

Intercultural church Dynamics (by Mark Naylor)

Based on Intercultural church models (Naylor) and A Case Study of MorningStar (Morris)

A. Definitions

- Intercultural = interaction between two or more cultures
- Multiethnic = A group made up of people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds
- Multicultural = A multiethnic group that shares a variety of cultural expressions
- Cross-cultural = movement of members of one cultural group towards engaging the members of another cultural group
- Intracultural = interaction within a cultural group

B. Cultural church Models

- Monoethnic Monocultural. Key word: Stability
- Sister Churches. Key word: Cooperation
- Multiethnic Monocultural. Key word: Integration
- Multiethnic Multicultural. Key word: Accommodation



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C. Essentials for setting an intercultural agenda:

- a. Commitment to a vision
 - i. Cultural analysis of congregation and community
 - ii. Commitment and sacrifice
- b. Ensure intentional communication and action
- c. Maintain priorities

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D. Case Study of an intercultural church

From: "Key Leadership Decisions in the Development of an Intercultural Church: A Case Study"

By: Michael Morris

- MorningStar Church
- The aim:
 - o "We would truly become a community church, that we would embrace the community in its diversity and intentionally seek to incorporate that diversity into the social fellowship life of the church." (Mahaffey)

Challenges:

I. Developing vision in the leadership

- aware of the demographic realities
- sensitive to the minorities in the church
- vision for a mixed church

How developed:

- must have a champion to lead, promote, keep on track
- all other church leadership with a common vision
- multicultural pastoral staff reflecting the ethnic makeup of the church

II. Establishing an intercultural church ethos

- a. Positive and constant affirmation of church identity:
- b. Intentional focus on reaching surrounding multi-ethnic community
- c. Customs or rituals help define the self-image of a group.

III. Establish diversity...

- at all levels of leadership
- in all of the decision-making groups
- representation from various cultural groups

IV. Instill an intercultural vision in all leaders

- people need to be trained and encouraged to become multicultural and intercultural

- Budget for funding
- Prioritization of time and energy on leadership training rather than task or program.

V. Involve new, competent members in leadership quickly

- Affirmation of leadership affirms and motivates
- Take Risks

Key concerns

KC: Resistance to Change

- initial dominant ethnic group may not want to belong
- People will leave

KC: Handling ethno-specific groups within the church [ie groups remaining mono-cultural]

two ethnic groups leave:

- charismatic leaders
- Filipino group that wanted to have a separate youth group for their young people
- Ethnic cliques will cause division
- you can't serve all

KC: Connecting people of diverse backgrounds to the church

- Biblical mandates to reach out across cultures
- Intentionally enabling and encouraging cross-cultural connections

KC: Handling divisive issues

- importance of time as compared to the importance of events
- respect for authority or age

How? deal with the issue of offense which requires:

- o strong leadership
- o clear priorities
- o cultural sensitivity
- Going slow: Making decisions is slowed down in an intercultural church.

KC: Fear and Prejudice

Pleasant Surprises:

- worship style
- Diversity as a virtue

Summary of requirements for successful intercultural church:

1. Pastoral vision and leadership support is essential
2. Enlist leaders representative of the diversity within the church
3. Establish an intercultural ethos within the congregation
4. Establish guidelines for the ethno-specific groups within the church structure
5. Connect new members of every background to others in the church
6. Commit to train leaders for cross-cultural ministry
7. Leaders from the senior pastor all the way down need extra sensitivity to cultural issues.
8. Investment of both time and financial resources for training opportunities for their ministry leaders.
9. A courageous, visionary champion of the cause.
10. Recognize both the limits and value of this model and be honest about expectations and objectives. All representatives must be committed to an ongoing negotiation of cultural compromise as well as a spirit of celebration for the differences.
11. Accept that this model requires both time and skill to deal with inevitable conflicts that arise from intercultural disagreements.
12. Be prepared to transition those ethnic groups out of the congregation that cannot adjust to a common agenda.
13. View ethnic diversity as an advantage to be recognized and celebrated.