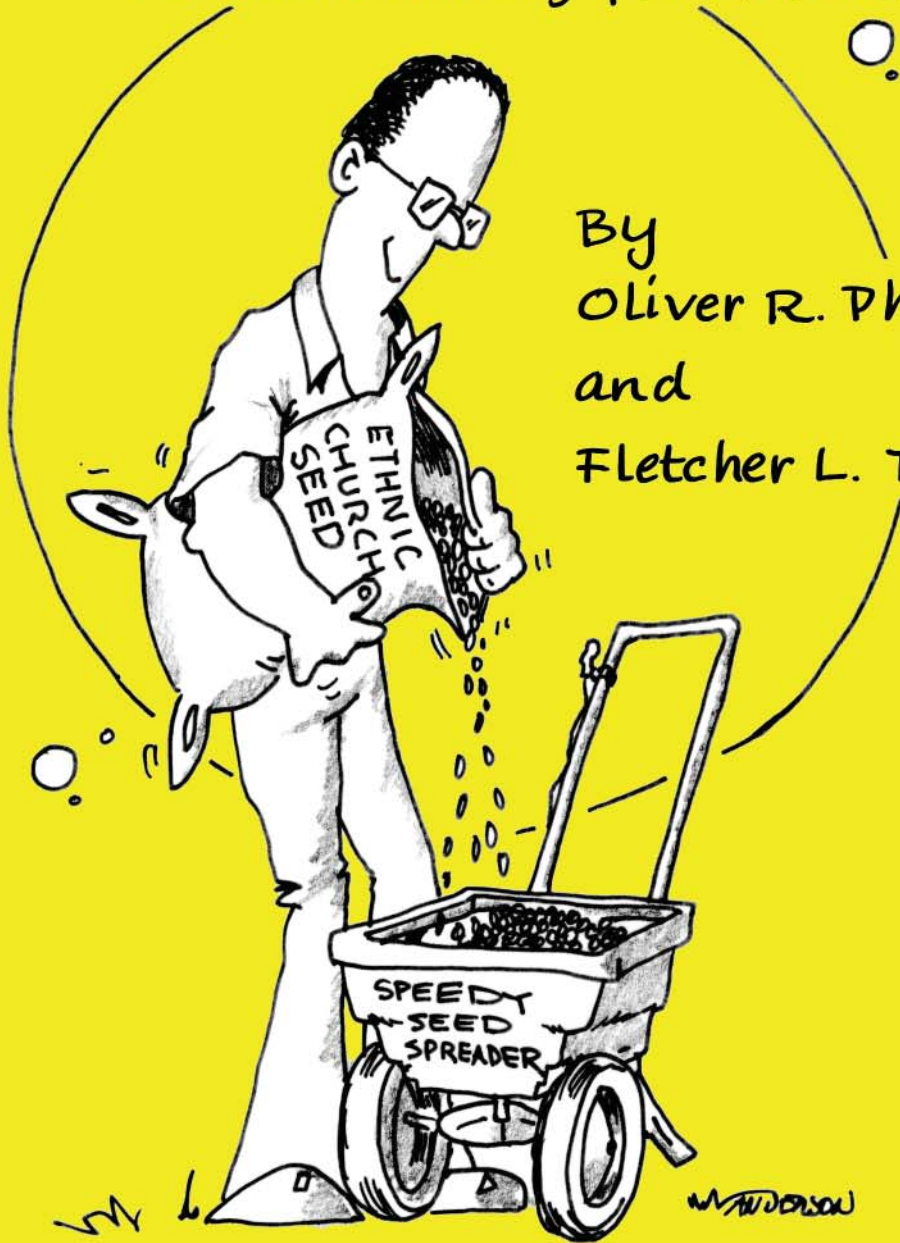


# How to Sponsor and Nurture an Ethnic Church

--- Without Losing Your Mind

By  
Oliver R. Phillips  
and  
Fletcher L. Tink



"Illustrations by Dave Anderson"

Don't bring us the gospel as a potted plant,  
but bring it as a seed and plant in our soil.

*-- An anonymous Indian Evangelist*

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## FOREWORD

The Eastside Nazarene Church was started in 1964, and the Westside Nazarene Church was started in 1971. Both congregations began as a result of a nuclear group of committed Nazarenes, who were convinced that the respective communities would be places where God's presence would be manifest through worship, praise, ministry, and fellowship. With a passion to reach the unchurched, over the years these congregations experienced somewhat consistent, though meager, growth.

In 1984, the Eastside congregation issued a call to Rev. Tobias Jones to be their pastor. Tobias had served congregations in New York, Boston, Delaware, and Philadelphia. A seminary graduate, Jones had experienced boastful successes in each church with average attendances of more than 200 in worship services. Eastside averaged 250 in worship services and their Sunday School had a vibrant responsibility list of more than 400. All indications were that this new pastor would take this congregation beyond its past records to new horizons.

In the same year, 1984, Westside suffered the untimely death of their pastor who had served for 15 years. The new pastor would be Rev. James Anglin, a visionary leader who graduated from Bible College and in his previous life was a used car salesman. Anglin did not receive an overwhelming vote, but believed that his skills and experience were well-suited to lead Westside into new areas of ministry. The first three years of Anglin's leadership were years of experimentation; whereby, many new programs were initiated, and growth was evidenced in most departments.

The latter years of the '80's and the early years of the '90's brought significant demographic and sociological changes in the state that would have an impact on both congregations. New manufacturing plants and service industries brought thousands of new residents to the state, many of whom were immigrants and people from other economically hard-hit states searching for the American Dream. In fact, in 1992 the U.S. Census Bureau declared the state had the highest population increase.

The Westside congregation noticed drastic changes in their schools, shopping places, municipal buildings, and restaurants. These changes were looked upon with alarm by some in the congregation, while there were others who began to talk about the implications for new ministry opportunities. Exploratory vision-casting groups were formed to discuss the emerging phenomenon.

One of the most vocal members in Westside was Tom, a graduate student at a university in the city. Tom began to express the possible areas of ministry opportunities among the new immigrants from Nicaragua, who were moving in great numbers into the neighborhoods. Before long, he started an ESL class in one of the Sunday School classrooms. Within six months a few Nicaraguan families began discussions about a Bible study group lead by Tom. From these humble beginnings, an Hispanic congregation began worship services on Saturday night.

As time progressed, Rev. Anglin befriended a Vietnamese car salesman in a nearby dealership. Nguyet Cam immigrated to America in the '70's and had been a Christian for only five years.

He had always searched for the opportunity to gather the many Vietnamese, who became his clients at the dealership. Now, as a member of Westside, Anglin convinced him to get them involved in an ESL class. The result was the start of a new church plant for Vietnamese immigrants.

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, Eastside Nazarene was not prepared for the changes. As the community transitioned into a new demographic landscape, membership began to dwindle. Within five years, attendance dropped from 275 to below 150. The congregation was fast becoming a fenced-in group, with no established relationships with the new people groups that comprised the new community.

By 2007, Westside had given birth to five new church plants with an average collective attendance of over 500. Eastside, on the other hand, was down to 60 in worship attendance and was absorbed in countless discussions about how to keep up with the spiraling costs of building maintenance.

What was it about these two congregations that led them to approach changes in such vastly different ways, with vastly different results? The answer may be found in two polarizing adjectives. Westside was a germinal church, while Eastside was a terminal church.

This book is about becoming a germinal congregation. A terminal church is one that is inwardly focused, preoccupied with conserving its past legacy, romanticizing in historical accomplishments, consumed with the fellowship of the faithful few, and proud of its early beginnings. The terminal church is a victim of the fatalities of the Sigmoid Curve (see Chapter 8).

Conversely, the germinal church is committed to the growth of the Kingdom through church multiplication and reproduction. The compelling theme of the Sigmoid Curve is that all institu-

tions, persons, molecules, organisms, and communities can only enhance and guarantee their longevity by creating new curves at propitious moments in their life cycle. Germinal churches are like the Apostle Paul, who endowed the early church with relative immortality by planting churches in urban centers throughout the Gentile world of his day.

Undoubtedly, as you read this book, the observation might be made that the sponsoring of new congregations seems to target people groups. What the authors have attempted to do is to raise the awareness of a rich mission field that God has brought to our shores and neighborhoods. The Church of the Nazarene has never shrunk from the challenge of fulfilling the passion of its founders to be a missionary organization, presently ministering in 156 countries. The membership in world areas outside the United States and Canada represents 64% of the total 2009 membership of almost two million.

With the explosive immigration patterns to the US and Canada, a new mission field has emerged that holds promise for avant-garde evangelism among people groups, who have proven to be exceptionally Gospel-friendly. Recent statistics show that over 40% of new church plants in the Church of the Nazarene are among these immigrants. What a mission field! As a corollary, the maxim that planting new churches is the most effective tool of evangelism is as true today as at any previous time in our short history.

The continuing task for the denomination will be to ensure that ministry within these cultures is embraced with full consideration of the cultural challenges that are de facto embedded within the church sponsoring and planting initiatives. This is the objective of this book. It is hoped that in the years ahead, our denomination would reap a plentiful harvest with the information covered in this practical guide.

The new ethnic congregations being sponsored by existing churches would be cultivated with a different cultural worldview and may sometimes create undue anxiety by the sponsors and district leaders. This should not be cause for alarm and consternation. The exponential growth in world areas, as well as the indigenous nature of the work, is a testament that our missionaries were aware of these differences in culture. Likewise, new church plants among people groups here would be fostered by our becoming culturally adept at deciphering the shades and nuances of these differences.

Our hope is that this book will help our districts and sponsoring churches to continue the ambitious initiatives among these new groups, fully aware that these new congregations will reflect their own culture. The rewards of planting

new, culturally-specific congregations, where neighborhoods have experienced demographic changes would be inestimable. An anonymous Indian Christian was quoted as saying, "Don't bring us the gospel as a potted plant, but bring it as a seed and plant it in our soil."

The authors of this volume have witnessed our denomination seize the opportunity to be relevantly evangelistic worldwide. This new decade might just be the time that expansive growth in the US and Canada becomes a cause for celebration and praise. God is not a capricious actor on the world stage, and it is this God who has brought this fertile mission field to our shores.

### **Carpe Mañana!**

*PS: The churches cited are fictional, but hopefully the message was received with holy concern.*



# INTRODUCTION

Apparently, a lot of people are losing their minds! No, not really! Or maybe they are tearing their hair out, scratching their heads, throwing up their hands and kicking up their heels over the whole matter of developing ethnic churches. There must be, otherwise this particular project would not have been endorsed, hasten quickly!

Among those distressed are district superintendents, who hear the litany of complaints when misunderstandings arise, or when they have to supervise the funeral of a church which, only a few years earlier, had been birthed with such enthusiasm. Or it may be that the ethnic congregational leaders don't think that the denomination fully understands their unique needs. Perhaps, the ethnic pastors find themselves alone in a jurisdiction swamped by programs and activities for the majority, but culturally isolated in their lonely congregation.

On the other hand, it may be that the majority congregation, inadequately referred to as "Anglo", does not understand why these newcomers do not act like Americans, carefully guarding the components of their originating culture as primary expressions of their identity. The Americans don't like the smell of curry in their curtains or "kimchi", that spicy fermented cabbage dish, in their kitchens. Why can't they be just like us? "Justice," some say, is "just us." Indeed, what is the rationale for their existence? Shouldn't they just learn English and discretely slip in and out of "our" congregations?

One of the most dispersed models is that of the multiple congregations in a single church facility, often referred to as "multi-congregational churches." The honeymoon of the arrangement

seemed so blessed and divinely ordered. But over time, the partnership often degenerates into misunderstanding, finger-pointing, and the quagmire of disengagement. It seems that divorce is imminent, and the two parties seek for the best face-saving way to salvage credibility. And the poor district superintendent is left washing his hands of the whole initiative.

Does it have to be this way?

The authors of this book emphatically believe that it does not! One (Oliver) has been an ethnic pastor in various contexts and has served as a denominational supervisor and consultant, facing these issues daily, and rendering wise counsel. The other (Fletcher) has been on four church staffs, juggling seventeen congregations that proliferated within the churches where he ministered. He has preached to many of those congregations and circled the world as missionary and professor, with an insight into cultures that informs this work. Together, they see both the potential for the glorious spread of the Gospel and the inherent dangers and traps that subvert it. Together, they give a resounding call to keep trying, to do better, to hang in there until churches are established that represent all peoples, tribes, nations and languages as partners in our communities, fully integrated with integrity, with the 5,000 congregations that already exist.

One author puts it this way:

*"Church planting is not about just establishing more churches... Allowing this to become the preoccupation of the church planters or denominational strategists would be a serious mistake.*

*Church planting is an opportunity for theological reflection and renewal, to asking radical questions about the nature of the church and its task in contemporary society, and for the developing of new kinds of churches. New churches are needed, not only to bring the Christian community closer to where people are geographically,*

*but closer to where they are culturally, sociologically, and spiritually.”*

So, roll up your sleeves, tighten up your belt, flex your arms, and hit the deck running. We’re about to go on a journey of discovery. And please, bring your mind along!

---

<sup>1</sup> Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Scottsdale, PA.: Herald Press, 2001) 129

## Chapter One:

# The Need to Do Things Differently



“This publication invites you to take a walk ‘around the block,’ to see what these churches, and perhaps your own, might look like. It celebrates the joy and successes, while admitting the complexities and difficulties of sponsoring arrangements. Both authors have valuable experience in seeing the art and in understanding the process.”



# The Need to Do Things Differently

In Christ's parable about the seeding of various soils for growth, He clearly identifies different responses to the broad effort of "casting seed" over the land. Some, he says, falls on the beaten path and picky little birds fly down and nibble it to extinction. Some seed falls on gravel, pushing tenuous roots down, but gets charred by the sun, because it can't suck up moisture. Some nestles in the weeds and, over time, is deprived of the nutrients necessary for growth. However, some manages to settle in fertile soil, shoot down solid taproots and spring up lusciously, producing delicious fruit and seed for another generation.

Christ was disarmingly honest about the potential for failure. He did not live in a Pollyanna world, predicting productivity every time. In his stories, not only do seeds die, houses disintegrate, towers collapse, sheep get lost, and disciples wander off. That is the X-factor of a sin-cursed world!

Perhaps as Christians and Christian organizations, we are a little too protective and too yellow-bellied, never daring risk, lest we appear to be failures. Now if we were entrepreneurs in business, we would acknowledge the bad odds against us succeeding in any new start-up, knowing that 50-70% of all small businesses fail in the first five years, and the average entrepre-

neur starts three to five businesses before he or she has long-term success. Given our Christian avoidance of failure, there just wouldn't be any businesses around if we were the only managers.

Perhaps our problem is spiritual, in that we have aligned visible success with God's blessings! Failure makes it appear as if God didn't bless us; therefore, we must be on the wrong side of history. If that were the case, much of Christian history would need to be rewritten. For instance, in martyrdom, all odds of success seem so publicly futile.

Yet the Gospel has the courage to take risks, to explore possibilities even in the face of diminishing odds. Christ risked His all on our response to the gospel. Paul risked his life to plant urban churches. The Church of the Nazarene risked its status in forging a new denomination.

### **Let's get to the point at hand!**

Jesus does not seem, in this parable, to be very discriminating. The sower casts the seeds helter-skelter in all directions. There is no selective planting. One soil is not targeted in deference to all others. When we cast the Gospel forth, we trust that some seeds miraculously grow against all odds. The birds might fly over, the clouds pour forth, the thistles wither, and the seeds

sprout. The result, we hope, is that God's grace beats the odds.

For the purpose of this book, we seek to identify productive soil where ethnic churches can grow in surprising and sustainable ways.

### **But first, why even the topic?**

Throughout the United States and Canada, churches proliferate on every corner, franchised almost as ubiquitously as McDonalds or Wendys. On the streets of the "hood", storefront churches line up with their exotic names and rustic architecture. Many of these are "ethnic" churches, new to the community, introducing their identities in languages unrecognized. So why do we need more of them?

Back in the 1970's, the "church growth movement" proclaimed that Christianity grows not primarily through large churches, impressive as their numbers may be, but rather through Christian adherents, who come to church primarily through intimate relationships. Relational conversion usually takes place in smaller churches. A church of 50 members, that incorporates three new converts a year, is ultimately more efficient than a church of 5,000 that propagates a growth of 200 new Christians annually. Indeed, there is evidence that the larger churches are magnets drawing members from the smaller churches. This fact however, should not devalue the exceptional visionary leadership that is evidenced in these larger congregations.

Unconvinced? Church growth specialist Peter Wagner used the phrase, "Homogeneous Unit Principle" to represent the groupings of people into useful categories that minimized cultural differences. Those in any classification of "HUP" may share a common language, cultural heritage, and lifestyle preferences. Dr Donald McGavran, a former missionary to India, observed firsthand the rigidity of the caste system and

speculated that the best evangelism takes place where there are "bridges" of relationships between people---family, co-workers, community, etc. These relationships should be mined for their potential in minimizing the barriers between people, focusing on their commonalities.

The problem with this thesis is that what was intended as a descriptive reality has been used as a prescriptive principle. Yes, we tend to hang out with people much like ourselves. And yes, we ought to do a better job of utilizing all commonalities to confront people with the Gospel, incorporating them into churches, in which they feel most comfortable. Indeed, HUP can easily justify a rationale to avoid people who present cultural obstacles. Let's go for the easy "low-lying fruit" in the vineyard of the Lord, let the specialists harvest the obscure and difficult fruit!

Given that rationale, Paul could have set up shop in Jerusalem at Sanhedrin First Church and had a productive upper-class Jewish ministry. The Church of the Nazarene could have opted to remain a nice, comfortable, middle class American church. But Dr. Phineas F. Bresee and his cohorts had this magnificent compunction to reach across barriers, be they geographical or cultural.

While developing missions in China and India, Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene began ethnic ministry between the Chinese in communities not far away. Thus, it instituted a glorious habit of reaching across boundaries, because of a vision determined to fulfill the description that the "sun never sets on the Church of the Nazarene." This is not a sun that scorches seeds, but one that illuminates ministries to the black, brown, red, and yellow peoples of the world, those in between, and those who don't want to be characterized in this fashion.

### **Defining "ethnic"**

Indeed, all peoples can be classified as "eth-

nic.” The adjective describes the cultural or racial situation of a group of people with identities in common. As a noun, “ethnic” sounds very disparaging, usually uttered with a twinge of cynicism or derision. If I am Filipino, then white people, “those without skin” as one person described it, are ethnic peoples. A parallel is the American who thinks that all other people have accents except them. One’s cultural base determines one’s reference point.

White people, who really are “pink”---racial definitions have little scientific base for discrete categorizations---in general are people whose heritage is bound up in Europe. They have, for the most part, enjoyed the privileges of a majority culture. Those unlike them in language, skin color, hair texture, national origins or in nose configurations are the ones often referred to as “ethnics.” For the purpose of this publication, we will use the term “ethnic” as an adjective to refer to those not generally classified in the majority culture, but we will avoid it as a noun.

Of course, for the purpose of this book, the term “ethnic” is purposefully used as a motivator, as leverage, for becoming more intimate with our neighbors, classmates, colleagues and co-workers. We use such language, not to convert them, because that would be manipulation---only God can convert. We do so for three reasons: first, because being neighborly and hospitable are long-standing Christian values; second, because our fate as nations depends in large part on our sense of civility by seeking to be “one people” transcending ethnicity, working together for the good of all. We reject the lynchings, the riots, the scapegoating of the past. Indeed, Christians ought to be, by nature and calling, peacemakers, reconcilers in a contemporary world where pundits and politicians scream rather than listen. Third, God has created an extraordinarily diverse world, spotted by mountains, trees, flowers, animals, humans and even things that grind

in the night, simply because He relishes being creative. As the old hymn says “All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.”

As to human diversity, St Augustine is quoted as saying: “Every meeting is a divine encounter” and “Every meeting is an exchange of gifts.” A Christian fully cognizant of this values all human interaction if taken in the right spirit. Neither language nor culture can dilute the value of such relationships.

### **Defining “Church”**

The second word that requires functional definition is “Church.” Frankly, our culture has ingrained in us an errant understanding of the “Church.” We see it as a brick building with a steeple and perhaps white columns out front, with doors flung open on Sunday mornings. Or, we see it as a bulletin-packed program of services for affiliates, with the add-ons of a prayer meeting or two, a Bible study, and some sermon notes. Or, we see it as an organization advocating a certain lifestyle, complete with a listing of popular or restrictive social stances on which we stand.

There is some truth to all of these caricatures. Jesus’ infant body was held in the crude manger. However, ultimately the Church is a “people,” convicted and convinced by the glorious news of the Gospel, impelled to share it by word and example to others. Los Angeles First Church, an elegant traditional building, struggled with the cost of finishing its steeple construction, opting to serve “people not steeple.” The Church on Sunday is the people “gathered.” But during the week, it is the people “scattered,” scattering seeds.

Lamentably, our church programs and services tend to take on the flavor of the culture of the pastor and, by extension, of the congregation.

This sets us up to certain expectations: pews, pulpit, and offering plates, order of service and altar, the decorum which makes us all a little more comfortable. The “narthex” is where we can talk over upcoming football events and trivial gossip, but please don’t discuss these things near the altar of the church. Everybody knows about the local church music wars: choruses versus hymns, song leader versus worship team, motionless behavior versus waving arms.

But these differences are minor compared with the emerging varieties of worship that confront us, smack in the face, when we “deal with” ethnic expressions of worship.

To sponsor an ethnic congregation or to help nurture it entails a risk not unlike adopting a child. The DNA is different, the habits are unfamiliar, the relationships potentially awkward. Sadly, in some cases, the relationship deteriorates, hopes are destroyed, and resources are dissipated. At least in the case of adoption, the

courts offer some fallback alternatives. But with a daughter congregation, church administrators have limited recourse in resolving conflict. Indeed, to effectively sponsor and nurture new congregations is more an art form than an arrangement.

This publication invites you to take a walk “around the block,” to see what these churches, and perhaps your own, might look like. It celebrates the joy and successes, while admitting the complexities and difficulties of sponsoring arrangements. Both authors have valuable experience in seeing the art and in understanding the process. Together, they seek to challenge the Church to take the risks despite the hazards, and in the process not lose our minds or our balance. May the growing compendium of ethnic church experience contained herein be divvied out into manageable doses that warm the heart, alert the mind, and advance the Kingdom of God among all peoples.



## Chapter Two:

# Why Mess Around With This?



“The opportunity opens up to begin a culture-specific congregation, most compatible with the changing local demographics. The congregation becomes a sponsor of that congregation and invests itself. They feel like there is a future in that locale, despite differences in language, customs, and worship styles. All is not lost! There is a future!”



# Why Mess Around With This?

According to one statistical presentation, in that new “community” known as Wikipedia, the Church of the Nazarene is the 38<sup>th</sup> largest religious body in the United States, ranking somewhere near Unitarians and Hindus in terms of affiliated church membership. We do a little better when it comes to number of churches: 19<sup>th</sup>. And in terms of official clergy, we creep up the scale to 17<sup>th</sup> position. For a denomination that recently celebrated its centennial, not too bad!

But are we in the business of just sticking churches here and there, like pins on a board? And if so, why? Shouldn't our effort be channeled to solidifying struggling congregations, salvaging others before rigor mortis sets in, enhancing more secure ones? Is it cost-effective to keep starting things anew?

Though the title suggests sponsorship and nurturing, the material here will deal with the range of contexts: starting new churches, bringing weak ones into supportive partnerships, and nurturing congregations that already exist. As humans, we don't think apologetically when a woman gets pregnant, when a child gets adopted, when an infant is nurtured, because we concede that the survival of a culture depends on its careful replication into a new generation. There is no task more important, for now, forever! As has been said repeatedly, “Christianity is but a generation away from extinction,” unless

of course, it is fruitful and multiplies. Proliferation is structured into our DNA, the ultimate pro-life statement. Or as Jesus, in the parable of the talents implies, the man who hoards is cursed, because he did not multiply his resources.

Jon Johnson, Nazarene sociologist, once described the evolution of church institutions. They start out as “lighthouses,” seeking the salvation of those capsized in waters around. Then they become “schoolhouses,” standing with status among similar institutions, educating those within through Christian principles and informing those without. Then they become “clubhouses,” oblivious to the world around, focused on self-survival. In this latter state, when a youth pastor is hired, his task is not so much to save the lost, but preserve the saved, coddling the young people lest we lose them.

So why is this compunction to plant new ethnic churches? Here are some worthy reasons. You, perhaps, can add others:

### Why Plant New Ethnic Churches?

#### 1. *Because we are told to.*

Not by some edict from a denominational executive are we motivated, but by the Lord whom is already orchestrating the salvation of the world, through church planting as the primary wedge into Satan's lair.

Frankly, the Biblical mandate of Matthew 28:18-20 did not include church buildings, legal documents, church boards, budgets, toilets, signposts, and the rest. We do these things out of the cultural necessity to “regularize” our presence, so that outsiders don’t think we are a spooky or a “fly by night” operation. If we were foreign missionaries, we would call the practices of all of these encumbrances “contextualization” and feel good about it, because we’ve made it look like the local culture. These “add-ons” engender accountability; they are the shackles of responsibility. They are not the Christ-child; they are merely the clumsy cradle that holds the Christ-child. Of course, it is quite possible to worship the cradle, long after Christ has departed.

### **2. Because Paul did it his way, effectively.**

No person in the New Testament is a greater candidate as an organizer of church planting than Paul. He targeted large cities, knowing that he was going after Satan’s jugular, rather than easy pickings elsewhere. To claim Christian turf in the heart of the culture would be to radiate the Gospel in a thousand directions. And what was his activity? It was church planting! However, it came in a dozen forms: through evangelization in the synagogue, through lectures in the local academies, through proclamations in the marketplace, through professional and vocational networks, through house churches, and through prison ministries while confined in detention. He dared to adapt methodologies to the context, to contour theology to the listener.

### **3. Because culture-specific congregations appeal to new populations.**

The story is told of a cat that chased a mouse down a manhole. The meows of the cat reverberated down the hole, as he tried to stretch his paw down to his prey. The mouse backed into a corner, frozen with fright, while the paw waved aimlessly by. Then there was a long pause. Sud-

denly, the mouse heard the barking of a dog and, relieved, assumed that the dog had chased away the cat. Only then did the mouse surface. Instantly, it was grabbed by the cat that, opening its mouth, started to devour it. The terrorized mouse as a last gesture before being dispatched whimpered, wanting to know where the bark had come from. “Ah, responded the cat, to live in this world nowadays, you’ve got to be bilingual!”

Point made? We’ve got to respond with new gifting and extraordinary flexibility to attract new, perhaps unreached, populations.

### **4. Because new initiatives can encourage existing congregations.**

The scenario is commonplace. The demographics of the community have changed, and many immigrants have displaced the traditional populations that once made up the church. The members have moved out of the community, leaving rows of empty pews. The congregation wrings its hands with frustration.

However, the opportunity opens up to begin a culture-specific congregation, most compatible with the changing local demographics. The congregation becomes a sponsor of that congregation and invests itself. They feel like there is a future in that locale, despite differences in language, customs, and worship styles. All is not lost! There is a future!

### **5. Because new congregations spawn new leaders.**

We are shocked at the audacity of an all powerful, all wise, all present God who suspends His decision-making powers to put fate into the hands of irresponsible human beings who, in turn, botch up Eden! It was God’s initiative to plant a colony of heaven on earth, a new “congregation,” with charter membership of two and full reign over

their own destiny. Their failure didn't end God's redemptive attempts to restore relationship, for God is a chronic Savior, seeking reconciliation in a thousand ways. As the book of Psalms almost monotonously repeats, "his loving-kindness endures forever," until one is dramatically drawn into that loving-kindness that reveals itself as no longer tedious, but glorious.

And from feeble leadership set on spindly legs, great leaders are formed. When they come out of diversity rather than redundancy, we are all enhanced!

**6. Because new congregations upset the status quo.**

They force other congregations into self-examination. A DVD has circulated around the denomination about the elephant and the giraffe. The giraffe wants to develop a business partnership with the elephant but fails to accommodate the elephant's need for a workplace contoured to his size and dimensions. The giraffe is constantly frustrated that, every time the elephant enters the facility, it inadvertently crushes the contours of the door, smashes the furniture and in general creates havoc solely because of its size. The business collapses because there has not been sufficient prior thought about the consequences of this partnership, nor have adjustments been made to accommodate the partner.

On the positive side, these partnerships may lead to a healthy re-prioritization of what is essential in the Gospel, not only for those directly involved, but also for those only observing. Other churches having examined the results might be challenged to re-assess their commitments.

Dr Phineas Bresee, pioneer church planter and intellectual architect of the Church of the Nazarene, is quoted in a powerful statement, almost shocking in contemporary application: "On the great fundamentals we are all agreed. Pertaining

to things not essential to salvation, we have liberty. To attempt to emphasize that which is not essential to salvation and thus to divide forces, would be a crime. Unwillingness for others to enjoy the liberty that we enjoy in reference to doctrines not vital to salvation is bigotry, from which the spirit of holiness withdraws itself." While methodologies and styles may change, the message remains the same.

**7. Because the development of new congregations is denominational priority.**

After 100 years, the Church of the Nazarene summed up its missional statement succinctly: "To Make Christlike Disciples in the Nations." Disciple-making best comes through the agency of the Church both to lead people to Jesus Christ, but also to nurture and guide them in Christian growth. TV ministries, distribution of Bibles, compassionate ministry projects can be successful in pointing the way to Christ. But, like a marriage relationship, until there is the commitment to live and be accountable in Christian community, Christianity is not fully consummated.

The second part of the statement references "the Nations." Once, the nations were far away, distanced by time, mileage and culture. Now, the world's masses are moving north and west both due to and despite immigration policy. The nations have landed on our doorsteps. As one urbanologist said, for years the West extended its influence and sovereignty over much of the remaining world. Now, "The Empire Strikes Back."

**8. Because new initiatives and new churches grace the Body of Christ as a whole.**

Many ethnic congregations will, over time, assimilate into the majority culture unless the immigrant flow continues unabated. More commonly, the second generation seeks increasingly to identify with the majority culture and, by the

third generation, the ties with the old are often severed. Obviously with African-American bodies, the situation is somewhat different. This means that positive and mutual relationships between majority and ethnic congregations are essential to provide seamless transitions. If there is a history of “bad blood,” it will play out in subsequent generations.

Remember, someone in cultural transition has heightened sensitivities to the various forms of treatment experienced. If hosting Americans seem crude and callous to their needs, this is long remembered. If these same Americans come across as caring and hospitable people, going the second mile to accommodate newcomers or other minorities, then their actions are remembered fondly and usually identified with the kindness and blessings of God Himself. It is important to recognize what it means to be an alien in a foreign land. Rudyard Kipling caught the irony of duplicitous attitudes:

All good people agree  
And all good people say,  
All nice people, like us, are We  
And everyone else is They:  
But if you cross over the sea,  
Instead of over the way,  
You may end by (think of it) looking on We  
As only a sort of They!

Done properly, true relationships become “We.”

**9. Because doing so might expand us further into true Kingdom-mindedness.**

On the night before Christ chose His disciples, He prayed throughout. It could be assumed that He prayed for a discipleship team that would come referenced with the finest resumes and recommendations possible. Instead he got a rag-tag group of men, two or three who might

have been terrorists, one a stooge of the Roman government, one impetuous sort of character, a couple of brothers who demanded preferential treatment, a fellow who just seemed to not “get it” in his doubting manner, and one who regularly ripped off the treasury fund. Amazingly, Christ tolerated the bumps and bruises of these associations with an uncanny “divine” patience. Furthermore there was a deep cross-cultural rift between them. Jesus, in his divine nature, felt within himself the clash between that and the human culture He so identified with. Furthermore, by moving from Galilee to Judea, engaging with Samaritans, dealing with Romans and Greeks, Jesus knew the tension of cross-cultural ministry.

Remarkably, after three years, the disciples along with Paul became the greatest agents of church planting. According to tradition, each of them lived out their lives cross-culturally, with perhaps the exception of James. The others dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. James supposedly landed in Spain; another, St Thomas, in India.

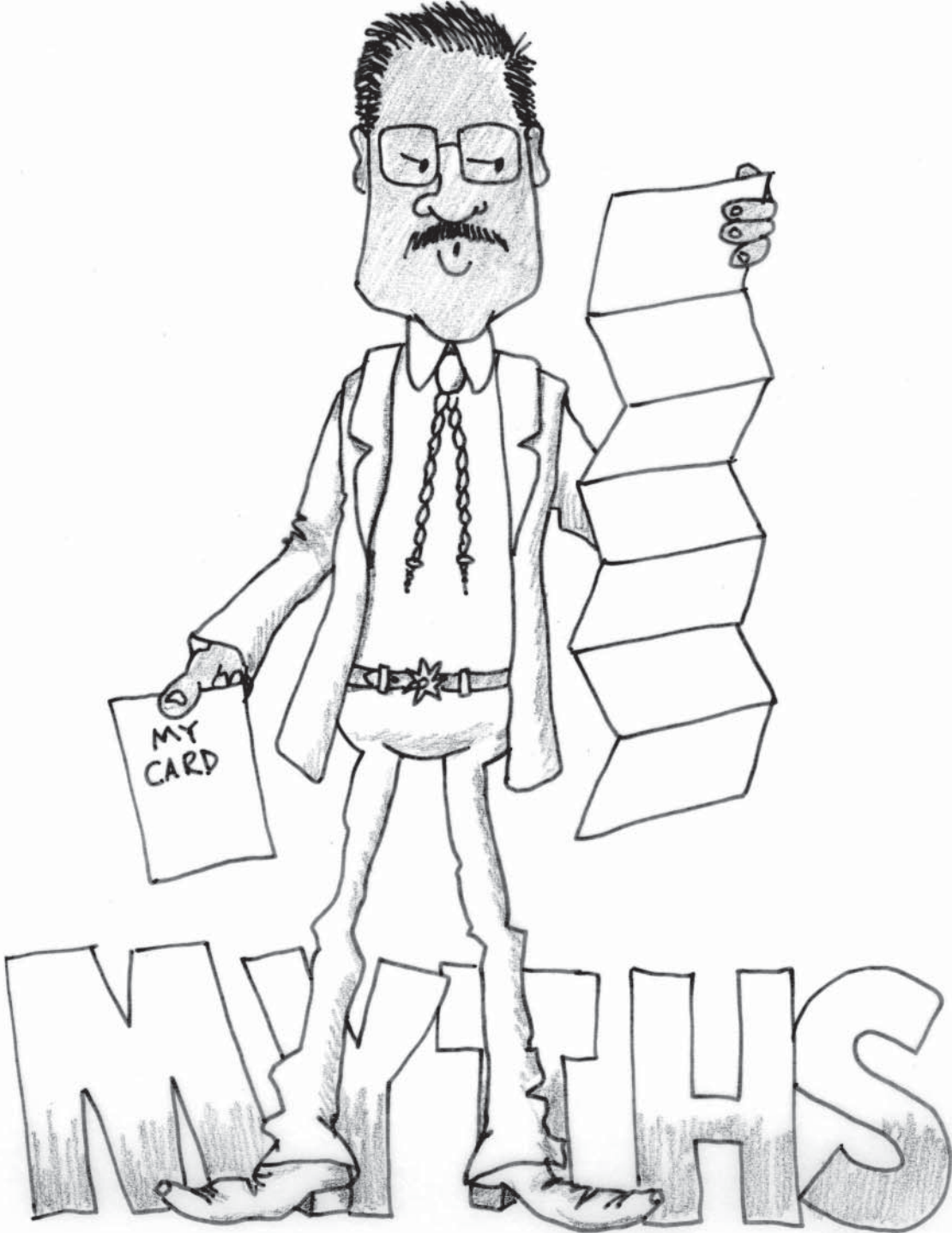
Christ put the weight of the Church on these disciples, who early in their calling seemed so inept. But, implicit in the Gospel is the promise that God can make much out of little, or take awkward or uncomfortable situations and invest them in great glory for Himself and expansion of His Kingdom. We need to remember the words of Frederick W. Faber’s classic hymn:

There is wideness in God’s mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There’s a kindness in His justice  
Which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man’s mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

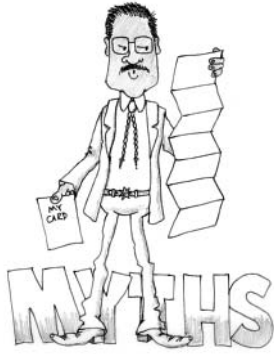
Chapter Three:

Examining the Myths



“What then is a Christian community to do in the midst of change? Does it protect itself and its cultural precedents, or does it “go native” to adapt itself to the strangers in its midst? Does it wrap itself up in the American flag? Or does it become all things to all people? To counteract this, nations need to work together to improve the lot of all and to find mutually common immigration policies that are fair, balanced, and sensitive to needs on all sides.”





# Examining the Myths

Next, let's dispel some pervasive myths:

**First Myth: Don't get involved with "ethnics." They either're here illegally or involved in un-American activities or are threatening the "American way of life."**

**Response:** Under our practical definition of "ethnic" groups as being something other than English-speaking Caucasians, there are many ethnic peoples in our midst, at least 100 million or about 35% of the total population of the United States and a similar proportion in Canada.

Some were here long before white people showed up: Native Americans or "First Nations" as the Canadians categorize them, and people of Hispanic origins, who settled in the Southwest, before those lands were annexed into the United States.

Almost forty million are derived from ancestries who did not even choose to come to the United States, but were forcibly brought to these shores as slaves. We call these African-Americans or Blacks, though their bloodlines have been mixed over time. These are very different from Africans, who have arrived directly from Africa and share nothing of the slave histories that others have experienced. Then there are the immigrants from the Caribbean, some nurtured deep in British colonial culture, from islands such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados.

Others have been fashioned under French influences from Haiti, Guadalupe, and Martinique.

A large number, almost 50 million, are categorized as Hispanics or Latinos. Because the US census bureau now allows people to define themselves, these can be people whose heritage is linked with Latin America, or whose predominate language is Spanish, or whose culture is of Latin American influence. This is more a cultural designation and not a racial one, because Latinos can be Black, brown, mestizo (the mix of European with indigenous cultures in Latin America), or mulattos, (a mix of European or Latin American bloodlines influenced by African racial traits). Indeed, Latin Americans can even be Asian in origin, as many of them have lived in Latino America for generations. In Peru, for example, one can be called Manuel Ozawa, combining Latin American and Japanese bloodlines.

Other ethnic groups include national entities such as Filipinos, who may feel more comfortable in their trade and academic language of English, or in Tagalog, their national language, or in regional languages such as Cebuano or Ilocano. People from South Asia, i.e. India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, may be educated in English but speak also national languages such as Hindi, Urdu, or Tamil.

Ironically, many of these cultures are derived from South Asia but transferred generations ago into the Southern Caribbean, where they speak not only English, but also a localized version of English, a patois or pidgin dialect. People from Guyana and Trinidad may have these cultural heritages.

Many of the Asian cultures are more homogeneous and combine national identity with race and language, such as in the case of Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, though there are many different languages used in Chinese, the most prominent being Cantonese (in Southern China), and Mandarin (in much of the rest of the country). Ironically, the written Chinese language, because it is based on symbols and not phonetics, can be read by all, even if their conversations are mutually unintelligible.

But then, there are other different national and language groupings, where the people look like the majority of the US population, of European stock: Russians, Swedes, Polish, Italians, French-Canadians, Norwegians, and even the Welsh. Church congregations for each of these groups exist in our major cities and, for the purpose of our discussion, can be considered “ethnic” congregations.

If we include these in our data, then the number of 100 million shortchanges the reality.

Ninety percent of these people are in the two countries legitimately. Even those without documents have lived successfully in their new lands for extended years and have raised families that know no other country. There is no evidence to indicate that their social liabilities statistically exceed the averages of all Americans or Canadians. And then, what is the “American way of life” or “Canadian way,” if it has not always been a mixed brew of cultural influences from the get-go?

**Second Myth: We are being inundated with “ethnics!”**

The fact is that the percentage of foreign-born immigrants is rising. But it is nowhere near what it was 100 years ago. Through the first three decades of the twentieth century, the number of foreign-born immigrants in the United States hovered around 13%. However, most of those immigrants were from Northern Europe: Germany, England and Ireland. As immigration policy liberalized, more came from Southern Europe, stirring a backlash, because many of these were Catholics and perceived as contaminating religious influences.

However, with the Depression and the Second World War, immigration almost completely stopped, only to be recharged in the 1950s. It has increased steadily each generation to the present, with about 10.4% foreign born.

**Table 1. Immigrants as a Percentage of U.S. Population**

1900	13.6 percent
1910	14.7 percent
1920	13.2 percent
1930	11.6 percent
1940	8.8 percent
1950	6.9 percent
1960	5.4 percent
1970	4.7 percent
1980	6.2 percent
1990	7.9 percent
2000	10.4 percent

Three major changes have occurred in the demographics of immigration. First, further liberalizing of immigration laws to provide different quota proportions have opened up the variety of nations who send immigrants now increasingly from Africa and Asia, with cultures very dissimilar from those already here. Second, because of the economic prosperity of the past 50 years, the United States and Canada have been huge draws for troubled or impoverished societies, bringing their refugees or their desperate

peoples to these shores, both as legitimate immigrants and as undocumented immigrants. In many ways, immigration is like the weather. High pressure systems invariably are drawn to low pressure atmospheres. And rich countries will always attract a rush of those from poor ones, despite laws and policies.

Frankly, there can be considerable discomfort in finding out that one's standard cultural neighborhood has been transformed by virtue of the numbers of immigrants. Stability gives way to change, and there is often anger and mourning that results in political backlash and social hostilities. This is a normal process. The question is whether it necessarily has to be part of a Christian reaction.

What then is a Christian community to do in the midst of change? Does it protect itself and its cultural precedents, or does it "go native" to adapt itself to the strangers in its midst? Does it wrap itself up in the American flag? Or does it become all things to all people? To counteract this, nations need to work together to improve the lot of all and to find mutually common immigration policies that are fair, balanced, and sensitive to needs on all sides.

Thirdly, the current immigration policies in the United States are sufficiently confused and inconsistent, that immigrants in increasing numbers are arriving without clear ideas as to the penalties, the rigors of life in America, and the potential damage to family structures. Until current policies are clarified, and enacted justly, many illegal immigrants will languish in situations in which they have little control or options.

Many of the ethnic peoples in the United States and Canada are already steeped in Christian orientation. The Latinos and Southern Europeans come primarily as Roman Catholics, but an increasing number are already indoctrinated into the Protestant, or "evangelical" faith (the term

used for all Protestants). They, along with many Africans and South Asians, enter North America in part, because they are connected to church associations or because their faith suffered as a minority religion back home. The problem then is not just how to start churches through evangelism, but to corral Christians into church clusters that support their existing faith and to channel them into extending the witness to those who need it. Ironically, the three major ethnic groups--Black, Hispanic and Korean--are three of the most evangelized groups in the two nations.

Let's get down and practical. "Ethnicity" as we use this fuzzy term here, for the purpose of missions, may refer to race, to language, to cultural origins, to national identity, or to any characteristic that significantly separates that group from the majority culture. Indeed, some have even used the term to include the hearing or sight impaired, special categories of singles or seniors, and even sexual orientation.

Within the Church of the Nazarene, our use of the term has evolved not from sound anthropology but from a mission-orientation. In other words, in what form should we group people to best minister to their needs? Or better yet, in what form do they group themselves?

The old "Church growth" language talked about "unreached peoples." In some sense, this is an attempt to reach "people groups," both "reached" and "unreached," in the ways that they feel most comfortable. Blacks, for the most part, don't worship in quite the same way as predominantly White congregations. And it is quite useless to demand that a new immigrant from Nicaragua, who does not speak English, attend an English-language service. They may feel the warmth of the congregation, but be totally estranged from its culture and meaning. Ironically, English-speakers around the world tend to congregate in English-speaking churches, even in those places

where the official language is something different. In Abu-Dhabi, one of the Arab Emirates, the Evangelical Church there, in a culture which uses Arabic, hosts congregations in English, Chinese, Korean, and Tagalog.

Some people have argued that the Church should mirror the racial and ethnic compositions of the world. It ought to look like the Kingdom of God that someday shall worship together in all of its diversity, as described in Revelation 7:9, with all “nations, tribes, peoples and tongues” under the same roof. This is a wonderful aspiration, and we all should be moving in that direction.

However, if the purpose is missiological, that is, to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, it is unfair to demand that they act fully mature in the faith, before they’ve even got a grasp of what that faith means. Jesus started with people at their point of need, not assuming full theological completeness. Yes, there needs to be a constant stretching towards what we ought to become as the complete Church of God. But this perfection takes time and even, perhaps eternity. In the meantime, we will continue to have “ethnic” congregations, expressing their cultures and peculiarities just as we express ours.

Yes, we yearn to see more “multicultural congregations” that mirror the diversity of the world around us, especially in those communities that themselves are multicultural. That would be a fine anticipation of the Kingdom of God yet to come. Yet the fact is that few churches ever attain such a mix. Some churches pride themselves in the fact that they have a cross-section of ethnicities within their numbers. But that in itself does not make such a congregation a multicultural church.

For a church to be truly multicultural, it is generally conceded that no one group or ethnicity should make up over 80% of its membership.

But then the leadership and the decision makers should be just as diversified. The character of the worship experienced should exhibit the tastes and the styles of the 20% minorities in proportionate measure. For this reason, a church may look multicultural in its rainbow membership but still be governed by the dominant culture and be mono-cultural in other ways. To find the balance is a very difficult task and rarely seen. The fact is that human nature tends to gravitate toward those that, for a variety of practical reasons including language, are most like oneself or toward the ethnic church option. The Gospel does not stamp out differences. But neither does it allow differences to be the defining identity that create barriers to those who are dissimilar. We rejoice that God has made us different and not redundant. But those differences will always yield ultimately to the oneness that we find in Christ.

***Myth #3: Getting involved in ethnic ministries is messy.***

Yes, there is some truth to this, but then getting involved in any ministry is messy, because ministry doesn’t necessarily zero in on “worthy” candidates. Indeed, Scripture suggests that “while we were yet unworthy, Christ died for us.”

The lives of those who have been transplanted from one nation to another are particularly messy: cultural misunderstanding, a twinge of paranoia that affects any person in a new context, financial issues, relational issues and, yes, possible legal issues.

The Gospel of holiness preached by the Church of the Nazarene works at all levels, seeking to restore people to self-sufficiency, to productivity, to patterns of health, to fullness in Christ, and connectedness in community. Not all of this happens instantaneously. Faith may be grasped in a moment, but rectitude in character and society is often a long and slow process.

Each ethnic group has its strengths and its deficiencies, including the majority culture. While the majority culture is most comfortable in its tailored society, it can become arrogant, detached, and insensitive to its neighbors. The judgment of Sodom cited in Ezekiel was that “she and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy” (Ezekiel 16:49). Other cultures face moral ambiguities, legal issues, or relational hostilities. Within the African-American culture, there is considerable concern that Black males in excessive numbers are absent from their homes. Within Latino cultures, the issue of legal documentation may be a recurring theme. In Middle Eastern cultures, there are long histories of resentment or mistrust toward others that may color even a congregation’s attitude.

Or perhaps, even the congregation itself is a construct of misguided motives. One Asian congregation saw as its major function, the illegal fabrication of documents for paying members, who were offered titles and to aid them in getting green cards. Indeed, ethnic ministries can be messy!

However, working among these groups, often shows an uncommon commitment to Christ, a zeal for evangelism, and faith that transcends reality, and a joy abundant that makes all of the messiness worthwhile. Indeed, as we follow in the footsteps of Christ, He leads us into the muck of life, in which He himself is invested. It is out of that muck that flowers and trees grow. His example compels our own.

For every messy situation, there are also miracles of grace. Black men are some of the strongest leaders in our denominations and the finest preachers. Legal issues among Hispanics and others are secondary to the grace exhibited.

One Nazarene, arrested on immigration charges, led six fellow prisoners to Jesus Christ, the weekend he spent in jail. And the church raised the bail funds.

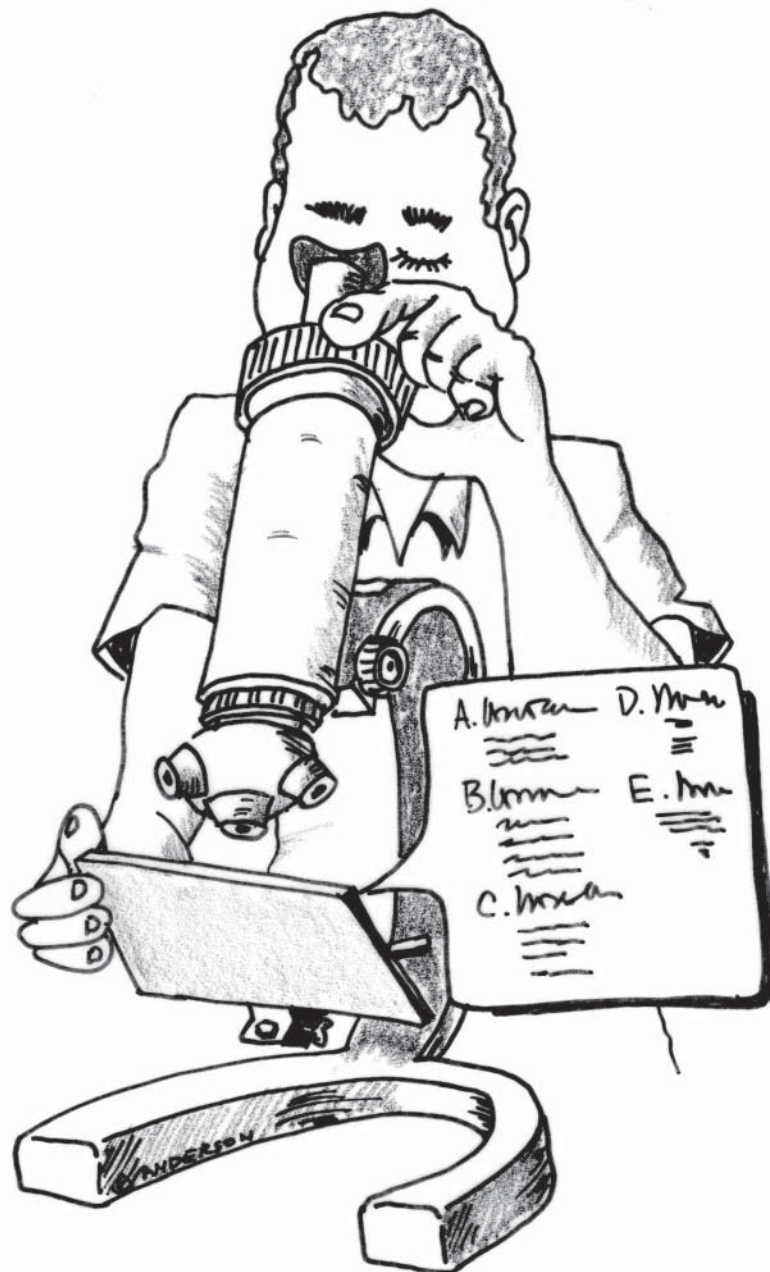
Regarding the legal issue, it is not primarily the Church’s responsibility to serve only “legal” residents. Indeed, it is better not to even raise the question of legal status, until the individuals involved offer information and explanation. The Church’s responsibility is to embrace all sinners, lead them to Christ, and then deal with the practical implications, step by step. Though there have been some legislative initiatives to deprive undocumented people from all private services, these do not hold water in the court of law and have been discounted both legally and practically. Just as a pastor is entitled to confidentiality privileges, so too is the Church, from legal binds in these issues. Yet, as in some cases---i.e. child abuse, confidentiality is trumped by laws of disclosure--- so too, contractual pastoral arrangements with salaries for undocumented pastors rightfully will incur the wrath of immigration authorities.

As to relational issues, it is important to know the ethnic history, the hurts that bind, the sensitivities that govern. Yet repeatedly, we have seen these congregations rise above their collective pain to exhibit a spirit of reconciliation and hope that their secular counterparts can’t comprehend: Arab and Jew, Armenian and Turk, Georgian and Russian, Central Americans who have warred against one another in the past, Hutus and Tutsis, the Irish and English. If Northern and Southern American states still carry the cultural divide of past pain 150 years later, it is Christ’s message of reconciliation that trumps regional, national and ethnic differences and brings healing and shalom to communities once in enmity.



## Chapter Four:

# So What's the Church of the Nazarene Up To?



“The Church of the Nazarene is blessed to have nurtured a worldwide vision of the Gospel, with an aggressive missionary program that has reached into more than 156 nations. We are seeing many Nazarenes in these nations taking leadership not only within their borders but also with a passion to win the lost for Christ in other nations. Some of these have settled in the United States and Canada and are itching for meaningful positions of leadership within their own groups.”





# So What's the Church of the Nazarene Up To?

Our denomination has long been engaged in ethnic ministries. The very first Nazarene Church, Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene, birthed a Chinese congregation over 100 years ago. For several decades, the so-called “Colored” District was the most geographically extensive, with African-American ministries extending from New England to the Southwest. In the 1960s, it was deemed inappropriate to constitute a district based on skin-color; consequently, those churches were amalgamated into the existing, white districts. Many ethnic congregations have emerged not so much by intentionality, but because groups of people connected in some way to the Church of the Nazarene desired congregations that better represented their cultural, linguistic, or national identity. These were formed because of Nazarene advocacy despite inadequate models and artificial jurisdictional arrangements.

On the other hand, other congregations have been formed by direct intent on the part of district leaders, local churches, and passionate “missionaries” to particular groups. Frequently, denominational resources have been engaged with consultancies and referrals and documents intended to expedite the creation of these congregations. The result has been the growth of many of these bodies both in membership and in the quantity of churches they represent. Currently, the denomination has identified minis-

tries to the following ethnic groups:

Language-based: Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Tagalog (Filipino), Mandarin, Cantonese, Russian (including the CIS states), French (French-Canadian, Martinique, France).

Racially-based: African-American, South Asian (Indian, Sri Lankan, and Pakistani), Native American, and First Nations.

Nationally-based: Haitian (in Creole and French), Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Ethiopian, Cambodian Samoan, Eritrean, Laotian, Armenian.

Regionally-based: Caribbean (Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Guyanese, etc), African (Nigerian, Congolese and others).

Culturally-based: Messianic Jews, the Hearing Impaired.

These categories are not fixed, as often they bleed into each other. For instance, an Armenian congregation may use English for the young people who see themselves as more American or Canadian than Armenian.

Remember, no culture is stagnant. Languages perpetuate themselves only if there is a continuous stream of immigrants. Messianic Jews and the Hearing-impaired strive for cultural distinctiveness in the face of the majority culture's pressure to homogenize. However, racial desig-

nations tend to categorize people permanently and so create a different dynamic that insures the cultural perpetuity of these congregations.

Some of these congregations have been around a long time and are permanent fixtures in the overall organization of the denomination. Others are new initiatives, still tentative and uncertain about their role within the whole.

### **Why are Ethnic-based Churches' Numbers Growing?**

The fact is that, in their totality, this is the cutting edge and growth curve of the denomination. While the majority population churches struggle to hold their own in a culture increasingly hostile to the Church's message, these congregations have proliferated for several good reasons:

#### **1. The percentage of non-Hispanic whites in the United States will continue to decline, while the composite of all other groups will increase.**

As of 2010, about 65% of the nation's population consists of non-Hispanic whites. Sixteen percent are currently Hispanic or Latino. Blacks account for over 12%, Asians over 4%, Native American or Alaska Native slightly less than 1%. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, just under ½%, "Other" is at 5%, and those who identify themselves as two or more races at 2.3%. Because there is some duplication of Hispanics who may be non-white, the tally adds up to more than 100%.

However, given current trends, it is projected that by the year 2050, the majority white, non-Hispanic population will no longer be considered a majority, having been reduced to around 46% of the population. Hispanics will have grown to 30%, African-Americans to 15%, and Asians to 9%.

The biggest discrepancy will be seen in the nation's children in 2050; 62% are expected to be

something other than white and non-Hispanic, with over half of these (39%) being Hispanic.

A church of the future should resemble the culture at large. Many of these will be so assimilated into the broader streams of American culture that they will be attending churches that are inclusive and hospitable. However, many others will opt for ethnic-specific ministries because of language barriers or cultural styles. A denomination like ours needs to anticipate growth in these areas and create the congregations that will attract members of a wide variety of ethnic identities.

2. As indicated in the above statistics, **these groups will be, on average, much younger.** Evangelism to children will have to be targeted both to individual cultural identities and to styles that are inclusive of all. This will affect how we teach, the language that is used, the symbols that are represented, the styles of music celebrated, and even the forms of discipline applied. Ministries to young families will also have to take on similar sensitivities.

3. **These growing populations are confined no longer to Border States, to the coasts, or to major cities.** Ellis Island, once the immigrant funnel in New York City through which most immigrants passed, is now displaced by centers all across both nations, which are used as "port cities." For certain groups, such as refugees, immigration is not a problem. Remember that Puerto Rico, Guam, and Samoa are all territories where citizens have the rights of other US citizens to move freely without restrictions. Immigrants tend to converge on workplaces as diverse as poultry plants on the eastern shore of Delaware, agricultural valleys of central California, or on the plains of Western Kansas, where crops are to be gleaned and cattle to be butchered. In other words, small town America is not immune from the influences of immigrants and minorities.

4. Yet ***the larger percentage of immigrants tend to assemble in older sections of cities***, often in waves where once the Irish lived, then the Italians, then the Polish and the Jews, then the Blacks, and now the Vietnamese, or the Ethiopians or the Nicaraguans. Communities, once depressed, are given life again, because immigrants have arrived.

These realities call for a new brand of leadership; cross-cultural “missionaries” trained, with uncanny savvy to reach, not just persons in distant countries, but also those hidden within their own communities. Our institutions need to be training “home missionaries” with the same diligence and curriculum that foreign missionary candidates require. Skills in language, insights into cultural anthropology, Biblical contextualization, conflict mediation, and street smarts will increasingly be necessary to minister effectively to these populations. Even more essential is the skill of leadership development in identifying, training and partnering with people who surface within these cultures to lead their ministries.

The Church of the Nazarene is blessed to have nurtured a worldwide vision of the Gospel, with an aggressive missionary program that has reached into more than 156 nations. We are seeing many Nazarenes in these nations taking leadership not only within their borders but also with a passion to win the lost for Christ in other nations. Some of these have settled in the

United States and Canada and are itching for meaningful positions of leadership within their own groups.

Others have arrived, and because they cannot find an accessible Nazarene church of their culture, or perhaps any ethnic congregations, they drift away from the Gospel, not by choice but by default. To plant ethnic churches is to not only evangelize, but to retain the results of the extensive missionary labors on the “mission field.” In other words, the failure to plant ethnic congregations not only stymies growth, but also may even contribute to decline. Rev John Pattee, retired missionary, having served in the Philippines, collected all of the names of the network of Filipino Nazarenes who had settled in the Los Angeles area. He dedicated several days to visiting each of these, encouraging them to reconnect with the denomination by appearing at a Filipino function to discuss a new church start. Out of his efforts, a new Filipino church was birthed, now strong and vibrant, one of the congregations of Los Angeles First Church.

The recent growth of Nazarene ethnic congregations has already been impressive. Between 1980 and 2010, the growth curve shows the following numbers of congregations (Chs), followed by the Sunday morning attendances. The parallel figures give the Sunday morning worship attendance (WpATT).

### Raw Data of Nazarene Ethnic Church Growth, 1980-2010

USA and Canada	1980		2010	
	Chs	Wp Att	Chs	Wp Att
Spanish-Speaking:	90	5240	458	27874
African-American, African-Canadian, Caribbean:	79	5390	124	10116
Haitian (Creole and French Speaking)	3	123	84	9248
French or French-Canadian:	1	14	4	178
Korean:	12	531	54	2321

USA and Canada	1980		2010	
	Chs	Wp Att	Chs	Wp Att
Native American or First Nations (Inuits, Hawaiian)	40	1372	53	1769
Filipino (various languages)	1	41	8	752
Cambodian:	0	0	10	596
Samoan:	2	116	18	1033
Portuguese, Capeverdian:	3	391	11	1196
Middle Eastern: (Armenian, Arab, Jewish	1	20	14	771
Other Asian and South Pacific:	7	269	40	1455
African (Eritrean, Ethiopian, Sudanese Congolese)	1	17	13	383
Multicultural Churches:	1	140	112	11237
Other: (Hearing-Impaired):	0		2	40
Total:	241	13664	1001	68960

It is necessary to add a caution about such statistics: not all of those who attend these churches are necessarily of that particular grouping. Spouses may be of different ethnicity, and others, not of that heritage. On the other hand, a sprinkling of various ethnic individuals may attend majority culture churches, desiring to assimilate rather than to identify with a specific ethnic body.

### Observations about Nazarene Ethnic Church Statistics

Some key observations from the statistics between 1980 and 2010 indicate the following:

**1. The number of ethnic and multicultural churches has grown exponentially---from 241 to 1001, an increase of 415%.** Likewise, the Sunday morning attendances have grown by over 50,000 or an increase of 504%. The average attendance in these churches has crept up from 57 in each congregation to 69.

**2. Meanwhile the net increase over this same time span for Non Hispanic white congregations is about 30,000 or a net increase of less**

**than 10% in 30 years!** However, in the last twenty years, there has been a net decline of membership in this ethnic category. Even more telling is the fact that the number of churches that are not considered "Ethnic" or multicultural has declined by almost 250.

**3. In other words, in this 30 year span, 62% of the membership growth of the church has been because of ethnic ministries.** More shocking though is the fact that all attendance growth of the denomination in the last twenty years in North America is due to the explosion of our ethnic church participation. Without their figures, the denominational attendance would be drifting into decline. To put it bluntly, the Church of the Nazarene is extremely attractive to ethnic groups and the church is seeing little growth in new populations of non-Hispanic whites.

**4. Because of these trends, the denomination is becoming increasingly culturally diverse.** In 1980, almost 97% of the attendance was categorized as white, English-speaking. In 2010, that figure has dropped to under 87%, still substantially higher than the national average. In other

words, the denomination continues to be much more Caucasian than its average neighbor is. However, in measuring the number of congregations, that percentage has dropped from just under 95% to 80%. In other words, of every five congregations in the United States and Canada, one of them is an ethnic congregation!

**5. During those 30 years, a number of ethnic ministry initiatives fizzled.** Ministries in the Afrikaans, Fijian, Formosan, Italian, Japanese and Russian languages came and went. This may be due to their isolation and lack of support as, in each case, only one congregation was formed then died. It is difficult to maintain a ministry when there is so little in common with all other affiliate groups. With the exception of the Formosan ministry, each of these immigrant groups is either well scattered (rather than concentrated), or have stymied immigration, or represent limited missionary service of the Church of the Nazarene abroad. On the other hand, **new groups have emerged** based on new and growing immigration patterns: the Tamils from India, the Sudanese, Vietnamese, and Congolese. Whether they can find their necessary "critical mass" to sustain themselves within the Church of the Nazarene is uncertain. It is at this point that sponsorship and nurturing from existing congregations holds the key.

The growth of these numbers compared to the statistics of the whole represents a bright spot in the church's strategies of evangelism. Within the majority population, around 1.4 persons out of every 1,000 citizens attends a Nazarene church. That figure is substantially lower in Canada. Yet compared with the opportunities that the ethnic initiative affords, those figures are still miniscule. For instance, of the nearly 50 million Hispanics in the USA, about one in 2000 attends a Nazarene Church. Among all Blacks, the proportion is far smaller. The two bright spots are among the Haitian and the Samoan communities. Consider-

ing that there are around 120,000 Haitian Nazarenes, or 1.2% of the population of the whole in Haiti, if this number held firm among the estimated 600,000 Haitians in the United States and 100,000 in Canada, some 8,400 should be Nazarenes. The reality is that almost 10,000 are so affiliated or fourteen of every 1000 Haitians attend a Nazarene church. Of the 250,000 Samoans who live in the US, 1,000 of them attend Nazarene churches, or four out of every 1,000. All other ethnic groups shrink drastically below proportional Nazarene white attendance, including the Korean and Native American populations.

#### **How are Nazarene Ethnic Churches "Packaged?"**

So then, how are Nazarene ethnic attendees packaged into church affiliation? Some participate in full-fledged stand-alone churches with their full complement of programs and responsibilities. Others are using or renting facilities not their own, but similarly are fully organized. Others have been nurtured within the scope of existing majority culture churches, meet in the facility, and are part of a multi-congregational structure that trades services and responsibilities with other congregations that meet in the same facility. They may be fully organized with independent identity or may be subsumed under the legal umbrella of the composite church.

Others are groups in formation, gathered as Bible Studies, ESL classes, Sunday School classes, yet without formal identities, usually at the encouragement of a host congregation. Some churches operate with a pastor who is bilingual and conducts the service in two languages. Other groups, unable to find a leader, may resort to an outside "missionary" who is translated into the language. Other churches experiment with combined services for various cultures, with running translations, either in person or elec-

tronically. Some churches divide the worship time giving space for combined rituals and activities, then designating a portion of the service to language-specific moments and gatherings. Some churches have joint and shared Sunday School activities but divide for worship services, a concession to the fact that the children of immigrants feel much more comfortable in the English language than their parents.

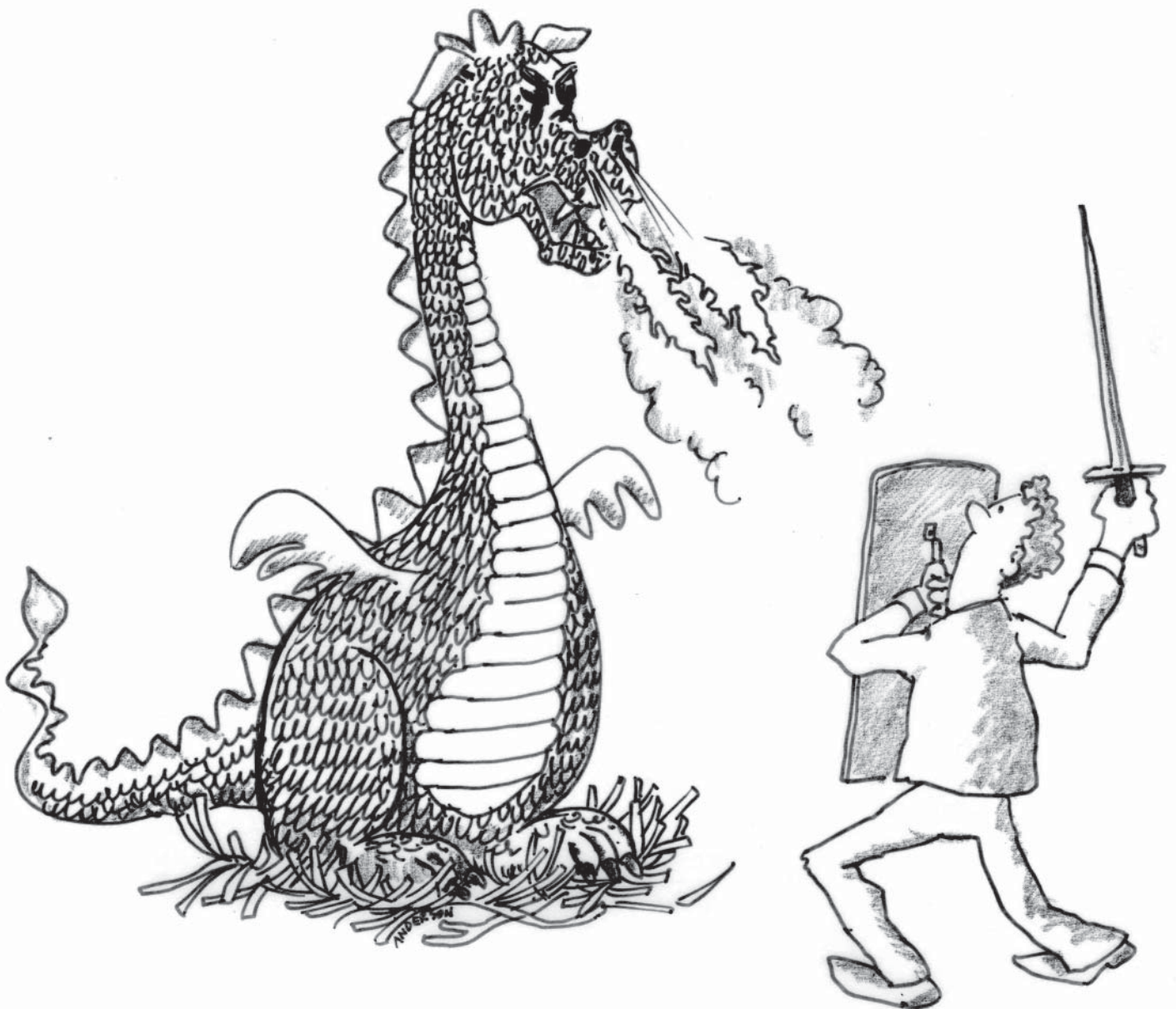
All of these are valid models, if they meet the needs of those gathered, or if they provide access to those they are trying to reach. Many of these are transitional models that, as the group grows, will morph into greater independence, much like any adolescent assuming responsibilities of maturity. Ironically, over time, if there is not a constant influx of new immigrants, the congregation will eventually assimilate into the English language, though the cultural identities will linger for generations. In cities around the country, congregations exist that call themselves “Welsh” or “German” or “Norwegian,” that have long since abandoned their original languages but still cling to their cultural roots. However, these are generally dying congregations, as subsequent generations become less loyal and more immersed into the majority culture.

Frankly, in the lack of adequate models, or perhaps we should say, in the wide variety of these models, denominational and district leaders get distressed, attempting to “regularize” these groups into patterns that conform to Manual organization. Sponsoring churches likewise seek models that adequately explain both what is and what ought to be. But these emerging ethnic congregations are often moving targets, better understood as lively “organisms” rather than “organizations.” Many are dependent on the vision of a “prime mover” rather than a prescribed constitution. Even at the global church level, what was once the office of “Mission Strategy” with responsibilities of “managing” church growth in North America, has more realistically renamed itself “Mission Support,” acknowledging that strategizing ought to be a locally contextualized effort rather than a mandated denominational one. “Support” would suggest the sharing of information, the encouragement of growth, the wisdom of past experiences, and the referencing of resources.

Ultimately, every local context is unique. However, a growing backlog of considerable experience can inform all new initiatives, some of which are problems to avoid, some that are avenues to pursue.

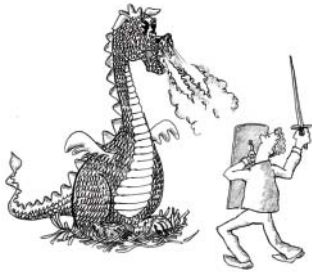
## Chapter Five:

# Disarming the Dragon:



“The issue is not solely confined to finances, but also in energy-outlay. It takes a great deal of communication, often awkward, across linguistic lines and cultural chasms to fashion a meaningful ministry of this kind. And all too easily, the relationships can flounder. Misunderstandings and broken contracts can create a bad taste in the mouth of the participants. A new congregation can easily abort, or move elsewhere to a better deal.”





# Disarming the Dragon

Most of the dragons we face do not have fiery tongues or lashing tails; they are mental boogymen who chase out creative imagination and replace it with tales of woe or lack of nerve. We fail by not risking failure, or by being reactive when God calls us to be proactive.

We are not encouraging the development of ethnic congregations, because to do otherwise is to see the North American Church dwindle. Rather, we desire to see these congregations develop, because that is our calling, our commission, our anticipation of a coming world, where all nations will bow down and proclaim Jesus as Lord.

Yet, in recent experience, it has become quite clear that there are dragons of thought that drag us into negativity, passivity, and an unwillingness to try new ventures. Perhaps we ought to compose an anthem entitled “We Never did it that Way Before”, as the “Seven Last Words of the Church” and assemble a church choir to sing this mantra out loud, in glorious four-part harmony, before sealing the church doors to all newcomers.

On the other hand, we Wesleyans tend to focus on the sins of “commission” rather than on the sins of “omission.” It is the stuff that we don’t do that kills our future! And we can feel glib and content, because we have not fallen into active sin.

### **The Mental Dragons that Subvert Ethnic Ministry**

Our sins of omission are often the result of the mental dragons that we fear. Here are some of them:

**1. The belief that the only real action is in the big or mega-church.** Much of the literature in church growth focuses on great success stories, where the numbers pile up, and the properties are purchased, until thousands are reached for Christ. There is little literature and perhaps less profit, in the sales of materials for small churches, or churches that “give themselves away for people who don’t look quite like us, nor are as successful as us.” There is not a lot of notoriety in the sludge work of sponsoring or nurturing an ethnic church. A foreign missions enterprise is far more romantic than dealing with the stranger next-door.

District superintendents are generally selected as having shown gifting in the development of large churches. Perhaps their ambitions and interests lie in that direction. Increasingly, the need is to challenge smaller churches to reach their potential, to take on the responsibility of church planting despite their size.

**2. The fear of new wineskins.** It is relatively easy for churches, members and leaders alike, to become habituated to certain organizational

ways of doing things. Any variance causes great tension and controversy. We are like the Pharisees criticizing Jesus who, on the Sabbath, both heals the sick and feeds the hungry. Frankly, the Manual, that honored black book Nazarene polity that undergoes scrutiny every four years, like the Sabbath, is intended to serve the church rather than to respond to every eventuality that new situations create. Written primarily by North Americans for a context that is always changing, it now allows for world regions to adapt certain portions of it for their contexts.

In seeking ways to relate the Gospel to potentially new ethnic audiences, it may be necessary to create new ways of organizing, not fully articulated by Manual mandates. These should not be seen as violations, but as opportunities. One senior pastor hired an associate and then commissioned him to start congregations in his ethnic world in churches that crossed district lines. He started fourteen of them, much to the consternation of a neighboring district superintendent, who felt that he was left out of the loop. Perhaps that loop should have been closed, but the initiative was certainly productive.

**3. The fear of turf issues.** The little ditty that we used to sing in Sunday School, “you in your small corner, and I in mine,” can become an excuse to avoid geographical stretches or crossed boundaries. The Church of the Nazarene has some odd idiosyncrasies. Throughout most of the country, all Hispanic churches are integrated, somewhat, into regular districts. However, in the South and in the West are two districts that are exclusively Hispanic with their own district superintendents. Why are there two different models? History plays a part in that both districts have a long tradition of successful self-management. In the first example, the ethnic districts were scattered over large areas with poor distribution that made managing them inefficient. Thus, they were coalesced into majority districts. However, the two

remaining districts, being border regions with Mexico, were constantly being fed large numbers of new immigrants and so were far less assimilated than the Hispanic churches elsewhere.

But this raises a problem. In Los Angeles, the convergence of a Hispanic district overlays Hispanic churches operating on the Los Angeles and Southern California districts. The tendency for rivalry or competitive programs is great. Thus the question is, should they operate oblivious to each other’s existence, or are there ways in which joint strategies and purposes can intertwine despite jurisdictional differences? In Canada, the relationship of the Quebec and Canada Central Districts offers similar dilemmas and opportunities.

Another question of turf relates to district versus local church initiatives. Can a local church initiate ministries despite a lack of support from the district in jurisdiction? Or can a district do the same, regardless of local church support? Ultimately, the district superintendent and the advisory board, according to the policies of the Manual, have “fall-back” responsibilities if failures mount. This makes them “gun-shy” if there is not good communication or a contingency plan. Hesitations on either side can kill a good project.

**4. The fear of bad investments.** Every church feels heavy responsibility to utilize finances, often diminishing, to get the “biggest bang for the buck.” To sponsor an ethnic ministry often creates a major outlay in funds up front with no guarantees of financial kick-back. A property may need to be purchased or rented or upgraded before it is functional. A leader may need to be selected. But this may mean moving costs, legal transactions, and financial arrangements, and it is uncertain if this leader will be productive.

Chances are that there is some type of a contractual arrangement for ongoing costs: utilities, facility security, facility care, furnishings

and health insurance. Many immigrant families are larger than the norm and require additional finances. On the other hand, the congregation that is being formed is often compromised financially, because the members earn funds at the lower end of the economic scale. Furthermore, portions of their income are committed to subsidize family members back home through remittances. For many, “tithing” is an uncomfortable or novel concept that may take a generation to factor in the congregational life.

Financial needs are rampant in such congregations. At times, the sponsoring pastor wonders if his or her congregation will wear down with “compassion fatigue” and bail out, before the new Nazarenes are permanently established and self-supporting.

The issue is not solely confined to finances, but also in energy-outlay. It takes a great deal of communication, often awkward, across linguistic lines and cultural chasms to fashion a meaningful ministry of this kind. And all too easily, the relationships can flounder. Misunderstandings and broken contracts can create a bad taste in the mouth of the participants. A new congregation can easily abort, or move elsewhere to a better deal.

All forms of parenting are risky and, in the short term, poor investments. A child may die in infancy or may become rebellious. For twenty years or more, the financial outlay is exorbitant without concrete return. But, the last I knew, we still keep having children! It’s the only way we perpetuate ourselves! This is also true with daughter or adopted churches.

**5. The fear of inadequacy.** The gift of cross-cultural savvy is an uncommon one, and admittedly most North Americans are poor at it. They have a great desire to help but are often clueless as to how to do it, especially when language issues interfere.

Frankly, some people ought to be isolated from immigrants and minorities. They are too bull-headed, too racist, too opinionated, and too legalistic to be helpful in building trust between the communities. And the military management approach will not work either. Then, by extension, some congregations have the same character or personality issues as those individuals above. These should be discouraged from developing new ethnic ministries, because the prognosis is disaster.

But the vast majority of people are not only well-intentioned, but also teachable. Their desire is matched by their openness and, given a chance, will grow as the challenges demand. The danger is that any excuse of “inadequacy” may become paralyzing.

Frankly, everyone is inadequate for the task of reconciliation; that’s where the Spirit comes in. Peter’s own biases, born of his Judaic convictions, confronted a different vision that challenged his assumptions and led him to Cornelius and a whole different slant on others who didn’t fit his image. And that’s where sensitive leadership comes in. The disciples, on hearing the complaints of the Greek widows who felt slighted on their food apportionments, appointed Greek-speaking stewards to work through their relational issues<sup>6</sup>.

If the calling is just and the attitude is right, then God uses extraordinary means to compensate for the inadequacies. As Paul says repeatedly, it was in his weakness that God’s muscle was flexed. Acknowledging inadequacies and deficiencies is critically important, so that God and obedient servants can kick into gear!

**6. The fear of reliving the horror stories.** Unfortunately, gossip circles the world while truth is still putting on its boots. We hear the bad stories of unfulfilled or hostile relationships much more quickly than those that are successful. But the

bad news stories are not necessarily normative and are usually avoidable. That's why this publication is being written. One failure does not condemn all other experiments. Entrepreneurs understand that failures are learning experiences in order to shorten the odds of failure the next time around. Scientists fail in 90% of their experiments; baseball players fail to hit successfully 75% of the time. But their failures don't preclude the value of their efforts.

One member of the organization, "Jews for Jesus" suggested that they rejoice in 994 rejections out of 1,000, to their evangelistic appeals, because they know statistically that, with that many rejections come six people who accept Christ. A language teacher encourages his students to make 354,255 linguistic mistakes, because it is only through daring to fail that the language skills of his students will be perfected. One does not linger on failed experiments, ground-outs, or language foul-ups but utilizes them to do better the next time.

Even in the horror stories, there may be unexpressed caches of grace. The congregation may fold, but one person in it may become the evangelist who leads many to Christ. To paraphrase a hackneyed phrase, "to try and fail is better than having never tried at all."

**7. The fear of not finding qualified clergy.** This is a real possibility if the bar for qualification is set too high. Ordinarily in the majority culture, any preferred candidate must complete the course of study, must be approved for correct theology, and must be rubber-stamped by the denominational District Advisory Board.

Several necessary concerns exist here. Does the candidate show the gifts and graces of Christian leadership? Does the candidate have the trust and support of his or her peers? Is the candidate in a situation to give the necessary time and effort to make the ministry happen? Can the can-

didate work in partnership with the sponsoring entity? Will the candidate be loyal to the Nazarene church and doctrine?

With these questions, the pool of eligible candidates is greatly diminished. Numerous church starts have been derailed because one, or a combination of these questions, has never been successfully answered. And in the meantime, the leader, congregation, or both are lost to the Church.

One problem that we face is our inability to disciple new leadership effectively within our ranks. Often, we operate like a baseball team, trying to curb the potentiality of failure by bringing in successful "ball players," imported in trades with brilliant resumes of fantastic experience and results. However, realistically they are quite inept at understanding the local needs and situation. Rather, we need a more effective "farm system" of leadership development. Almost all leadership in the young New Testament church was home grown, based less on outside expertise than on "gifts and graces" manifest within local congregations, which chose its leaders. The early Methodist model of pastor-apprentice relationship trained a teenage Phineas Bresee on horseback, while he rode around the Methodist circuit with a pastor-mentor.

It is probably impractical to sponsor or nurture an ethnic congregation, if there is no emerging leader who meets these criteria. The qualifications don't always have to be definitive, depending on the grade of organization that is developing. But if the individual is teachable and has a good mentor, the possibilities grow for a successful ministry. Key to success will be the expenditure of time, finance for studies and ministry resources, and a guidance and accountability procedure tailored to the need.

**8. The fear of the threat to our commitment to World Mission.** Commitment to world mission

enterprises has secured the historic growth of the Church of the Nazarene. We are enamored with the gains and the glories in Papua New Guinea or in Jordan, but ministry around the corner sounds tedious, expensive, long-term, and even threatening. We are fed daily on images of violence and crime in the “hood” which is presented as bleak and troubled. To challenge members to give locally might perhaps siphon off our contractual commitments to foreign missions. In addition, we may find that the local challenge is far less appealing and successful than the distant one. If we’ve got to choose, let’s go for the “long bomb” to use a football analogy.

Yet the Bible distinctly suggests a process of priority: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The work in Jerusalem legitimizes the work elsewhere. The matter is not “if” or “which,” but “each” and “all.” If our Christianity has little relevance locally, it is less relevant internationally. Local ministries demand not just resources but a piece of us.

Other fears also strangle the potential ministry to our minority and immigrant neighbors. The result is inaction. Over many churches, the epi-

taph should read: “Come weal, come woe, my status is quo.”

We need the winds of the Spirit, not the breath of the dragon, to blow out those fears, so that we can see the potential of doing mission to our neighbors in a new way.

This new way, and the focus of this book, is to sponsor and nurture ethnic congregations. Using the metaphor of the body of Christ in I Corinthians 12, we desire that both seemly and unseemly parts of the body in tandem and mutuality grow into a mature and healthy body that begins to look like Christ. To grow feet without arms, head without heart, eyes without nose, is a sorry disfiguration of that body. The full complement of parts requires us to see the Kingdom represented broadly in its diversity. A mono-cultural expression of the Gospel will always be a deficient one.

This realization ought to add impetus to our desire to create and encourage ethnic ministries. So, then, where do we start?



Chapter Six:

# A New Toolkit for Cross-Cultural Ministry: Cultural Intelligence





## **Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Experiential Learning Workshops\***

We are available to work with districts and local congregations to provide workshops tailored to individual needs. Please contact Susan Grube for more information - [sgrube@nazarene.org](mailto:sgrube@nazarene.org)

Workshops are designed to help attendees understand CQ as well as understand the results of their own CQ assessments. Workshops normally focus on two areas:

- 1. Cultural Intelligence Experiential Learning Exercises** - Designed to enhance awareness of self and awareness of others with special emphasis on cultural similarities and differences.

*Note: workshops can be focused on diversity within culture and/or diversity across cultures.*

### **2. Explanation and Interpretation of Personalized Multi-Rater Feedback Reports**

- A. Self-Assessment of Individual Cultural Value Orientations, with Group comparison information
- B. Self-Assessment of Cultural Intelligence, with World Wide Norm comparison
- C. Observer Assessment of Cultural Intelligence, with Self and Observer comparison
- D. Self-Development Suggestions

*“Individuals with high CQ have the knowledge and motivation to encounter unfamiliar cultural situations, think deeply about what’s happening (or not happening), and make appropriate adjustments to how they understand, relate, and behave there. Making these kinds of adjustments involves a complex set of capabilities and processes that come from intentional effort on the part of the individual, all of which contribute to the person’s CQ.” --- [www.culturalq.com](http://www.culturalq.com)*

\* Oliver Phillips is a certified facilitator with the Cultural Intelligence Center.





# A New Toolkit for Cross-Cultural Ministry: Cultural Intelligence

*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. - Hebrews 1:1-2*

Sponsorship of a new socio-ethnic congregation has too often been considered as the culmination of years or months of planning, as well as the result of the desire and aspiration of a mission-oriented congregation. Such a posture relegates the daughter church to a journey of isolated growth pains that leads to stunted growth and adolescent angst. Every effort should be made to forge a long-term relationship; whereas, the sponsoring church becomes an incubator for the nurturing of a cultural intelligence continuum that enriches the lives of all involved in the mission.

Why is culture so important? *Culture is the self-imposed shared collective programming that a society uses to align their behavior as they think, feel, and react to various situations and actions.*

No people group is cultureless. When the decision is made to sponsor a new congregation, the task of those involved is to begin an intimate study of the group.

Friedman's observation of the "flat world" is never truer than in the experience of sponsoring a new church. In a flat world or community, it is really unthinkable to assume that the new congregation should be expected to grow without constant interaction with the mother congregation. In fact, this should be the expectation of both congregations. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon the sponsor to embark on a journey to hone behaviors that are critical to the bridging of the gap between the *desire* to be multicultural and the *ability* to do so.

As new congregations are mothered through the embryonic embrace of sponsoring congregations, the assumption is often made that the task is complete once the launch is accomplished. This is far from the truth! There must be a continued relationship between the two congregations; this is the nurturing aspect of the affiliation. However, challenges are intrinsic in this adventure that could be mitigated by an understanding of the differences and commonalities in the respective cultures.

The two congregations are now inextricably linked by mission objectives to accomplish that which God intended to be the purpose of congregations, i.e. to be a perpetual witness to the

Kingdom objective of establishing the Shalom community of faith. Both congregations share the mandate to be God's presence, albeit targeting a different socio-ethnic neighborhood or community. However, the strength of this new relationship is dependent upon both congregations accepting a dual impetus to assault the gates of hell and to be unified in mission. The experience is not ephemeral in nature, but one that must be sustained by perseverance and intentional mutuality.

Because of the differences in cultures of the congregations and enclaves of ministry, they often become estranged or remotely independent, with time. How do these congregations strengthen this relationship? What are the important factors that would enhance the motivation toward unity?

The simple answer is that both congregations and the district leadership must transition from a Great Commission entity toward becoming a Great Commandment Church. Before there can be unity in missional objectives, there must be the acceptance of LOVE as the basis for everything that is undertaken. In the first place, the motivation for sponsorship should have as its foundation LOVE for the unchurched and those of a different culture. When approached with the prospect of starting a new congregation targeting a different culture, most people exhibit a visceral ambivalence that is founded on fear of the unknown. The nuance and uniqueness of cultures presents this fear, because many do not recognize that ministry to and with other cultures can be a pleasant experience, when there is a complementary recognition that it is necessary to embark on a pathway to contextualizing the ministry partnership. This is best accomplished by an intentional adventure into the improvement of one's cultural intelligence.

If one is seriously committed to this journey of

cross-cultural ministry, there are two indispensable texts that should become the cornerstone of the cross-cultural toolkit: Michael Emerson and Christian Smith's *Divided by Faith*, in which the writers use quantitative and qualitative techniques to investigate the enormously different ways Christians view their faith and the issue of race. The sequel to this thorough treatment of the race issue in America is authored by Curtiss DeYoung, Michael Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim, *United by Faith*. These authors lend credence to the truism that there is no such thing as a cultureless people or person. To be human is to be immersed in an encounter that involves human nature and individual personality. These texts reveal the need for the Christian community of faith to be deliberate and intentional about becoming brokers for a loving, respectful, and redemptive option within multicultural communities. What these texts further disclose is the need to develop a system that nurtures the relationship between people of different cultures; this mechanism is Cultural Intelligence or CQ.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is the third leg of disciplines that have been employed in leadership development. First was the recognition of the need to analyze one's "Intelligence Quotient" or IQ as a means to measure cognitive capacities and abilities. In recent times, the "Emotional Quotient" or EQ has been developed as a measurement of one's emotional intelligence. Both IQ and EQ assumed that individuals are somewhat familiar with the environment in which they interact. CQ, on the other hand, provides a measurement for individual demonstrations of comfort level when called upon to minister in a variety of cultural contexts. While IQ is rarely an attribute that could be drastically improved, and EQ is inherently a product of human nature and individual personality, CQ is a life skill that may be incrementally improved by assessing how one reacts to the chasm that is created by the interaction of different cultures.

### Why Cultural Intelligence?

Cultural Intelligence is the conduit that moves the sponsoring congregation on a journey from merely desiring to love the members from the new congregation, to the expression of that love in ways that are meaningful and reverential.

The relationship with the new congregation could be an enriching experience, as members of both communities accept the challenge to address the hindrances that are created by differences. The following information has been gleaned from the writings of David Livermore, expert and lecturer on the art of Cultural Intelligence, as well as faculty member of Grand Rapids Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan.<sup>1</sup> Livermore's approach to this resource is grounded in the motif that cross-cultural successes are based on transformation rather than information. He insists that "we must actually become more multicultural people so that we might better express love cross-culturally." Other approaches engender the need to know (information) and to act (behavior). Cultural Intelligence takes one on an inward journey, while at the same time bridging relationships through the alignment of responses and behavior.

Livermore insists that the foundation of the journey to improve one's CQ must be love for the other culture, which is created in the Imago Dei. No culture was ever created without the will and purposes of God, and as such, the starting of a new congregation should be for no other reason but to reach a people, because within that group God has imbedded prevenient grace. Mis-

sions have often been portrayed as the delivery of a message that addresses a spiritual deficit existing within the target culture. This is partly true; God is the Creator and the mandate to embark on the missionary enterprise is to respond with love to the neighbor.

But the desire to love and the ability to love are two different things. The desire to love will arouse a congregation to start a new congregation. A corollary to this desire must be the implementation of a learning path that increases the awareness of the differences, as well as an ability to adapt behavior to reduce misunderstanding. CQ seeks to provide an approach to help both congregations to interact effectively. It is the framework that helps the sponsored church, district superintendents, sponsoring pastors, and sponsoring congregations to lovingly explore the differences, with the understanding that it is the Christ of mission who is in charge.

Cultural Intelligence consists of four key factors:

- 1. Knowledge CQ:** This measures our factual data of cross-cultural issues through the accumulation of relevant information. Conflicts between congregations often result from a lack of this critical factor. Knowledge CQ is the understanding one has about cross-cultural issues and differences. It is what culture is and how it shapes us. Educational approaches to cross-cultural interaction must be oriented toward deciphering what kinds of questions to ask and what to look for, rather than teaching people to become experts at behaving well in another cross-cultural context.

In his book, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World*<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> David Livermore, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the Global Learning Center at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, where he also teaches Intercultural Studies. In addition, Dave is a visiting Research Fellow at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and a Senior Research Consultant with the Cultural Intelligence Center in East Lansing.

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<sup>2</sup> David A. Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Grand Rap-

Livermore compares our knowledge of culture to an iceberg. What one observes as she views the iceberg is indeed only the tip, which is basically the cultural artifacts lived out in the behavior that is being exhibited. Culture is largely invisible and is best understood metaphorically. Submerged beneath the surface, however, are the assumptions and values that shape the behavior.

Understanding any culture in which ministry is offered involves an exegesis of these assumptions and values that lie beneath the surface. What is often dealt with in the interaction of cultures is the language, dress, food, and sometimes the poverty or latent immaturity of a culture. Nonetheless, beneath these visible artifacts are basic assumptions that drive culture. Anthropologist Edward Hall expresses it succinctly, “Most of culture lies hidden and is outside voluntary control, making up the warp and weft of human existence. It penetrates to the roots of an individual’s nervous system and determines how he perceives the world. Even when small fragments of culture are elevated to awareness, they are difficult to change.”<sup>3</sup> The responsibility in the task of increasing knowledge is for both groups to explore the values and assumptions that help shape the culture. The challenge is even more profound when it is necessary to discern if an observable trait is unique to the culture, a learned behavior, significant to the people, or indispensable to one’s self-identification.

Effective foreign missionary enterprises demand a prolonged and detailed study of the target culture as a necessary prerequisite. Missions across the street are no less de-

manding, in so far as profound knowledge of the group is concerned. Knowledge of the culture reveals that culture is a combination of learned and inherited factors, and interaction demands that a clear differentiation be discerned. Leaders of both congregations must constantly learn from and with each other. It is only by so doing that communication and mutuality are enhanced for the effectiveness of ministry.

An ethnic church brings with it a cultural ethos that is too often viewed through the lens of the dominant culture, leading to judgmental attitudes. When the admission is made through knowledge that every culture brings its own idiosyncrasies, tolerance and open-mindedness, this is a welcome portal to Christ-like ministry. This is particularly germane to the leaders of both congregations. “If leaders do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential if they are to lead.”<sup>4</sup>

- 2. Interpretive CQ:** This measures our ability to reflect and interpret our cross-cultural interactions at deeper levels. We need to interpret the cues that occasionally surface and adjust accordingly. In familiar cultures, we travel on “cruise control,” accustomed to the familiar sights and sounds. But in a different culture, we don’t have the luxury of easily navigating the cultural waters. The tides and currents are unknown and change constantly, and unless we consciously respond to these changes, we will be submerged beneath tides of irrelevance and disconnectedness. Interpretive CQ helps us to engage and grapple with some of the long held assumptions

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ids: Baker Academic, 2009).

3 Edward Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 188.

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4 Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 23.

that we may have adopted about a particular people group. On another level, it is to walk in someone else's shoes.

As in the case of the image of the iceberg in studying Knowledge CQ, the metaphor in Interpretive CQ that brings clarity to the challenge is that of the cruise control in driving. When driving in familiar conditions, it is easy to rely on the cruise control, because one is not deeply absorbed in negotiating turns and curves of the road. Under recognizable conditions, one is in a semi-automatic modality that does not require much concentration.

When the territory is unfamiliar, however, time and effort must be taken to heighten the level of interpretation of said conditions. Likewise, the sponsoring church is in foreign driving conditions; a careful and deliberate exegesis of the surrounding culture is imperative. Familiarity with the new culture can only be achieved by awareness and consideration of the emotions, behavior, and assumptions that engulf it. It behooves all involved in the new partnership to be keenly aware of new driving conditions and of the need to adjust and adapt. Consequently, what has been planned must be re-evaluated in light of what is happening now.

Effective cross-cultural ministry must engage a measure of reflection and praxis that goes beyond mere knowledge of behaviors that are seen above the surface. Mere knowledge must be harnessed by stepping back to conceptualize and interpret. That which is unseen below the surface is a ubiquitous presence and influence on what is often described as cultural embellishments. In the final analysis, time must be taken to ask the all-important question, why?

Sadly lacking in many approaches to cross-cultural training is Interpretive CQ. Interpretive CQ connects the dots from Knowledge CQ to Behavioral CQ. It is the search for an alignment between what is learned about a particular group and what is actually happening. Much confusion occurs in cross-cultural interactions, because of the perceived frustration that surfaces when the new ethnic congregation appears to proceed on a path that is inconsistent with the conventional norms of behavior. Cultural dynamics will continuously present cues that must be addressed. Hopefully, these cues will be assessed by revisiting the sacred and valued assumptions that have shaped the ethnic culture. Interpretive CQ will help in strategic planning for the future of both congregations. An example of this is the inadequacy of the Spanish language translation for "illegal immigrant." Because legalities in Latin America are so subjective and whimsical, the term used to translate this phrase is "indocumentado," "without documents." Therefore, the meaning is not so much one of a violation of laws, but the absence of useful and necessary documents. When one prays, he or she does not pray over moral failure but rather over the practical need of a miracle to obtain any document, which lends legitimacy to the government. This is not a defense of the illegality, but rather an application of Knowledge CQ to better understand the complexities of the issue.

- 3. Perseverance CQ:** This measures our level of interest, drive, and motivation to adapt cross-culturally. Sooner or later, the new initiative will present to congregations, as well as district leadership, the fierce temptation to capitulate in the midst of apparent insurmountable challenges. Never underestimate the enormity of this task in cross-cultural adventure.

A high level of Perseverance CQ gives added ammunition for partners to persist in tweaking strategies and tactics to align with new realities. On short Work & Witness Mission adventures, one can endure two or three weeks without making necessary adjustments in strategies developed in the original orientation. But this luxury is not available in forging long-term partnerships with new congregations.

Without a sustained and altruistic motivation for reaching new people groups through new church evangelism, failure and surrender becomes inevitable. However, Livermore is of the opinion that motivation alone is insufficient. Motivation must take into consideration an array of factors like the congregations' expectations, historical cultural backgrounds, collective value systems, and perceptions of the preferred outcome and objectives. In short term mission enterprise, the goal is to complete the mission successfully. In contrast, in sponsoring a new church project, short-term goals are inadequate, as it may take years before one gains any sense of fulfillment. Perseverance CQ is a major reservoir to which one can retreat for sustainability.

A sure way to maintain motivation is to combine stated objectives with the broad perspectives of what the God of mission is doing in God's world. Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury puts it succinctly, "It's not the church of God that has a mission, but the God of mission who has a church." Another church leader expressed, "Mission comes first from the heart of God and we are caught up in it rather than initiating it."

- 4. Behavioral CQ:** This factor measures the degree to which our verbal and non-verbal actions are reflective of the knowledge gained

about those of a different culture. Working effectively with another cultural group does not mean imitating the group, but responding emphatically and sensitively to a proper understanding of the shades and nuances of the culture. Negative Behavioral CQ is a combination of miscommunication, misunderstandings, personality conflicts, and improper perceptions. Positive Behavioral CQ integrates a well-informed appreciation of the varied cultural mechanisms with appropriate reaction.

The composite of all that is gleaned through knowledge, interpretation, and perseverance will inevitably dictate the behavior exhibited, as interaction takes place. As indicated earlier, conflicts will inevitably arise. While perseverance is helpful to endure the differences that lend themselves to discomfort, it is equally important to determine where compromise and conflict resolution can be useful. Compromise is not necessarily a negative term. Unease is the common and necessary lot of both the sponsoring congregation and the new ministry, but it doesn't have to evolve into "disease."

Historical thought has been that upon entering into a partnership with the sponsored congregation, the new Nazarenes will adapt quickly to the accepted cultural norms within the Church of the Nazarene's dominant culture. To expect quick assimilation to both church policy and style is somewhat unrealistic. Behavioral CQ informs us that both the sponsoring body and the new congregations face awkward cultural interactions that can derail the relationship. It becomes imperative to sound out the non-essentials in both cultures that need to be negotiated and to do so with Christian grace. This is the task before us.

### Suggestions for Cultural Intelligence Progress

- Be authentic and draw on knowledge about the group
- Pay attention to the embedded layers of emotions, judgments, and value systems.
- Find a mentor through whom you can process the constant challenges.
- Read and assess the present situation in light of changing assumptions.
- Diversify perspectives with an open mind.
- Identify with the new congregation through love and empathy.

- Stimulate your imagination by establishing new paradigms of ministry.
- Do not imitate. Use new knowledge to adjust behavior to convey sensitivity.

The goal then is to identify leaders that come with high Cultural Intelligence, or who are willing to hone their CQ precisely for the purpose of enhancing the character of what might be a glorious expansion of the Kingdom of God. It may never be perfect, but it can be improved!

### Recommended Resources

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Lingenfelter, Judith, and Sherwood Lingenfelter. *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

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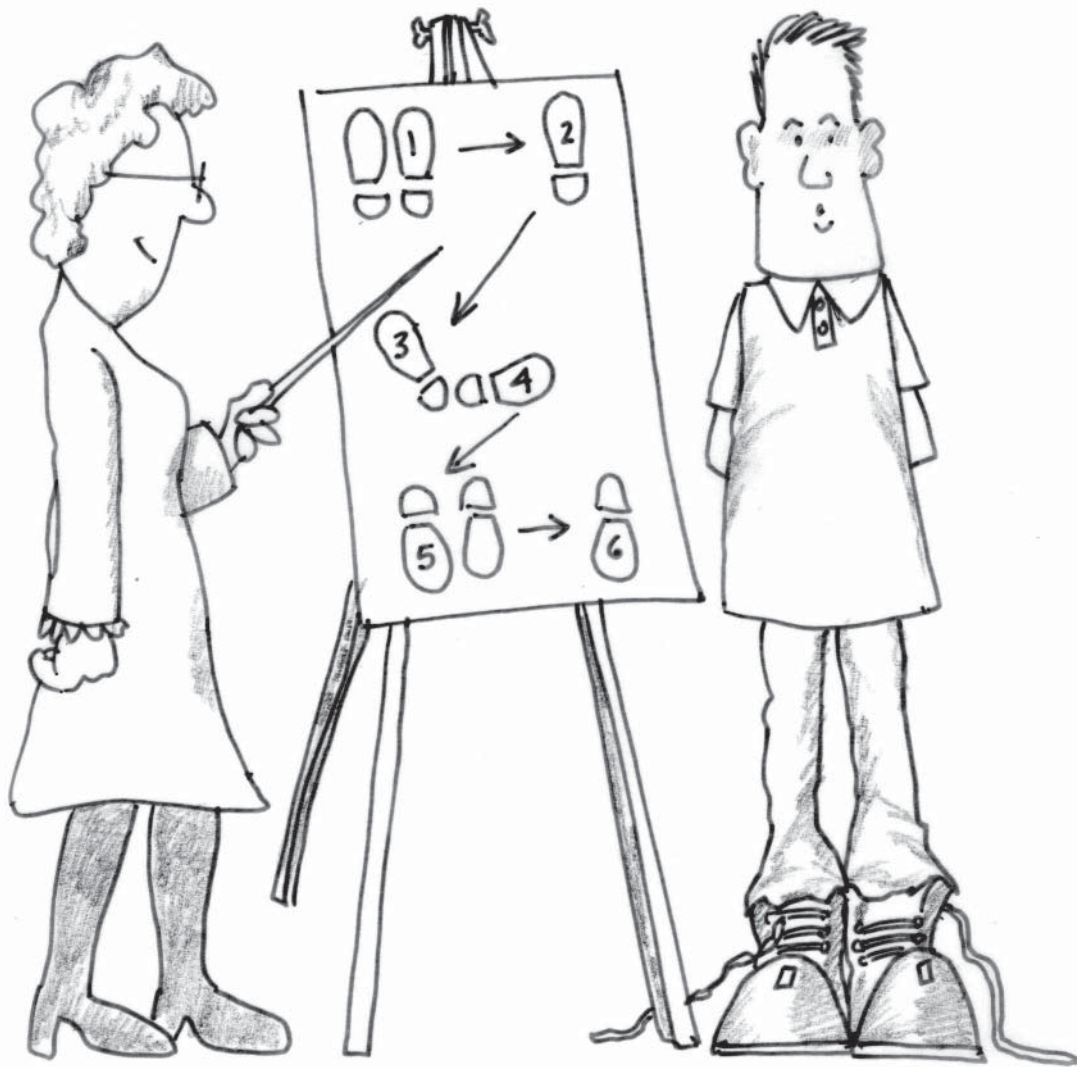
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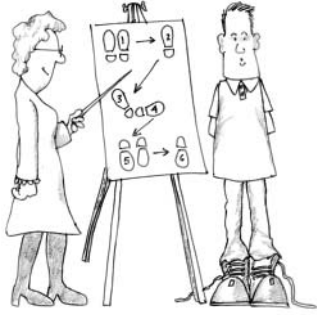


## Chapter Seven:

# An Invitation to the Dance



“The boldness, the courage, and the poise are not the actions of a single individual but represent the collective will of a supportive cast. So too, with the developing partnerships for church sponsorship. The Bible is quite adamant that each decision should engage one or two witnesses who affirm, support, and cheer the actions taken. And the work resonates even more, when one senses a “cloud of witnesses or a grandstand of supporters in time and space, which encourage the faith steps one is taking.”



# An Invitation to the Dance

Now that we have chased away some of the dragons of fears, how do we get to the dance?

Of course, we as Nazarenes have some historic discomforts and Manual constraints about “dancing,” but the metaphor does have some resonance in this discussion of how to carefully select relationships before a partnership can develop. Undoubtedly, you have watched a child dance solo, to a song that only she hears. Perhaps one of your own children has entertained you with interesting little steps that are immature, yet fun. Set this solo dance in contrast to an expert couple, partners for life who have rehearsed and practiced day after day to perform the intricate maneuvers required of artful styles. They are grace in motion. There is exquisite symmetry and movement between the couple that engages the music in a world of its own. Not only are the two completely engrossed in one another, they are united by the music as they glide across the floor, effortlessly. Their work looks effortless, because of years of purposeful investment. Imagine the hours of practice required for the few minutes in the spotlight!

From our uninitiated and relatively uninformed perspective, “dancing” is a high art form that engages the whole body in both spontaneous and measured movement to the rhythms of music, done in tandem with a partner so that the two united become a single spectacle. A more precise dictionary definition suggests that it is

the art of “moving rhythmically usually to music, using prescribed or improvised steps and gestures.” We, of course, have narrowed that definition by making it a twosome, for the purpose of our discussion here.

In both our definition and that of the dictionary, music is the stimulus, the context under which dancing occurs. Thinking metaphorically, music is emotion and motivation, in something of the same way that the Holy Spirit, in God’s joyous celebration of life, stirs both emotion and motivation that encourages partners to step out on to the dance floor. We are not dragged, kicking and screaming onto the floor. We do so under the enticement of the Holy Spirit.

For novices, those first steps are awkward. And the choice of a partner is freighted with uncertainty. Will we be rejected? Will we look stupid? Will we trip over each other? Will there be any compatibility?

Some dance steps themselves must be learned and practiced. This is where the “knowledge” portion of CQ (discussed in the previous chapter) is applied. Where do I put my feet? What do I know about the partner? What timing should be applied? Some music demands certain steps that perhaps are outside one’s immediate knowledge or capacity. One can’t dance a waltz to the tango beat. And it is quite inappropriate to demand instant intimacy. One must be cau-

tious about whom he or she asks, what they ask, and when to venture forth on to the floor.

It can be helpful to prepare. Try out the steps in solitude, with family members, before taking the activity public. Private and personal study of other cultures, through books, movies, courses, and individual conversations can cut down potential disasters later on. Only through some diligence ahead of time can one work up the nerve and the confidence to suggest meaningful partnerships later on.

And one has to selectively choose one's partner: is he or she too tall, too short, too flippant, and too trained to make a comfortable pairing? It is important to look over the candidates before jumping to the first in line. Many a church sponsorship has turned sour, because it has leaped at the first arrangement that seems profitable, rather than studying compatibility.

The technique that one uses to approach a partner is the key. Don't accost her or him slovenly, carelessly, arrogantly, or too enthusiastically. Those initial messages could haunt one in the long term. Likewise, on initial encounter, be cautious, not overpromising, not manipulating, nor underprepared. Don't come with a proposition, before the parties have gotten to know each other somewhat. For many cultures, relationship takes priority over program, and needs to be constructed in trust, before it makes requests or demands. And remember, not every casual encounter leads to a meaningful pas de deux. There are some predators to avoid despite their enthusiasm to dance with you.

The words spoken are significant. Often they are muted in the intimacies of the invitation. One does not want possible rejection broadcast aloud. And if the rejection does occur, move on, don't linger. Not all relationships are productive. A better choice waits down the line.

There is an image that amuses. Usually at a junior

high dance there is a bevy of boys or girls in clusters, goading the ingénue to brave the invitation. Once accepted and the thumbs up signal given, one can hear the giggles, laughter, and approval of the curious group left behind. The boldness, the courage, and the poise are not the actions of a single individual but represent the collective will of a supportive cast. So too, with the developing partnerships for church sponsorship. The Bible is quite adamant that each decision should engage one or two witnesses who affirm, support, and cheer the actions taken. And the work resonates even more, when one senses a "cloud of witnesses or a grandstand of supporters in time and space, which encourage the faith steps one is taking.

The invitation is accepted and gingerly the couple steps on to the floor. They touch hands, waiting for the moment, when they begin their most elementary maneuvers. They tentatively test each other, seeking to minimize embarrassment. Then, a comfort level is reached and the movements become increasingly intricate. Along the way, he steps on her feet, or she wriggles out of reach and, rather than sparring, they laugh it off and try again. It is all done in the name of fun and experimentation, with the understanding that it will never be entirely perfect. It may be a one-time dance soon lost to memory. Conversely, it may be a connection that lasts a lifetime.

In the spirit of John the Elder who wrote to his "dear children" affectionately encouraging them to pick themselves up after sinful failure, so too, we are not called to mire ourselves in failure, but to get up, dust ourselves off, and get back into the music.

It is at this point that Cultural Intelligence kicks in its "Interpretative Quotient."

Ultimately, it takes years of practice to attain perfection. We watch Olympic events, where lifetimes have been invested in perfecting rou-

tines, only to see competitors crash and fall! Those failures deprive one of medals. Our failures merely instruct us to do better next time. Of course, if we chronically repeat our failures, we may need to try things differently; here, our Perseverance Quotient is primarily seen.

We yearn for that moment in which all is synchronized; that magic moment when rhythm and movement, beauty and art converge, when the world will look and see a scintillating relationship, uncommon in character, perfect in intent. Our Behavioral Quotient has burst into the high expressions of performance that give glory to God and shekinah to God's Church.

So where do we locate the "dance floor?"

### **Starting a New Ethnic Ministry**

In the history of the Church of the Nazarene, two principal options have been used in the where and how of beginning new ministries. Here are the options focusing on location:

**1. We begin a ministry within the setting of an existing local church.** Leadership is selected, space is designated, perhaps a Bible Class or a Sunday School class is organized. People are invited from the network of the target group selected. These people may be attracted to the location from a variety of feeder sources. Perhaps they have been clients in a compassionate ministry, or the extended family of someone attending the sponsoring church, or a network of Nazarenes who have immigrated into the community, or interested people who have responded to advertising at a community ethnic center, or people who have been attracted to an ESL program or international college ministry, or special ethnic-centered events. They may even have come as a collective group from outside of the church, wishing to utilize property or identify with the denomination.

Then, the ministry grows as does the expansion of the programs. The group may become a full-fledged congregation. Perhaps they desire their own legal entity or wish to remain under the umbrella of the existing sponsoring church. In time, they may want their own facility or continue comfortably under the roof of the church that nurtured them.

**2. We locate a facility that is designated for the use of the ethnic congregation.** It may be a majority culture church building whose congregation has atrophied to the point that the district or local church board is ready to turn it over to a new ethnic ministry. Or either it may be a neutral location, under a lease arrangement, or available for purchase, or owned by the district, in a library, store front, even in a park. It may be a congregation that began in a house, following Biblical precedent as a "house church." This may be an extension ministry of the sponsoring church, or it may be a partner with that church with its own legal designation.

Determining which "dance floor" we use is critical. A location distanced from the ethnic population is impractical. A site which conveys negative messages such as blight and hopelessness caricaturizes the ministry for a long time. A place with impractical expenses belabors the congregation with bills better used for evangelism. A church building that is inflexible to the cultural tastes and needs of an ethnic congregation is counter-productive. For instance, a facility purchased from the Jews is probably not a comfortable setting for Arabs. A sanctuary that is too small for growth will inevitably stifle growth.

Before determining meeting space, it is necessary to determine who's going to show up at the dance. That's where the real action begins.



## Chapter Eight:

# Showing Up at the Dance



“In ministry, one is always calculating the assets. Among those assets are the composite strengths of time, experience, wisdom, organizational integrity, relationships, networks, and material resources that more than match the need, if mobilized and managed in the right way. And if there is a deficiency, one is reminded of St Augustine’s words: ‘God gives where [God] finds empty hands’.”



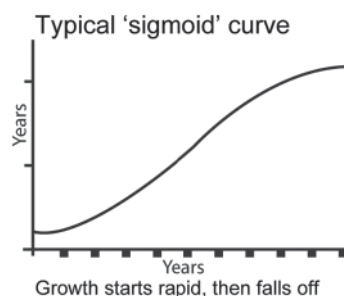


# Showing Up at the Dance

Many churches within our denomination are stalled, shrinking, or folding. In some instances, the problems are internal. In others, they are external, where communities are suffering from demographic change, or structural transformation, such as when a new highway cuts through a community, isolating the church. In rural communities, populations have migrated out, or undocumented immigrants have fled. Not all church failures are due to internal, conflictual issues.

As stated earlier, churches generally begin as “lighthouses,” then in their success become “schoolhouses,” and finally settle into “clubhouses.” In this final state, they have lost their mission to the world and are primarily self-absorbed.

Charles Handy has described the phenomenon of “Riding the Sigmoid Curve,” measuring the life cycle of organizations as the relationship of success over time in terms of profit, money, power, and influence. The object considered can be a country, a society, an individual, or a career.



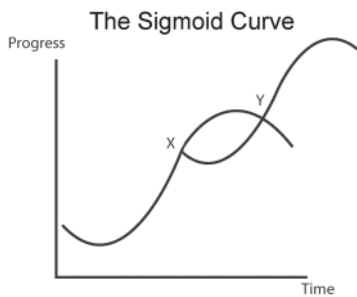
When an organization begins, its net productivity and effectiveness is usually negative, often sloping downward, before it gets better. There's an initial loss as money is expended in the start-up and in the organizational process. After a while, those costs begin to balance out, as the institution begins to understand its best practices and efficiencies that bring it maximum success. There is then rapid growth to the curve that begins to level off at “maturity.” At the high point of the curve, inertia sets in, caught in denial and complacency, which force the curve downward into an inevitable decline.

Research and experience suggest that the organization receives positive feedback throughout the level portion of the curve. The feedback becomes ambiguous at the initial decline, and the organization recognizes negative messages only when the downturn has begun. It will not be warned of its demise until it is unavoidable.

This process is not inevitable. During the growth period, the organization has many assets: Biblical integrity, organizational structures, resources, etc. to take on a new challenge.

Therefore, the strategy is to jump off the downturn of the Sigmoid Curve and land on the bottom of a new one. The “Sigmoid Mindset” suggests that whenever times are good and the momentum of success carries the organization upward, institutional efficiency becomes some-

what reduced. Then is the time to heed those footsteps and start planning for the next challenge. In the context of church ministries, one should look at the possibilities of initiating a new ministry, sponsoring and nurturing it. In the meantime, there will be a dip in the Sigmoid Curve---some practical losses and inefficiencies as the new venture sucks up some of the energy of the whole. But such adaptation guarantees that the inevitable downturn of maturity is reversed.



Two Biblical churches confronted the dynamics of the Sigmoid Curve and perpetuated their ministries as a result. The first was the Church at Jerusalem. It was a growing church but skewed theologically in favor of the “elected” Jewish people. However, with the confrontations of Peter, who went through his own personal Sigmoid Curve in his Cornelius encounter and Paul with his mission to the Gentiles, this church had to choose to hang on to its racist tendencies or open its doors to the Gentiles. The Bible honestly details the struggle and tension that found meaningful resolution that recharged the mission of the Church.

The second example is that of the Church of Antioch of Syria, founded on the down curve of the persecutions of Christians elsewhere. Yet it molded this multi-racial and multi-ethnic church into a model informative for today. In its growth ascendancy, it faced triple crises: 1. its mission to Jerusalem, as sponsor of this original ethnic ministry, 2. the crisis between Paul and

Barnabas, which resulted in the sending out of two mission teams in the place of one, and 3. the witness of various prophets, including Agabus, who foretold the famine that would grip the Roman Empire. In all three instances, there were positive responses, even under costly and stressful circumstances, that led to an upsurge in momentum in this bellwether church. In both instances, the churches “seized the moment” (*carpe diem*) before natural decline set in and, despite the disruptions to “business as usual,” laid the groundwork for expanded goals and purposes.

As one author has said, these churches were “germinal” rather than “terminal,” fostering new ministries. Like a pregnant woman, the body undergoes biological change. The contour of the body changes, the hormonal levels increase, the daily life-cycles adapt, the fetus jumps, as the gestation cycle must be completed for a healthy birth to occur. The same is true of germinal churches.

However, the birthing process has benefits for the mothering church, once the congregational child is born. Here are some of those benefits:

### **The Benefits of Ethnic Ministries on the Sponsoring Church**

**1. The Rejuvenation of the Broader Mission of the Local Church---looking beyond itself.** A church interested only in its survival becomes incestuous or narcissistic. In anthropology, the best explanation for incest taboos is the principle of “Marry out or die out.” Perhaps for the church, a similar mandate might be “Reach out, or die out.”

**2. The Joy of New Relationships.** Minneapolis First Church used to have a very effective bus ministry. Over time, the bus ministry lost its punch. But along the way, a group of Cambodians had been introduced to the church through

the bus ministry. The bus pastors became mentors and teachers of the Cambodians, who then formed a congregation, then a church. Two of those bus pastors, non-Cambodians, are still deeply involved with the Cambodian population, which itself has planted other churches and scattered its members into a variety of congregations.

**3. The More Efficient Use of the Facilities of the Sponsoring Church.** It is increasingly difficult to justify large buildings under-utilized for the Gospel. While grocery stores are increasingly adapted to diverse markets, and remain open 24/7 to access different schedules, a few Christian churches fail to adjust similarly, keeping themselves confined to traditional hours and pet programs for the diminishing few.

**4. The Influence of a Younger Generation.** Most immigrant groups are much younger, with large families and extended families. Because parents are often confused within the new culture, it is common for the children to lead them in assimilating. They will translate for their parents, explain cultural nuances, and generally adapt to the programs, providing energy and enthusiasm. Combined activities between other generations and congregational youth can rouse dormant programs.

**5. The Enriching of Worship Experiences.** Through pastoral exchanges, combined worship services, and special ethnic presentations, the quality and variety of rituals and worship components can be greatly enhanced to the glory of God. Many cultural groups are particularly adept and expressive in their use of musical instruments and vocal arrangements that can embellish any service. Their melodies and messages are often fresh and poignant, lending drama to praise and prayer.

**6. The Development of Leadership.** These new ethnic church initiatives give opportunity for

new leaders to emerge. These leaders often have bi-cultural gifts, and seek occasions to serve. On the other hand, young people in the sponsoring church are often gifted multi-culturally and can lead the way in developing meaningful relationships across cultural boundaries. The need for new Nazarenes can mobilize old Nazarenes into mentoring roles.

**7. The Change in Image.** Unfortunately, the Christian church is stylized as the most segregated hour of the week, the 11:00 a.m. slot on Sunday. In the eyes of the world, we are seen as a very sectarian, narrow, self-serving club, not much different from the Rotary or Kiwanis, except that we are seen as more judgmental. To engage in cross-cultural ministries contradicts this image. It is one way of proving to the world that our oneness is not built on our cultural comfort levels, but rather on the shared commonness we find in Christ. That is a compelling message!

**8. The Urgency of Self-Examination.** Working across racial, ethnic, and cultural boundaries challenges us to re-examine central themes of the Gospel from multiple angles. It also forces us to make minor issues minor. Again, Dr Bresee: "We can afford to sacrifice every prejudice and preconceived notion which is not essential to heaven or holiness." It was that spirit that forged different regions of the country with contrasting histories and perspectives, into a united Church of the Nazarene in 1908. It will be that same spirit that prompts us to carve out cross-cultural ministries throughout this increasingly diverse century. Indeed, the self-emptying, loving spirit of Christ expressed in the Kenosis passage of Philippians 3 ought to be the same spirit that breathes through us. Or to rephrase Jesus' words: "He who seeks to save his own church, will lose it. He who is willing to lose His church for my sake, will save it." The church that survives is the church that gives itself away.

So how does one become a sponsoring church? The outline below will be fleshed out in more detail later. The points are not necessarily chronological, but may dovetail or may repeat in any order. Yet most of these building blocks nurture passion and initiatives that produce results.

### **The Building Blocks of Ethnic Church Planting**

**1. By Seeing the Need.** There is an impression that an ethnic group is under-served by the Gospel. The experiences are generally anecdotal, an encounter here, a conversation there, a connection around the corner, all confirming a bottom line message that the hope of the Gospel is desperately needed and that there might be a receptive “people group” in the neighborhood.

**2. By Studying the Data.** You become curious to know whether there is a critical mass of people of this particular group nearby. The US government census of 2000 is well outdated, but the results of the 2010 census will dribble out over the next two years. Conversations with realtors, gas companies, and school administrators can give you a clue as to the changing demographics. But, most importantly, you need to walk the neighborhood, chat with individuals, and look for signs and symbols that confirm your suspicions that this may be ground zero for ministry to a particular ethnic group. Contact Dale Jones, the director of the Research Center at the Global Ministry Center. He and his staff can provide at little or no cost, data of all kinds, based on zip codes, communities, or radii from a given address. With his information comes information not only on ethnicity, but also on housing, age breakdowns, household sizes, and educational levels. The office also compiles data of churches and church memberships for any given community in North America.

Purchase local newspapers, which will often record articles or check the Internet for past news-

paper articles about the group in your designated community. One pastor was assigned by the District Superintendent, a Samoan pastor, only to discover that there were few Samoans living in range of his church. By studying the data, he learned that the heart of the Samoan community was located some 25 miles away. The leader was transferred on to a church in that neighborhood, and a thriving ministry began.

Visit the cultural center of your interested group and ask a lot of questions. Present yourself as a concerned and caring citizen wanting to help new immigrants successfully make the transition into North American culture.

**3. By Identifying the Opportunity.** Check with other ministries who have worked with this population and piece together their story lines. Has their experience proved successful? If so, why? If not, why? Do these groups encourage you to also venture forth, or are they suspicious, competitive, or discouraging?

Timing is a critical factor. Is your church looking for a new local challenge? Is your credibility such that your interest is contagious? Are there others beside yourself who see the opportunity? Remember that the word “opportunity” signifies not just an open door, but also the opportune moment for entering it. Many good ideas are subverted by bad timing. On the other hand, a pregnant moment of opportunity can be aborted due to unpreparedness.

**4. By Studying the Word.** As the Black preacher intones, “Is there a message from the Lord?” Have you had personal confirmation within the Word? The Wesleyan quadrilateral test may be useful here, where experience, tradition, reason, and the Word all seem to dovetail in a common message of action. The Bible itself, inspired by God, is a compendium of a multicultural committee of writers to a multicultural world. As such it is packed full of images and illusions

about crossing barriers and boundaries to express the love of God.

**5. By Sensing the Call.** The prelude to mission is submission. Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver II shared this story. At the congressional prayer session, one US representative prayed with all sincerity, “Oh Lord, as we go about our business, we pray that You will walk with us.” Cleaver commented afterwards, “Never does it suggest in the Bible that God will walk with us, as though God is riding shotgun in our hip pocket. Rather, ‘Enoch walked with God, and was not, because God took him.’” God does not necessarily choose to affirm our agenda. It is our responsibility to discover God’s agenda in our lives, and to follow God wherever we feel led.

Oftentimes, intensity with God begins with being silent long enough to hear the prayer already working within oneself. Or on the other hand, as one Nazarene pastor put it: “Get out of your seat, get on your feet, and get out in the street.”

**6. By Appropriating the Resource.** In ministry, one is always calculating the assets. Among those assets are the composite strengths of time, experience, wisdom, organizational integrity, relationships, networks, and material resources that more than match the need, if mobilized and managed in the right way. And if there is a deficiency, one is reminded of St Augustine’s words: “God gives where [God] finds empty hands.”

Develop an asset chart and weigh it against any liabilities. If it tilts heavy on the asset side, then chances are you’re headed in the right direction.

**7. By Building the Friendship.** Connect with people in the target community. Meet with them in their worlds rather than yours. Explore what you have in common, what their histories might represent, what your mutual goals might be. Show interest in their families here and abroad. Honor them in appropriate ways. Uncover their

leadership skills or potential. Invest in their personal development. Share your friendship with them, with others. One of the most poignant and practical expressions of friendship was the donation of a sponsoring pastor’s kidney to his ethnic pastor. Now that is personal investment, when your organs walk around in the body of a Christian brother!

**8. By Sharing the Vision.** Sharing the vision is accomplished by capturing an ethereal thought. It is pulling down the passion of God and packaging it in language and gesture, so that others can unwrap and possess it. It should become a mantra that both energizes and directs a congregation to action. One child was heard to mutter, “Matthew, Mark, Luke, John . . . and Revolution!” The Word, the Calling, the Need, the Timing all converge to form a vision that motivates us to . . . Revolution! And it needs to be shared broadly.

**9. By Strategizing the Process.** Church congregations defeat themselves, because they are impervious to the challenge. Somewhere the sweat work of strategizing must surmount the “mind over mattress” syndrome of comfort. Most potential ministries die, because churches are reluctant to undergo the “renewing of their mind.” Skepticism must be replaced by optimism, negativity by anticipation, disappointments by lessons learned and appropriated. Committees and task forces can be useful. It is said that the devil used to try to prevent people from doing good works; now, he organizes them instead. Organization is essential but should never replace engagement.

**10. By Building the Network.** Build networks of relationships within the target community, the power brokers, the gate-keepers, the opinion makers. Present yourself as an agent of hope, not of patronage, nor of criticism. Ask what their felt needs are, rather than imposing your per-

ceptions of their needs, then build responses to those felt needs. Honor the target culture by showing interest in their unique components, their holidays, and festive celebrations. Strategize a trip into their country, perhaps even as a Work and Witness trip, mutually shared. Every culture is proud of its heritage and delighted to see others interested and enthusiastic.

Remember the message of Christ is central to the turning and troubled worlds of both the majority and ethnic cultures. However, this message may be of reduced initial interest. The denomination also has secondary assets that are often appreciated by new immigrant and minority groups. Here is a list of some of them:

### **Denominational Assets that Attract Ethnic Groups**

1. Openness, interest, and world-class experience through our missionary programs to peoples all over the world.
2. Denominational integrity with minimal scandal and high degrees of accountability at all levels.
3. Special attention to the role and expression of music and to the unique needs of children.
4. Extensive training programs for leadership development, including pastoral preparation, college education, etc.
5. An international publishing house that produces extensive literature in many languages.
6. Resource and supervisory personnel for twenty different cultural groups through the Global Ministry Center and district resources.
7. Extensive properties scattered throughout the nation, available for extended ministry possibilities.
8. A very generous and giving church that responds to compassionate needs, crises, and special project challenges.
9. A Gospel message that is increasingly attractive to people of all denominations that offers full and free salvation.
10. Organizational flexibility that promotes expansion and encourages experimentation in church and community models.

We have a church with a positive message for all people groups, including immigrants. We have a passion to reach them. We are unusually blessed with resources of strategies and personnel. But more importantly, we have a history of the artful practice of hospitality offered to the stranger in our midst. For we know what it means to be accosted by He who was a Stranger, who dared upset and transform our own lives.

## Chapter Nine:

# The Glory is in the Details



“Go first to the district superintendent to obtain permission to approach potential pastors and congregations. Be well armed with demographic information, with some historical and contemporary knowledge of your ethnic community, their receptivity to the Gospel, the cost of doing business in that community. Take along potential co-leaders committed to initiating the project. Get his/her permission to engage conversation with the local potential sponsoring pastor.”





# The Glory is in the Details

It has been said that the devil is in the details. Being good Nazarenes, we kick the devil out and seek to find some ennobling in the nitty-gritty details that can contribute to a glorious outcome.

The details given here are suggested procedures primarily for identifying leaders, pinpointing locations, and producing new congregations that can be sustainable and healthy, not just within themselves but also with broader partnerships. How does one identify and foster new ethnic leaders, who could be challenged to plant new Nazarene ministries?

Here is a suggested sequence to identify and foster potential new ethnic leaders, who could be challenged to plant new Nazarene ministries.

### Steps for Identifying Potential Ethnic Leaders

1. **Seek God's Direction:** Pray regularly and consistently that the Lord will give you workers for "the harvest."
2. **Study the Need and Opportunity:** Research and absorb the denominational materials that describe demographic details about the population group that draws your attention. These can be found at [www.missionstrategy.org](http://www.missionstrategy.org).
3. **Survey Potential Personnel:** To identify po-

tential leaders, look to the following sources:

- "ethnic" Nazarenes who attend majority group congregations
- "ethnic" Nazarenes who attend non-majority congregations
- "ethnic" students studying in our Nazarene colleges
- newly-transposed Nazarene leaders from the target culture
- former Nazarene missionaries well informed or experienced in the target culture or referrals from these
- those ethnic leaders from other denominations who show authentic interest in potentially becoming Nazarene
- referrals from the Global Ministry Center, regional directors, district resource centers, local pastors
- unassigned ethnic leaders from other like-minded denominations unable to find placement
- referrals from current credible "ethnic" pastors

4. **Screen Potential Candidates:** Make an initial contact to see if the potential candidate has any interest at all in pursuing some level of ministry at this time or later. Indicate that you and your church are dreaming a dream of possibilities

about initiating a new ministry. Measure the level of interest that this person has in your dream. Make no promises.

**5. Analyze the Information:** Create an informational template that records the names of potential candidates including: past personal history, past and present ministry history, formal ministerial credentials, Nazarene involvement---past and present, current assignments (both sacred and secular), family and legal status, academic ministerial training, personal issues, ministry gifts and graces, motivational issues, “red flag” cautions.

**6. Scrutinize the Names:** Rank potential candidates on overall suitability and availability, prioritizing one or more who might be open to personal mentorship.

**7. Survey the Opportunities:** Is there a potential match between the superior candidates and the opportunities for ministry envisioned?

**8. Select the Best:** Present a plan to that person or those showing greatest potential. What is your personal commitment to the development of this individual? What are the mutual commitments and benefits of this potential relationship?

**9. Secure a Covenantal Commitment:** This should be mutually shared by both the mentor and mentored. It should detail a workable time-frame for the relationship, an agreement on the commitments and benefits of the relationship and a means of terminating it, if it doesn't pan out.

**10. Specify the Terms of the Covenant:** There should be a negotiated formal agreement between the potential sponsoring pastor and the prospective “ethnic” leader.

For the prospective “ethnic” leader, the Cove-

nant should specify:

- A commitment to being a leader within the denomination
- A commitment to preparing for formal Nazarene ministry service or for obtaining the necessary ministerial credentials desired
- A commitment to regular mentoring, as a mentored person
- A commitment to rectify any personal “deficiencies,” be they in ministerial training in personal or legal issues.
- A commitment to practice, where possible, ministerial gifts

For the sponsoring pastor, the Covenant should specify:

- The time frame of the special mentoring relationship
- The frequency and nature of mentoring contacts
- A negotiated plan for training and Nazarene service that addresses issues of attitude, knowledge, and skills necessary for both Christian and Nazarene service
- A plan to create ministry opportunities for the ethnic leader
- Resources and assignments complete with relevant readings, available conferences, designated district events, etc.
- A context for honest accountability and feedback
- A gracious option that permits, without embarrassment, a means of withdrawing from the contract if so desired

**11. Share the Joy:** The opportunity for ministry to a particular ethnic or cultural group can entice both risk and satisfaction. The mentor needs to honor and enjoy new leadership, tell the story of up-and-coming leaders as frequently as possible, clarify and enlist resources to make the

process more convenient, find settings of ministry conducive to the gifts and culture of the selected leader.

12. **Sanctify the Relationship:** See it as an anointed relationship saturated by prayer and wise counsel for the purpose of expediting and affirming the calling, gifting the emerging leader to impact the people group that you, through him or her, can influence. In the event that the relationship doesn't mature into a hands-on ministry, see it still as a legitimate ministry to that person and the extended family. In time, identify and employ an on-site supervisor or mentor who can assume the relationship, if and when your commitment terminates.

### Steps For Ethnic Leaders in Selecting Sponsoring Churches

For ethnic leaders impassioned by the call to start new works, we recommend the following sequence of tasks to determine potential sponsorship organizations:

1. **Pinpoint "Ethnic" Population Centers:** Study the latest demographic figures found at [www.census.gov.us](http://www.census.gov.us), along with appropriate research about your ethnic group. What issues or needs stand out? Is yours an historical immigrant group, a more recent one, or a group continually being replenished? What has been the local success of the evangelical witness among this group? What have been the barriers?

2. **Profile Potential Sponsoring Congregations:** Look first to Nazarene churches who have ministry in the general area, or who have some affinity or standing with the ethnic or cultural group being targeted. Is there a barrier or problem that may discount this ministry from meaningful and productive engagement?

3. **Prepare Persuasive Documentation:** Go first to the district superintendent to obtain permis-

sion to approach potential pastors and congregations. Be well armed with demographic information, with some historical and contemporary knowledge of your ethnic community, their receptivity to the Gospel, the cost of doing business in that community. Take along potential co-leaders committed to initiating the project. Get his/her permission to engage conversation with the local potential sponsoring pastor.

4. **Prioritize from among the Potential Churches Studied:** Study one or two churches of highest priority and availability to sponsor a new ethnic, linguistic, or cultural ministry that represents your target group. Learn all you can about these churches, their motivations, their leadership team and styles.

5. **Present a Well-Organized Challenge:** Armed with good data, and a quality presentation, and appropriate introductions from the district superintendent in jurisdiction, approach the senior pastor first, then staff and lay leaders, as the pastor sets up opportunity, to share your vision and passion for collaborating with this prioritized church in developing a ministry. Perhaps the district superintendent can set up a three-way meeting for you all.

6. **Pray for Guidance with, and for these local Church Leaders:** After a time of soul-searching and discussion, encourage the pastor and people to pray for God's guidance entering into the commitment to sponsor your new ministry or congregation.

7. **Produce a Mutual List of Commitments:** Once the church has indicated its interest in sponsoring your new ministry or congregation, sit down with the pastor and people and discuss the nature of the commitments. These commitments should include:

- Identifying a core of committed local leaders, who will take on tasks and re-

sponsibilities for seeing the vision realized.

- Identifying and assessing the necessary resources (personnel, facility, legal, financial, etc.) that sponsorship would entail.
- Determining the time frame for the sponsorship.
- Articulating the means of orderly transference of responsibilities to the nascent ministry.
- Setting up a means to resolve conflicts and manage commitments.
- Determining an exit strategy in the event that the sponsorship does not function appropriately.

**8. Partner with the Local Sponsoring Church to offer Ongoing Guidance:** If the district has an ethnic ministry coordinator, it will be important to work with this person intimately as a “broker” between the two communities to help each side understand their roles, responsibilities, reasonable expectations, and resources needed and offered. Keep in regular touch and seek necessary encouragement and guidance as needed.

**9. Prepare One’s Own Leadership Skills:** Together with the sponsoring ministry, seek to understand what it means to be “Nazarene.” Work with the sponsor to provide theological and ecclesiastical training on how to operate within the

“Nazarene culture,” as soon as possible for your congregation’s orientation.

**10. Penetrate the Target Community:** Using existing networks, other churches, organizations and associations, employ these resources to create an awareness of the existence of the ministry and how it plans to serve the community, in terms of the culture’s felt needs.

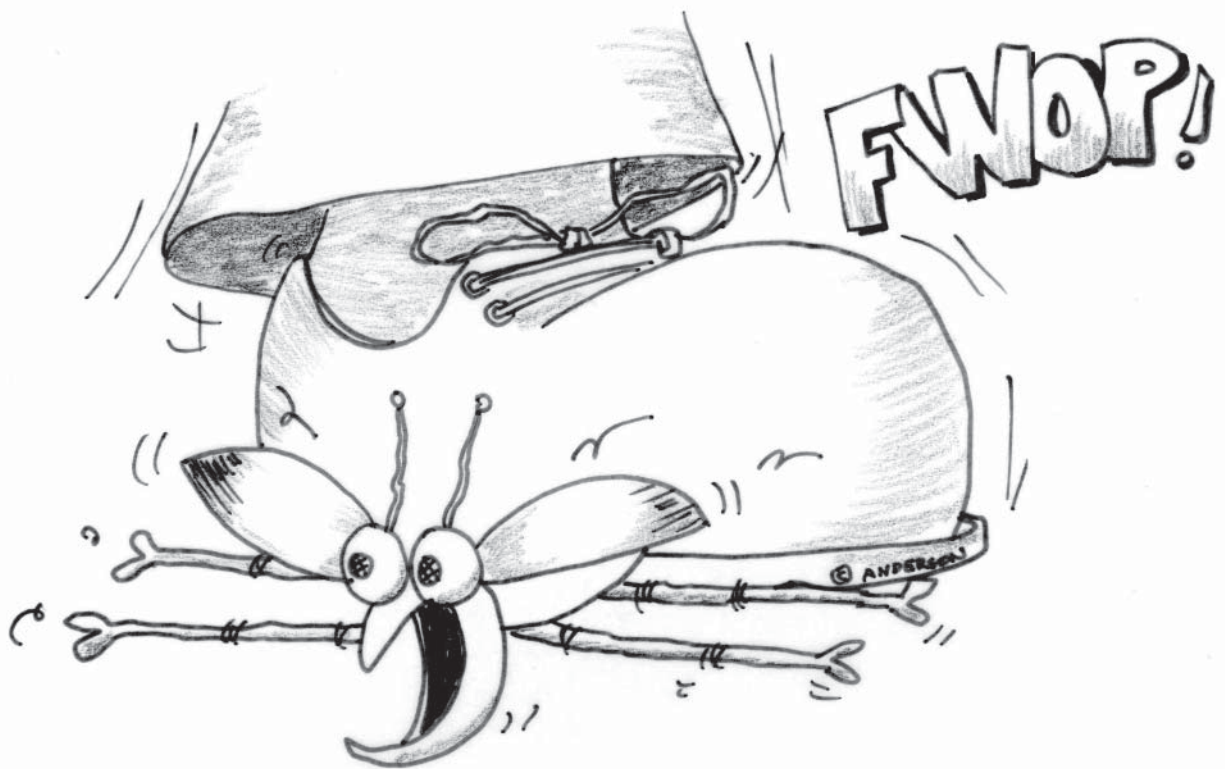
**11. Pioneer New and Creative Ways of Doing Contextualized Ministry:** Help the sponsoring church to understand that the new ministry will not be a “clone” of their ministry but will be colored by its own needs in the areas of evangelism, worship, and needs.

**12. Profile the Ministry to Others:** Keep the denomination informed through the district superintendent, and Nazarene News. Report good news stories on the Internet and in the denominational publications, highlighting the ministry of both the roles of the sponsor and the emerging congregation. Participate in denominational events and present pictures and videos of your activities.

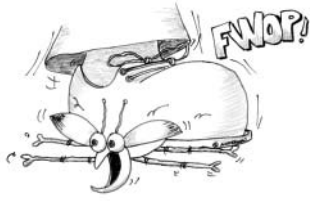
These are helpful generic processes that move churches and peoples into creative relationships. Now, we must face the bug-a-boos that needlessly disrupt these relationships.

## Chapter Ten:

# Stomping out the Bug-A-Boos



“There is no failure, if two groups part ways peaceably, after examining all of these issues and finding that their differing expectations don’t correspond. On the other hand, to fail to ask these questions may itself be the biggest failure. Admittedly, some of the answers will change over time, and others may not need immediate definition. A diagnosis is not the disease; it merely reveals whether or not the patient is healthy.”



# Stomping out the Bug-A-Boos

In this chapter, we want to help with a sequence of questions that, appropriately worked out as early as possible, will help stomp out the organizational bug-a-boos. We have organized them here into seven areas of concern: 1. Informational/Orientation Questions, 2. Personnel Questions, 3. Facility Use Questions, 4. Philosophical/Theological Questions, 5. Organizational/Governance Questions, 6. Programmatic/Linguistic Questions, 7. Self-Image Psychological Questions.

### Informational/Orientation Questions:

**Question #1:** *Where can I get information concerning the demographic patterns in my community?*

**Answer:** Through the Global Ministry Center (Research Division); through government census data at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); through professional marketing agencies where “cluster systems” and “geodemography” identify not just race and ethnic groups, but also culture and lifestyle clusters, example, [www.claritas.com](http://www.claritas.com), through annual almanacs both on-line and in bookstores.

**Question #2:** *Where can I get information concerning new populations moving into my community?*

**Answer:** At local school district offices, at the

local community college, from local public day care administrators, from housing realty associations, from the local “Welcome Wagon” organizations, from the Chamber of Commerce.

**Question #3:** *Who are the groups that need access to our ministry? How can I get to know the particularities and sensitivities of their culture?*

**Answer:** Look to see what language and cultural newspapers are being sold in the community. Identify cultural centers and associations that are operative within your community. Talk to immigrant business people, especially owners of “Mom and Pop”-type businesses. Study the entertainment and announcements advertised in their establishments. Listen to what the police department has to say about how a particular cultural and language group is coping within the neighborhood. Call the local newspaper beat reporter and ask what research and articles have been printed about the ethnic group during the prior months. Talk to government officials about population projections. Talk to administrators of ESL programs in the area.

**Question #4:** *How do I know which people groups are most receptive to Christian ministry?*

**Answer:** Scan the community to see which people groups are forming congregations in the neighborhood; find out what their experience and suc-

cess has been. Check with the local Council of Churches and collect their listing of churches. Remember that ethnic groups are under-represented in such councils or form their own network and affiliations. Meet with a cultural “broker” acquainted with this particular group, asking honest questions, and following leads offered. Read Christian missiological literature, which describes worldwide patterns of receptivity to the Gospel. Look at Nazarene statistics to determine what success the Church of the Nazarene has had on that particular mission field.

**Question #5:** *What are some of the traits or characteristics of the sponsoring church leaders that contribute to the building of trust with those ethnic leaders who are potential candidates for partnership?*

**Answer:** Jerry Appleby, in a seminal book entitled *The Church is in a Stew*, has presented six positive characteristics that contribute to trust. These are: 1. An attitude of a servant manifest in transparency, humility, honesty and selflessness, 2. The courage of a “change agent,” 3. Cross-cultural attitudes with regards to matters of change, property and people, 4. A willingness to live with compromise and ambiguity, 5. The ability to handle criticism and rejection, 6. A sense of humor.

Manny Ortiz adds that the effective leader is committed also to the authority of Scripture, to mission, and to spiritual formation.

**Question #6:** *Where does one go to “bone up” on the issues to prepare oneself for this type of ministry?*

**Answer:** To the literature, a relevant bibliography is provided at the end of this book, to various denominational urban ministry leaders, to fellow pastors who have successfully led such arrangements, to specialized courses and seminars that occasionally and with increasing fre-

quency, address these issues. For Nazarenes, the M11 Conference next year will feature some of this. SCUPE (Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education) is a conference that meets every three years, the next conference will be held in Chicago ([www.scupe.org](http://www.scupe.org)). Or the CCDA (Christian Community Development Association), which meets annually ([www.cdda.org](http://www.cdda.org)).

### Personnel Questions:

**Question #1:** *Who needs to be “on board” for the sponsorship and nurture of an ethnic congregation?*

**Answer:** An enthusiastic and somewhat savvy potential sponsoring pastor, a sponsoring church board and congregation, which is generally supportive of the initiative, a tolerant or supportive district superintendent, peer group leaders in the larger community who offer good will and insight, a cultural “broker” or translator who can interpret conversations and mediate differences, a “called” leader who is willing to assume leadership for the new group, either in a transitional or long-term role.

**Question #2:** *Where does one find a “called leader”?*

**Answer:** If the idea is divinely initiated, leadership will emerge. Here are four possible sources:

1. Traditional training program such as seminaries, Christian colleges, Bible colleges and secular universities.
2. Non-traditional training sources such as ministerial coursework at the district level, correspondence programs.
3. In-house recommendations, with gifted persons, “tent-makers,” church staff members, retired missionaries.
4. Other under-utilized sources such as international Christian students, formal solicitations both within the US and in the homeland, leaders from other compatible denominations.



**Question #3:** *How do we change the attitudes or create paradigm shifts in the thinking of people, within the potential sponsoring church, toward this possible ministry?*

**Answer:** Invite the church membership to participate in an all-day retreat following this outline in studying the possibilities: Look Back (Review the church history); Look Around (See the trends); Look Into (Understand the issues and needs of a particular target ethnic group); Look Across (Meet representatives of this group, hear their testimonies and listen to their appeal); Look Ahead (Imagine what might be in this ministry); Look Up (See what God is telling you about the possibilities).

### **Facility Questions:**

**Question #1:** *What facilities will be required by the new congregation initially? If it grows, what are the facility options that would allow for growth? What modifications need to be made to meet the project needs?*

**Question #2:** *Will these facilities be used exclusively by the congregation or will they be shared? Who will be responsible for supplying furnishings and/or moving the furnishings around between transitions? These items are key in any listing: the sanctuary, Sunday School rooms, office space, kitchen, storage space for microphones, offering plates, musical instruments, hymnbooks and Bibles, flags and artifacts, kitchen utensils, projection equipment, church van. Who will provide these? What insurance covers them?*

**Question #3:** *Will the ethnic congregation have the freedom to decorate its designated space for its purposes and needs?*

**Question #4:** *When will these facilities be used? On a first come, first serve basis? How are they reserved? Who gets preference when there is a conflict? What do rental dollars buy in terms of*

*facility usage?*

**Question #5:** *Who unlocks and arranges the facility? Who cleans it? Who pays for any damage to or misuse of the facility?*

**Question #6:** *How will the office needs for the new congregation be met? What access do they have to phone service, copy machine, coffee machine, computers, secretarial assistance, and church stationery?*

**Question #7:** *Does the ethnic congregation have access to church transportation? Under what conditions?*

**Question #8:** *What parking arrangements have been made for the ethnic congregation? For their pastor? For their church vehicles?*

### **Philosophical/Theological Questions**

**Question #1:** *What is the motivation of the sponsoring congregation to work with an ethnic congregation?*

**Question #2:** *What essentials does the new group desire to share with the sponsoring church, besides facility?*

**Question #3:** *Is there theological compatibility between the congregations?*

**Question #4:** *Is the leadership style and leadership philosophy of the mutual groups compatible?*

**Question #5:** *Is there a comfortable distance allowed for the two congregations to enjoy some autonomy?*

**Question #6:** *What is ultimately desired out of the working arrangement between the two congregations?*

### **Organizational/Governance Questions**

**Question #1:** *At what level does this new congregation begin its ministry? As Bible study? As*

Sunday School Department? As dependent congregation? As independent congregation?

**Question #2:** *Is the congregation listed officially in denominational publications as a separate entity or is it considered a subset of the sponsoring church's identity?*

**Question #3:** *Is there a single church membership list, which contains names of members of both groups?*

**Question #4:** *Is there a single mailing address list, which contains the names of all who meet at the church?*

**Question #5:** *Is there a uniform procedure for incorporating members into the church? Is the ceremony of membership celebrated jointly?*

**Question #6:** *To whom is the ethnic pastor accountable?*

**Question #7:** *How is the ethnic pastor selected for his or her congregation? How is that pastor dismissed?*

**Question #8:** *Is movement between the congregations encouraged or discouraged.*

**Question #9:** *How is conflict mediation handled? Who handles it?*

**Question #10:** *How is the income of the ethnic congregation handled? Is it kept within that congregation? Is it turned over to the sponsoring church?*

**Question #11:** *How are the ethnic congregation's expenses handled? What does the sponsoring congregation underwrite?*

Here is a listing of cost items that should be determined in advance as to who pays: facility usage, facility maintenance, facility repair, furnishings, educational supplies, office supplies, worship supplies, ethnic pastoral salary, hous-

ing, medical insurance, retreat registrations, Social Security payments, legal expenses, business transportation, moving expenses, other pastoral expenses, congregational advertising, organizational dues, church budgets (World Evangelization Fund), mission projects, emergency assistance.

### **Programmatic/Linguistic Questions**

**Question #1:** *Are there united "worship" experiences? How often? What is the nature of these occasions?*

**Question #2:** *Are there multiple languages used in joint gatherings?*

**Question #3:** *Is formal translation used at these gatherings? For what part? Why type of translation?*

**Question #4:** *Besides joint worship services, what other activities of the congregations are programmed to pool persons from both congregations?*

**Question #5:** *Are there appropriate cultural or special amenities made available to both congregations, such as logo, signage, webpage, denominational publications, calendars of events, newsletters?*

### **Self-Image/Psychological Questions**

**Question #1:** *How does each congregation feel about the other?*

**Question #2:** *Does the ethnic congregation feel of equal status with the sponsoring congregation? Does it feel like a partnership? Does it seem "out of sight, out of mind"?*

**Question #3:** *Does each congregation share similar perceptions of the other? How do they allow for feedback and criticism?*

**Question #4:** *What symbols of common pur-*

*pose and organizational cooperation are evident?*

To probe these questions openly and honestly early in the process will bring clarity of vision or reveal incompatibilities. There is no failure, if two groups part ways peaceably, after examining all of these issues and finding that their differing expectations don't correspond. On the other hand, to fail to ask these questions may

itself be the biggest failure. Admittedly, some of the answers will change over time, and others may not need immediate definition. A diagnosis is not the disease; it merely reveals whether or not the patient is healthy. If healthy, then vitamins, exercise and appropriate diet are ordered. If not, medical care can cure the patient. So it is, in examining this dual manifestation of the Body of Christ.



**Chapter Eleven:**

**Tell Me the New, New Story**



“Grace Point Church of the Nazarene graciously opened its doors to us so that we could hold services in their facility. We began with services on Sunday afternoons, because all classrooms were being used during the morning hours, and there was no space for the Spanish-language group to meet. Our services began at two in the afternoon. I would play the guitar, my wife would lead worship, my father-in-law, and another retired missionary from Colombia would play hymns on the piano.”



# Tell Me the New, New Story

We are hesitant to provide church models, as each context, history, people group, and organization is unique. However, among the thousand ethnic churches currently in the North American Church of the Nazarene, certain church arrangements have taken root with some success. Briefly, they are:

### 1. The “Adoption” Arrangement

In the “adoption” example, the sponsoring church adopts an ethnic congregation within its own facility that has come intact from another location. This sponsoring church makes space available and pays most, if not all of the increased financial load of facility use, including subsidizing the financial support of the ethnic congregation’s pastoral expense. The financial obligations are gradually shifted over to the ethnic congregation, as it is able to assume it. The arrangement is seen as a short-term relationship, with the expectation that as the ethnic congregation matures, it will increasingly earn its own independence.

### 2. The “Initiator” Arrangement

Here, a congregation initiates an ethnic congregation within its facility. It does so by starting from scratch, with a Bible study, then a Sunday School department, then a full-fledged congregation. The sponsoring church feels a great

“buy-in,” as it has set the terms, provided the resources, and chosen the leadership. As the ethnic congregation grows, it may choose to remain permanently under the umbrella of the sponsoring church, or it may grow until it needs a new facility, at which point it will have to determine if it remains under the legal umbrella of the sponsoring church or seeks its own independence.

### 3. The Joint Ownership Arrangement

A joint ownership example consists of two or more congregations sharing the governance and management of a single umbrella church. Each organized congregation shares representation on a “superboard” on the basis of an agreed formula, pro-rated by congregational membership and financial income. This board makes joint decisions concerning facility usage, shared programs, and financial allotments. The individual congregations maintain their own boards, financial records, pastoral selections, and congregational duties.

### 4. The District Plant Arrangement

In this example, a district sponsors a cross-cultural church plant in the facility of an existing church. The district assumes the financial and supervisory responsibilities for the newly developing congregation.

This example may be maintained, even after the new congregation matures and assumes its own financial and administrative responsibilities. It is possible that two or more congregations continue to worship at the facility owned by the founding group, each separately as fully organized churches.

Open lines of communication must be maintained for purposes of scheduling, facility care and operations, financial accountability and fraternity in order to avoid an “us” and “them” mentality.

### **5. The Transitional Arrangement**

In the transitional church, the existing congregation finds itself in decline due to changing demographics. The ethnic church initiates a new work with the intention of supplanting the existing congregation. The transition can be made difficult by the reluctance of the older congregation to relinquish control of the facility to the newer group. Often, there is great financial stress on both congregations during the transition. This is where a sponsoring church can mediate or partner with both congregations to provide a healthy transition.

### **6. The Bilingual Pastor Arrangement**

Congregations in transition may want to hire a pastor who is truly bilingual and is willing to pastor two different congregations. The advantage here is that the second generation ethnic young people have a place to land, probably in the English-speaking option.

However, the effort required on the part of the leadership is great, and such leaders are rare. The strength of the model lies in the unique character of the bilingual leadership. “Two for the price of one” also helps in the financial arrangements of the church.

Other arrangements exist often with compo-

nents of these, with examples of failure, and success within each of them. However, here are two case studies that seem to exhibit harmonious notes of multi-congregational arrangements shared on both sides.

#### **I.1 Fort Wayne Grace Point South Church of the Nazarene (*Transcript of Interview with Senior Pastor Chuck Sunberg, Conducted March, 2010*)**

“We were formerly Lake Avenue Church of the Nazarene. I came as senior pastor in 2005 and shortly afterwards met with the District Superintendent, Dr. David Roland, who recommended to me the son-in-law, Javier Mondragon, of his Spanish-language district Coordinator, Carlos Sol to help begin a Spanish-language ministry. We started on Sunday afternoons, and then moved to Saturday nights, attracting a group of about 30. I discovered Javier to be an extremely strong and competent leader, gifted in both English and Spanish.

After a period of time, we moved the service to Sunday afternoon because all Sunday School rooms were occupied in the morning. However, very soon we became aware that a church called New Vision Church of the Nazarene, located about ten miles from our campus on the south side was vacant. With the assistance of the district superintendent we worked out arrangements for the congregation to move there. From that point we were called Grace Point North, and they, Grace Point South.

We encouraged a group of our members to transfer at least temporarily with them, and about 40-50 did. Eventually, about 30 continue to this day in that congregation.

Though the ministry started as a Spanish-speaking ministry, the demographics in the south resulted in the need to make this a “multicultural” congregation as about one-third who attend



are Black, one-third white and one-third Hispanic. Pastor Javier preaches now, alternating with his wife, Annette Mondragon, in Spanish and English. Obviously, some people feel some discomfort with the arrangement and have left. However, attendances in general have grown to about 100.

Pastor Javier and the congregation are fully financed by the Grace Point Church, which includes both congregations. South raises about \$40,000 a year, while the expenses run about \$90-100,000. Though there have been some nay-sayers in the North congregation, the board is fully behind the arrangement. We see it as an organic relationship less dependent on contractual agreement but very much on personal relationships. I meet with Javier weekly. We coordinate sermon series, using the same Scriptures, but cooperate on Faith Promise and Revival services, and have pulpit exchanges. On Labor Day, we celebrate a joint picnic, and twice a year on Sunday nights, we have a joint service. However, his congregation sees him as pastor. Initially we had planned to have my sermons videocast in his congregations, but Javier is such a great preacher that there was no need for that. At this point, there is some representation from their congregation in the Finance committee, and we are seeking to integrate members of his congregation eventually more fully into our board and committees. Javier is fully a member of our staff. However, we serve more in an advisory capacity, rather than dictate his ministry.

For us, it has been a wonderful arrangement. Neither congregation seems to be interested in changing the terms, nor is there any financial pressure or time frame that would push us to seek changes.

We are delighted with the arrangement and believe that our model of one church and two congregations is a blessing for all concerned.”

## **I.2 Fort Wayne Grace Point South Church of the Nazarene (Narrative Story of Pastor Javier Mondragon)**

“When my wife and I arrived in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 2007, we never could have imagined that our ministry would look the way it does today. It was our goal in coming to Fort Wayne to begin a church for the Spanish speaking people in the city.

Grace Point Church of the Nazarene graciously opened its doors to us so that we could hold services in their facility. We began with services on Sunday afternoons, because all classrooms were being used during the morning hours, and there was no space for the Spanish-language group to meet. Our services began at two in the afternoon. I would play the guitar, my wife would lead worship, my father-in-law and another retired missionary from Colombia would play hymns on the piano.

Our start was in February 2007 and five months later we had a group of 25 to 30 regular attendees. Meanwhile, Grace Point was going through a time of transition as they wanted to expand because the church was growing. In July, I was approached by Senior Pastor Chuck Sunberg who asked me about becoming a part of the team at Grace Point instead of being a separate entity from the church. I happily told him that I would like that. When my wife and I had arrived in Fort Wayne, we didn't have a salary and the offerings we would collect in our small congregation were sent weekly to the district office, which would then in turn send us a monthly love offering to help us financially.

In July, the church board at Grace Point met and voted to hire me as a part of the staff. By August, I was officially on the staff of Grace Point as the Hispanic Ministry pastor.

From the time we began services in Spanish, we started meeting families whose parents were im-

migrants. However, their children are first generation born or raised in the US. While the parents prefer to speak, sing, and listen in Spanish, the children chose to communicate in English.

In order to reach both generations and keep families intact, we came up with the idea to hold services in both languages, English and Spanish simultaneously. This would be totally out of the ordinary and unique. The truth is, we didn't know if it would work but we wanted to try. We switched our service from Sunday to Saturday night.

The songs were projected on screen in both English and Spanish side by side, I preached in Spanish, and my wife interpreted phrase by phrase. When she preached in English, I interpreted into Spanish. Our announcements then and now were given in both languages, and the bulletin and all church publications are in both languages.

Our services on Saturday nights began very well, and we maintained our attendance. But God already had other plans in mind for us.

In the summer of 2007, a Nazarene church in the south part of the city became vacant. The pastor had resigned, and the church had closed. The building sat empty for a few months, and the district superintendent, concerned about the maintenance of the building, wanted to start something there. Grace Point Church wanted to expand its facilities and so, when Pastor Sunberg and staff became aware of the available building, we began to talk about making it a branch of Grace Point. This new church was located in the south part of the city, closer to the Hispanic community. The idea of starting the Hispanic church caught fire. Pastors Chuck and Carla Sunberg and I met with the district superintendent to talk about the empty building and the possibilities of a new Grace Point campus. The superintendent allowed Grace Point to initiate

the new arrangement. Work was then invested in what would become Grace Point South Campus. Up to this moment, no one knew exactly what this new church campus would look like, but we knew that it was a great opportunity and that the hand of God was in it. Before opening the new South Campus, we studied the community around the building and learned that it was multicultural with whites, Hispanics, and African-Americans living in the area. We concluded that instead of initiating a Spanish congregation, we should start a bilingual multicultural church that reflects the community in which the church is located, to reach a multicultural community.

We again changed the time of our services, from Saturday nights to Sunday mornings but now in a new location under the name of Grace Point South. Thirty people from the north campus came with us to begin the new campus to begin identifying with us. Our first service was held on November 11th, 2007 with 40 people in attendance.

At this point, we had not formally announced to the community that we had begun the church. Our goal was to launch our new campus on March 23, 2008, so that we could use the time leading up to that date as "practice" or a "dry run," getting ready and filling all necessary positions within the church with our north campus volunteers. On our launch date, we placed an article in the local newspaper and got a clip on the local television news. We also put up signs on our property announcing the services. On Easter Sunday, we had 135 people attend service and twelve people gave their lives to Christ.

Grace Point South Campus officially opened its doors as a different kind of church, a multicultural church for a multicultural community. Today after two years, we are moving forward with the ministry. Everything is done in the flow of two languages. People from ten different coun-

tries attend, representing Argentina, Dominican Republic, Peru, Paraguay, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, México, and the United States. One look at our congregation gives you a glimpse of a wonderfully woven tapestry of diversity: white, African American, and Hispanics, beautiful hues of color united in Christ's love. We celebrate our diversity, as each year we hold a special International dinner the Sunday before Thanksgiving where people bring dishes of food that represent their country of origin, and we all fellowship together.

We consider ourselves one church in two locations: Grace Point North and Grace Point South. We do not have a separate church board at Grace Point South. Although we do have a representative council in our congregation, we are still very connected to the North Campus. We share the same vision and the same values, although we adjust them according to the needs of our congregation and community.

We have many benefits in being connected to Grace Point North campus; we have resources available for each department, not necessarily financially but in moral support. We are fortunate to have resources for Bible studies, regulations, methods and organization. If any one of the department leaders has a question, we can always go to our children's or youth pastor at the North campus. On Sunday mornings, we use the church buses to transport people to and from our services. On occasion, we have people from the North campus come to bring special music or to help out in some other way.

A few months ago, I had lunch at the mall food court. I was deeply impacted when I realized all of the options and diversity that one can find there: Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and Mexican fare. As I ate my plate of Chinese food, I looked around. There were people of all colors, ethnicities, languages, all eating in the same place un-

der the same roof. I thought, "If this can happen in the world, why can't it happen in the church." That is what we want to be: Grace Point South Campus, a church that welcomes everyone.

**Glories:** The biggest satisfaction is to see people find the Lord and start a new life in Christ, to see people interact with each other even if they don't speak the same language. They love each other, and in our prayer meetings, everyone prays in the language in which they feel most comfortable. We have a saying at Grace Point South, "God does not need a translator." The majority of people coming from the North Campus as volunteers have grown so much as leaders. They are very passionate about their ministry at the South campus. They see themselves as missionaries in their own city. Our focus is to see people from different ethnicities, colors, and nations come together in worship as in Revelation 7:9. Grace Point South is just a little taste of heaven in Fort Wayne.

**Trials:** Our Church is definitely not for everyone. Although we welcome everyone, the bilingual way we do church has been hard as people come and go, or serve for a period of time and leave. Reaching out to the community has been difficult, because people move away, given the economic recession, which has hurt people and left many houses in our neighborhood empty.

We still have not reached our goals at Grace Point South the way we would like to. One of our dreams is that everything we do will reflect our diverse congregation. Our music ministry has been the biggest challenge. We need a good worship leader that can lead, both willing and talented, to play different styles of music that reflect our many preferences such as Gospel, Latino rhythms, etc.

At the moment, our plans are to stay connected to the North campus and continue as one church in two locations. Our advantage is that we have

a senior pastor who understands, is passionate about missions, loves people and is a great leader. We've talked about starting new campuses in the future. One of our biggest dreams as leaders is to have a strong church, where all departments and ministries have strong leadership and function efficiently, so that some day we can send a group of leaders from Grace Point South to start a new campus in the city. Maybe it will be called Grace Point East or West. Who knows?

### **II.1 Nashville First Church of the Nazarene (*Transcript of Interview with Rev Dale Benson, Senior Associate Pastor*)**

"We were approached at Easter in 2007 by Haitian Evangelist Thervy Damassi, about the possibility of housing a Haitian congregation that he led called Iglesia de Dieu, under a rental arrangement. I was assigned by our senior pastor Gary Henecke, because of my prior work with Haitians in South Florida, to negotiate the arrangement.

We determined some necessary prior conditions. We offered Rev. Damassi the Nazarene Manual in French and asked him to read it to determine if there was some theological compatibility between his church and ours. He did and agreed that he and his congregation would feel harmony with that doctrine.

The Haitian coordinator, Pascal Permis, came up from Florida to meet with the congregation and stayed over several days. Indeed, he held revival services for the Haitians.

They were in something of a desperate condition, having rented another church which had been sold. At that time, their congregation had an attendance of 70. When the approval and the comfort level were achieved for a move, 38 of the members actually transferred over. Though their doctrinal policies seemed to dovetail with the Nazarene theology, the struggle took place

in the area of matching "polities." It was agreed that their congregation and Sunday School would flip-flop with the program of Sunday mornings of the English-speaking service, to make space available. A small chapel became theirs at this time.

Evangelist Damassi did not feel like he could fully function as a pastor. Meanwhile, Dr Maromy Samuel, a medical doctor, had transferred to Trevecca Nazarene University to acquire his theological training. His wife was the daughter of a major Nazarene pastor in Haiti, and so he was soon appointed as Damassi's assistant pastor. Despite his title, he continues to have a major role in the church and is the person who attends weekly meetings with the First Nashville Church of the Nazarene staff.

Initially, the rental arrangement was \$300 a month. However, the nature of the relationship has so tightened that there is no longer a rental fee. Indeed, the funds that had been collected were put into an account that, when the church formally consented to be a fully integrated part of First Church, were put into a reserve account in their name. The congregation now raises about \$15-20,000 a year, and has been able to purchase its own van. However, because the legal arrangements are with First Church, their board has to give the approvals, and holds the title and insurance. In the course of those discussions, it became apparent that the relationship had become so intimate that, given the opportunity to become an independent "new start" congregation, neither side desired this. Indeed, as one sponsoring board member said, "They are a part of us." Currently, the attendance runs about 60, a drop in the bucket compared to the 1200 attendees, and \$2.4 million budget in the English-speaking congregation.

The Haitian congregation has adopted First Church's logo with the amendment that they

are Nashville First Church of the Nazarene, Congregation Haitienne. Dr Samuel receives only a housing allowance of about \$6,000 a year. The congregation did pledge \$3,500 to the joint Faith Promise commitment this past year. The congregation meets four times during the week and joint services between the two congregations take place four times a year.

Indeed, this arrangement has been so positive, that we are open to working with other congregations on a similar basis. Our church has an alternate service to the homeless and the neighboring poor. We are also contemplating a new ministry to address the postmoderns. And we are open to an Hispanic ministry, if we could find the right leadership.

I am offering an example of our statement of agreement, a copy of their logo, and the congregational report of July 2009 to include in my report (found in the appendices).”

## **II.2 Nashville First Haitian Church of the Nazarene (Report by Dr Maromy Samuel, Assistant Pastor)**

“The Haitian Congregation at Nashville First Church of the Nazarene came to existence in 2000, when the immigrants began to explore opportunities in Nashville. They first started with prayer meetings and then came the idea to join an existing American church, but as an alternate service. Finally, they identified a local mission from Atlanta, which agreed to host them.

Because of their varying religious backgrounds and other doctrinal issues, some of members left the original group to start other congregations. Now, we number three Haitian churches in Nashville with about 250 members.

Nashville First Church of the Nazarene is a blessing for the Haitians. As a mother church, it supports the congregation in every way. Many of the members earn only an average salary and

so are unable to support themselves, pay a pastor, finance a building, and cover the utilities of a congregation.

God was at work before planting the Haitian church here. With the help of Pastor Dale Benson, who had befriended many Haitians and worked with them in a multicultural setting in Florida and, with the vision of Dr. Gary Henecke, the board voted last year to include the Haitian Congregation officially as part of Nashville First Church of the Nazarene. Now we are one church worshipping as two different congregations. To God be the glory!

When the earthquake first hit Haiti, the church provided moral and spiritual support for the Haitians. They sponsored my medical trip in April, 2010, to go and assist the displaced victims from the earthquake. Also, the church became one of the local centers for the collection of crisis care kits to ship to Miami and then on to Haiti.

The congregation is working fine. Since I came here in July 2008 to complete my Master’s degree in theological studies and serve as associate pastor, I have seen the church making some significant progress. Last year, we bought our first new musical instruments, a church van, and office furniture set. We reorganized the financial structure and the Sunday School and also facilitated a greater dialogue with the American congregation.

We are working on several programs to train leaders for Sunday School, to record our Sunday service to put it on the web, so that people can listen to our services online. We are reaching out to the community through Bible studies at home and other cultural and community events. Through the English as a Second Language program, we are reaching out to other communities. Also, we are developing a project, which will allow us to walk in the footsteps of Nehemiah to become more efficient in rebuilding the walls of

the homeland through medical and educational missions and other community services.

Overall, the ministry is making a difference in transforming lives and a generation for Christ. We will be self-sustaining despite many challenges. In the near future, the pastor may need to be full-time in order to devote more time to leading the congregation to accomplish what the Lord calls them to do, as the first Haitian Nazarene church in Tennessee. With the help of God, a clear vision, and the support of the mother church, the congregation is moving ahead into the future.”

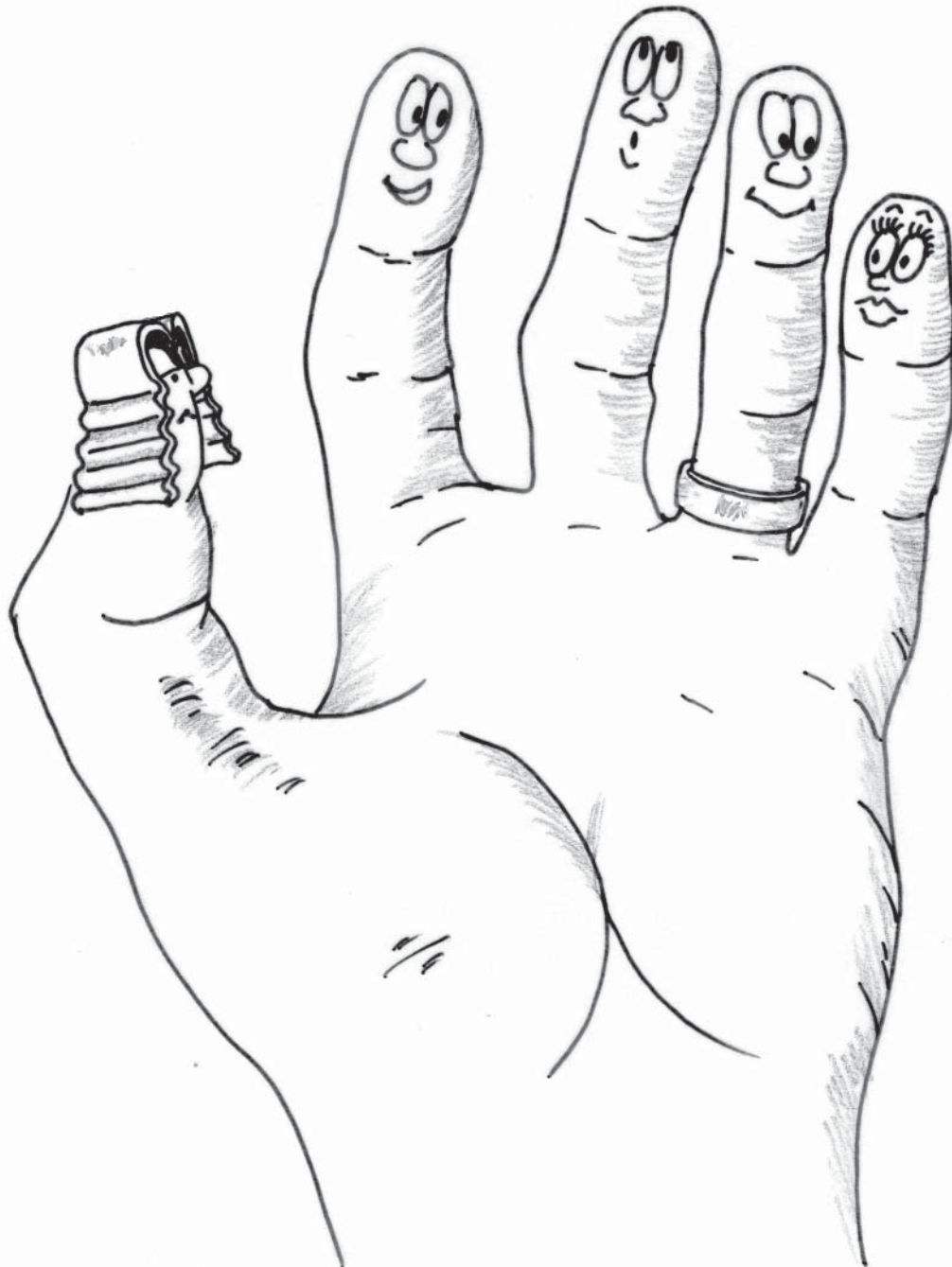
In both Fort Wayne and Nashville, the arrangements appear very positive. In both instances, there are affirming relationships between the leaders of both congregations, good support from the respective boards, and mutual feelings of loyalty to the whole. Both sponsoring congregations feel that the investment has already paid good dividends and have little interest in changing the arrangements.

George Yancey, after studying successful multiracial congregations, concluded that there were seven significant principles that each seemed to have in generous measure. They were: 1. Inclusive Worship; 2. Diverse Leadership; 3. Overarching Goal; 4. Intentionality; 5. Conducive Location; 6. Personal Skills; 7. Adaptability. Though these were drawn from multiracial ministries, leaders that work well together between congregations may well share several of these characteristics, as seen in the testimonials above.

Both arrangements are rather young and for the time being, seem secure. One wonders what issues ten or twenty years might bring, with growth and attrition, demographic and potential leadership changes. One only hopes that the leadership skills, the congregational commitments, and the shared visions will continue to grow the ministries in ways that further enhance the Kingdom of God.

**Chapter Twelve:**

**Open the Doors and See all the People**



“The people, congested down below, ducking dust and dirt, were both annoyed and astonished. Jesus didn’t seem bothered in the least. The mat, holding a choking Zebedee, was passed down to those below who, in turn, lowered the weight down to the floor in front of Jesus. Within minutes, Zebedee was both physically and spiritually healed and a dissident group attending the miracle subsequently got mad. Healings were not supposed to happen this way.”





# Open the Doors and See all the People

One must see the big picture of where the Kingdom is going. If, as Tom Skinner used to say, our churches are to be “colonies of heaven,” then we need to organize and conduct ourselves not as we have been, but as we shall be. We anticipate the future and structure ourselves for the transition.

Below are two ways of seeing our need for cooperative, diverse leadership to convey the message of the Gospel to a world that longs for the Church to think outside the box.

### The Parable of the Four Fingers

The four fingers were having a rousing argument as to who was the most important of all. To settle their claims, they enlisted Judge Thumb and brought their quarrel to him.

He silenced them stating that he would make a decision on the basis of the persuasive, rational argument of each one. “Pointing finger” was first and eloquently argued that he was the most important by virtue of the fact that, when he signaled directions by pointing left, right, or straight ahead, human beings were compelled to follow. The other fingers applauded its report that obviously made sense.

Middle finger without standing up, declared passionately that his credentials were quite obvious --- he was head and shoulders taller than

the others were. Again the group admitted the obvious. Ring finger then arose and described how human beings, in their most glorious moments, so many times embellish her with their finest jewelry and diamond rings. The competitors acknowledge this truth.

Finally, little finger proudly stretched upward her small frame. The others hushed, wondering what she might say. With confidence, she described human beings, their emotions, whims and passions and then, pounding the fist onto the table, they used her as the point of contact, bearing the brunt of their violent reactions, as the finger under the others suffered the expressive blows. She must be the most important, to convey such feelings! The other fingers saw her graphic point.

All faces turned to the judge to render his decision. He stood up and in regal voice declared: “I have listened to your convincing arguments and have been duly impressed with your individual credentials. However, I have one last request of each of you, before I render a final decision. To my left, is a large Bible; I want each of you to reach over and grab it, then secure it high for the world to see.”

One by one, they tried to grab it, only to have it slip away. It was just too big and they, too clumsy, to be able to control it. Then the truth

dawned on each of them. They all needed to grasp it together to be able to life it high to a hungry world.

### **A Revisionist Story of the Paralyzed Man: Luke 5:17-26**

Zebedee was a quadriplegic. He had been since an ugly fishing accident. Without benefit of technology or social services, he had become essentially a pariah on society. But those days featured a slower and kinder society that tolerated and accommodated the damaged misfits that so generously populated it.

It was a culture not quite as self-conscious as our own, about one's unproductiveness. Normally each citizen would eke out an existence that would provide for his or her own needs, but not much more. In this case, Zebedee was left out in the cold.

His condition demanded help. His family reluctantly fed, clothed and occasionally shaved and cleansed him. He could, but there were few wanting to listen. In his normal isolation, he didn't have much to talk about other than uttering tiring pleas for help.

Paralysis creates inactivity which, in turn, stimulates weight gain. Zebedee was grossly overweight. His untoned flesh seemed to invade the space around. If they could drag him out to beg, they would. But, most of the time, it was hardly worth the effort.

The news pierced the shabby little house with hope that morning. Jesus, shaman or magician, maybe even the hope of Israel, was passing through town. The family, exhausted in serving a hopeless Zebedee, suddenly chattered hopefully that maybe Jesus could make a difference. Maybe the prophet would give him a needed scolding, tell him to be more productive, or maybe just change his negative attitude. But none of

them even dared to think of a miracle.

Zebedee was too obese to move. One family member tried and almost jiggled him off the mat. In frustration, he called out to a passerby, a man of color, who consented to help. But the two of them still didn't have enough muscle power! A Latino volunteered to help. But between the three of them, the balance just wasn't right. A Native American grabbed the empty corner, and an Asian joined in, rounding out the team. The family member happily took over the role of directing the movement and traffic through the gathering gawking crowd.

The distance to the home where Jesus had stopped, almost exhausted them. Zebedee kept mouthing off about being such a public spectacle. He wanted help, but in a more secret, subtle way.

As they approached the house, it became apparent that other visitors had more pressing needs or were monopolizing Jesus' attention. It was clear that the path inside was blocked.

Worse yet, his disciples thought it their responsibility to serve as "gatekeepers," to fend off the pressing crowd. Repeatedly, one could hear them shoot back, "The Master is too busy to attend to you as this time." Were they lying or was this Master not all he was cracked up to be?

The men temporarily laid down their growing, grunting burden and discussed alternative strategies. The conversation was awkward, given cultural and linguistic differences. But they finally settled on a solution. One had brought along his artisan tools, tucked away above his hip pocket. Another had some evident managerial and organizational skills. It was he who suggested the outdoor staircase. Another had been a student of physics and intuitively knew how to angle deadweight up the narrow, open stairs. Another flexed brute strength, necessary to shoulder the

weight on the bottom end. The remaining team member gave it the “heave-ho” spirit of encouragement that made even a plan as crazy as this, sound feasible.

Together they devised strategies with brute strength and dogged persistence to, step-by-step, raise their impossible load up to the roof. At times, their burden almost teetered and toppled. But the combination of people power and individual contributions saved the day, and salvaged Zebedee’s neck.

On settling in on the roof, they briefly lowered their load, while the man with the tools shamelessly chipped and chopped away a large portion of it, an unfortunate necessity that created no little consternation on the part of the host downstairs, who had wanted nothing more than a nice cultured garden party.

The people, congested down below, ducking dust and dirt, were both annoyed and astonished. Jesus didn’t seem bothered in the least. The mat, holding a choking Zebedee, was passed down to those below who, in turn, lowered the

weight down to the floor in front of Jesus. Within minutes, Zebedee was both physically and spiritually healed and a dissident group attending the miracle subsequently got mad. Healings were not supposed to happen this way.

No problem! Zebedee was one happy man! And his newfound friends had themselves a new intercultural camaraderie and a great story to tell over coffee and time.

So the question is, “Who is Zebedee?”

And the answer may be, we suspect, that he is the Church. A Church that desperately needs all from “every nation, tribe, people and language” to share mutual needs, unify around common mission, share wondrous stories of joint grace, and celebrate abundant healing from the paralysis of habits, security, and ease.

Perhaps birthing, sponsoring, and nurturing new ethnic churches can offer a tangible stimulus and structure for us to better discover Jesus and the healing that only comes from him!

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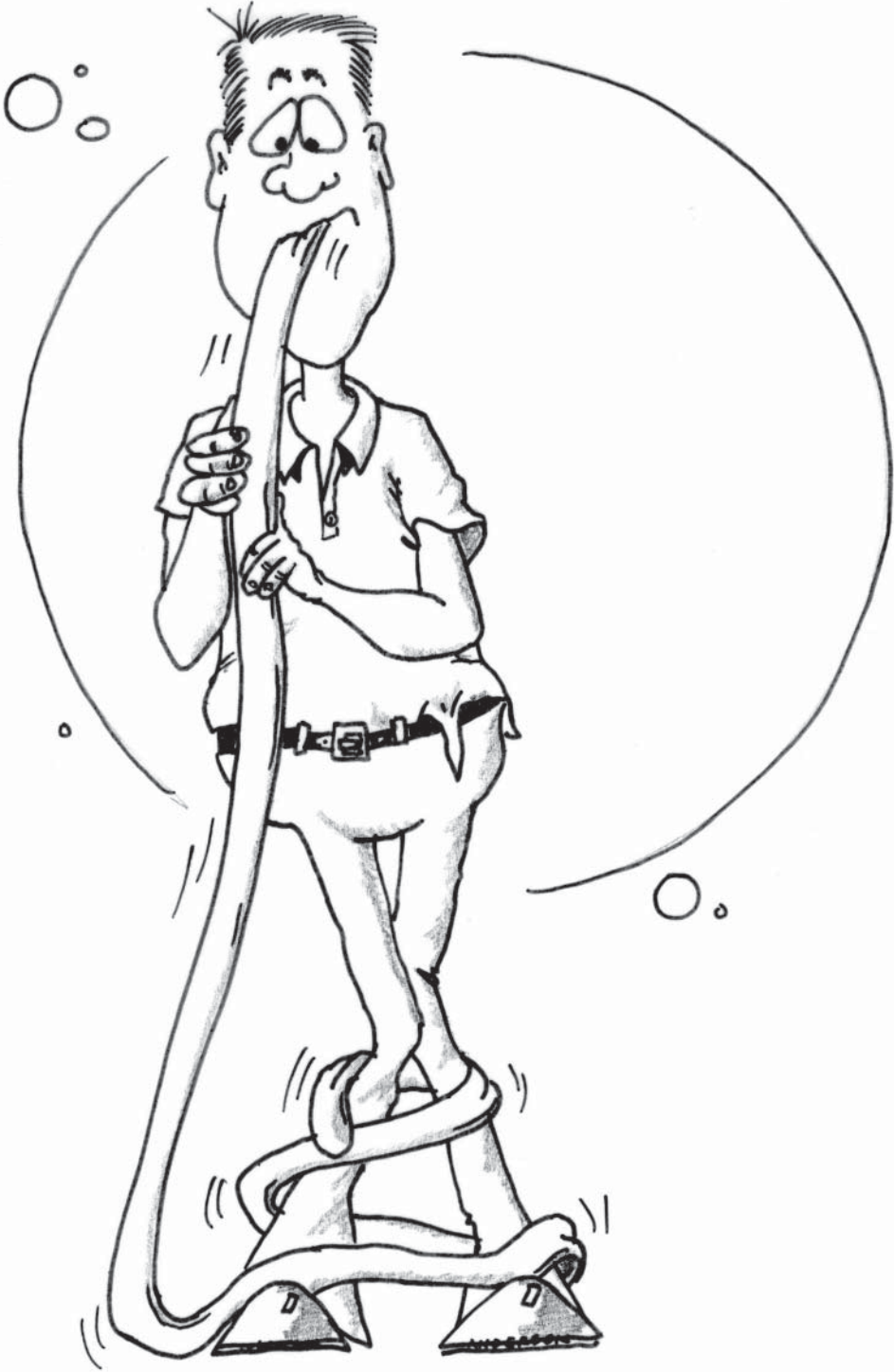
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Appendix:

# Tripping Over Your Tongue



“Let the Church of the Nazarene be true to its commission; not great and elegant buildings; but to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and wipe away the tears of sorrowing, and gather jewels for His diadem.” — Phineas F. Bresee

“The first miracle after the baptism of the Holy Ghost was wrought upon a beggar. It means that the first service of a Holy Ghost-baptized church is to the poor; that its ministry is to those who are lowest down; that its gifts are for those who need them the most. As the Spirit was upon Jesus to preach the gospel to the poor, so His Spirit is upon His servants for the same purpose.” — Phineas F. Bresee

“The evidence of the presence of Jesus in our midst is that we bear the gospel, primarily, to the poor. This must be genuine; it is more than sentiment; it cannot be stimulated nor successfully imitated.” — Phineas F. Bresee



# Tripping Over Your Tongue

## Glossary of Ethnic Terms

Some of these terms have been gleaned from other lists such as the Policy on Inclusive Language with respect to Ethnicity, national Origin, Race and Religion at the University of Maryland at College Park, Maryland; and from Jerry Appleby's [The Church is in a Stew](#).

**Acculturation:** The process of becoming familiar with, and able to function in a different culture or environment, while retaining one's cultural identity.

**Alien:** Acceptable word when referring to legal status of non-U.S. citizens. Can be used when one is quoting official policy. It is not polite to call an international student or scholar an "alien."

**American Indian:** This term is acceptable to describe Native Americans.

**American:** Some caution should be used here as Central and South Americans also claim the term. Preferable language would be "United States" or "States-side" or, in including Canada, "North American" would be appropriate.

**Anglo:** Not recommended. Use "English-speaking" or "white."

**Asian:** This term is acceptable but can be strengthened by being more specific. "Oriental" is not acceptable.

**Assimilation:** The full adoption of the culture, values, and patterns of a different group, to the extent that affiliations with the original group are no longer significant.

**Black:** African-American is increasingly preferred.

**Chicano, Chicana:** Often describes Mexican Americans born in the United States.

**Cultural Values:** An integrated system of regulations, behaviors, and ways of communicating understood by a specific group of people.

**Eskimo:** The term "Inuit" is preferred.



**Ethnic, ethnics:** A colloquialism referring to “new immigrant” nationalities. It is now used only to refer equally to any groupings of people as opposed to just certain groups (i.e., Southern and Eastern Europeans.). To use the term as a noun may be offensive.

**Ethnocentrism:** Using the culture of one’s own group as a standard for judging others, or thinking of it as superior to other cultures.

**First Nations:** Canadian term for “native Americans.”

**Foreign:** “Foreign” is appropriate if it describes places of origin or distinguishes between categories of persons, as in distinguishing between United States and foreign students. “International” is preferred.

**Hebrew:** This refers to a language and not to people or religion, except in references to ancient Israel.

**Hispanic:** See the term “Latin American.”

**Hispanic American:** See the term “Latin American.”

**Indian:** Refers to a person from India. “East Indian” is also used.

**International:** Used to discuss people of national origin other than US citizens.

**Israeli:** Refers to citizens of Israel, not just Jews.

**Jew:** A person whose religious background is Jewish.

**Latin American:** “Hispanic” is often used when referring to United States residents who speak Spanish or are one or two generations removed from Spanish-speaking people from a Central American, South American, or Caribbean country. However, some groups feel “Hispanic” emphasizing a shared European cultural origin. When possible, be specific. Some resent “Latin American” saying it is insensitive to national differences and inaccurate. “Central American” or “South American” can also be used. “Latin American” is preferred over “Hispanic American.” Ibero-American is acceptable but clumsy; use “Brazilian” instead of “Luso-American.”

**Latino/Latina:** Preferred by some groups rather than “Hispanic.”

**Mexican American:** An acceptable term.

**Negro:** This term is only acceptable when quoting from a historical document with the appropriate context.

**Polycultural:** Used interchangeably with multicultural.

## **General Comments about How to Speak about People from Other Cultures or Backgrounds**

Grouping people by ethnicity is a social and political phenomenon. As society changes, so do the labels that define groups.

To reflect individuality and diversity, choose language that supports an audience's expectation and self-image.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Refer to race, religion, or national or ethnic origin only if relevant to your point.
2. Respect the wishes of the group to whom you are communicating. Even within groups, individuals may not agree about which term best defines them.
3. Avoid descriptive words or labels that reinforce stereotypes. Rather than saying "Black slaves," use "enslaved Blacks," rather than "Minorities attend our church," use "Our church ministers to a variety of cultures."

Rather than use the phrases "culturally disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived," describe the specific differences directly related to the discussion.





**Oliver Phillips** presently serves as director of Mission Support USA/Canada and gives general direction to compassionate, multi-cultural, and urban ministries. Prior to this assignment Oliver pastored churches in Trinidad, West Indies, Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington DC. Phillips is a graduate of Caribbean Nazarene College, Howard University School of Divinity, and International Bible College and Seminary. He is the author of several books, booklets, and published articles on a variety of socio-ethnic and cultural themes, most noteworthy being *E Pluribus Unum: Challenges and Opportunities in Multicultural Ministry*.

Phillips is a certified facilitator with the [Cultural Intelligence Center](#). Phillips was the recent recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Leadership Award from the Reed Institute for the Advanced Study of Leadership at Olivet Nazarene University.

**Oliver R. Phillips**



**Fletcher Tink** was born into the parsonage and raised in Canada, Scotland, England and then immigrated to the United States at age 15. He has served with Peace Corps (Brazil), as missionary (Bolivia), as pastor or on pastoral staff in five major U.S. cities where four of the churches have had 17 ethnic congregations. He has five graduate degrees, including a PhD from Fuller Seminary.

Since the year 2000, he has taught at Nazarene Theological Seminary in the area of urban/ compassionate ministries and directs the Bresee Institute for Metro Ministries. He teaches at a variety of academic institutions in 32 nations and has authored, translated or co-authored five books on missions. He is married cross-culturally, is father of four and grandfather of six including two Ethiopians adoptees.

**Fletcher L. Tink**

## Endorsement

Between 1980 and 2010, ethnic specific and multicultural churches represented the fastest growing part of the USA and Canada Nazarenes, adding 55,000 in worship attendance! We are at the time of greatest opportunity in the history of the Church of the Nazarene to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment of our Lord Jesus. We have the resources of over 5,000 churches, 650,000 God-called, Spirit-filled members and the "Invincible Power of a Holy Purpose." Wouldn't it be a great testimony to the seeking, searching, and inclusive heart of God, if more than 1,000 of the more than 2,000 new Nazarene churches started in the next 10 years were reaching cultural groups other than white middle class people? God has called us and equipped us to "Make Christlike Disciples..." and we have the promise of Jesus that "... the harvest is ripe and the harvest is plentiful!" My prayer is that the work of my friends, Drs. Oliver Phillips and Fletcher Tink will inspire a district, local church or individual to start a new congregation.

**Bill Wiesman**, Director, Evangelism Ministries,  
USA/Canada Regional Office, Church of the Nazarene

