography, the following ethnic representation is as seen in Figure 40 below.

To analyze if CLCs location makes it relevant to a multiethnic community, Yancey’s qualitative measures were used and the following questions were asked: Is the church known for communicating a feeling of acceptance and openness to people of all race, cultures and ethnicities within the community? Is the church physically located in an area of marked diversity? What number of regular church attendees come from the immediate community? Appendix G provides a detailed result of these survey questions.

\textsuperscript{12} Yancey, \textit{One Body One Spirit}, 129.
From the responses of the survey, respondents observe that CLC members do not necessarily live in the immediate community. In analyzing this data deeper, Figure 41 addresses the distance people travel to CLC.

Figure 25. City of Pomona Race Demography

Figure 26. Members Distance From Charisma Life Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 miles</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 miles</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 - 20 miles</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 30 miles</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 40 miles</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 50 miles</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 – 60 miles</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The surprising information in this survey is that Charisma Life Church is not a community church but a commuting church within a six-to-twenty-mile radius. Based on the survey, 46 percent of parishioners live within a six to ten-mile radius. These are Filipino-Americans living in Covina, Laverne, San Dimas, West Covina, Baldwin Park, La Puente, Walnut, Diamond Bar, Chino, Chino Hills, Montclair and Upland. The church is in a position to maximize these two areas where they are getting their attendees from: the local and commuting members. This surprising data holds potential encouragement that if the church can fully emerge and exist as a multiethnic church, it can be more effective to reach out to a more diverse community. If the community observes a visible representation of people like them, their interest grows.

On February 27, 2019, in his “State of the City Pomona Address,” Mayor Tim Sandoval recognized the church for its role and contribution in helping the community. In good faith, he invited Mendoza to grace the occasion by giving the opportunity to share a short inspirational speech and lead the invocation. The next challenge is for the mayor and city to recognize the congregation, composed of different races, ethnicities and cultures to genuinely practice the crux of the gospel of Christ, which is love, unity and reconciliation.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Every member of Charisma Life Church is an immigrant. A large part of the congregation is Filipino-Americans who followed the call to establish a church and reached out to other Filipino immigrants. Three decades later, the church has exceedingly grown. Today, the church is no longer just a congregation of Filipino-Americans. It is attended by people from different races, ethnicities, languages and cultures. The growth was not intentional but a reflection of the changing landscape of American multiculturalism. Charisma Life Church is at an intersection to remain a monoethnic or multiethnic congregation. There are no guidelines, models and structures from other Filipino-American churches the church can apply and emulate.

Through careful historical, sociological, theological, ecclesiastical and qualitative research, the result could assist CLC to successfully transition and emerge to become a multiethnic church. The principles presented here are the synergy of those who are ahead and laid the foundations of what is a daunting task for many churches in the middle of these changes. However, the principles need to be applied, evaluated, modified and shared with other Filipino-American churches that are also at the same crossroads. A good start is to reflect on some of these findings.

Firstly, Charisma Life Church needs to understand the cultural and ethnic barriers preventing them from change. Three hundred years of Spanish colonialism and one hundred years of Hollywood have oppressed Filipinos and made them followers rather than innovators, front-runners and risk-takers. T metam noske” or to know oneself is a
fundamental step from which all things need to begin. The church needs to discover their Filipino precolonial, colonial and post-colonial identity and history, which as been buried for generations. They also need to understand the plight of earlier Filipino immigrants and their effects of racialized oppression in the US. The quest is not to change the past but to discover how they can effectively engage in the present and the future. Embracing some of the painful reminders of the past can assist people to avoid it and empathize human experiences that others can relate.

Secondly, the church needs to understand that this hybridity of culture has a redeeming purpose. *Heilsgeschichte* or salvation-history is the story of God redeeming His people who are oppressed, marginalized and colonized to accomplish His purpose. The story of the Samaritan woman is an excellent example Filipinos can relate to because of their broken identity. Jesus went to her, spent time with her and empowered her to become an evangelist to her own people.

Thirdly, the *imago Dei* should lead to the *missio Dei*. As the church understands its spiritual and ethnic identity, it is important that it takes into account a missional role of seeing other ethnicities outside of their own to integrate, commune and live the Gospel life together. Revelations 7:9 is not just a picture of one nation reaching to another nation taking the role of missionary and the lost. In the context of American changing culture, the church needs to integrate and do away with segregation, separation, and colorblindness.

Lastly, the Filipinos need *bayanihan* - the Tagalog word for cooperation. Its iconic image is the village coming together helping a neighbor move their house to a new location by carrying the bamboo house together. It is lamentable that eleven o’clock
Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour in the US. But it will take a “village” to move God’s house to its next destination. To accomplish this, Charisma Life Church needs models and structures from other churches that are Black, White, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Latino and Africans.

The journey, challenges, culture, ethnicity, identity and transforming power of God are unique to every Filipino who migrates to the US. Like the Samaritan woman and Joseph of Egypt, God has placed Filipinos in Charisma Life Church to tell their story. Perhaps the words of an American anthropologist by the name of Miriam Adeney is worth quoting on how her life has been heartened by these people: “Filipinos interact gracefully, colorfully, unhurriedly. They make hospitality an art. Filipinos act symbiotically. . . . No Filipino is an island. I have learned first from the Filipinos. In gratitude, I have begun this book with a glimpse how they make a difference.”

APPENDIX A

CHARISMA LIFE CHURCH
A BLENDED COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Charisma Life Church is committed to becoming a blended community. One of the ways we can improve this reality is to fully understand the present multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural status of our church. By answering this survey, you are helping us to make a comprehensive congregational study that will provide essential steps to prepare us for the future of our church.

Please fill in the blanks and answer to the best of your knowledge the questions in this survey. The survey will take only 2-4 minutes of your time. Thank you again for your time and assistance.

A. INCLUSIVE WORSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different racial/cultural/ethnic styles of music are often incorporated within the same service.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>From week to week, the music typically varies from one racial/cultural/ethnic style to another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The preaching style is not associated with any one racial/cultural/ethnic group within the congregation.</td>
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<td>The music style is not associated with any racial/cultural/ethnic group within the congregation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The interior decoration of the church (e.g., artwork, banners, pictures, bulletins, screen projector graphics, etc.) is not associated within any racial/cultural/ethnic group within the congregation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The worship team/band represents different ethnicities of the congregation.</td>
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B. DIVERSE LEADERSHIP

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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The church is proactive and intentional when it comes to the racial, cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and lay leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaders who are not members of the major ethnicity group in the church are visible in worship and other corporate gatherings.</td>
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<td>C. OVERARCHING GOAL</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major ministry goals within the church are tied to becoming more multiethnic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a sense of a blended community vision that is easily recognized by individuals within the church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church members and regular attendees perceive becoming a blended community as being an essential element leading to the achievement of other goals (e.g., community service, evangelism, etc.).</td>
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<td>The congregation is energized and hopeful when it comes to becoming a more multiethnic church.</td>
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<tr>
<th>D. PERSONAL SKILLS</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members and regular attendees are patient with one another in matters relating to ethnicities and have developed the ability to handle setbacks with kindness, wisdom, and even laughter.</td>
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<td>Church members and regular attendees are sensitive to the needs of others--especially those that are ethnically different from them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is an openness to empowering people who are not members of the majority ethnic group to lead and direct the affairs of the church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The leaders of the church demonstrate the ability to communicate, understand and empathize with people of different ethnicities and cultures.</td>
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### E. LOCATION

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The church is known for communicating a feeling of acceptance and openness to people of all race, culture, and ethnicities within the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The church is physically located in an area of marked diversity.</td>
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<td>An increasing number of regular church attendees tend to come from the immediate community.</td>
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### F. INTENTIONALITY

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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The congregation expresses their desire to become a more multiethnic church through thoughts, words, and actions.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In spite of struggles and setbacks, church leaders remain committed to the goal of becoming a multiethnic church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considerable time is spent talking about issues related to becoming a more multiethnic church throughout the year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church leaders have formally set becoming a multiethnic church as one of the top-level church goals.</td>
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### G. ADAPTABLEITY

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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The staff and lay leadership team spend time anticipating potential obstacles to becoming a more multiethnic church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The staff and lay leadership team have set goals for educating the congregation and preparing them for participation in a blended church community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generally, the congregation embraces new ethnic, racial, and cultural norms and practices</td>
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</table>
(e.g., worship styles, interracial marriage, leadership, different views of time, communication style, symbols, etc.).

Church leaders demonstrate flexibility in handling the challenges that are associated with becoming a multiethnic church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H. IDENTITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Country of Birth: ____________________ Sex: __________________ Age: ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Residence: __________________ Citizenship: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Spoken: ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countries of Residence/s Before Residing in the US: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Residence in US: ________________ Number of Children ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity of Husband: __________________ Ethnicity of Wife ____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B
INCLUSIVE WORSHIP QUESTIONS AND SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1: Different racial, cultural, ethnic styles of music are often incorporated within the same service.

Question 2: From week to week, the music typically varies from one racial/cultural/ethnic style to another.
Question 3: The preaching style is not associated with any one racial/cultural/ethnic group within the congregation.

Question 4: The music style is not associated with any racial/cultural/ethnic group within the congregation.
Question 5: The interior decoration of the church (e.g., artwork, banners, pictures, bulletins, screen projector graphics, etc.) is not associated within any racial/cultural/ethnic group within the congregation.

Question 6: The worship team/band represents different ethnicities of the congregation.
APPENDIX C

PERSONAL SKILLS QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

Question 15: Members and regular attendees are patient with one another in matters relating to ethnicities and have developed the ability to handle setbacks with kindness, wisdom, and even laughter.

![Bar chart showing responses to Question 15]

Question 16: Church members and regular attendees are sensitive to the needs of others—especially those that are ethnically different from them.

![Bar chart showing responses to Question 16]
Question 17: There is an openness to empowering people who are not members of the majority ethnic group to lead and direct the affairs of the church.

[Bar chart showing responses for Question 17]

Question 18: The leaders of the church demonstrate the ability to communicate, understand and empathize with people of different ethnicities and cultures.

[Bar chart showing responses for Question 18]
APPENDIX D

INTENTIONALITY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

Question 22: The congregation expresses their desire to become a more multiethnic church through thoughts, words, and actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</table>

Question 23: In spite of struggles and setbacks, church leaders remain committed to the goal of becoming a multiethnic church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 24: Considerable time is spent talking about issues related to becoming a more multiethnic church throughout the year.

Question 25: Church leaders have formally set becoming a multiethnic church as one of the top-level church goals.
APPENDIX E

DIVERSE LEADERSHIP QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

Question 7: The church is proactive and intentional when it comes to the racial, cultural and ethnic diversity of staff and lay leadership.

![Bar chart for Question 7]

Question 8. Leaders who are not members of the major ethnicity group in the church are visible in worship and other corporate gatherings.

![Bar chart for Question 8]
Question 9: There is a proportionate number of staff and lay leaders who are not members of the major ethnicity in the church.

Question 10: The views and perspectives of different racial/ethnic/cultural groups influence the decision making of the head pastor in the church.
Question 11: Major ministry goals within the church are tied to becoming more multiethnic.

Question 12: There is a sense of a blended community vision that is easily recognized by individuals within the church.
Question 13: Church members and regular attendees perceive becoming a blended community as being an essential element leading to the achievement of other goals (e.g., community service, evangelism, etc.).

Question 14: The congregation is energized and hopeful when it comes to becoming a more multiethnic church.
Question 19: The church is known for communicating a feeling of acceptance and openness to people of all race, culture and ethnicities within the community.

Question 20: The church is physically located in an area of marked diversity.
21. An increasing number of regular church attendees tend to come from the immediate community.
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