

Mission Moments – July 13, 2007
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From the Center for U.S. Missions
Following Jesus into the U.S. Mission Field
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Mono-cultural vs. Multi-cultural Church by E.J. Rethinasamy

The churches being planted today come in a variety of languages, shapes and sizes. Numerous church planting models address the complex needs of people groups and cultural anthropology.

Church planting is directly impacted by global migration and globalization. Our lives are globally connected. We cannot circumvent it. We have to embrace and live it.

Global migration and globalization are inseparable. The reality of globalization has been dissected into various local forms – “glocalization” – defined by Wikipedia as *“the creation or distribution of products or services intended for a global or transregional market, but customized to suit local laws or culture.”*

Like never before, the Confessional church is challenged to be in Mission at the crossroads of people migration, globalization and glocalization. This necessitates strategies to reach out in integrating an international/trans-national/multi-cultural church in a local context.

The United States is the forerunner of unity in diversity, where people of all colors, ages and races come together to work and to share life, space and time. This is a ‘last hour’ call for all churches to additionally engage in multi-cultural and mosaic church models. Why the church is still intentionally segregated at 11 am on Sundays by color, language and economic status?

What does it mean to be a multi-cultural church?

In a multi-cultural church, diversity is neither an option nor a trend but a reflection of the increasing reality of our society. Particularly in the context of the American mosaic, churches are called to understand multiculturalism while planting, organizing, and administering a church.

In a multi-cultural church, people of all colors, languages, races and economic status transcend their differences and intentionally stand together, experiencing God’s reconciliation, an amazing race under the cross of Christ’s amazing grace!

When the New Testament church was born on Pentecost (Acts 2), it was obviously multi-cultural/mosaic in character. Undoubtedly, multi-cultural/mosaic reflects the Image of God (Imago Dei)!

For practicing mission planters, it is essential to use every opportunity in and around us to create or serve in a multi-cultural, trans-national, intergenerational context; in other words, networking various homogenous groups, inter-related for a Kingdom cause, shapes up a heterogeneous church. What does your/our church look like?

I like to quote from Brenda Salter McNeil, an acclaimed scholar in racial reconciliation. “Cultural isolation is no longer viable for Christians who want to serve a society where soon no ethnic group will be a majority . . . What we most need to do is what the expectant mother asks her husband to do at a crucial moment: Wake up. It’s time” (from “Behold, the Global Church” *Christianity Today* November 2006 at http://www.christianvisionproject.com/2006/11/behold_the_global_church_1.html)

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Recommended Reading

One Body, One Spirit: Principles of Successful Multiracial Churches by George Yancey; InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2003.

United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race by Curtiss Paul Deyoung, Michael Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim; Oxford University Press: New York, NY, 2003.

Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America by Michael Emerson and Christian Smith. Oxford University Press, New York, 2000.

Multicultural Ministry: Finding Your Church's Unique Rhythm by David Anderson; Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI and Willow Creek Association, 2004.

One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church by Manuel Ortiz; InterVarsity Press. Downers Grove, IL. 1998.

A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church by Gerardo Marti; Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 2005.

Links

<http://www.mosaix.info/>

from the website: MOSAIX represents a growing movement of believers and congregations seeking to know God and to make Him known through the establishment of multi-ethnic churches throughout America and beyond.

<http://www.mosaic.org/>

from the website: We are a community of followers of Jesus Christ . . . The name of our community comes from the diversity of our members and from the symbolism of a

broken and fragmented humanity which can become a work of beauty under the artful hands of God

<http://www.mosaicchurch.net/>

The Mosaic Church of central Arkansas

<http://www.saltermcneil.com/>

The website of Salter McNeil and Associates, who work in racial reconciliation

<http://www.racialreconciliation.com>

The website of Reconciliation Consulting, “a husband and wife team dedicated to the promotion of racial healing through the body of Christ.”

<http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/atf/cf/%7B087EF6B4-D6E5-4BBF-BED1-7983D360F394%7D/multiculturalChurchGuide4..pdf>

A Guide for Planting Multi-Cultural Churches

News from the Center

Church Planter Assessment Center

Mon-Thurs August 27-30, 2007

Cleveland, Ohio

How does a potential church planter clarify whether or not God has given him the specific calling and the necessary gifts, skills and character to be a lead church planter? How does he know what those needed gifts and skills are? How does a sponsoring agency verify whether or not a specific individual has these needed gifts?

The Church Planter Assessment Center (CPAC), a new offering of the Center for U.S. Missions, is a 4-day experience designed to answer those vital questions. CPAC uses research-based church planter qualifications and multiple perspectives, trained assessors, behavioral interviews, proven self-awareness inventories, self-discovery experiences, group projects, carefully gathered references, testing and interviews by a licensed Christian psychologist, all under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, to prayerfully evaluate candidates.

LCMS/World Mission endorses and encourages CPAC as a supplemental strategy for supporting the Church Planting movement (2000 new congregations in the USA by 2017), which is part of the *Ablaze!* initiative. The first of a planned series of LCMS Church Planter Assessment Centers will be held at the Ohio District Office on August 27-30, 2007.

The registration fee for candidates sponsored by LCMS districts or parent churches is \$250 for the candidate and \$250 for the candidate's spouse, if applicable. LCMS World Mission provides an additional \$1500 per person scholarship to round out the full cost of assessment. Candidates not sponsored by a LCMS agency pay \$1800. The registration fee covers pre-assessment tools, all on-site assessments and activities, lunches, supper and snacks Monday through Thursday, and concluding reports for the candidate and sponsoring agency. All applications, references and

assessment tools must be completed and submitted by August 8, 2007.

For complete information and to register, see www.centerforusmissions.org > Seminars and click on this event.

Certified Mission Coaches Soon Available

Ten Mission Coaches are now receiving coach mentor training and will receive coach certification training on July 23-24 in Irvine, California. These certified mission coaches will be tremendous resources for:

- Ablaze! Covenant Congregations (plant up to 4 new churches by 2017)
- congregations engaged in Revitalization
- training others as coaches

Contact the Center for more info.

On the Edge: Training for Missional Leaders

We request your prayers for all who are attending the various trainings to be held in Irvine July 23-27. May they be a blessing to their congregations, districts and God's greater kingdom. Late registration is still possible. See www.centerforusmissions.com/ontheedge/index.html for full information.

Designing Worship to Engage the Culture -- No late fees for this half day seminar on Friday, July 27! It's part of the On the Edge: Training for Missional Leaders, but is open to anyone involved in planning and executing worship. Live, downloadable, web-based resources will be shown that even a small church can utilize with minimal cost. Attention will be given to pastoral, music and leadership issues which affect how we "make disciples," reaching out to unbelievers so they might experience a relationship with Jesus Christ and helping believers grow in the faith and have an effect on the culture around them. For more information, or to register and pay, see www.centerforusmissions.org/ontheedge/dwtec.html

Mission Moments, a biweekly electronic newsletter from the Center for U.S. Missions, brings information and encouragement to all who desire to share the God's great love in Jesus Christ with others. The Center for U.S. Missions provides research and training for mission work among unevangelized people in the United States. A partnership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod World Missions, Concordia University in Irvine, California, and the North America Mission Executives of the LCMS, the Center serves all Christian denominations.

www.centerforusmissions.org

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