Articles

There Is Hope for Second Generation Immigrant Christian Churches: Challenges of Mono-Ethnic and Semi-Independent Immigrant Congregations

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Introduction

Historians refer to the twenty-first century as "the age of migration," mainly because there are more migrants in the world today than ever before.[1] In 2020, a UN report shows that, globally, the number of international migrants was 281 million, with nearly two-thirds being labor migrants.[2] This is 3.6% of the world's population. In another UN report published in 2022, over the past two years, despite the impact of Covid-19, the number of migrants has continued to increase.[3]

These migrants have been both Christian and non-Christian. According to Todd Johnson and Gina Bellofatto, almost half of United States immigrants before 2012 were Christians.[4] According to a recent report from Pew Research Center, Christians continue to make up the majority of legal immigrants to the US.[5] Two of the main challenges that the immigrants face are integration into the larger society and inclusion in the Christian community.

Many denominations in the United States, including Lutherans, are engaged in helping immigrant congregations plant mono-ethnic congregations. This is mainly due to the choice of first-generation immigrants to worship in their native languages. Still, while this is the preference of many first-generation immigrants, their children feel differently.[6] Second- and third-generation immigrants speak English and often have

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only a limited understanding of the language spoken by their parents or grandparents, respectively. This forces immigrant congregations to accommodate these later generations generations through programs offered in English, such as Sunday School, Bible study groups, and youth programs. The key challenge is how to encourage the younger generations of immigrants into the life and ministry of the church. Whether the immigrant communities are African, Asian, or Hispanic/Latinx, these challenges are strikingly similar.

In my conversation with leaders of immigrant communities over the past twelve years, I have observed that there exists fear within immigrant congregations that the younger generations of immigrants are leaving their parents' churches and abandoning their faith. Second-generation immigrants are children born to first-generation immigrants and those who were "born in the country of origin but raised in that of destination" where their parents found their new home.[7] This includes all "immigrant children who have arrived in the United States before they reach adulthood."[8] Much of the research done on immigrant congregations has focused on the first generation.[9]

This article will discuss the challenges of the Ethiopian immigrant congregations in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota, and focus on their struggle to understand how to incorporate second- and third-generation immigrants into their communities. Through exploring the two types of churches planted by African immigrants in America, both mono-ethnic and semi-independent congregations, I propose a move to planting multiethnic congregations. This would create a space where the youth can feel comfortable, are nurtured in Christian faith, and are enabled to participate fully in the life and ministry of the church. As Helen Ebaugh and Janet Chafetz rightly state, "The future of immigrant congregations in the United States depends, in large measure, on whether and in what ways the second and subsequent generations participate."[10]

Ethiopian Mono-Ethnic[11] Congregations

A mono-ethnic church is a congregation primarily comprised of one ethnic group with the total of secondary ethnic group(s) consisting of no more than 20% of the entire congregation.[12] Two reasons lead to the formation of mono-ethnic churches. One of the main reasons is that many people do not wish to cross racial or linguistic barriers to become Christians. This is confirmed by the work of Donald McGavran, who first came up with the homogenous unit principle (HUP). [13] Based on his experience of cross-cultural work in India, McGavran established a correlation between homogeneity and church growth. Thus, according to the HUP, churches grow faster when they are homogeneous. The second reason is that the language barriers in a non-mono-ethnic congregation make it difficult for many immigrants to participate fully in the local congregation's life and ministry. Ethnic churches are organized to meet the needs of particular ethnic groups. They worship in their native language, and their clergy are from the old country.[14]

According to Pastor Demelash Yosef, the reason why Ethiopian immigrants are interested in forming their own separate congregations rather than joining the local church is that the church in the immigrant community functions as a social center that connects them together and brings a sense of cultural and religious identity to each community

member. This is also confirmed by Mark Mullins' research on the life cycle of churches.[15] The church provides immigrants with a context for establishing cultural ties and fellowship. Members speak the same language and share the same values, which for the immigrant community is vital to sharing life together. As Gemma Cruz contends, "for many immigrants, especially from the Global South, the church is not just the principal site of celebration for ethnic identity and community. It is their refuge in times of crisis and their home when they want to shout for joy."[16]

The main challenge among the Ethiopian immigrant congregations is related to youth ministry, especially when serving the first- and second-generation immigrants.[17] Immigrant congregations feel responsible for educating their children in the Christian Gospel and their culture. They assume responsibility for nurturing their children spiritually and culturally. For them, both must happen simultaneously. They try to teach their ethnic languages and culture, hoping that the second and third generation will retain their cultural identity. Yet, they often feel unsuccessful. This is due to the gap between the two generations.[18] As J. Milton Yinger observes, "What will give one generation a sense of a unifying tradition may alienate parts of another generation who have been subjected to different social and cultural influences."[19] Some second-generation immigrants often communicate both in English and their parents' native language but are not fluent in their parent's native language. They attend schools with peers from diverse backgrounds. They are connected to the church because of their parents and friends whom they want to socialize with over the weekends. However, second-generation immigrants are not comfortable in "ethnic" churches, contrary to the assumption of the homogeneous unit principle.[20]

By my observation as a first-generation immigrant, most second- and third-generation immigrants neither understand the language of worship nor are interested in learning the culture. This has created a cultural divide between the first generation, who came to create opportunities for their children, and the second and third generations, who feel misunderstood or unappreciated by the older generation and leaders of the church. The first generation turns out to be radically attached to their traditions, which in most cases results in the failure to create a flexible and engaging environment for the younger generations.[21] As one young girl said during an interview, "the young Ethiopians don't feel welcomed at the

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church because the pastors and leaders of the church can't relate to them because they don't speak the same language."[22]

This has led to what some scholars call the "silent exodus" of the second- and third-generation immigrants from the ethnic churches. It is called the "silent exodus" because because much of it went unnoticed by the first generation. The reason for this exodus is is dissatisfaction with the ethnic emphasis on church culture and the lack of opportunities for them to be part of the larger church and to serve, given the language barriers.[23] The mission of the first-generation immigrant churches is also limited to serving their own community, while the second and third generations are more concerned about being Christian witnesses to their neighbors. In other words, immigrant churches focus on their ministry to the immigrant society, leaving Christian service to their neighbors as an individual responsibility.[24] The difference in mission results in dissatisfaction from the young generations' side and adds to the reasons why they leave the church. Where are the younger generations going? Some leave the church when they move to college or get a job and don't return because they don't feel any connection with their congregation anymore.[25] Studies have also shown that some begin to differentiate themselves from their parents' worship tradition and join mainstream evangelicalism.[26]

How should mono-ethnic congregations respond to these challenges? I propose a move to growing into a multiethnic congregation or planting multiethnic congregations that are led by the youth and are focused on youth ministry. I will also discuss the second type of congregations or ministries that are planted by African immigrants in Minnesota, semi-independent congregations.

Semi-Independent Ministries

Most first-generation immigrants want to worship independently and not integrate with others. They form their separate congregation by sharing a space with a local congregation or buying their own church building. Some immigrants, however, form semi-independent ethnic ministries, ministries that are initiated within a local congregation. This is not a congregation within a congregation, but two or three separate ministries sharing the same space. The immigrants have their own worship service, Bible studies, Sunday School, youth ministry, and so on.

This is different from the mono-ethnic congregation that is planted on its own as a mono-ethnic congregation. Semi-independent congregations are organized based on the assumption that they can be part of the local congregation without losing their cultural identity. Yet, through time, when they don't feel fully integrated into the congregation's culture, they begin to form their own groups within the congregation. The language barrier is what makes it difficult for an ethno-cultural minority (first-generation immigrants) to fully participate in the life and ministry of the host congregation.[27] When the host congregation does not provide worship services in the immigrants' language, it is only natural that they organize as a separate group.

In some congregations with more than one group of immigrants, the host congregation provides space for different ethnic groups and helps them get organized and engage in ministries. Some of these groups grow to become separate ethnic ministries within a

congregation. In such a structure, the immigrant groups have their own worship, Bible study, and so on in their own languages and are actively engaged in a variety of However, this doesn't mean that they form a separate congregation or plan to become They remain part of the local church, but without actively participating in its life and ministry. This means they have their own worship in their own language and common worship with the host congregation.

The advantage for these ethnic groups is that they can share resources with the host congregation. They worship with the host congregation, and their children join for Sunday School with all other children in the congregation. The young adults also participate fully with their peers and have their own Bible studies, all done in English. Some host congregations even pay ethnic pastors from the common treasury. These practices help the children of immigrant communities get integrated with the Anglo congregation, leading the Anglo congregation to grow into a multiethnic congregation.

Unfortunately, this approach hasn't worked for many congregations because, for the first-generation immigrants, there is tension between their ethnic language and culture and that of the host congregation.[28] Immigrants report that when the host congregation is unwilling to incorporate migrant languages and culture into the worship life of the congregation, the migrant community does not feel at home in the dominant Anglo community. In other words, "organizational rigidity"[29] prevents some congregations from adopting changes that accommodate immigrants (such as introducing bilingual services, recruiting bilingual leaders, making materials used during worships services available in multiple languages, and so on). This makes it hard for the immigrants to feel at home.

An additional challenge that immigrant communities note is that they are not invited to participate in the ministry and leadership of the church. In an interview conducted for this article, one interviewee said, "pastors and leaders of the host congregation want them to sit there as attendees even though they as new members want to be there as contributors and leaders."[30] It is in response to such practices that Steven Bevans argues that for the local church to grow and serve its diverse communities, it should "not only respond to migrants' needs and to accompany them on their journey, but also to call and equip them for ministry, both within the church and within the world."[31] He also contends that "as migrants grow in integration into the local church, they should be given opportunities not only for ministries among people of their own culture but for cross-cultural ministries as well."[32] The presence of multiethnic ministry teams and leadership present to a congregation a welcoming image—an image that attracts people of other cultures to join.

Problems arise when Anglo congregations attempt to grow a mono-cultural congregation into a multiethnic congregation, hoping that immigrant communities will assimilate to the congregation's culture through time. Nevertheless, as also clearly noted in the document of Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), "Integration as assimilation is perceived by many among ethnic minorities, including especially African Americans, as a call for the surrender of one's heritage and identity in order not only to 'get in,'

but also to become what others label as fully 'human.'"[33] Many perceive this to mean the "interaction of blacks and whites within a context of white supremacy."[34] In some cases, because of the segregation from the host congregation, the immigrants decide to leave this church and join either the mono-ethnic church described above or move to a multiethnic congregation to feel more at home.[35]

A Multiethnic Church

Both mono-ethnic and semi-independent congregations struggle with how to create a healthy church in which the second- and third-generation immigrants are nurtured and enabled to grow into vibrant leaders as first-generations age and step back from leadership. The semi-independent congregations in particular attempt to work this out with the host (Anglo) congregation, and yet are not successful in doing so. It is for this reason that I suggest growing into a multiethnic church as a better alternative for both mono-ethnic and semi-independent congregations to serve, equip, and prepare the second generation for mission in the kingdom of God.

A multiethnic congregation is a congregation comprised of two or more ethnic groups with the sum of the secondary ethnic group(s) consisting of at least 20% of the entire congregation.[36] It is a congregation where no one culture stands over the other. It is a shared community where varying ethnic groups interact with each other and nurture the culture of shared ministry focusing on the mission of Jesus Christ. It is a place where the cultural values and traditions of each ethnic group are represented in every aspect of the church, including leadership.

There are three main reasons for starting a multiethnic congregation. First, because of the continued demographic change in our cities, we need to consider new ways of engaging in mission that are most applicable in our context. Minnesota, for example, is where many cultures converge. This increase in cultural and ethnic diversity, as Douglas Wingeier notes, "demands that we [as a church should] attend to and respect the gift of various groups now represented in our society, church, and institutions. It also requires us to develop intercultural sensitivity and skill."[37] Secondly, it is the multiethnic congregations that the second- and third-generation immigrants feel most comfortable joining. In one case close to my heart, my thirteen-year-old son, Ebba, said, "I want the church to be as integrated as the schools and the families in our community." Thirdly, the church's mission is mainly to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to *all nations* (*penta ta ethne*) (Matt 28:19). As this text clearly indicates, God's mission, which the church embodies, is to open the ways for "all nations" (*ethnos*) to have access to the Gospel of the Kingdom.

This move to a multiethnic congregation would entail the church becoming a truly integrated society representing different cultures. In a multiethnic congregation, all cultures are recognized. Their goal is to grow together, becoming one in Christ regardless of their differences. Members are allowed to work together to be the one body of Christ that expresses both unity of faith and diversity of culture. Whether migrant or citizen, rich or poor, black or white, people find in this church a place and a space, especially the younger immigrant generations. In a prayer for his disciples, Jesus said, "that they may all be one,

just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn 17:21).

Below are three approaches that offer possibilities for faith-filled and fully Christian communities to create a healthy environment for the second and third generations to grow in faith and to take the lead in growing their congregations into multiethnic congregations. The youth should be included in this because these require each member, not just the congregational leaders, to be committed to God's mission in the world, taking personal ownership[38] of this mission and working to create a system in which this can be carried out through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Approach A: Focus on Ministry to the Second Generation

Currently mono-ethnic immigrant communities or congregations are united in Christ, but ethnicity frames the basis of that unity. These communities are effective in reaching out to people of their common ethnic groups, but they see no reason to include or incorporate people of other cultures. The main challenges include doing ministry within their community because of language barriers, lack of vision to engage people beyond their own ethnic groups, and failing to incorporate younger generations into their congregations. These challenges require them to open their doors to "others" and change to a multiethnic congregation, which according to one interviewee "makes their leaders uncomfortable because it challenges the particularity that they enjoy or the ethnic identity that holds them together."[39]

In most immigrant congregations, the focus is on the needs of first-generation immigrants. Therefore, the younger generations feel excluded and unappreciated. The question remains, What can the older generation do to make the next generations feel wanted, celebrated, and even affirmed? The first step to ministry among second-generation immigrants is adopting the culture of listening. As stated above, the problem that the second- and third-generation immigrants mention when it comes to their experience with mono-ethnic congregations is that the older generation is unwilling to listen. So, the older generation needs to identify ways of serving the young ones by listening and discerning their needs. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer once stated, "the first service that one owes another in a community is *listening*."[40] This concern, for listening and engaging, has long been an issue even for monocultural congregations with their youth ministry. Will the congregation act in a way that engages younger members?

What can the older generation do to make the next generations feel wanted, celebrated, and even affirmed? The first step to ministry among second-generation immigrants is adopting the culture of listening.

As I have observed among the African and Asian immigrant congregations in Minnesota, some congregations even find it difficult to find English-speaking teachers

from the first-generation immigrants who can communicate well with the Sunday school students. Therefore, almost anyone who speaks English could be appointed as a Sunday School teacher. Recruiting Sunday School teachers and youth ministers from among the second- and third-generation immigrants is also the best way to start a ministry focused on the younger generations. First-generation immigrants should also create an environment in which younger generations are invited to fully participate in ministries, including leadership and decision-making.

Also important is building partnerships with other congregations that are seeking to engage youth in ministry. Eldin Villafañe in his book entitled *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry* proposes a ministry pattern that David Sanchez describes as "a corporation composed of several congregations (Anglo and ethnic)."[41] According to Sanchez, congregations can do youth ministry together in a way that "the resources of the congregations are combined to present a strong evangelistic witness in the community."[42] This is done while "the autonomy of each congregation is preserved."[43] It is also helpful to engage the youth from ethnic and Anglo congregations in joint service opportunities. This way, they will begin to learn about each other and take the lead toward becoming part of the same community.[44] These joint youth ministries can then grow into multiethnic distinct congregations led by the youth. This can be done either under the church structure or separately. Such moves have been successful in the case of second-generation Korean immigrants.[45] What is exceptional among the second-generation Korean immigrants is that they plant their own churches that are distinct from mainstream evangelicalism or Korean Christianity—yet a hybrid of both traditions. They have become successful in planting Korean congregations that grow into multiethnic congregations.[46] So far, there have not been any immigrant Lutheran congregations that have done this successfully.

Approach B: Joint Ministries

This approach focuses on the semi-independent congregations described above. These congregations include various ethnic groups that maintain separate distinct ministries within the congregation's structure while worshiping and celebrating life together as one church body in Christ. For these congregations, an essential step to growing into a multiethnic congregation is to start joint ministries with the host congregation focused on children and youth. This could include joining Sunday School, youth Bible studies, confirmation classes, etc. As David Anderson argues, however, "developing a multicultural mindset before [starting] a multicultural ministry is important."[47] According to Anderson, we must be "gracist" to have this mindset, which means that we should be "the one who hears, sees, and pays attention to those on the margin"[48]

One way to develop a multicultural mindset is to be open to incorporating elements of different cultures into our worship and to use different languages for worship and communication. Immigrant members should be willing to learn to worship and serve in English, and the host congregations should be prepared to incorporate other cultures and languages into their ministry. As Michael Hawn notes, the problem with most Anglo congregations is that even though they are open to the multiethnic congregation, "assimilation of immigrants into a single cultural perspective is the goal."[49] This is based

on the assumption that the host culture becomes like a "melting-pot" where other cultures will be "melted" into the main "pot." This, of course, has happened to the traditional European groups that migrated to the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But this time, there are over 120 different ethnic groups communicating in more than one hundred languages and dialects. Therefore, a move to being a multicultural congregation requires openness to accommodating other cultures or adopting a mosaic culture.

On the other hand, the issue with many first-generation immigrants is the language barrier and the problem of adopting English as a worship language. To fully integrate with others and serve in different capacities, these immigrants should be willing to learn and practice English and to adapt to American worship styles. They can do this by intentionally and willingly learning the language and immersing themselves in American church culture. As John McClure rightly argues, language should not be a problem because "languages are nothing more than *things in the world* that human beings shape and reshape to identify and deal *together* with the conditions of life under which they live, as they perceive them, and to identify, live into and bring about certain (hopefully good and true) desires and effects given that situation."[50] Therefore, rather than isolating themselves from the dominant culture in the church to maintain their own identity, they should learn how to embrace and celebrate differences, which in turn will enrich their ministry in the larger society.

This step also requires congregations to start a worship service in which the youth can actively participate. In other words, we need to design a worship program that incorporates elements of different cultures represented in our congregations. This is where the church designs a worship service for all people, young and old, or black and white, using one common or different language that people can understand. This can be an English or bilingual service in which elements of different cultures are reflected. This type of worship program allows the youth to fit in and be part of the service easily. One way Ethiopian congregations, for example, can adopt such worship programs is by designing a joint worship service with the host (English-speaking) congregations. Meaning that, among other activities, the English speakers also use the Ethiopian language.

Furthermore, it is essential to aim to build relationships and involve all members in the life and ministry of the church. As Gerardo Marti rightly observes, "multicultural churches do not achieve integration by diligently accommodating to supposedly distinct racial music styles, constructing assumed universal forms of worship, promoting highly intentional leadership for diversity, or raising racial awareness."[51] Rather, Marti argues, "most people come [to the church] because of family or friends and stay because they are involved."[52]

Approach C: Second Generation Immigrants Taking the Lead

The Korean American experience can be a good model for moving forward with forming a multiethnic church. In her book entitled *A Faith of Our Own*, Sharon Kim shows how second-generation Korean Americans are establishing new churches of

their own.[53] According to Kim, second-generation Korean Americans are planting new hybrid congregations rather than assimilating into mainstream churches or inheriting the the churches of their immigrant parents. They are creating a hybrid second-generation ecclesiastical experience by fusing elements of Korean Protestantism and some expressions expressions of American evangelicalism. Kim argues that this development is unprecedented: "It is only within the Korean American community that you witness a large number of the second generation leaving the immigrant church to develop entirely autonomous religious institutions apart from the immigrant context."[54]

However, studies also show that later generations of Japanese, Chinese, Hispanic, and some African American Christians are also forming multiethnic congregations fused with their own hybrid culture.[55] So Kim may be wrong in describing the second-generation Korean Christians' experience as unique; nevertheless, there are lessons to be learned from their approach. One of the main lessons is allowing the young generation to take the lead in planting new churches that are unique to their experiences and needs.

As some studies show, young Americans are dissatisfied with the kind of leadership that exists—the old leadership style both in the immigrant and non-immigrant congregations. Eddie Gibbs, in his book *LeadershipNext,* contrasts the old leadership style, characterized by "inherited patterns of hierarchy, status, and dispensability" with the emerging leadership (the youth) focused on missional effectiveness. For him, the emerging missional leaders (particularly among the youth) focus on "ministry by the church in the world rather than ministry in the church that is largely confined to the existing members."[56]

An important fact mentioned in Gibbs's book is the "relationship between leadership [in the Anglo congregations] and the loss of the [youth] under-forty-five."[57] According to him, one of the main reasons the youth have continued to disappear from the Anglo church in large numbers is their dissatisfaction with the old leadership style. His research related to the Anglo congregations also speaks to the reason why second- and third-generation immigrants find it difficult to remain in the church. So how can immigrant congregations develop a ministry appropriate to the younger generations? I think the answer should be clear by now—it is by allowing them to take the lead and by thrusting the next generation into God's ongoing creative works.

Conclusion

If Ethiopian American congregations want the second and third generations to keep their Christian faith and remain in the church for life, they need to start multicultural worship programs. The advantage of multiethnic congregations is that they have better opportunities to be a Christian witnesses to their neighbors and influence the larger society. They can engage the larger society by being part of the multiethnic church and still maintain their own ethnic cultural space.

Starting a multicultural congregation requires the openness of congregation leaders and members to change. As church pastors and leaders, we must graciously navigate this change. Congregations are more likely to vote for "no change" and champion the illusive status quo until they realize the enormous short-sightedness of their convictions. Leading change for the sake of mission and developing a program that incorporates the youth among

the immigrant communities may seem nearly impossible. However, this is something worth trying. Remember, if we refuse to change, we will most likely see fewer and second and third generation immigrants attending our churches!

ENDNOTES

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[2] International Organization for Migration (IOM), *World Migration Report 2022*, ed. Mary McAuliffe and Anna Triandafyllidou, 2021, https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022, 2.
[3] IOM, *World Migration Report 2022*, 2.
[4] Todd Johnson and Gina Belloffatto, "Migration, Religious Diasporas, and Religious Diversity: A Global Survey," *Mission Studies* 29, (2012): 8–9, doi: 10.1163/157338312X637993.
[5] "The Religious Affiliation of U.S. Immigrants: Majority Christian, Rising Share of Other Faiths," Pew Research Center, May 17, 2013, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2013/05/17/the-religious-affiliation-of-us-immigrants/
[6] Second generations' dissatisfaction and disaffiliation from ethnic churches has been noted among immigrant communities such as Koreans, Filipinos, Vietnamese Catholics, Chinese, Africans, and Mexicans. See Kathleen Sullivan, "St. Cathrine's Catholic Church: One Church, Parallel Congregations," in *Religion and the New Immigrants*, ed. Helen R. Ebaugh and Janet S. Chafetz (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 258–289; Henry Kim and Ralph Pyle, "An Exception to the Exception: Second-Generation Korean American Church Participation," *Social Compass* 51, no. 3 (2004): 321–333.
[7] "First generation" describes individuals born and raised in a different country. The 1.5 generation are those who were born in a different country but immigrated to the United States between six and seventeen years of age. For further detail, see Cecilia Menjivar, "Living in Two Worlds? Guatemalan-Origin Children in the United States and Emerging Transnationalism," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 532; Min Zhou, "Growing Up American: The Challenge Confronting Immigrant Children and Children of Immigrants," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, (1997): 65.
[8] Zhou, "Growing Up American," 65.
[9] See Mark DeYmaz and Harry Li, *Ethnic Blends: Mixing Diversity into Your Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010); Michael O. Emerson with Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Harold Coward, "Religion and Ethnicity: An Overview of the Issues Raised," in *Religion and Ethnicity*, ed. Harold Coward and Leslie Kawamura (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1978); H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian Books Edition, 1981).
[10] Helen Ebaugh and Janet Chafetz, eds., *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continues and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 10.
[11] "An ethnic group consists of those who conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of their common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are regarded by others." Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification: A Comparative Approach* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 389, quoted in Peter Wagner, *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 38–39.

[12] Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregations as Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2.
[13] Donald McGavran, *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* (New York: Distributed by Friendship Press, 1955).
[14] Demelash Yosef, in discussion with the author, August 15, 2022.
[15] Mark Mullins, "The Life-Cycle of Ethnic Churches in Sociological Perspective," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14, no. 4 (1987): 322.
[16] Gemma Tulud Criz, "Christian Mission and Ministry in the Context of Contemporary Migration," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 20, no. 2 (2016): 249.
[17] Demelash Yosef and Girma Chala, in discussion with the author, August 15, 2022.
[18] Ibid.
[19] J. Milton Yinger, *The Scientific Study of Religion* (Toronto: Collier-Macmillian, 1970), 112.
[20] For a biblical critique of this principle, see Damian Emetuche, "Avoiding Racism in Starting New Congregations," in *Racism, Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics*, vol. 35 (Waco, TX: Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University, 2010), 75–81.
[21] Barkot Berhanu, in discussion with the author, August 10, 2022.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Tsion Hailu, in discussion with the author, August 10, 2022. Helen Lee in her studies among Korean immigrant congregations describes the three reasons for "silent exodus" as the dissatisfaction of second-generation immigrants with the leadership of their parents, dissatisfaction with the ethnic emphasis on the church culture, and lack of opportunity to participate in the life and ministry of the church. Cf. Helen Lee, "Silent Exodus: Can the East Asian Church in America Reverse the Flight of Its Next Generation?" *Christianity Today*, August 12, 1996, 50–53; Helen Lee, "Silent Exodus No More," *Christianity Today*, October 2014, 38–47; Eunice Hong, "Struggles of Korean Second-Generation Leaders: Leaving the Immigrant Church," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 45, no. 3 (2020): 257–265.
[24] Lee, "Silent Exodus No More," 38–47. For more detail on this, see Mulualem Kaba, "Mobilizing Habesha Churches in Greater Boston: Training Servant Leaders for Transformation and Growth" (PhD diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2018).
[25] Barkot Berhanu, in discussion with the author, August 10, 2022.
[26] See Prema Kurien "Christianity by Birth or Rebirth? Generation and Difference in an Indian American Christian Church," in *Asian American Religion: The Making and Remaking of Borders and Boundaries*, ed. Tony Carnes and Fenggang Yang (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 160–181.
[27] Demelash Yosef and Girma Chala, in discussion with the author, August 15, 2022. Demelash was a pastor of a semi-independent congregation for over ten years and is now a pastor of a mono-ethnic congregation.
[28] Demelash Yosef and Girma Chala, in discussion with the author, August 15, 2022.
[29] William Starbuck, "Organizational Growth and Development" in *Handbook of Organizations*, James March (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965), 471.
[30] Challa Gemechu, in discussion with the author, July 25, 2022.
[31] Stephen Bevans, "Mission Among Migrants, Mission of Migrants," in *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*, ed. Daniel G. Groody and Giacchino Campese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 101.
[32] Stephen Bevans, "Mission Among Migrants," 101.
[33] See *Racism and the Church: Overcoming the Idolatry (A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod)* (St. Louis, MO, 1994), 26. For

details on assimilation practices, see Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).
[34] Chester L. Hunt and Lewis Walker, *Ethnic Dynamics* (Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press, 1974), 354.
[35] It should be noted here that at its 1992 convention, the LCMS adopted Resolution 3-03 "To Combat All Racism," in which it urged its members "to repent of any attitude or practice of racism as individuals and congregations" and resolved that "the Synod repudiate all racism and urge its members to celebrate God's love in Christ and their forgiveness and acceptance as God's children by loving and serving all fellow humans as they have been loved and served, without any exception of persons, and to work toward social justice in their neighborhoods and workplaces and all areas of society." Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Convention Proceedings – 58th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (Pittsburg, PA, 1992), 114, https://archive.org/details/1992LCMSConventionProceedings/page/n111/mode/2up
[36] Curtiss Paul DeYoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregations as Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2.
[37] Douglas Wingeier, "Emptying-for-Filling: An Approach to Cross-Cultural Ministry," *Quarterly Review* 11, no. 3 (Spring 1992): 35.
[38] Not "ownership" in the sense that the members control God's mission, but rather that God's mission has become their mission as well. Through their participation in the Trinitarian community, they now also have a stake in this mission.
[39] Berhanu Aaromo, in discussion with the author, July 29, 2022.
[40] Dietrich Bonhoeffer quoted in Douglas Ruffle, "Building Blocks for a Multicultural Congregation," *Quarterly Review* 13, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 81, italics mine. See also Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Vida en Comunidad* (Buenos Aires: Methopress, 1966), 96.
[41] David Sanchez quoted in Eldin Villafañe, *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry* (G.R.: Eerdmans, 1995), 55.
[42] Sanchez quoted in Villafañe, *Seek the Peace*, 55.
[43] Ibid.
[44] This approach was proposed twenty-five years ago by Manuel Ortiz. See Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1996).
[45] Dae Sung Kim, "New Missions with a New Generation: The Experiences of Korean American Churches and Missions," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 44, no. 2 (April 2020): 174–182.
[46] Sharon Kim. "Shifting Boundaries within Second-Generation Korean American Churches," *Sociology of Religion* 71, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 98–122.
[47] David Anderson, *Gracism: The Art of Inclusion* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 40.
[48] Anderson, *Gracism*, 23.
[49] Michael Hawn, *One Bread, One Body: Exploring Cultural Diversity in Worship* (The Alban Institute, 2003), 4.
[50] John S. McClure, *Mashup Religion: Pop Music and Theological Invention* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 107, italics mine.
[51] Gerardo Marti, *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 21–22.
[52] Marti, *Worship Across Racial Divide,* 82.
[53] Sharon Kim, *A Faith of Our Own: Second-Generation Spirituality in Korean American Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010).
[54] Kim, *Faith of Our Own*, 22. The limitation to Kim's findings is that her research is focused on second-generation Korean American churches in the Los Angeles area. So, we cannot be sure if it

is applicable in other contexts. However, I am proposing the second-generation Korean American experience be taken seriously as we explore different options on how we can grow to be multi-cultural congregations.

[55] See Yoshida Ryo, "Japanese Christians and their Christian Communities in North America," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 34, no. 1 (Summer 2007): 229–244; Timothy Tseng, "Second-Generation Chinese Evangelical Use of the Bible in Identity Discourse in North America," *Semeia* 90, no. 4 (Spring 2002): 251–267.

[56] Eddie Gibbs, *LeadershipNext: Changing Leaders in a Changing Culture* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 31, 44.

[57] Gibbs, *Leadership Next*, 13.