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Multiethnic Church Planting in Diaspora Movements:

Practicing the Heart of Christ to Walk the Diaspora Road with Migrant Ministry Leaders
for the Common Good of the City

By
Bradley Thomas Wos

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of Covenant Theological Seminary
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry.

Saint Louis, Missouri

May 10, 2024

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how migrant ministry leaders plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The praxis of the study is to apply the findings to a multiethnic church planting residency in the city of St. Louis. By 2025, St. Louis plans to be the fastest growing foreign-born city in America. The God of scripture is a missionary God who created all people in his image to walk with him and learn to practice his gentle and humble heart, by faith alone, in Christ alone, so all families will be fully known through grace alone.

The church in America in the last twenty-five years has experienced the largest religious shift in history toward pluralism. This rapid social change has led to isolation, spiritual pride, and loneliness. Furthermore, as the global Christian epicenter moves to the Global South, God is sending migrant ministry leaders to the American church as multiethnic church planters. This study walks with sojourners to listen, learn, love, lament, and establish migrant ministry leaders for a diaspora movement of multiethnic church planters in St. Louis. The Bible speaks to immigration from the heart of God.

The three main areas of literature review for the study are: diaspora mission, multiethnic church planting, and developing culturally intelligent leaders.

This study utilized a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with eleven migrant ministry leaders from various denominations in St. Louis, representing six continents. The interviews gathered data using four research questions to identify the challenges that migrant ministry leaders face as sojourners, how the four movements of God's story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration are lived in their ministry, the

role of cultural intelligence in shaping the mature character of Christ, and how networks flourish in the immigrant communities of their city.

The literature review focused on three key areas: the challenges multiethnic church planters face in rapid social change in America, the divine design of multiethnic motivations to practice the heart of Christ to love the sojourner, and the glory and affliction of those who network diaspora communities for the common good of the city.

This study found three necessary components to multiethnic church planting in diaspora communities: the brokenness and beauty of diaspora mission, the glory and affliction of practicing the heart of Christ in multiethnic church planting, and the beautiful community of a diaspora network for the common good of the city.

Related to these three components, this study also found that multiethnic ministry leaders face five major challenges: trust, trauma, isolation, conflict, and identity in cross cultural complexity. The Harvard study of five domains of Human Flourishing are also explored as a resource for building networked communities.

The praxis of the study is to implement a residency training for migrant ministry leaders to seek the common good of the city of St. Louis by living the gospel to transform the idolatry of the city. Migrant ministry leaders multiplying whole life disciple making in beautiful community are redeeming the idols of parochial, prideful, and prejudicial attitudes. Migrant leaders are modeling humility in suffering for the American church to see the glory of the beatitudes lived as a city of ambassadors from all families of the earth. This study is a call to learn in community from the diaspora to establish apostolic church plants with five core networks and seek shalom and flourishing for the common good of the city of St. Louis.

To my wife Patty. In Christ, we sojourned together for fourteen years in South Africa following the promise of practicing one heart and one way in Christ. Thank you for being my covenant love and my best friend. Behold, you are beautiful, my love.

To Andrew and Hannah with Abigail; Katie and Kevin with Simon; Samuel and Lia; Emily and Tim. In Xhosa, “Umntu Ngumntu Ngabantu,” means “A person is a person because of community.” My greatest honor is to learn grace as your dad and grandpa!

To Dr. Robert Kim and Dr. Dan Doriani, my Covenant Theological Seminary friends, along with the great cloud of mentors and friends who have practiced the gentle and humble heart of Christ for forty-three years. You are God’s plan of Christ in you, the hope of glory. Soli Deo Gloria!

And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and with all my soul. **Jeremiah 32:38-41**

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and, on the third day, rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are my witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while Jesus walked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us?” **Luke 24:45-47, 32**

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Abbreviations

PCA	Presbyterian Church in America
EFCA	Evangelical Free Church of America
REACH Global	EFCA Global Mission
REACH National	EFCA USA Mission
MTW	Mission to the World
MNA	Mission to North America
TGC	The Gospel Coalition
FIFA	Federation International of Football Association

Chapter 1

Introduction

In today's world more people live outside their country of birth than at any other time in world history.¹ Most migrants move by choice, but some move out of necessity. All people have been created to seek God and find him.² In scripture, God faithfully walks with sojourners on the diaspora road of migration. Even now God is on the move daily with all the families of the earth to reveal Christ, the hope of glory.

The longest road in the world is the Inter-American highway. It covers 19,000 miles from Prudhoe Bay Alaska to the tip of Argentina, travels through fourteen countries, and has become one of the most important highways of the 2020s. History professor Eric Rutkow, in *The Longest Line on the Map*, describes how the highway “commanded the interest of every U.S. President from Calvin Coolidge to Richard Nixon, though none were able to complete the highway.”³ The only unfinished section is known as the Darien Gap. This sixty miles of tropical jungle between Colombia and Panama is the most dangerous migrant crossing in the world. In 2023, Doctors without Borders reported that almost 500,000 migrants traveled the Darien Gap with most survivors suffering serious medical and psychological trauma.⁴ The U.S. southern border

¹ United Nations, “International Migration 2020 Highlights,” *United Nations*, July 15, 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/desa/international-migration-2020-highlights>.

² E. S. V. Bibles et al., *ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible: Christ in All of Scripture, Grace for All of Life* (Crossway, 2019), Acts 17:26-28.

³ Eric Rutkow, *The Longest Line on the Map: The United States, the Pan-American Highway, and the Quest to Link the Americas* (New York: Scribner, 2019), 11.

⁴ Doctors without Borders, “Darién Gap: ‘We crossed the jungle looking for a better future—not for our lives to end.’” *Doctors Without Borders*, November 21, 2023,

has witnessed a record 6.3 million migrant encounters at and between ports of entry since January 2021.⁵ Migration reform has been named as the number one 2024 election year issue in America, yet political gridlock has not brought reform since 1986.⁶ As migrants sojourn this long road toward citizenship, what role does the church play to practice the heart of Christ to stand in the gap?

John Stott states, “Our God is a missionary God. But the very concept of mission is out of favor in today’s pluralistic world, and hostility to it is growing.”⁷ Pluralism is a plausibility structure of unspoken rules and assumptions through which people see the world. Every society and culture has unspoken assumptions about how they view the world, but this structure is invisible to the person living inside the culture. Pluralism in the form of expressive individualism is the pop ideology of American culture, and increasingly, world evangelism is seen as an intrusion on the individual liberty of people’s personal lives. This study explores practicing the heart of Christ in walking with migrant ministry leaders living in the largest religious shift in American history. Diaspora Mission reflects both the glory and suffering of God’s world mission to reveal the brokenness and beauty of God’s grand story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/darien-gap-we-crossed-jungle-looking-better-future-not-our-lives-end>.

⁵ Muzaffar Chishti, Kathleen Bush-Joseph, and Colleen Putzel-Kavanaugh, “Biden at the Three-Year Mark: The Most Active Immigration Presidency Yet Is Mired in Border Crisis Narrative,” *Migrationpolicy.Org*, January 19, 2024, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/biden-three-immigration-record>.

⁶ Liz Mineo, “Immigration Roars Back in Headlines. Time Finally Come for Reforms?,” *Harvard Gazette*, February 1, 2024, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2024/02/immigration-roars-back-in-headlines-time-finally-come-for-reforms/>.

⁷ John Stott, “Our God Is a Missionary God” (Sermon, Loma Linda University, 2005), <https://johnstott.org/work/our-god-is-a-missionary-god/>.

The Great Dechurching in America

Jim Davis and Michael Graham, in *The Great Dechurching*, document the largest and fastest religious shift in American history.”⁸ Their research found “about 15 percent of American adults living today (around 40 million people) have effectively stopped going to church, and most of this dechurching has happened in the past 25 years.”⁹ A dechurched person is “someone who used to go to church in America at least once a month and now goes less than once a year.” This religious shift away from the church is erasing what used to be an assumed sense of community, creating epidemic levels of isolation. Their study reveals that this 40-million-people shift is greater than all American revivals combined, and one of the major reasons for people leaving the church is moving. Mobility has become a high value in American culture, but the consequence is a lack of rootedness in the culture. Rapid cultural change is calling the church to nurture goodness by walking with these sojourners and seeking a culture of home found in the heart of Christ. As outside cultural catalysts, migrants can speak wisely of their resilience within this American religious shift by modeling the gospel on the move. American believers in Christ can model home by welcoming sojourners with the gentle and humble heart of Christ and then walk with migrant ministry families to flourish in all life.

⁸ Jim Davis and Michael Graham, *The Great Dechurching: Who’s Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023), 24.

⁹ Davis and Graham, 44.

The Great Pastoral Resignation in America

Before the Great Dechurch study, the Barna Group reported that in a survey of over 500 full-time pastors 42 percent reported considering quitting ministry.¹⁰ The top three reasons were immense stress, isolation, and political divisions.¹¹ The Barna group study sites the Covid pandemic as a catalyst. Similarly, many migrants have left their countries after political and economic collapse and are often isolated in American culture. Research shows many pastors are experiencing a similar stress-based desire to leave.

In September 2023, Rev. Alexander Lang wrote “Why I left the Church, “ and it went viral, sparking online discussions of what he called “The Great Pastoral resignation.”¹² One of his most insightful comments described the fixed mindset of the church not desiring growth in their walk with God.¹³

Matthew Soerens is the U.S. Director for U.S. Church Mobilization with World Relief. He references a 2022 Lifeway study showing a dramatic shift from its 2015 study, where only 12 percent of evangelicals believed the Bible speaks of care for immigrants, to its 2022 study, where 70 percent believe the United States has a biblical basis to care for the immigrant.¹⁴ The improvement is encouraging. Yet, Soerens states that the biggest problem he encounters is that “a lot of evangelicals have been disciplined by cable news, talk

¹⁰ Barna Group, “Pastors Share Top Reasons They’ve Considered Quitting Ministry in the Past Year,” Barna Group, April 27, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-quitting-ministry/>.

¹¹ Barna Group.

¹² Alexander Lang, “Departure: Why I Left the Church,” Restorative Faith, September 2, 2023, <https://www.restorativefaith.org/post/departure-why-i-left-the-church>.

¹³ Lang.

¹⁴ Matthew Soerens, “Evangelical Views on Immigration Are Shifting,” *World Relief*, October 21, 2022, <https://worldrelief.org/blog-evangelical-views-on-immigration-are-shifting/>.

radio, and social media to believe that they must choose one of two extreme positions on immigration: either be for open borders, with no regulation and no regard for immigration laws or to be for closed borders, restricting immigration dramatically if not entirely.”¹⁵ Could migrant ministry leaders provide a third way for churches to walk together on the diaspora road?

The Great Church Decline in America

In 2014, Lifeway research studied thirty-four Protestant denominations representing 60 percent of USA Protestants, finding that for every 4,000 new churches planted, 3,700 churches closed.¹⁶ In 2019, Lifeway conducted a similar study five years later and found for every 3,000 churches planted, 4,500 churches closed. Furthermore, Lifeway has also conducted a 30-year discipleship assessment study finding less than 10 percent of American church members practice evangelism at least once a month.¹⁷

In 2014, the U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy embarked on a listening tour across the United States. In life-on-life conversations and in scientific journals, he discovered that before the Covid-19 pandemic, one in two American adults felt isolated, invisible, and insignificant.¹⁸ He concluded that loneliness had become an American epidemic pre-Covid and lay at the root of the country’s health care problems. He

¹⁵ Soerens.

¹⁶ Aaron Earls, “Protestant Church Closures Outpace Openings in U.S.,” Lifeway Research, May 25, 2021, <https://lifewayresearch.com/2021/05/25/protestant-church-closures-outpace-openings-in-u-s/>.

¹⁷ Lifeway Christian Resources, “Discipleship Pathway Assessment,” January 2024, <https://discipleshippathwayassessment.lifeway.com/about/>.

¹⁸ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), “New Surgeon General Advisory Raises Alarm about the Devastating Impact of the Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation in the United States,” May 3, 2023, <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/03/new-surgeon-general-advisory-raises-alarm-about-devastating-impact-epidemic-loneliness-isolation-united-states.html>.

compared the harmful physical consequences of social disconnection to smoking fifteen packs of cigarettes a day and called on faith communities nationwide to help rebuild the splintered American social infrastructure. He stated if the country is not intentionally rebuilding society, cities will no longer function as a mutually beneficial society.

As the U.S. Surgeon General reported, isolation and loneliness are the true epidemic in American culture. Yet, Genesis 3 reveals that isolation and loneliness aren't new issues, but rather, they are historic sin issues, reflected in the three studies cited in the great dechurched, the great pastoral resignation, and the great church decline. Genesis 3 reveals what R.C. Sproul summarized when he stated, "The crisis in America is that we have lost confidence in God ruling over us."¹⁹

The Worldwide Migration Crisis and Global Fertility Decline

For the last seventy years, global fertility rates have decreased from five children to 2.4.²⁰ Lower fertility rates in nearly every country around the world, combined with increased life expectancies, are compounding economic pressures. The push-pull model of migration, developed in 1946, pairs economic pressures with migration. These economic pressures influence the "push" and "pull" of global migration. Migrants are pushed to leave their country when poverty, war, or economic collapse force them to seek asylum or refugee status in another country. Migrants who are pulled will migrate by

¹⁹ *Themes from Deuteronomy* by R.C. Sproul, Themes from Deuteronomy Chapter 1 on 2 Kings 22 King Josiah, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/themes-from-deuteronomy>.

²⁰ Pablo Alvarez, "What Does the Global Decline of the Fertility Rate Look Like?," *World Economic Forum*, June 17, 2022, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/06/global-decline-of-fertility-rates-visualised/>.

choice to seek better economic opportunity. Biblical examples, however, reveal that migration and sojourning are much more complex than the push-pull model.

Throughout history, God has used voluntary and involuntary migration to advance the kingdom of God. The worldwide refugee crises is sometimes called the greatest humanitarian crisis of our times.²¹ God is sovereign in the dispersion and migration of people,²² these dispersions reveal migrants' beliefs, values, and relationships as they are uprooted. The persecution in Acts records the scattering of people that led to the church of Antioch²³. Likewise, the current worldwide migration of people will shape the future of the church in America.

The Chinese word for “crisis” is made up of two symbols; one symbol means danger and the other opportunity.²⁴ The American news media regularly polarizes both danger and opportunity within the great migration crisis at the U.S. Mexican border.²⁵ In December 2023, United States immigration officials processed the largest monthly immigrant total ever, 300,000, at the border.²⁶ The mayor of New York has reported the

²¹ *Refugee Diaspora: Missions amid the Greatest Humanitarian Crisis of the World* (William Carey Publishing, 2018), 5.

²² Acts 17:26

²³ Acts 8:1

²⁴ Ajay D Wasan, “Wei-Ji: Every Crisis Is an Opportunity,” *Oxford Academic* 22, no. 4 (April 1, 2021): 774–75, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pm/pnab080>.

²⁵ Stephen Groves and Lisa Mascaro, “House Speaker Johnson Is Insisting on Sweeping Border Security Changes in a Deal for Ukraine Aid,” *AP News*, December 5, 2023, sec. Washington News, <https://apnews.com/article/congress-ukraine-border-security-zelenskyy-bf932727abd5e8ff3cf5c9c848a3cf78>.

²⁶ Camilo Montoya-Galvez, “U.S. Border Officials on Track to Process over 300,000 Migrants in December, the Highest Monthly Tally on Record,” 1704036600, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/u-s-border-officials-on-track-to-process-over-300-000-migrants-in-december-the-highest-monthly-tally-on-record/ar-AA1mhcGU>.

migration crisis will cost the city \$12 billion dollars by mid-2025 and “destroy the city.”²⁷ The church in America has responded to the migration crisis as both a danger and an opportunity. How can the church love the sojourner God is sending and seek the common good of the city?

Defining Culture and the Multiethnic Church

Dr. James Anderson of Reformed Theological Seminary defines culture as simply “what we do with what God has made.”²⁸ He lists five guidelines for culture: scripture informs culture, culture is a gift, culture is fallen, culture is religious, and culture is seen through the lens of the Great Commission. Diane Langberg describes the fall of culture, noting, “As humans, we are easily seduced and shaped by the culture in which we have marinated. We breathe it in constantly, and our culture becomes part of us without assessment. We are easily blind and oblivious to the toxins we ingest that grow in and around us and that we transmit to others.”²⁹ Andy Crouch in *Culture Making* says, “Culture is people making sense of the world by making something of the world.”³⁰

Sam George is the director of the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center for Global Diaspora. He is also a Lausanne Movement global diaspora catalyst. He believes

²⁷ Muzaffar Chishti Putzel-Kavanaugh Julia Gelatt, Colleen Putzel-Kavanaugh Muzaffar Chishti, Julia Gelatt, and Colleen, “New York and Other U.S. Cities Struggle with High Costs of Migrant Arrivals,” *Migrationpolicy.Org*, September 27, 2023, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/cities-struggle-migrant-arrivals-new-york>.

²⁸ James Anderson, “How Should Christians Engage with the Culture?,” Reformed Theological Seminary, accessed September 5, 2023, <https://rts.edu/resources/how-should-christians-engage-with-the-culture/>.

²⁹ Diane Langberg, *Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2020), 26.

³⁰ Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (IVP Books, 2013), 24.

that the current refugee crisis in Europe has created one of the greatest mission moments for secular Europe. In 2016, George traveled through ten European cities in five countries and describes how the diaspora is God at work to shape culture:

It was amazing for me to be present at meetings where hundreds of refugees turned to Christ. One church in Germany had baptized over a thousand Syrian and Kurdish people over the previous six months. There are over 100 Arabic-speaking churches across Europe, some predating the crisis and others started in response to it. They are not only very engaged with the issue, but also highly effective on account of their linguistic and cultural proximity to the refugees.³¹

Michael Emerson defines a multiethnic church as a local congregation of believers with no more than 80 percent of its worshipers identified from a single racial or ethnic group.³²

Multiethnic ministry leaders are sojourners intentionally ministering cross-culturally by following the incarnate word of Jesus Christ as citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

Thomas Harvey, the Academic Dean for the Oxford School of Mission, writes, “In an insecure world, humans tend to seek refuge in grounded and stable communities. Yet, the God of the Bible turns to the sojourner and announces his blessing and shalom.”³³ The church has an opportunity to humanize the migration crises by loving, listening, learning, and lamenting to seek shalom in walking with sojourners as migrant ministry leaders.

³¹ Sam George, “Is God Reviving Europe through Refugees?,” *Lausanne Movement*, April 28, 2017, <https://lausanne.org/content/lga/2017-05/god-reviving-europe-refugees>.

³² Cole Brown, “3 Concerns About Pursuing Multi-Ethnic Churches,” The Gospel Coalition, October 24, 2017, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/3-concerns-about-pursuing-multi-ethnic-churches/>.

³³ Sadiri Joy Tira, Tetsunao Yamamori, and Christopher J. H. Wright, *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology* (Langham Global Library, 2020), 30.

Three Multiethnic Sojourners Walking in God's Rule

Amos 5:24 says, “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream”. Dr. John Perkins’ book *Let Justice Roll Down* tells his life story of justice and gospel transformation. As a sojourner, Perkins casts the vision that the church live in the waters of justice so that the righteousness of Christ flows like living streams from the church. He defines justice as “making right any of the many things that have gone wrong in this very good world that God made – and among the very good human beings he created to inhabit the world.” Perkins believes injustice has been a cultural gap revealing lost confidence in God ruling over America and that the first step in pursuing justice is to effectively listen to God and talk with one another. Perkins believes Revelation 7:9 is the prize of Christ; in Christ, the church must be intentional to leave the comfort of culture to see the image of God in all people.

Lesslie Newbigin was a British missionary to India for forty years. When his sojourn ended, he returned to England and as an outside catalyst, saw the church’s idolatry of religious pride. Its resulting isolation led to pluralism in the church in Europe. Newbigin believed his country had lost confidence in God leading in their daily lives. America shares this problem, seen in its misplaced confidence. Yet, the missionary God of scripture is sending the gift of migrants to practice the heart of Christ to shape gospel resilience in rapid cultural change.

Lesslie Newbigin describes pluralism as glasses that make sense of the variety of cultures and faiths shaping daily life and decisions in cultural context. Newbigin believes the culture of the contemporary West celebrates pluralism and has built a two-tier house

of truth separating facts from beliefs.³⁴ The plausibility structure of the contemporary West makes science into absolute truth, containing the beliefs or values of faith. Therefore, pluralism states that since faith cannot be proven with facts, all faiths must be valued equally. Newbigin explains that throughout history and in the rest of the world, faith is central to truth. Could this missionary God be sending the highway of immigrants to be the Revelation 7:9 catalyst in America to remove idolatry and renew hearts to practice gospel identity?

Lamin Sanneh was descended from an ancient African royal family but grew up on the margins in a poor Muslim family in Georgetown, Gambia, among the Mandinka people. He learned of Jesus by reading the Qur'an, wondering, "How did God 'rescue' Jesus from the cross, and why would Jesus choose a life of suffering?" For over thirty years, Sanneh lived as a sojourner in the U.S., teaching at Yale Divinity School. He credited his commitment to academia to reading Helen Keller's autobiography, and he became known as the world's leading expert on Christianity and Islam in Africa. Sanneh's definition of worldview defines Christianity from the perspective of a sojourner, noting that Christianity was not the colonial enterprise of geopolitics, but a worldview based on the eternal word of God made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ whose kingdom transcends ethnic, national, and cultural barriers.³⁵

³⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, Mich. : Geneva SZ: Eerdmans, 1989), 28.

³⁵ Lamin O (Lamin Ousman) Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 2nd edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 189.

Lamin Sanneh introduced the unconventional idea of Christian mission as an agent of pluralism.³⁶ Sanneh believed genuine pluralism assumes mutual benefit is derived from mutual responsibility. The Latin word for “university” is “the whole” which pursues the mutual benefit of truth in the context of many cultural identities and ideas. Unfortunately, American culture has limited the university to an institution with buildings for the pursuit of academic instruction. Sanneh stressed the importance of living cross-culturally in pluralism as a sojourner to expose ‘the naked gospel’ to shape the character and heart of Christ through the principle of reciprocity.³⁷

These three sojourner stories reveal how God is on the move in the global diaspora of an estimated 281 million sojourners. This global migration is one of the greatest opportunities for the church to innovate a new paradigm of how the missionary God of scripture displays his glory in all people to walk confidently in his rule of life.

How can the church practice the heart of Christ in walking with the migrant sojourner? Charles Spurgeon taught that of the eighty-nine chapters in the four gospel accounts, only Matthew 11:28-30 quotes Jesus describing his heart as gentle and lowly.³⁸ The Migration Policy Institute identified the 2023 top ten migrants issues as variations of various hearts searching for this beauty.³⁹ Tim Keller says, “Our character is mainly shaped by our primary social community -- the people with whom we eat, play, converse,

³⁶ Lamin O (Lamin Ousman) Sanneh, “Christian Mission in the Pluralist Milieu: The African Experience,” *International Review of Mission* 74, no. 294 (April 1985): 209.

³⁷ Sanneh, “Christian Mission in the Pluralist Milieu.” 210.

³⁸ Dane C. Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 17.

³⁹ Migration Policy Institute, “Top 10 Migration Issues of 2021,” [migrationpolicy.org](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2021), December 7, 2021, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2021>.

and study.”⁴⁰ At a time of the largest religious shift in American culture, how do migrant ministry leaders practice the heart of Christ to walk with diaspora communities?

The *Washington Post* published an article titled, “The World is Expected to Become More Religious – Not Less.” In this article, David Voas of the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex states, “The culture of the West is going to become increasingly nonreligious at the same time the culture in the Global South persists in being religious, and the repercussions will be global.” The missionary God of scripture is sending migrant ministry leaders to America as gospel catalysts on diaspora mission to strengthen his church in a more non-religious American culture.

The Ephesian Moment of the Global Diaspora

Diaspora is the global dispersion, or scattering, of people. These movements can be voluntary or coercive, domestic or global, yet sovereignly effected by the sovereign rule of God.⁴¹ These movements are collectively called a diaspora, from the Greek word *dia* meaning “across” and *speirein* meaning to “scatter.” The word is translated in English Bibles variously as “moved, driven out, scattered, banished, exiled, dispersed, outcast, exiles, preserved, or remnant which were scattered.”⁴² Diaspora is a recurring event in Old and New Testaments revealing the heart of God to love sojourners.⁴³

⁴⁰ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*, Ill. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 651.

⁴¹ Acts 17:24-27.

⁴² Tira, Yamamori, and Wright, *Scattered and Gathered*, 11.

⁴³ 1 Peter 1:1, Deut. 10: 12-22

The Lausanne Diaspora Leadership Team distinguishes between a diaspora and a migration, a difference crucial to understanding the connections between geographic and spatial mobility and world missions.⁴⁴ A diaspora includes overarching political and social structures, whereas a migration is a designation for diasporic movements.⁴⁵ Thus, a diaspora denotes grand design while a migration is a specific effort requiring a structure. Diaspora missiology is the study of the geographic or demographic movements through the lens of God's redemptive plan for all nations.⁴⁶ In the context of the Great Commission, a diaspora accentuates a broad missiological perspective, while migration looks at sociologically oriented movements. This study examined the diaspora within the United States missiologically through migrant ministry leaders.

Andrew Walls is a church historian of mission known for his pioneering studies in the history of the African Church. Walls coined the phrase "The Ephesian Moment" from Ephesians 2:19-22, where the Ephesian church celebrates Jews and Greeks together in their union as one in Christ.⁴⁷ He defines this Ephesian Moment as the mystery of the gospel now revealed, uniting people from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. He speaks to this moment with a call to interdependence. "Each was necessary to the other,

⁴⁴ Tira, Yamamori, and Wright, *Scattered and Gathered*, 13.

⁴⁵ Chandler Im and Amos Yong, "Global Diasporas and Mission," *Concordia Seminary*, Edinburgh Centenary Series, January 1, 2014, 3.

⁴⁶ Tira, Yamamori, and Wright, *Scattered and Gathered*, 4.

⁴⁷ Daniel Yang, "Our Modern Ephesian Moment: Four Markers of Meaningful Ethnic Belonging In Multiethnic Congregations," *Wheaton College Billy Graham Center*, August 15, 2019, <https://wheatonbillygraham.com/modern-ephesian-moment-four-markers-meaningful-ethnic-belonging-multiethnic-congregations/>.

each was necessary to complete and correct the other; for each was an expression of Christ under certain specific conditions, and Christ is humanity completed.”⁴⁸

In summary, the missionary God of scripture is sojourning with migrant ministry leaders in America to lead gospel movements in a changing social and ethnic demographic. Revelation 7:9 reveals the glory of Christ is entering American ethnic silos by grafting in the vine of migrant ministry leaders. The diaspora mission in twenty-first century America is the hand of God moving the nations to create an Ephesian Moment to multiply multiethnic churches for the common good of the city.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore how migrant ministry leaders plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The three main areas of literature review for the study are: diaspora mission, multiethnic church planting, and developing culturally intelligent leaders.

Research Questions

1. What challenges do migrant ministry leaders face in planting a multiethnic church?
2. How do migrant ministry leaders understand God’s story of four movements of creation, fall, redemption, restoration to love the diaspora community?
 - A. (Creation) How is the image of God reflected in diaspora people?
 - B. (Fall) How are immigration systems broken with attitudes of injustice?
 - C. (Redemption) How does the gospel bring healing to the diaspora?
 - D. (Restoration) How can cities flourish with migrant ministry leaders?

⁴⁸ Yang.

3. How do migrant ministry leaders use Cultural Intelligence to serve the common good of the city?
 - A. (Motivation) How does their own diaspora story motivate them ?
 - B. (Knowledge) How do they describe cultural intelligence?
 - C. (Strategy) What scripture influences their cultural work to serve the common good?
 - D. (Behavior) How do they network for the common good of the city?
4. In what ways and to what extent do migrant ministry leaders shape a regional network in the diaspora community for the common good of the city?

Significance of the Study

This study has significance for church leaders in particular but is applicable to all people desiring to grow in understanding diaspora, migration, and the character of wisdom formed in leaders through their migration experience. Leaders will identify qualities of cultural assimilation and tensions to apply in their whole life discipling. The essence of the study is obeying the scriptural call to love the sojourners by following a God who is on diaspora mission walking with multiethnic disciple makers for the common good of the city. Ministry leaders who want to grow in their love for all people through a network of multiethnic leaders will be encouraged in their growth in CQ® through discipleship practices and spiritual identity. This study will primarily serve multiethnic church planters to identify best practices for creating a DNA of engaging the city, multiplying whole life disciple makers, and planting multiethnic churches in a changing cultural context of the city with immigration. This study is a work in progress humbly asking for wisdom in the cultural complexities in the American culture so the church can innovate on culture change through a posture of practicing the heart of Christ.

Definition of Terms

Citizen: The narrative of scripture speaks of sin separating all of humanity ever since the fall living east of the garden of Eden in exile from God. Therefore, every citizen on earth is a sinner living as an exile far from home. The New Testament writers used the language of citizenship in Christ's righteousness to refer to the people of God.

Culture: Dr. James Anderson of Reformed Theological Seminary defines culture as simply what people do with what God has made. Resilient Ministry researchers Tasha Chapman, Bob Burns, and Donald Guthrie define culture as the "patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting to various situations and actions and as the programming that shapes who we are and who we are becoming." Leslie Newbigin says culture "includes the whole life of human beings as far as it is a shared life. It includes the science, art, technology, politics, jurisprudence, and religion of a group of people."

Cultural Intelligence: an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings and interactions. It goes beyond the ability to acquire and understand general knowledge. London Business School Professors Christopher Early and Soon Ang developed the cultural quotient's (CQ) four capabilities: CQ drive, CQ knowledge, CQ strategy, and CQ action.

Diaspora: the global dispersion or scattering of people throughout world, from the Greek word *dia* meaning "across" and *speirein* meaning to "scatter." A diaspora denotes grand design while a migration is a specific effort requiring a structure. Diaspora missiology is the study of the geographic or demographic movements through the lens of God's redemptive plan for all nations.

Diaspora ministry: a two-way road of ministries: ministering to the diaspora and ministering through the diaspora. Enoch Wan defines diaspora missions as Christian participation in God's redemptive mission to evangelize their kinsmen on the move and through them to reach out to natives in their homelands and beyond.

Dechurched person: someone who used to go to church in America at least once a month and now goes less than once a year.

Ephesian Moment: a term developed by Andrew Walls to define when Jewish and Greek followers of Jesus Christ embraced that each was necessary to the other, and each was necessary to complete and correct the other, for each person was an expression of Christ under certain specific conditions, and Christ is humanity completed.⁴⁹

Home: living in the daily rootedness of the gentle and humble heart of Christ so that Christ within is the hope of glory for all families to be fully known and fully loved.

Involuntary migration: the movement of people through war, persecution, famine, natural disasters, economic collapse, primarily for the pursuit of freedom.

Justice: making right any of the many things that have gone wrong in this very good world through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Migrant ministry leader: Samuel Escobar says migrants are people in transition, people on the move who are experiencing the loss of roots. Such people are open to new commitments, ready to assume faith in a personal way.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Eph 2:19

⁵⁰ Samuel Escobar, "Migration and Ethnic Conflict," *Lausanne Movement*, May 1, 2014, <https://lausanne.org/content/migration-and-ethnic-conflict>.

Multiethnic Church: a local congregation of believers with no more than 80 percent of its worshipers identified from a single ethnic group.

Multiethnic ministry leaders: sojourners intentionally ministering cross-culturally by following the word of Jesus Christ as citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

Philoxenia: a love for strangers or foreigners, hospitality, kindness to strangers.

Practicing the heart of Christ: Charles Spurgeon teaches that of the 89 chapters in the four gospel accounts, only one reveals Jesus Christ's heart as gentle and humble. Jesus' call is to take his gentle yoke and learn of him to find rest for their souls,⁵¹

Pluralism: a plausibility structure of unspoken rules and assumptions through which people see the world. Every society and culture has unspoken assumptions about how they view the world; this structure is invisible to the person living inside the culture.

Sojourner: from the Greek word *paraoikos*. Peter uses the word in 1 Peter 2:11 and Paul uses the same word in Ephesians 2:19 to describe a foreigner, alien, or stranger and aligned with Acts 7:6 describing Israel "sojourning to a land belong to others."

Voluntary Migration: movement of people based on a choice to pursue economic, educational, or family relationships primarily for security and identity.

Whole life disciple-making: gospel transformation engaged with the whole person in all of life; the Word of God in the whole person, in all of life; and Jesus at the very center of life.⁵²

Xenophobia: a fear or hatred of foreigners, people from different cultures, a superior attitude to strangers.

⁵¹ Matt. 11:28-30

⁵² D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones et al., *Preaching and Preachers*, Anniversary edition (Zondervan, 2012).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to explore how migrant ministry leaders plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The presupposition of this study was that multiethnic ministry leaders with a collectivist cultural heritage can network strategic partnerships to seek the common good of their city, yet because of superior attitudes toward migrant ministry leaders their communities are isolated and lonely in American culture. The three main areas of literature review for the study are: diaspora mission, multiethnic church planting, and developing culturally intelligent leaders.

The literature review begins with defining and applying diaspora missiology in cultural engagement through the life stories of sojourners practicing the heart of Christ. Next, a study of the biblical model of the Ephesian church identifies character qualities of migrant ministry leaders for a gospel movement in the context of the dispersion. The goal is to identify the best practices in the Ephesian Moment for passing the gospel to the next generation of migrant ministry leaders to make whole life disciples and plant multiethnic churches. Finally, the study concludes with literature that could spark innovation in multiethnic ministry network with cultural intelligence. The network brings a theology of suffering and glory to serve the common good of the city, away from cultural idolatry, to embrace a gospel identity in all of life.

Immigration with A Missional Hermeneutic

Chapter 1 identified the cultural complexities of immigration and the need for the church to practice a missional hermeneutic. Diaspora missiology reveals the glory of God walking with sojourners in their suffering by leaving the familiar to move to the foreign. A missional hermeneutic is the biblical theory of interpretation that God is on mission to bring glory to his name among all people. Psalm 67 rejoices that when the “face of God shines upon his people,” his ways are known on earth and his salvation to all people. Colossians 1 celebrates the mystery of the gospel, “Christ in you the hope of glory,” empowering diaspora leaders to live as ambassadors of God’s kingdom in a foreign land. Thus, South African missiologist David Bosch speaks to Psalm 67 in the face of God, “God’s very nature is missionary.”⁵³ J.D. Payne speaks to the glory of God, “The glory of God among his image-bearers comes through sending and relationship.”⁵⁴

Latino-American biblical scholar M. Daniel Carroll Rodas believes migration is a metaphor of the Christian life. He believes the image of God in Genesis 1 gives value and purpose by ‘filling the earth’ with the history of humanity as the stories of migration.⁵⁵ Carroll clearly outlines narrative and legislation of migration as God’s story of culture.

The narrative themes of covenant and kingdom also add to the study thematic significance. God is a covenant-keeping God who still loves to walk in between the

⁵³ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 20th Anniversary edition (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2011).

⁵⁴ J. D. Payne, *Theology of Mission: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Lexham Press, 2022), 17.

⁵⁵ M. Daniel Carroll Rodas, *Dr. Daniel Carroll R. (Rodas) on Immigration and the People of God: A Biblical Foundation — EFCA Helps*, loc. 7 minute, accessed April 4, 2024, <https://helps.efca.org/resources/dr-daniel-carroll-r-rodas-on-immigration-and-the-people-of-god-a-biblical-foundation>.

broken pieces of life, as he did with Abraham in Genesis 15. In Luke 9:23, Jesus called his twelve disciples to “follow me.” The Greek word for “follow” means to imitate Jesus in all of life. Dane Ortlund, in *Gentle and Lowly*, describes the gentle and lowly heart of Christ in Matthew 11:28-30 as “the humility of the heart of Christ in the sense of destitution of being thrust downward by life circumstances.”⁵⁶

The apostle Peter identifies himself as a follower of Jesus Christ and writes from Rome⁵⁷ to the “elect exiles.” The elect exiles were Gentile and Jewish converts called to live as a ‘holy nation’ by practicing the heart of Christ in a hostile world. Peter urges them as “sojourners and exiles to abstain from the fleshly lusts that wage war against their soul.”⁵⁸ In 1 Peter 2:11, Peter uses the word “sojourner,” *paraoikos*. This is the same word tense as used in Ephesians 2:19 to describe a foreigner, alien, or stranger. This also aligns with Acts 7:6 describing Israel as “sojourning to a land belong to others.” The word “exile” used in 1 Peter 1:1 also is defined by the Greek word *parepidemois* as a “sojourner living as a temporary resident.” The powerful combination of words Jesus used to describe his heart as gentle and lowly is now used by Peter when he combines the words “elect exiles.” The word “exile” in Greek is *elektos*, which means “chosen.” Peter immediately in his letter calls Christians to practice the heart of Christ as elect exiles.

The narrative of scripture speaks of sin separating all of humanity ever since the fall living east of the garden of Eden in exile from God. Therefore, every citizen on earth is a sinner living as exiles far from home. The New Testament writers used the language

⁵⁶ Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*, 20.

⁵⁷ 1 Peter 5:13, 1:1.

⁵⁸ 1 Peter 2:11.

of citizenship in Christ righteousness to refer to the people of God. A citizen was defined in the ancient world by ethnic identity tied to a nation state that could be given to a foreign-born sojourner in certain circumstances or at great cost.⁵⁹ In Genesis 14:13 Abraham is called a “Hebrew” that literally means “one from beyond.” Elsewhere, the prophet Jeremiah wrote to exiles in Babylon to reject the comfort of the false prophets and seek the welfare of the city. In Jeremiah 29:5-14, the exiles are called to build houses, plant gardens, multiply their families, and pray for the welfare of the city that “I have sent you” into exile. In verse 13, this missionary God promises, “when you seek me with your whole heart I will be found by you, and will gather you from all nations, and will bring you back from where I sent you.” The language of resilience found in Jeremiah’s letter to exiles is to trust in the character of this missionary God who loves to walk with the sojourner. Philoxenia is the word that describes a love for strangers or sojourners by showing hospitality and kindness with a gentle and humble heart.

Harvard Study on Human Flourishing

For the last five years researchers at Harvard and Baylor University are investing \$43.5 million to study human flourishing for the common good of cities.⁶⁰ In 2017, Tyler VanderWeele published a study *On the Promotion of Human Flourishing* that defined

⁵⁹ Louis Berkhof, *History of Christian Doctrines*, Revised edition (Banner of Truth, 1996), 174.

⁶⁰ Harvard Crimson, “Harvard Researchers Launch \$43M Global Human Flourishing Study | News | The Harvard Crimson,” November 8, 2021, <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2021/11/8/human-flourishing-study/>.

human flourishing as “living in a state in which all aspects of a person’s life is good”.⁶¹

The study examines six domains of human flourishing:

1. Happiness and life satisfaction
2. Mental and physical health
3. Meaning and purpose
4. Character and Virtue
5. Close social relationships
6. Financial and material stability⁶²

These six domains provide a human flourishing index that were developed through interviewing 240,000 people from 22 countries.⁶³ The study pursues what Vivek Murthy, the US Surgeon General, identified in the previous chapter of the need to recapture a deeper outcome of purpose and meaning to restore the social fabric of community.

Before the Harvard study, Moses describes in Leviticus 19:33,34 a call to live the social fabric of being image bearers by reflecting the holiness of God in how we love our neighbor:

When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.⁶⁴

Matthew Soerens and Jenny Wang in their book *Welcoming the Stranger* state that the Hebrew Scriptures are full of instructions on how to treat immigrants.⁶⁵ The many

⁶¹ Tyler J. VanderWeele, “On the Promotion of Human Flourishing,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 31 (August 2017): 8148–56, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1702996114>.

⁶² VanderWeele.

⁶³ Harvard Crimson, “Harvard Researchers Launch \$43M Global Human Flourishing Study | News | The Harvard Crimson.”

⁶⁴ Bibles et al., *ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible*, Leviticus 19:33,34.

⁶⁵ Matthew Soerens, Jenny Yang, and Leith Anderson, *Welcoming the Stranger*, Revised edition (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2018), 91.

commands in scripture to care for the foreign born reveal his heart that we his people would love our foreign born neighbor as a native in the land. America is a land of immigrants that holds an important identity in our national social fabric. Yet, as historian Roger Daniels suggests most Americans hold a dualistic opinion about immigration by stating, “on the one hand America revels in the immigration past and on the other hand rejects much of the immigrant present”.⁶⁶

Emma Lazarus penned the sonnet at the foot of the Statue of Liberty in 1883: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...I lift my lamp beside the golden door”.⁶⁷ Ironically one year previous to the sonnet’s publication the US Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act that forbid Chinese from entering the United States for sixty years.⁶⁸ The Church is called to practice the heart of God to love the sojourner for the repairing the dualism in our culture to restore the social fabric for the flourishing of communities and the common good of the city.

A Heart of Philoxenia Motivating Diaspora Mission in America

M. Daniel Carroll Rodas in his book *The Bible and Borders* communicates the gentle and humble heart of philoxenia when he states,

because immigrants are made in the divine image, they have an essential value and possess immense potential to contribute to society and to the common good through their presence and work. Migration is not a new phenomenon; it is as old

⁶⁶ Soerens, Yang, and Anderson, 45.

⁶⁷ Soerens, Yang, and Anderson, 46.

⁶⁸ Soerens, Yang, and Anderson, 46.

as time.⁶⁹

NT Wright in a recent talk on kingdom oriented approach to global migration patterns also speaks to the gentle and humble heart to love the sojourner when he stated,

At the time of the reformation, the reformers insisted on having liturgy in their own language. This is excellent, we want the word in our heart language. But the consequence was that the church became divided according to language, ethnicity, and becomes a denial of Ephesians 2 where Jewish and Gentile believers are one. The church in Ephesians 2 modeled the new creation with the body of Christ being one across traditional lines. The church culture has forgotten the Ephesian model the last 400 years. The new heaven is coming down to earth, and we the church are called to recapture the multiethnic heart of God by rehumanizing human beings as sojourners.⁷⁰

The theme of dualism is not only in the culture of society but is in the culture of the church. As NT Wright states, this paper advocates for the Ephesian model on the integrative kingdom oriented approach where Jewish and Gentile believers live as one to reflect the new heaven of Revelation 7:9 coming down to earth recaptures the multiethnic heart of God. The word of God can sanctify the dualism in the church to rehumanize immigrants as sojourners as we walk together as one for the flourishing of the land.

The statement of faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America contains ten articles. Article eight is titled Christian living and is rooted in scripture with a heart of philoxenia for sojourners that contends with dualism in the church. The article reads:

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from his sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others

⁶⁹ *The Bible and Borders: Hearing God's Word on Immigration (Audible Audio Edition): M. Daniel Carroll R., Jim Denison, Blackstone Publishing: Audible Books & Originals*, Audible, 2024, loc. Chapter 1, <https://www.amazon.com/Bible-Borders-Hearing>.

⁷⁰ N.T. Wright, "Front Stage Back Stage with Jason Daye - Healthy Leadership for Life and Ministry: Resisting the Empire: A Kingdom-Oriented Approach to Politics & Government - N.T. Wright - 103," accessed April 5, 2024, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/resisting-the-empire-a-kingdom-oriented-approach/id1620979919?i=1000651162624>.

sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.⁷¹

The church is called to have compassion for the poor and the migrant because this reflects the image of God who identifies himself with the lowly of the world (Isa. 57:15). Showing philoxenia to the sojourner is an act of worship toward God. Loving the sojourner demonstrates a sincere love since the giver cannot be repaid. God is the defender of the poor (James 2:5), and judges those who deprive foreigners living among you of justice because you do not fear me (Malachi 3:5).

Timothy Keller, in *Love the City*, asks two questions to expose the attitude and the understanding of the nature of culture in America. The first asks "Should we be pessimistic or optimistic about the possibility of cultural change?"⁷² The second asks, "Is the current culture redeemable and good, or fundamentally fallen?"⁷³

The praxis of a missional hermeneutic applies these attitudinal questions to the immigration and cultural crisis challenges identified in Chapter 1. Migrants today are seeking the beauty of a new home. To better understand their movement, the Migration Policy Institute identified the 2023 top ten immigrant issues in America:

1. New models are emerging in humanitarian protection in migration.
2. New migrant moving patterns show migrants seeking second and third destinations.
3. A transformed Western Hemisphere wrestles with a new migration reality.
4. Countries are competing for high skilled migrants.
5. After fleeing violence many migrants are forced back to their home country.

⁷¹ EFCA and Kevin Kompelien, *Evangelical Convictions, 2nd Edition*, ed. Greg Strand and Bill Kynes (Free Church Publications, 2011), 161.

⁷² Timothy Keller, *Loving the City: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 248.

⁷³ Keller, 249.

6. Movements toward temporary status to provide protection from crises.
7. Migration movements within regions gets easier.
8. Immigration fears are at the top of American voters' minds.
9. Potentially landmark climate migration policy is developed.
10. New social media apps arrive to support migrants.⁷⁴

To answer the first cultural change question with a missional hermeneutic, James Davidson Hunter in his book *To Change the World* approaches issues with optimism, concluding that culture change primarily happens from the top down rather than from the grass roots up.⁷⁵ Hunter identifies the “outer elites” as catalysts of culture change, young immigrant leaders who form networks of common cause from multiple disciplines in society.⁷⁶ Hunter also notes the difficulties implied in the question, saying that culture is a product of history not simply new ideas, so culture will not change easily and will always require the resilience of character to fight for change.⁷⁷

To answer the second cultural question on the redeemable yet fallen nature of culture we will study D. A. Carson’s four church models in Figure 2.1 for the church to enter the migrant gap. The missional hermeneutic of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration can connect church leadership to cultural engagement for the common good of the city.

Samuel Escobar defines migrant ministry leaders as people in transition, people on the move who are experiencing the loss of roots. Migrants are open to new commitments,

⁷⁴ “Top 10 Migration Issues of 2023,” [migrationpolicy.org](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2023), December 18, 2023, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2023>.

⁷⁵ James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*, 1st ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 41–42.

⁷⁶ Hunter, 42.

⁷⁷ Hunter, 33–34.

ready to assume faith in a personal way.⁷⁸ Escobar reminds the church that John Calvin was a migrant from France to Switzerland who cared for 5,000 immigrants in a city of only 10,000 in Geneva and launched faith and work initiatives for young immigrants.⁷⁹

Four Models of Cultural Engagement

D.A. Carson provides practical wisdom in his book *Christ and Culture Revisited*. He revisits H. Richard Niebuhr's five Christ-and-culture options, but rather than providing an either/or view of Christ and culture, Carson looks at Niebuhr's five culture options as one bigger biblical-theological vision in the narrative scripture. He emphasizes the connection between redeeming culture with the one vision of biblical theology, to "control our thinking simultaneously all the time."⁸⁰

Carson defines the four models in the church to engage culture as the following:

1. The Two Kingdoms model emphasizes the goodness of the material creation with the image of God in all creation, and God's common grace to all.
2. The Transformational model emphasizes the fallen condition focus, the gap between belief and unbelief, and the idols of heart in culture.
3. The Counter-culturalist model pinpoints God's redemption in history by calling and creating a new people to show the world a new life in Christ.
4. The Relevance model focuses on God's restoration of his creation, the healing of the nations, and the resurrection of the dead.⁸¹

Each incorporates one part of the biblical storyline, but each also overemphasizes its center of gravity, neglecting most of the rest of the biblical storyline, leading to the following criticisms:

⁷⁸ Escobar, "Migration and Ethnic Conflict."

⁷⁹ Escobar.

⁸⁰ D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, Repr. ed. (Eerdmans, 2012), 59.

⁸¹ Carson, 44–58.

1. The Two Kingdoms model is simplistic in how people need the scriptures, not just general revelation, to live and work with issues in all of life.
2. The Transformationalist model creates a two-tier understanding of truth and overlooks the work of unbelievers.
3. The Counter-culturalist model makes a such a sharp distinction between the world and church that they miss sin in the church and common grace in world.
4. The Relevance model fails to see fallen cultures in an “already but not yet” perspective, and thus they aim for the common good over evangelism.

Keller summaries the weakness of these models:

The reality of sin that remains in unbelievers means that the church is never nearly as good as her right beliefs should make her, and common grace in non-believers means the world is never as bad as their wrong beliefs make them.⁸²

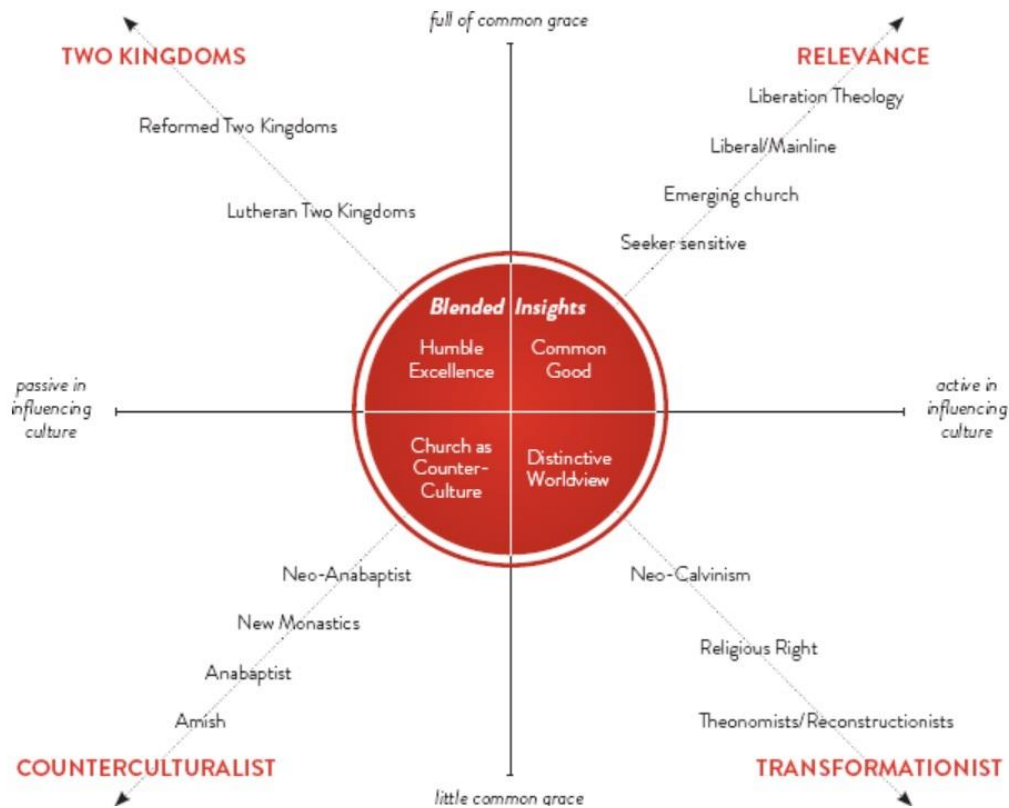
Carson and Keller communicate that each of these models engages a section of culture, but like an unbalanced wheel, each presents an unbalanced missional hermeneutic and as a result will not restore the full image of God.

Keller graphs the four models against two axes reflecting culture and grace. The vertical axis represents the common grace of God in culture, with the top representing the redeemable view of culture with God at work in general revelation to draw all people to himself. The bottom of the vertical axis represents the opposite: the world is so fallen and full of idolatry that God’s activity happens only through the church. The horizontal axis addresses the attitude toward cultural change, with the left horizontal axis representing the passive pursuit to change culture. The right side of the horizontal axis representing in active pursuit of cultural change. The graph is not communicating a simplistic approach to cultural engagement by combining the best of each model, cutting out the extremes, and simply balancing the wheel of culture.⁸³

⁸² Keller, *Loving the City*, 108.

⁸³ Keller, 257.

Figure 2.1 Four Models of Cultural Engagement in Churches



Craig Ott and Gene Wilson in their book *Global Church Planting* provide a helpful third dimension to the two dimensional models outlined by Keller and Carson. Ott and Wilson provide not only the biblical principles and practical cultural models like Keller and Carson, but a middle layer of best global practices for developing a healthy cultural methodology applied to diaspora mission. Ott and Wilson use the term apostolic church planter to describe a model of developing, empowering, and releasing local believers from the very beginning to create a healthy culture of multiethnic leadership.⁸⁴

Most Western church planting consists of the pastoral and catalytic models, but the apostolic church planting model provides a much needed indigenous multiethnic

⁸⁴ Craig Ott, Gene Wilson, and Rick Warren, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Baker Academic, 2010), 89.

multiplication in American cultural church planting models. The apostolic model sets up a planter with a 6-M roles to pass through the three stages of launching, developing, and departing. The 6-M roles of the planter are the motor to get the work started, the model for disciple making, the mobilizer to multiply, the mentor to equip multiethnic leaders, the multiplier of all nations, and the builder of a raft to leave well as a memory.⁸⁵

Figure 2.2 Ott and Wilson Three Models of Church Planters

Table 5.1
Three Types of Church Planters

	Pastoral Church Planter	Catalytic Church Planter	Apostolic Church Planter
Goal	To plant the church and pastor it until it is large enough to call and pay its own pastor	To plant a church that will become the catalyst for mothering many other churches and launching a movement	To multiply churches that are not dependent on the church planter or outside resources
Method	The church planter serves as pastor; missionary church planters usually move on after the church has called a national pastor	The church planter plants a large, strong church and then remains as pastor or resource person to facilitate the planting of multiple daughter churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The church planter serves as equipper rather than as pastor, training and delegating ministry to nationals The church planter moves on quickly, leaving ministry in the hands of local leaders
Assumptions	A church is established only when it can call and pay its own pastor	Under the right leadership a strategically located church can multiply daughter churches	Local lay believers can be equipped to provide their own pastoral leadership and multiply churches
Application	Suited for areas of moderate church growth, relative affluence, and available trained pastors	Suited for moderately responsive urban areas with potential for multiple daughter churches	Suited for most localities, especially areas with rapid church growth and rural settings
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality of ministry by well-trained leaders Long-term relationships in church and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates church reproduction Networking among the new churches Long-term relationships in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates church multiplication Promotes lay ownership and ministry Free from dependency on outside resources
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely leads to church multiplication The church planter stays too long at one location Failure to mobilize the laity and dependency on professionals and outside resources Rapid church-planting movements can be hampered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church planter must be exceptionally gifted Not all church plants will grow or become strong enough to mother many churches Dependent on the gifts of the church planter; reproduction may cease with the departure of the church planter The church reproduces but seldom multiplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress is initially slower Local believers are not always willing or capable to lead Lay leadership may be weak or poorly trained Most church planters are not trained in this method Church planter may need to change location often
Examples	Most Western church planters	Rick Warren, Bob Roberts	Tom Steffen, George Patterson

⁸⁵ Ott, Wilson, and Warren, 105.

Mission in the Kingdom: Organic and Organized

Ott and Wilson weave together the ministry of the gospel with the heart of God to walk with multiethnic leaders for lasting kingdom impact in all areas of life and society.

Ott and Wilson define kingdom impact as:

The churches influence in all its relationships by reflecting and advancing the righteousness, compassion, justice, and restoration of all things under Christ's reign.⁸⁶

Ott and Wilson define kingdom communities by holding in tensions the three dimensions of The Great Commission, The Great Commandment, and The Great Calling (Worship) with excellent multiethnic stories to mobilize apostolic church planting.⁸⁷

Matthew 28:18-20 is known as the Great Commission, and Carson's four cultural engagement models categorize the core beliefs of churches around the world, yet each has significant weaknesses. John Bolt draws from Abraham Kuyper's call that the gospel be lived through the organic spheres of life in the priesthood of the believer living in community, contrasting the organic and organized church. Bolt writes:

In Kuyper's view, Christians who go out into their various vocations do so neither as direct emissaries of the institutional church nor as mere individual believers...Christian cultural, social, and political action does not flow directly from structures and authorities of the church but comes to expression organically in the various spheres of life as believers live out their faith and spirituality that develops and is nurtured in the church's worship and discipline.⁸⁸

Kuyper bridges the gap between Christ and culture by relying on the priesthood of the believer practicing the heart of Christ.

⁸⁶ Ott, Wilson, and Warren, 395.

⁸⁷ Ott, Wilson, and Warren, 398.

⁸⁸ John Bolt, *A Free Church, a Holy Nation: Abraham Kuyper's American Public Theology: Abraham Kuyper's American Public Theology* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 428–29.

Michael Allen, in *Reformed Theology*, reviews a practical missional hermeneutic over five centuries in the Reformed church tradition. He defines the formal, always reforming belief in *sola scriptura* as lived in the material -- the priesthood of the believer lived in the covenant community of the Reformed church.

Allen complements Carson and Keller by highlighting that the deadly crisis in the American church is rooted in the idolatry of church identity. Allen believes that H. Richard Niebuhr failed to make the critical distinction between the rights and responsibilities of the follower of Christ and those of the church. While in contrast the apostolic church planting model creates a multiethnic identity that from the very beginning is designed to leave ministry in the hands of multiethnic leaders.

Keller provides a helpful structure with the illustration of seasons in the life of a church to live in line with scripture through the pressures of cultural attacks:

1. Winter describes a church in a hostile relationship to culture, bearing little evangelistic fruit, embattled and spiritually weak.
2. Spring describes a church battling and even persecuted by a pre-Christian culture but growing in faith and bearing fruit, i.e., the church in China.
3. Summer describes the allied church, highly regarded by the culture with Christians in centers of every sphere of society and feeling at home in culture.
4. Autumn describes the church in the West, marginalized in a post-Christian culture and looking for ways to reach out winsomely.⁸⁹

2010 Lausanne Cape Town Diaspora Missiology in Culture

Another primary literature source for practicing the heart of Christ in the diaspora missionary theology is the Lausanne movement. In 2010, The Lausanne Cape Town Congress on Evangelism identified diaspora as a strategic focus and created the Global Diaspora Network to advance God's mission worldwide. Its primary strategy is to

⁸⁹ Keller, *Loving the City*, 265.

mobilize Christian leaders to collaborate for world evangelism. The Lausanne Congress is a specific meeting with a set time and location to serve the movement of world Christian leaders.

Dr. Christopher Wright was the 2010 Chair of the Lausanne Theology working group that drafted the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, now known as The Cape Town Commitment.⁹⁰ The Cape Town Commitment calls the church to the unchanging nature of God's word on mission and the changing realities of the world. The commitment begins, "The mission of God flows from the love of God. The mission of God's people flows from our Love for God and for all that God loves."⁹¹ At the 2010 Cape Town Lausanne Congress, one of the most strategic paradigms shifts in mission was identified with the global movement of people termed diaspora mission.⁹²

On November 15, 2022, the global population reached 8 billion people.⁹³ The World Migration report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates one billion people as migrants today – 214 million internationally and 740 million internally, within countries or nation-states.⁹⁴ The global trend of people movements translates into one out of thirty-three persons in the world, or 3.1 percent, of

⁹⁰ Jay Hartwell, "The Cape Town Commitment," *Lausanne Movement*, January 25, 2011, <https://lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment>.

⁹¹ Jay Hartwell.

⁹² Jay Hartwell.

⁹³ United Nations, "World Population to Reach 8 Billion on 15 November 2022," United Nations (United Nations), accessed October 25, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/desa/world-population-reach-8-billion-15-november-2022>.

⁹⁴ United Nations, *World Migration Report 2022*, 2022, <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022>.

the world's population. IOM projects that by 2050, the population of international migrants could nearly double to reach 405 million.

The United States has been the main country of global migration since 1970. In 1970 there were 12 million global migrants to the United States. The 2022 International Migration report shows that migration quadrupled from 1970 to 2020 with North America receiving 59 million immigrants.⁹⁵ Long-term data shows that international migration is not uniform across the world but is shaped by economic, geographic, demographic, and crises factors, resulting in distinct migration patterns, such as migration “corridors” developed over many years. Global migration projections expect migrations to multiply exponentially all the way to 2050.⁹⁶

People are seeking prosperity by moving “from south to north, and from east to west” toward the world's seven wealthiest countries of USA, UK, Japan, Canada, France, Germany, Italy.⁹⁷ These seven nations make up less than 16 percent of the world's total population, yet 33 percent of the world's migrant population.⁹⁸ The International Labour Organization's global estimate on migrant workers reports that 65 percent of the 281 million global migrants are economic migrants.⁹⁹ The IOM has also identified income and employment as the primary motivation for migration and immigration movements.

⁹⁵ United Nations, “Interactive World Migration Report 2022,” July 15, 2023, <https://www.iom.int/wmr/interactive>.

⁹⁶ United Nations, *World Migration Report 2022*.

⁹⁷ United Nations.

⁹⁸ Danielle Joly, *International Migration in the New Millennium: Global Movement and Settlement a Book by Danièle Joly* (Routledge, 2004), <https://bookshop.org/p/books/international-migration-in-the-new-millennium-global-movement-and-settlement-daniele-joly>.

⁹⁹ United Nations, “International Migration 2020 Highlights,” United Nations (United Nations), accessed October 25, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/desa/international-migration-2020-highlights>.

As global migration patterns continue to increase and global fertility rates continue to decrease, the competition for skilled migrant workers will escalate beyond the top seven wealthy countries of the world.¹⁰⁰

The Langham Global Library has published an anchor resource on diaspora missiology titled *Scattered to Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology* by Elias Medeiros. Medeiros brings the global diaspora discussion local when he states:

Diasporas are, doubtless, a global irreversible phenomenon with significance for every local church in the world...As a matter of fact, diasporas have always been vitally important throughout the history of redemption. Any Evangelical local church, denomination, or Christian institution that is indifferent toward this theo-graphical historic moment in regard to diaspora missions is already failing regarding the Great Commission.¹⁰¹

Diaspora missiology is defined by the Seoul Declaration on Diaspora Missiology as a framework for understanding and participating in God's redemptive mission among peoples living outside their places of origin.¹⁰²

Diaspora therefore communicates "peoples on the move" with a sense of displacement from their country of origin with the hope to return to their homeland at some future time. Diachronic is defined by Merriam Websters as "the dealing with the phenomena of language or culture as they change over a period of time."¹⁰³ Merriam Webster defines synchronic as "events existing in a limited time period and ignoring

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, *World Migration Report 2022*.

¹⁰¹ Elias Medeiros, "Chapter 2: Diaspora of Mission," in *Scattered to Gather: Embracing the Global Trend of Diaspora*, ed. Sadiri Joy Tira and Tetsunao Yamamori (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham Global Library, 2020), Kindle.

¹⁰² Medeiros.

¹⁰³ Merriam Webster, "Definition of DIACHRONIC," accessed January 6, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diachronic>.

historical antecedents.”¹⁰⁴ An example to distinguish diachronic and synchronic diaspora would be the African slave trade that took place from 1500 to 1870. The diachronic view of the slave trade provides a macro understanding of how Africans were commercially transferred ‘over time’ to North and South America. The synchronic perspective would capture a small section of that timeframe within a limited scope to one location of a nation of the diaspora to tell stories of migration movements and cultural change.

Dr. Carl Ellis in his book *Going Global* uses the term “gospel of the gap” to describe what happened in the African American experience.¹⁰⁵ Ellis describes the whole life biblical gospel as the sum total of all human needs in Luke 4:18-19. The gospel gap is separating spiritual needs and allowing the world's system to address the physical needs.¹⁰⁶

Scattered to Gathered states, “Migration generally occurs in a response to differences, and there are two major types of differences that prompt people to move: economic and non-economic.”¹⁰⁷ The following theories define the reasons behind the migration and diaspora movements of people:

1. Neoclassical economic theory: the primary factor of labor migration is the wage difference between the two locations.
2. Dual labor market theory: the secondary labor market in developed countries needs low skilled labor. This is a risk-averse strategy.
3. Relative deprivation theory: the consciousness of living in daily poverty.
4. World systems theory: migration arises from the partnership between countries in terms of trade between societies.

¹⁰⁴ Merriam Webster, “Definition of SYNCHRONIC,” accessed January 6, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/synchronic>.

¹⁰⁵ Dr. Carl F. Ellis, *Going Global: Beyond the Boundaries* (Urban Ministries, Inc., 2005), 11.

¹⁰⁶ Ellis, 11.

¹⁰⁷ Medeiros, “Chapter 2: Diaspora of Mission,” 344.

Kevin Kenny is a professor of history at Boston College who has written a helpful primer on the diaspora. Kenny states, “The word ‘diaspora’ had a specific and restricted meaning to the dispersion and exile of Jewish people. Since 1980, however, diaspora applies to every global movement of people”.¹⁰⁸ As a result, diaspora mission can provide helpful insights into the movements of people, but there can also be dangerous distortions in cultural expression. For example, diaspora can send distorted messages of nationalism, identity politics, and race. The themes of creation and corruption within the diaspora are rooted in scripture. The next step is to apply God’s four movements of scripture in creation, fall, redemption, and restoration as seen through the worldview of a sojourner.

Creation and Corruption in Culture Making

The beginning of the biblical narrative in Genesis begins with God on the move creating human beings in the “image” of God. God on mission begins with the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters. The four movements of God applied to the image of God reveal the church’s call as culture makers in the divine story of God’s four movements: image bearing, image breaking, image revealing, and image restoring.¹⁰⁹

Dr. Van Groningen explains that God shows his glory in creation with the Hebrew word *bārā’* or, “something new coming to pass or a radical change or transformation as in the appearing of the heavens and earth.”¹¹⁰ The usage of the term *bārā’* in the Old

¹⁰⁸ Kevin Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*, Illustrated edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

¹⁰⁹ Keller, *Loving the City*, 287.

¹¹⁰ Gerard Van Groningen, *From Creation To Consummation*, (Dordt College Press, 2004), 25.

Testament communicates the concept of what God actually did, does, or will do in his sovereign character as a concrete historical event.

The Latin term “*imago dei*” means the “image of God” or “likeness.” Genesis records Adam and Eve were created “in our image, in our likeness.”¹¹¹ Furthermore, as God’s climactic act of creation, he gives humanity a cultural mandate to subdue the earth, to have dominion over all creation, and God blesses male and female to be fruitful and multiply.¹¹² Adam and Eve are vice-regents blessed to rule and care for creation. Yet, Adam and Eve are also given a moral command to not eat from the tree.¹¹³ Deuteronomy 30:15-16 summarizes humanity’s responsibility in God’s blessing and command resulting in either life or death. Yet, humanity still represents the image of God and to honor God is to honor God’s image in themselves.¹¹⁴

The image of God in man is on mission to sculpt man as his masterpiece with a theology of making. In *Art and Making*, sculptor Makoto Fujimura provides a practical framework of the theology of making.¹¹⁵ The four sides of this theology of making are like the four sides of a frame best remembered with 4 P’s. First, the *poema* workmanship of Christ walks with his people in their tears, revealed in John 11 when Jesus weeps for Lazarus. Second, Western culture applies a plumbing theology of short-term fixes to minimize suffering instead of embracing a theology of suffering seen in waiting for the

¹¹¹ Gen. 1:26-27.

¹¹² Gen. 1:28.

¹¹³ Gen 2:16-17.

¹¹⁴ Gen. 9:6.

¹¹⁵ Makoto Fujimura and N. T. Wright, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2021).

paint to dry in suffering, Third, the theology of making is rooted in poverty of spirit when Christians embrace sonship in Christ, as in the art form of kintsugi.¹¹⁶ Fourth, a painted masterpiece of sonship identity is lived out with resurrection hope in the Lazarus culture, walking by faith with Christ in suffering, waiting for the paint to dry the masterpiece of the character of Christ.¹¹⁷

The image of God in humanity is broken because of sin. “Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in Act, Attitude or Nature.”¹¹⁸ The Bible does not speak to the origin of sin but does reference Isaiah 14:12-14 speaking to the heart of Satan who said in his heart, “I will make myself like the Most High.” Romans 5 points to humanity’s union with Adam in sin, and sin brings the consequence of death.¹¹⁹ 1 Peter 2:11 speaks of “fleshly lusts which wage war against our soul.” 1 John 2:15-16 speaks of the contrast between the love of God and the love of the world, characterized by lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.

Scripture further communicates that humanity is dead in sin and unable to save itself and unable to choose God.¹²⁰ Christian missiologists divide this fall from glory into

¹¹⁶ Ella Tennant, “How the Philosophy behind the Japanese Art Form of ‘Kintsugi’ Can Help Us Navigate Failure,” The Conversation, November 8, 2022, <http://theconversation.com/how-the-philosophy-behind-the-japanese-art-form-of-kintsugi-can-help-us-navigate-failure-193487>.

¹¹⁷ Fujimura and Wright, *Art and Faith*.

¹¹⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology, Second Edition: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Second edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 490.

¹¹⁹ Gen. 2:17.

¹²⁰ Eph. 2:1, John 6:44.

three cultural worldview systems: shame, fear, and guilt.¹²¹ These three moral emotions have become the foundation for three types of basic culture rooted in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve experienced shame and covered themselves with fig leaves. Then they heard God walking in the Garden and in fear hid themselves. When God asked, “Who told you that you were naked?” in guilt, Adam blamed God and Eve for his sin. These are the three cultures of listening to the lies of sin:

1. Guilt-innocent culture/Western individualistic culture: guilt and justice valued
2. Shame-honor culture/Eastern collective culture: community expectations valued
3. Fear-power culture/tribal context: spiritual power valued to control fear/evil/harm.

At the root of these cultures is the original sin of Adam. This “bondage to decay”¹²² has impacted all creation. Romans 5:12 communicates that through “union with Adam,” death comes to all man made in the image of God from dust.¹²³

Chip Dodd in his book *The Voice of the Heart: A Call to Full Living* calls the church to journey into the heart of God to discover the eight gifts of emotion: hurt, lonely, sad, anger, fear, shame, guilt, and glad.¹²⁴ Dodd speaks of the attunement and attachment of the heart of these eight core emotions as central to practicing the humble and gentle heart of God to address the dualism of our own hearts to transform the church.

Bryan Chapell writes in *Grace at Work: Redeeming the Grind and the Glory of your Job* that Jesus in Matthew 21 modeled for us how to pursue good to great in our

¹²¹ Simon Cozens, “Shame Cultures, Fear Cultures, and Guilt Cultures: Reviewing the Evidence,” *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 42 (October 1, 2018): 326–36, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2396939318764087>.

¹²² Rom. 8:20-21.

¹²³ 1 Cor 15:49.

¹²⁴ Dodd, Chip, *The Voice of the Heart: A Call to Full Living (Audible Audio Edition)*: Chip Dodd, Sage Hill Resources: Books, Audible, 2018, Chapter 4.

work through humility.¹²⁵ Chapell references Jim Collins research that only eleven out of 1,435 companies achieve greatness through level 5 leadership. Collins defined a level 5 leader as ‘someone who demonstrates a compelling modesty, never boastful, with an unwavering resolve to do what must be done for long term results no matter how difficult.’¹²⁶ Chapell says humility is a quality of character that is built in the heart and not measured by profit and loss models.¹²⁷ Chapell summarizes Jesus heart of humility in Matthew 21 with Jesus as prophet, priest, and king.¹²⁸ Migrant ministry leaders go from good to great in multiethnic church planting by practicing the humble heart of Jesus as prophet, priest, and king. The practice of this heart is rooted in the promise of Christ.

Proto-Evangelium: Redemption in Jesus Christ

The proto-Evangelium is the gospel preached in advance or the first revelation of redemption in the Old Testament. In Genesis 3:15 God declares, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” The proto-evangelium establishes hope in judgment through a promised messianic redeemer but also includes offspring conflict between the seed of Satan and the seed of Adam in Jesus Christ. This promise shows that

¹²⁵ Bryan Chapell, *Grace at Work: Redeeming the Grind and the Glory of Your Job* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2022), 107.

¹²⁶ Chapell, 107.

¹²⁷ Chapell, 108.

¹²⁸ Chapell, 110–12.

God has graciously purposed from the beginning of time that he is on mission to redeem his creation through a promised covenant seed,¹²⁹ by faith alone in Christ alone.

Scripture next records the missionary heart of God in Genesis 3:23 as he sends Adam and Eve out of the garden, rather than allow them to eat of the tree of life and live forever in the state of sin. Van Groningen notes that while the word *hesed* does not appear in Genesis 1-4, the character of lovingkindness and compassion of God is on mission to restore shameful, guilty, and fearful Adam and Eve.¹³⁰ Scholars agree that *hesed* is a covenant term to describe the steadfast, loyal love of the way God restores humanity as his masterpiece of creation.¹³¹ *Hesed* is used over 250 times in the Old Testament.

Iaian Duguid, a Ligonier scholar describes *hesed* as “God entering a covenant relationship with his people and binding himself to acts toward them in certain ways by being utterly faithful to his covenant love.”¹³² Duguid further explains this faithfulness:

The fullness of the Lord’s *hesed* is seen in the cross: there the true *hasid*, Jesus Christ Himself—the only human ever truly to be loyal to the Lord and to His neighbor in every aspect of life—was treated as the covenant breaker and cursed for sin so that we who are unfaithful might be clothed in His faithfulness and thus redeemed. In this way, God’s original covenant purpose to have a people for His praise was faithfully accomplished.¹³³

¹²⁹ Rom. 9:8-11.

¹³⁰ Groningen, *From Creation To Consummation*, 123.

¹³¹ Groningen, 124.

¹³² Iain Duguid, “Loyal-Love (Hesed) by Iain Duguid,” *Ligonier Ministries*, February 21, 2024, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/loyal-love-hesed>.

¹³³ Iain Duguid.

In Genesis 3 the word “sent” describes humanity being sent to a place of toil and not a place of torment. The way to the tree of life was now guarded with a sword. The significance of being sent out communicates the consequences of sin is death.¹³⁴ The Hebrew word for “sent” is *shilluach*, meaning “a dismissal from a place of communion with God.” In the missiological study of mission, the word “diaspora” means “sent or dispersed from a place known as home.” Thus, the Genesis account of creation and corruption brings the hope of redemption and restoration in the proto-evangelium.

A Diaspora Missiology: City of God and City of Man

The proto-Evangelium contained the promise of a messiah and the curses as the consequences of sin. The *hesed* love of God communicated that the offspring would be at war. Genesis 4 states, “The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering but no regard for Cain and his offering.” God was on mission to come after Cain in his anger against one who kills his brother and in his kindness to grant hope with a mark of protection. Yet, God pronounces judgment that the ground will not produce a yield, and Cain will be a wanderer and fugitive. Once again the pattern of hope and judgment is contained in the dispersion of Cain being sent out. In Genesis 4:17 Cain married, had a son named Enoch, and built a city. Meredith Kline notes that the city is not to be viewed as an invention of ungodly men but an unfolding of God’s plan to develop world culture as a city.¹³⁵

Regarding cultural and demographic change, Augustine in *The City of God* recounts how God’s plan of creation began in a garden, but God was on mission to reveal

¹³⁴ Eph. 2:1-3.

¹³⁵ Groningen, *From Creation To Consummation*, 118.

his redemption of all creation in the consummation of his holy city.¹³⁶ At the core of *The City of God* is a worldview that asks two questions: What is the gospel and who is living in this gospel of grace of God's four movements every day to shape their identity?

From Genesis to Revelation, the answer to these two questions is revealed in the grand narrative of scripture leading to the promised messiah Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the good news in the kingdom of God has come to restore all creation to sojourners seeking the city of God. Jesus Christ is the long-awaited sojourner who left his home of heaven to be God on mission to redeem the entire cosmos through his salvation.

Revelation 7:9-12 reveals the multiethnic heart of the Lord to walk with and bless all nations for his own glory, showing how multiethnic ministry is not a new diversity strategy but the heart of God to love the sojourner and to display his glory to all people.

In the early biblical narrative, there is confusion before the call of Abram as a sojourner. In the beginning, the multiplying movements of people to come to the promised seed of redemption was God's plan from the beginning.¹³⁷ Willem VanGemeran notes the three generations of human fallenness in Genesis 2-11: Adam and Eve in the garden, the generation of the flood, and the generation of Babel.¹³⁸ Scripture reveals the contrasts between sin and obedience in the plan of God for the movement of people. VanGemeran comments that in Genesis 11 the people of Babel are on a mission to build a city to 'make a name for themselves' and 'keep us from being scattered all over the world' as a wicked union to defy the Creator's will to "fill the earth". Scripture says

¹³⁶ Rev. 21-22.

¹³⁷ Gen. 1:27-28; Gen. 3:15.

¹³⁸ Bibles et al., *ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible*, 17.

of the Lord, “Come let us go down and confuse the people with different speech.”¹³⁹ The Hebrew word *pizur* or “scatter” means to “dash in pieces or disperse.” God confused the languages and scattered the people all over the world so that Babel as a city is never completed. The Hebrew word *Babel* means to “confuse” and within the narrative of scripture represents the place with the event of an unfinished city of confusion, evil, and misunderstanding. The scattering of people in the confusion of languages demonstrates a supernatural act of God, God is still on mission within the diaspora theology of dispersion to raise up polycentric leaders.

A New York Rabbi teaches there is no Old Testament commandment to love your parents, husband, wife, or children. The Rabbi says the Old Testament gives three commands: love the Lord your God, love your neighbor, and love the sojourner living in your land for you are sojourners (Deut. 10:19).¹⁴⁰ How do we love the sojourner?

Abraham: The Father of Sojourners

Christopher Wright states, “We live in an age of a multicultural church and multidirectional mission and appropriately we now live with multicultural hermeneutics”¹⁴¹ God sent Abraham and gave a covenant promise to be the Father of many nations.¹⁴² The word “covenant” is defined by Tim Keller as “God’s love locked on

¹³⁹ “Genesis 11,” ESV Bible, 11, accessed April 5, 2024, <https://www.esv.org/Genesis+11/>.

¹⁴⁰ Soerens, Yang, and Anderson, *Welcoming the Stranger*, 1.

¹⁴¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*, Reprint edition (IVP Academic, 2018), 38.

¹⁴² Genesis 17:5.

His people with unending commitment.”¹⁴³ The term *polycentric* comes from two Greek words: *polús*, meaning “many,” and *kentrikós*, meaning “center.” Polycentric leadership functions across geography, ethnicity, age, region, gender, and nationality. Polycentric leadership has many centers of authority or importance. In other words, it is a diversified leadership, from everyone to everywhere.¹⁴⁴ Polycentric mission leadership draws from a rich diversity of wisdom across cultures to bring the unity of Christ in mission to reflect the glory of God in the manifold wisdom of the church with collaborative leaders.¹⁴⁵

In Genesis 12 through 17, Abraham is identified as a sojourner sent with a covenant promise to bless all nations. In Genesis 12:1, God calls Abraham to be sent as a sojourner. The LORD promises to bless Abraham so all nations will be blessed through him on the condition he leaves and becomes a sojourner. Genesis 12:10 reveals a significant motivation for Abraham that ‘there was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there’. Hunger is rooted in sojourning. Scripture later reveals in Galatians 3:8 that the gospel was preached in advance to Abraham as the father of many nations. Abraham believed that God would provide a perfect sacrificial lamb in Jesus Christ as the promised heavenly sojourner who came to make all things new by completing justification on the cross and rising from the dead as the first born of creation.

¹⁴³ Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*, Reprint edition (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 15.

¹⁴⁴ Joseph Handley and Micaela Braithwaite, “What Is Polycentric Mission Leadership?,” Lausanne Movement, September 20, 2022, <https://lausanne.org/about/blog/what-is-polycentric-mission-leadership>.

¹⁴⁵ Joseph W. Handley Jr, *Polycentric Mission Leadership: Toward A New Theoretical Model for Global Leadership* (Regnum Books International, 2022), 8.

Abraham also receives the covenant promise as a sojourner seeking an eternal city.¹⁴⁶ The Hebrew word *ger* or “sojourner” occurs ninety-two times in the Old Testament, referring to a person not native to the local area, living without family. The significance of the sojourner is rooted in promised seed in the proto-evangelium.

Scripture explains the promise to redeem the curse of “being scattered to pieces” when Yahweh cuts a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15. Yahweh walks through the pieces as a picture of the covenant promised to the descendants of Abraham, the “chosen sojourner.” In Genesis 15 Abraham asks for an heir and God tells him to “know for certain” by providing a vision of a smoking firepot and a blazing torch passing between the pieces revealing the gospel preached in advance to Abraham. The Apostle Paul would write in Galatian 3:8 that scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel in advance to Abraham saying, “All the nations shall be blessed in you.” Abraham was justified by faith in the perfect king of righteousness and was credited as righteous by believing the promise of God of a smoking firepot and blazing torch. In Genesis 15:12, God promises that Abram’s offspring will be sojourners and servants afflicted for four hundred years. Four hundred years later the promise is fulfilled through the mediator Moses as he leads the Israelites out of Egypt through the desert for 40 years with a blazing torch at night and a pillar of cloud by day.¹⁴⁷ The narrative of Abraham as a sojourner reveals both a spiritual hunger (promise) and a physical hunger (famine) as a much broader understanding of how God is at work in the life of a sojourner to seek the gentle and humble heart of God.

¹⁴⁶ Hebrews 11:13-16.

¹⁴⁷ Ex. 13:21.

Lamin Sanneh: Sojourner To Disciple All Nations

Lamin Sanneh insists that the gospel of Jesus Christ comes unclothed when the vernacular of scripture resolves the dichotomy between faith and culture. Sanneh as a historian is one of the first to unpack how the enlightenment detached culture from the metanarrative of Christianity. History records how Christianity harmed national identities in colonial times to create exclusion. Sanneh countered this harmful distortion with what he termed an intercultural hermeneutic that argued that the gospel is like a seasoned chicken to reflect the various cultural flavors of the same gospel. The intercultural hermeneutic of Sanneh will provide an anchor in this literature review of character formation across cultures to expose the ‘naked gospel’ that transforms culture.¹⁴⁸

Sanneh suggested that as the “naked gospel” shapes the character of a sojourner to reflect the heart of Christ, that person finds the motivation to live as a change agent in a culture of pluralism. He uses the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh Scotland, which John Mott described as the decisive hour of Christian missions. Mott warned in 1910 that Africa would become a Muslim continent and called for a comprehensive plan to continue the American student movement call of “the evangelization of the world in this generation.”¹⁴⁹ Tellingly, there was not a single delegate from Africa or Latin America at the conference. The 1910 conference hosted

¹⁴⁸ Lamin O. Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity*, 1st edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 210.

¹⁴⁹ Sanneh, 272.

1,215 delegates but only seventeen delegates came from the Third World: eight from India, four from Japan, one from China, one from Burma, and one from Korea.¹⁵⁰

Sanneh identifies the 1910 Edinburgh conference as changing the face of modern mission toward a global Christianity. The movement created a collaboration of churches to bring the gospel to the global culture of rising nationalism, Islam, and secularism. The 1910 movement mobilized African and Asian leaders of young churches with the hope of church unity partnerships with indigenous leadership. The conference sought to repair the cultural context that the word “mission” had carried with the baggage of European domination and financial control. Before the conference started, eight assigned commissions, each with twenty members, conducted two years of research on their assigned topic. Each commission produced a single volume report, which was distributed to all the delegates beforehand, to engage the gospel with the following eight commissions at the assembly during the conference:

1. Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World (June 15, 1910)
2. The Church in the Mission Field (June 16, 1910)
3. Education in Relation to the Christianization of National Life (June 17, 1910)
4. Missionary Message in Relation to the Non-Christian World (June 18, 1910)
5. The Preparation of Missionaries (June 22, 1910)
6. The Home Base of Missions (June 23, 1910)
7. Missions and Governments (June 20, 1910)
8. Co-Operation and the Promotion of Unity (June 21, 1910)

Missiologist Allen Yeh, commenting on the 1910 Edinburgh Conferences, writes, “C.S. Lewis’ classic book on *The Four Loves* includes a line that has intrigued me from the moment I read it: To the ancients, friendship (*philia*) seemed the happiest and most

¹⁵⁰ Sanneh, 272.

fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it.”¹⁵¹ Yeh continues, referencing Mark Noll book’s *Turning Points*, which highlights the twelve most important points in church history. Noll identifies the speech given by the first bishop of Southern India, V.S. Azariah. Azariah’s speech spoke to the superior attitude toward non-Western Christians, saying, “You have given your goods to feed the poor, you have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us FRIENDS!”¹⁵² Yeh concludes by affirming Azariah, that of the four loves of *agape*, *philia*, *eros*, and *storge*, the one eternal universal love is *philia*, or friendship. Yeh compares *philia* as the “Type O” blood type of the loves and calls the majority world church to a community of sojourners toward the ancient city of friendship rooted in the perfect love of Jesus Christ to live a polycentric view of mission.

The fifth commission on The Preparation of Missionaries at the 1910 Edinburgh conference builds on this theme of friendship in mission moving toward a polycentric friendship. It contrasts the character formation of missionaries of the gospel in the last 100 years with the 2010 Lausanne World Mission conference held in Cape Town South Africa. The comparison will develop Sanneh’s unique intercultural hermeneutic of missionaries as cultural change agents or gospel catalysts.

Sanneh describes the missionary impact on culture as the translatability of the gospel message into the context of a new culture and language. He describes how first century Christianity dismantled Jewish exclusiveness. The Apostle Peter would affirm

¹⁵¹ Allen Yeh and Tite Tienou, *Majority World Theologies: Theologizing From Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Ends of the Earth* (Littleton: William Carey Library, 2018), 3.

¹⁵² Yeh and Tienou, 5.

the translatability of the gospel message to the Gentiles stating, ‘Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people.’¹⁵³ Sanneh states that the radical statement in 1 Peter 2:9 to include Gentiles as a “chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people called out of darkness into wonderful light” suggests a radical pluralism with theological roots.¹⁵⁴

Sanneh also states that believers in Christ must recognize the difference between cultural representation and the revealed truth of scripture.¹⁵⁵ He quotes H. Richard Niebuhr as eloquently describing an inherent tension between Christ and Culture.

¹⁵⁶Niebuhr in his classic book *Christ and Culture* identifies that cultures are not static, and they are constantly changing. Culture provides a structure for people to survive, thrive, and reflect the image of God. Sanneh summarizes that translation of the gospel to a new culture and language is better than diffusion. Diffusion replaces a culture with a new culture.¹⁵⁷ Sanneh argues that the history of Christian mission through translation has done more to preserve culture than destroy culture.

Sanneh illustrates the difference between translation and diffusion in the history of Christian mission and Islam.¹⁵⁸ Christianity has identified the message of the Bible above the language of the culture, encouraging the translation of the Bible into the heart language of the people while Islam views the Quran as eternally existing in the Arabic

¹⁵³ 1 Peter 2:20.

¹⁵⁴ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 13.

¹⁵⁵ Sanneh, 37.

¹⁵⁶ Sanneh, 38.

¹⁵⁷ Sanneh, 72.

¹⁵⁸ Sanneh, 73.

language in seventh century. The founder of Islam portrayed Arab culture as the ideal culture and all other cultures are to be diffused into the Arab culture. The theme of Sanneh's work has been to move Christian mission beyond the scope of the Western cultural captivity that fails to engage indigenous knowledge systems with the translatability of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sanneh agreed with Dietrich Bonhoeffer that the kingdom of God is to be lived out with the message of loving enemies.

Christopher Wright speaks to the language of the Bible to the heart of people with the whole center of gravity of world Christianity shifting with at least seventy-five percent of the world's Christians in "The Global South" of Latin America, Africa, and Asia.¹⁵⁹ These movements of God often reveal the blind spots of how God is on the move to transform the cultural captivity of the gospel,

"There is a great irony that the Western Protestant theological academy, which has its roots in a hermeneutical revolution (the Reformation), led by people who claimed the right to read the scriptures independently from the prevailing hegemony of medieval Catholic scholasticism, has been slow to give ear to those other cultures (Global South) who choose to read the scriptures through their own eyes, though the situation is undoubtedly improving".¹⁶⁰

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Sojourner in a Missional Hermeneutic

In 1930, Dietrich Bonhoeffer a German Lutheran pastor arrived in New York for post-doctoral studies at Union Theological Seminary. The Germany Bonhoeffer had left was crushed by sanctions after World War 1. In the year previous, Bonhoeffer had served as an assistant pastor of a small German congregation in Barcelona, Spain. At the young

¹⁵⁹ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 38.

¹⁶⁰ Wright, 38.

age of 22, he taught this German congregation to be hyper-patriotic by seeking German national interests, even if it meant sacrificing the interests of others.¹⁶¹

God moved Bonhoeffer to Harlem to shape his character with a missional hermeneutic. He was assigned field education with Abyssinian Baptist Church, a Black church in Harlem, New York. Bonhoeffer spoke of how this one year in Harlem shaped his missional hermeneutic of the gospel as he saw the character of Christ in the friends he met in Harlem. Bonhoeffer exemplifies authentic discipleship through the diaspora missional hermeneutic of a missionary God bearing gospel fruit in the life of leaders.

Franklin Fisher and Bonhoeffer were assigned field education together at Abyssinian Baptist Church. Fisher was from Birmingham, Alabama, and one of the few Black friends Bonhoeffer ever had. Together they taught Sunday school, and Bonhoeffer learned to play the role of an “outside catalyst” for racism in America as he gained an intimate knowledge of life in Harlem. Fisher and Bonhoeffer were eating in a restaurant, and Fisher was not given the same service as his white friend. Bonhoeffer led a protest outside of the restaurant for equal service. Fisher would value Bonhoeffer’s friendship and was quoted as saying to Bonhoeffer, “Make our sufferings known in Germany, tell them what is happening to Blacks in America, and show them what we are like.”¹⁶²

The friendships of Bonhoeffer’s fellow German Union Seminary professor Reinhold Niebuhr, Franklin Fisher, and French Reformed pastor Jean Lasserre shaped his desire to communicate simple gospel truths to his German culture. In 1932, after his time

¹⁶¹ “Bonhoeffer in Harlem: A Devotional Reflection on Ephesians 2:11–22,” Gospel-Centered Family, February 1, 2021, <https://gospelcenteredfamily.com/blog/bonhoeffer-in-harlem>.

¹⁶² F. Burton Nelson, “Friends He Met in America,” *Christian History | Learn the History of Christianity & the Church*, accessed November 25, 2023, <https://christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-32/friends-he-met-in-america.html>.

in America working with children, Bonhoeffer co-wrote a catechism with his friend Franz Hildebrand titled, *As You Believe, So You Receive*.¹⁶³ In the catechism, Bonhoeffer recaptures a gospel identity with simple narratives as a catalyst to his culture. Here are a few examples from Bonhoeffer's catechism:

What is the gospel?

This is the message of God's salvation that has appeared to us in Jesus Christ and has been conveyed to us through his Spirit. This is the message of the kingdom of God that is contested in the world and intended for God's righteous. This is the message of God's will, which speaks today and decides over life and death.

Why actually is Jesus the Lord?

He is the answer to every human question. He is the salvation in all the sufferings of the world. He is the victory over all our sins. In him, you have God himself in his power and the human being in complete powerlessness.

Does the church, then, act according to the will of Christ?

The church knows today more than ever how little it obeys the Sermon on the Mount. Yet the greater the discord in the world becomes, the more Christ wants to have proclaimed the peace of God that reigns in his kingdom. The church still continues daily in prayer for the return of its divine Lord, and he lays his hand upon it, until he leads the church to its fulfillment.

Many biographers look to the Harlem Renaissance as what shaped Bonhoeffer's character most. Harlem served as a catalyst for Bonhoeffer's return to Germany, giving his life to the German resistance, and writing his classic book, *The Cost of Discipleship*:

If our Christianity has ceased to be serious about discipleship, if we have watered down the gospel into emotional uplift which makes no costly demands, and which fails to distinguish between natural and Christian existence, then we cannot help regarding the cross as an ordinary everyday calamity, as one of the trials and tribulations of life.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Victoria J. Barnett et al., *Ecumenical, Academic, and Pastoral Work: 1931-1932: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 11*, ed. Nicholas S. Humphrey and Michael B. Lukens (Minneapolis, Minn: Fortress Press, 2012).

¹⁶⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, First Edition (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 88–89.

Bonhoeffer speaks of no costly demands and failing to distinguish between natural and Christian existence. He speaks of authentic discipleship with the yoke and burden of the cross not as misery and bondage but as peace and the highest joy of the soul. Bonhoeffer viewed the racism in America as manmade laws that brought a heavy yoke of self-rooted in a self-righteousness of one's own choosing. He viewed the Christ-suffering which every disciple must experience as a call to abandon the attachments of this world rooted in Mark 8:34.¹⁶⁵ In summary, for Bonhoeffer life in the cross is to surrender control of life to Christ in death to self and carrying one's cross as the essentials of discipleship.

Lesslie Newbigin: Sojourner of a Missional Ecclesiology

Lesslie Newbigin was a sojourner in India for forty years. When Newbigin returned to his home country of England, he was shocked that his people had embraced the false stories of cultural idolatry instead of gospel identity. Newbigin saw how the church in the West had embraced what he called the "myth of progress." This myth was rooted in the secular evolutionary trajectory that the world was moving forward toward better moral behavior through community in technology. Michael Goheen summarizes Lesslie Newbigin's six characteristics for the church to find its place in the biblical story.¹⁶⁶

1. It will be a community of praise in a world of doubt and skepticism.
2. It will be a community of truth in a pluralist society that overwhelms and produces relativism.

¹⁶⁵ Bonhoeffer, 90.

¹⁶⁶ Trevin Wax, "Here's Why I Keep Returning to Lesslie Newbigin," The Gospel Coalition, February 19, 2019, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/heres-keep-returning-lesslie-newbigin/>.

3. It will be a selfless community that does not live for itself but is deeply involved in the concerns of its neighborhood in a selfish world.
4. It will be a community prepared to live out the gospel in public life in a world that privatizes all religious claims.
5. It will be a community of mutual responsibility in a world of individualism.
6. It will be a community of hope in a world of pessimism and despair about the future.

Michael Goheen in his excellent book, *The Church and It's Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology*, comments on the gospel and culture:

The choice for the church in every age will always be, will our identity be shaped by Scripture or by our culture—by the biblical story or the cultural story?¹⁶⁷

Newbigin wrestled with the ecclesiology of the church because it intertwined gospel identity with the identity and vocation of the church in the biblical story. Goheen identifies four themes for finding one's place in God's story:

1. The Bible is universal history that narrates the true story of the whole world from creation to consummation.
2. A central thread in the biblical narrative is that God has chosen a people to be the bearers of the end and meaning of this story.
3. At the center of the story, Jesus reveals and accomplishes the end and therefore the purpose of universal history.
4. The cosmic story is comprehensive and so is incompatible with all other cultural stories.¹⁶⁸

Furthermore, Newbigin called the church to find its place in God's story and do battle with the "myth of progress" by calling the church to live a missional hermeneutic.

Goheen quotes Newbigin on a gospel identity that overflows to living missionally:

The Gospel is the truth, and therefore it is true for all men. It is the unveiling of the face of Him who makes all things, from whom every man comes, and to whom every man goes. It is the revealing of the meaning of human history, of the origin and destiny of mankind. Jesus is not only my Savior, He is the Lord of all things, the cause and cornerstone of the universe. If I believe that, then to bear witness to that is the very stuff

¹⁶⁷ Michael W. Goheen and N. T. Wright, *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology* (Baker Academic, 2018), 7.

¹⁶⁸ Wax, "Here's Why I Keep Returning to Lesslie Newbigin."

of existence. If I think I can keep it to myself, then I do not in any real sense believe it. Foreign missions are not an extra; they are the acid test of whether or not the Church believes the Gospel.¹⁶⁹

Cultural Matrix Models for Sojourners Preaching the Heart of Christ

Migrant ministry leaders need cultural matrix models for preaching to the pluralistic culture. Bonhoeffer's catechism asked, "Why is Jesus Lord?" Newbigin called the church to live as a community of hope being on mission in a suffering world as the decisive test of whether the church boldly lives the gospel.

Keller continues this theme of the church modeling a theology of suffering in culture in his book, *Walking with God in Pain and Suffering*. He speaks of suffering and states:

This is a dark world. There are many ways we keep that darkness at bay. When pain and suffering come upon us, we finally see not only that we are not in control of our lives but that we never were.¹⁷⁰

He also provides helpful models of preaching in his book, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*. He combines a theology of suffering with the religious affections of Jonathan Edwards to put what Martin Lloyd Jones called "logic on fire."¹⁷¹ This model of preaching connects the head and the heart to see Christ and suffering in all of scripture. Edwards believed at the root of every heart is excellency that longs for the "beauty" of Christ. To practice the heart of Christ is to see the logic on fire of Deuteronomy 10:16 in the call to "circumcise the heart." Keller writes that the foundation

¹⁶⁹ Goheen and Wright, *The Church and Its Vocation*, 11.

¹⁷⁰ Timothy Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*, Reprint edition (Penguin Books, 2015), 28.

¹⁷¹ Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, Reprint edition (Penguin Books, 2016), 165.

of Christ-centered preaching is rooted in 1 Peter 4:10-11, calling Christians to use their gifts to serve one another. He specifically draws on the phrase “whoever speaks as one who speaks the oracles of God.” Keller defines the word speaking by quoting scholar Peter Davids, “The word speaking does not refer to casual informal discussion but is referring to people with Word ministry gifts of counseling, instruction, teaching or evangelism.”¹⁷² Keller establishes three levels of word ministry gifts helpful leaders to practice the heart of Christ in diaspora mission: ¹⁷³

1. Informal conversational teaching
2. Speaking gifts based on 1 Peter 4:10-11
3. Formal preaching gifts that communicate the apostolic tradition of scripture.

The beauty of this three-level word ministry for preaching structure is that every person in the church can daily preach the gospel, calling on John 3:14 that preachers are called to “look to Jesus” as the one lifted on the cross to remove the poison of sin.

Keller draws from Edwards’ classic book, *Charity and its Fruits*, to provide a structure in his seventh lecture on “The Spirit of Charity a Humble Spirit.” Edwards calls people to see that the spirit of charity produces humility that transforms proud behavior and a proud spirit into a habit of heart and mind united to Christ in sonship.¹⁷⁴ Edwards provides a model for preachers with four structures or marks of humility to grow the habit and mind of humility to practice the heart of Christ:

1. Humility is opposed to self-consciousness, anything boastful, glory-starved and prefers to be self-less.

¹⁷² Keller, 3–4.

¹⁷³ Keller, 1.

¹⁷⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits: Christian Love as Manifested in the Heart and Life*, ed. Tryon Edwards (Carlisle Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1969), 19.

2. Humility is opposed to willfulness, especially someone who is always right and never listens.
3. Humility is opposed to scornfulness, especially words of sarcasm, disdain, or contempt on social media.
4. Humility is opposed to drivenness, such as working to find approval and fill inner emptiness.¹⁷⁵

Edwards's call for preaching is to die to self and repent of putting on an outward humility as clothing and seek an inner gospel transformation of identity of who we are in Christ.

Martin Lloyd Jones in his classic book, *Preaching and Preachers*, states, "Preachers are there to deal with the whole person, and his preaching is meant to affect the whole person at the very center of life."¹⁷⁶ Agreeing with Lloyd Jones and preaching to root out the idolatry of the heart, Keller summarized with the simple phrase, the "gospel changes everything."

Dennis Johnson reviews Keller's "gospel changes everything" redemptive historical preaching by stating in *Him We Proclaim*, "Keller blends a Reformed heritage of biblical aspects to contemporary post-modern and post-Christian culture,"¹⁷⁷ Keller credits his approach to George Whitefield's sermon "The Method of Grace." Keller believed Whitefield taught him the two-fold model to practice the heart of Christ in preaching is first to repent of sin and second to repent of one's own righteousness.

¹⁷⁵ Edwards, 42.

¹⁷⁶ Lloyd-Jones et al., *Preaching and Preachers*, 64.

¹⁷⁷ Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg NJ: P & R Publishers, 2007), 54–55.

Another helpful multicultural preaching matrix is found in Matthew D. Kim's book, *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence*.¹⁷⁸ This matrix is an eighteen-point exegetical method with a cross cultural homiletical template in three stages.

Stage 1 is the hermeneutic acronym HABIT:
Historical-Grammatical & Literary Context,
Author's cultural context,
Big Idea of text,
Interpret in your context,
Theological presuppositions.¹⁷⁹

Stage 2 is the homiletical bridge with the acronym BRIDGE:
Beliefs, **R**ituals, **I**dols, **D**reams, **G**od, **E**xperiences.

Stage 3 is the Homiletic acronym DIALECT:
Delivery, **I**llustration, **A**pplication, **L**anguage, **E**mbrace, **C**ontent, **T**rust.

Kim states, "Many cultures are being cultures rather than doing cultures, yet both being and doing are necessary applications to walk in obedience to the Scriptures for all of Jesus disciples."¹⁸⁰ He calls pastors to consider Philip in Acts 8 whose divine appointment with an Ethiopian eunuch intentionally crossed cultures to demonstrate glory and suffering and fulfilled Acts 1:8. Kim provides a holistic definition of culture as a "group's way of living, way of thinking, and way of behaving in the world for which we need understanding and empathy to guide Christians toward Christian maturity."¹⁸¹ Kim

¹⁷⁸ Matthew D. Kim, *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence* (Ada Michigan: Baker Academic Publishing, 2017), Kindle.

¹⁷⁹ Kim. Kindle.

¹⁸⁰ Kim. Kindle.

¹⁸¹ Kim. Kindle.

draws from business professors Earley and Ang and combines their cultural quotient (CQ) theory with David Livermore's framework to achieve cultural intelligence.

Kim believes preachers bridge cultures as transformational agents whom God uses to "Fasten sinners to the scriptures and meld disparate disciples to one another."¹⁸² The Apostle Paul also urges cultural engagement in 1 Corinthians 9:22 with a spirit of empathy to see life from other people's perspectives so other's may see Jesus.

Dan Doriani provides an outstanding preaching recommendation in the appendix of his book *Getting the Message* encouraging pastors to preach in a mild state of panic.¹⁸³ Doriani speaks of how John Calvin preached four or five times a week and entered the pulpit with no notes.¹⁸⁴ Mild state of panic preachers enter the pulpit full of ideas then connect these ideas in the love of the Holy Spirit by looking people in the eyes not fully knowing precisely what you will say. The power of this preaching is in interpreting scripture through the study of God's word with the CAPTOR method.

The acronym CAPTOR stands for Context, Analysis, Problems, Themes, Obligations, Reflection.¹⁸⁵ Context speaks to the literary and historical eyes of the text, analysis is the flow of events in the story, problems are the words we need explaining, themes are the major ideas of the writer, obligations are the obedience required, reflection

¹⁸² Kim. Kindle.

¹⁸³ Daniel M. Doriani, *Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (P&R Publishing, 2022), 231.

¹⁸⁴ Doriani, 233.

¹⁸⁵ Doriani, 8.

is the main point to apply the gospel in our life.¹⁸⁶ Migrant ministry leaders will find the exercises and practical application of Doriani's book a valuable resource in preaching.

Diaspora Missiology in the Ephesian Church

The Ephesian church accounts for 40 percent of the New Testament writing. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit moved hearts in the city of Ephesus and in all of Asia. This movement was so powerful that scripture records that all of Asia has heard the word of God. NT Wright states, in 300 A.D, 10 percent of the Roman empire had come to Christ, but by 380 A.D. 50 percent of the empire had become followers of Christ.¹⁸⁷

In Acts 17:24 scripture reveals that the God who made the world and all things in it is Lord of heaven and earth. Furthermore, in Acts 17:26 the Lord made from one man every nation of mankind to live on earth and has appointed the exact time and location where people should live so that they may seek him and find him.

In Acts 14:19, Paul was stoned and presumed dead. But the disciples gathered around Paul, and "he rose up" and brought life to the city. The enmity between the seeds from Genesis 3:15 is evident in this passage, and yet the gospel is preached and they "made many disciples in Derbe." The context of the passage in Acts 14:22, "through many tribulations we enter the kingdom of God," is the cross – the resurrection path Jesus fulfilled when he rose from the dead.¹⁸⁸ The Church of Antioch in Acts 11:26 modeled the Ephesian Moment by the disciples first being called Christians.

¹⁸⁶ Doriani, 9.

¹⁸⁷ N. T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *Jesus and the Powers: Christian Political Witness in an Age of Totalitarian Terror and Dysfunctional Democracies* (Zondervan, 2024), 23.

¹⁸⁸ Acts 2:36-41.

Yet, in Acts 13:1-5, “The Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them.” The context of Acts 13 is a team of five multicultural followers of Jesus Christ: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucious, Manaen, and Saul. Dan Steel, a Gospel Coalition writer from England, writes concerning them:

Paul and Barnabas were both Jewish but had been raised outside Palestine. Both were fluent in Jewish language and customs, but they also spoke Aramaic and Greek. Then there’s *Manaen*, a man who grew up with incredible opportunity and education within the household of Herod Antipas. Next there’s *Lucius of Cyrene*, from North Africa, who may have been one of the initial evangelists who arrived amid persecution and began reaching out to Greeks. And finally, was *Simon called Niger*, who was most likely a Black African.¹⁸⁹

The call of the Holy Spirit to send Barnabas and Saul meant the three leaders left in the city of Antioch had to train and equip new migrant leaders for the church.

The Ephesian Church and the North American Church

The Sunday worship hour is the most segregated hour in America, and the church remains complicit in this splintered social infrastructure. Yet, some seasoned church leaders claim, “Multicultural church planting is a kingdom ideal that has failed for the church in America.”¹⁹⁰ Randy Nabors, New City Network Senior Coordinator, counters with fifty years of planting sustainable multiethnic churches.¹⁹¹

John Stott has provided helpful insight on the dispersion in the early church, considering the North American church in his commentary on Ephesians:

Every church in every place at every time needs reform and renewal. But we need to beware lest we despise the church of God and are blind to his work in history. We may

¹⁸⁹ Dan Steel, “What the Diverse Church in Antioch Can Teach Us Today,” The Gospel Coalition, accessed July 24, 2018, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/diverse-church-antioch-teach-today/>.

¹⁹⁰ Chanequa Walker-Barnes, “Why Multicultural Churches Fail,” Collegeville Institute, May 31, 2018, <https://collegevilleinstitute.org/bearings/why-multicultural-churches-fail/>.

¹⁹¹ Randy A. Nabors, “Observations of a Passing Journey,” *Review & Expositor* 109, no. 1 (February 1, 2012): 31–38, <https://doi.org/10.1177/003463731210900105>.

safely say that God has not abandoned his church, however displeased with it he may be. He is still building and refining it. And if God has not abandoned it, how can we? It has a central place in his plan.¹⁹²

Michael Cooper in *Ephesiology* affirms Stott's call to study the movement of the gospel in the Ephesian church by asking four questions to apply the gospel of grace to why people are leaving the church and returning to a culture of idolatry:

1. Does our Church mission strategy have a clear training to multiply disciples?
2. Do all people know we love them, and we see idolatry transformed in our city?
3. Does our Church seek the Glory of God in all areas of Life?
4. Do we collaborate intentionally to multiply disciples among all people?¹⁹³

Keller speaks of the priority of character in caring for the image of God to find and uncover spiritually unjust attitudes. Keller says:

The image of God carries with it the right not to be mistreated or harmed.... Regardless of their record or character, all human beings have an irreducible glory and significance to them, because God loves them.... So we must treasure each and every human being as a way of showing due respect for the majesty of their owner and Creator.¹⁹⁴

Surveys estimate that within the American migration patterns, over 350 unreached people groups are present in the United States.¹⁹⁵ Yet, the evangelical attitude toward immigrants reveal gaps in the foundational belief in grace with the welcoming practice of grace.

Further, Graham and Davis in the 2023 Dechurching Study describes the legacy of segregation of Black dispersed people as a significant reason many leave church. Martin

¹⁹² John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, Revised, Revised edition (IVP Academic, 2021), 62.

¹⁹³ Michael T. Cooper, *Ephesiology: A Study of the Ephesian Movement*, Illustrated edition (Littleton, CO: William Carey Library Publishers, 2020), 27.

¹⁹⁴ Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just* (Penguin Books, 2012), 57.

¹⁹⁵ Enoch Wan and Anthony Casey, *Church Planting among Immigrants in US Urban Centers (Second Edition): The "Where", "Why", And "How" of Diaspora*, 2nd edition (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 20.

Luther King, Jr. stated, “The most divided hour of the week in America is still 11am during Sunday morning worship.”¹⁹⁶ Graham and Davis also reveal the church in America is wrestling through a multigenerational diaspora toward secular and societal pluralism, with 25 percent of people in the United States having no church background.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, the plurality of ethnic peoples in the marketplace in America is not reflected in the local church. Mark DeYmaz states, “I have come to believe that planting and growing homogeneous churches can be done without the power of the Holy Spirit. Donald McGavran’s “homogenous unit principle” began with a missional heart but has been conscripted into a marketing tool for church growth”.¹⁹⁸

As Stefan Paas states, “MLK’s call to “divine dissatisfaction” over the “divided hour of the week” may mobilize churches for inter-congregational cooperation, but the intrinsic problem of pluralism remains.”¹⁹⁹ The Lausanne movement believes now is the time to invest in younger multiethnic ministry leaders in the marketplace and for multiethnic church planting that will address cultural flaws in the church.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Martin Luther King Jr., “On Racism, Poverty, Capitalism, and Other Big Questions,” 1967, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/628.html>.

¹⁹⁷ Davis and Graham, *The Great Dechurching*, 22.

¹⁹⁸ Mark DeYmaz et al., *Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Seven Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them*, Illustrated edition (Zondervan, 2013), 12.

¹⁹⁹ Stefan Paas, *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016).

²⁰⁰ Future Leadership Lausanne Movement, “Lausanne Occasional Paper: Future Leadership,” Lausanne Movement, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/future-leadership-lop-41>.

Diaspora Evangelism in a Dechurching Culture

Michael Green speaks of the Greek word *evangelion* as the act of announcing the good news that the cross of Good Friday became the resurrection victory of Sunday.²⁰¹

Luke 4:16-21 records Jesus reading Isaiah 61 as the scripture being fulfilled in the hearers' presence. The proto-evangelium promise in Genesis 3:15 states sin will be conquered, and creation made new through the promised seed of the Messiah.

Rico Tice of Christianity said, "The essence of evangelism is that we preach Jesus Christ as Lord and pray that God opens the eyes of the blind."²⁰² British preacher Charles Spurgeon in *The Soul Winner* affirms the same and states, 'Neglect of private prayers is at the core of a lack of evangelism in our lives.'²⁰³

Tice speaking at Covenant Seminary *Equipping for Evangelism* conference describes three characteristics of the success of the majority world in evangelism. First, the majority world success in evangelism is powerfully connected to a vibrant prayer life. Tice stated, "Our identity as evangelists is rooted in prayer. A vibrant prayer life prays for eyes to see Jesus. Satan has placed spiritual cataracts on the eyes of people so they see cannot see the eternal. Failure is being successful at things in life that are not eternal, success is seeing Jesus as Lord in all areas of life."²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, Revised edition (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2004), 76.

²⁰² Rico Tice, Carl Laferton, and D. A. Carson, *Honest Evangelism* (The Good Book Company, 2015), 7.

²⁰³ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner (Updated Edition): How to Lead Sinners to the Saviour* (Abbotsford, WI: Aneko Press, 2016), 134.

²⁰⁴ "Equipping for Evangelism: How to Love, Live and Tell the Gospel | Covenant Seminary," Covenant Theological Seminary, November 11, 2022, <https://www.covenantseminary.edu/calendar-collection/equipping-for-evangelism>.

Secondly, “the secular culture of the Western world is being drawn to listen to a majority world evangelist from Africa, Asia, or Latin America to that can engage the American-born leader. A majority world leader can have incredible impact on mobilizing a multicultural church gospel movement both locally and globally”.²⁰⁵

Thirdly, “The majority world evangelist embraces a theology of suffering and lives under the sovereign rule of Jesus Christ as King with a gospel boldness. The boldness to be creative to connect the gospel to culture yet with integrity of the word.”²⁰⁶

In his excellent book, *Gospel Witness: A History of Evangelism*, David Gustafson defines evangelism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The 21st century Lausanne Covenant defines evangelism as “spreading the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the spirit to all who repent and believe.”²⁰⁷

In contrast, the 1918 Anglican archbishops committee on the evangelistic work of the church stated, “To evangelize is to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men and women shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their savior, and serve him as their King in the fellowship of his church.”²⁰⁸ In other words, evangelism in 1918 was to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and to serve him as their King in their local church. In conclusion, the migrant ministry leader is the cultural catalyst needed for the American cultural moment.

²⁰⁵ “Equipping for Evangelism.”

²⁰⁶ “Equipping for Evangelism.”

²⁰⁷ David M. Gustafson, *Gospel Witness through the Ages: A History of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2022), 38.

²⁰⁸ Gustafson, 39.

Ephesian Moment of Evangelism

The Ephesian Moment of evangelism when applied to polycentric leadership pursues oneness to reflect a developing model of diversity in collaborative teams and mission leadership—a paradigm that can only be fully appreciated when Christians see God’s design for his temple lived as the body. In Romans 12:4-5 Paul writes that though the church is many, its members do not have the same functions or abilities, they are one in Christ, and each member belongs to the others.

The Apostle Paul also speaks of this cultural application of the gospel in Colossians 1:24-28. The cost of being called as a pastor is clearly defined by Paul with the key words of suffering, affliction, mystery, revealed, glory, proclaim, warning, teaching, mature, struggling, and powerfully. The word “mystery” is used twice as well. The Greek New Testament uses the word μυστήριον (mystērion = mystery) to refer to matters that God once hid but now he has revealed through the gospel. The early church used the Latin word *sacramentum* translated “mystery” to reveal the divine grace of two sacraments: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Augustine provided additional clarity defining the word “sacrament” as an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace.²⁰⁹ Sacramental preaching of the gospel bridges the gap between scripture and application by revealing scripture to see Jesus’ grace in all of life to all people.

Sacramental preaching begins with listening to learn about current diaspora disciple-making and how it can provide a framework for multicultural church planting. The *shema* of Deuteronomy 6:3 means to listen and obey with the identity of oneness. This theme of *shema* on the essence of oneness of God’s people is a theme expressed in

²⁰⁹ *Christian Theologies of the Sacraments: A Comparative Introduction* (NYU Press, 2017), 1.

the Old and New Testaments. How can the local church and mission structures partner together in oneness on the diaspora road with migrant ministry leaders?

When individual musical notes are played or sung at the same time to make a beautiful sound, it is called “harmony.” In an orchestral performance, the beauty of the harmony forms one melodic sound. Polycentric leadership brings together the tension between the individual notes which captures the hearers’ attention. The orchestra practices together until each individual part no longer sounds on its own but is one collective expression of emotion. No one instrument is louder than another. No one instrument is stronger than another. Together, as they listen to each other and are guided by the conductor, they create music. In today’s interdependent world, the concept of musical harmony provides a framework for understanding polycentric leadership and how it can be an effective model for multiethnic church planting.

In his prayer in John chapter 17, Jesus prayed, “They may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” The key to unity is not compromised, but sacramental listening to one another’s voices and appreciating the different gifts and perspectives each one brings to the Lord’s table.

The heart of Jesus loves to bring the global diaspora mission local with real life stories of sojourners who have walked the diaspora road. Apostolic church planters can transform the culture with the gospel. Evangelism along the diaspora road begins by listening and learning to the immigrant stories for the common good of the city to practice the heart of Christ by seeking the gospel to change everything.

Welcoming the Sojourner in American History

The history of immigration in the United States has an important place in the identity and story of the nation. Every American President and every generation have wrestled with how to welcome the immigrant. Former President George W. Bush told the stories of forty-three immigrants in his 2021 *New York Times* best-selling book *Out of Many, One*. He quotes previous presidents through nearly four centuries of immigration. In 1782, the American Congress adopted the Great Seal of the United States that is on the US currency with the Latin phrase E PLURIBUS UNUM meaning “Out of Many, One.” In 1783, President George Washington said, “The bosom of America is open to receive not only the opulent and respectable stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all nations and religions.”²¹⁰ President John F. Kennedy published *A Nations of Immigrants* and states, “The wisest Americans have always understood the significance of the immigrant.”²¹¹ President Ronald Reagan in his final speech said, “America leads the world because, unique among nations, we draw our people and strength from every country of the world. By doing so we continuously renew and enrich our nation.”²¹²

President George W. Bush grew up in Texas and as governor has had a long history of listening to the stories of immigrants crossing the border. Bush believes the immigration system in America is broken with fear dominating the immigration discussion. He also believes immigrants are central to the nation’s economy and are not

²¹⁰ George W. Bush, *Out of Many, One: Portraits of America’s Immigrants*, First Edition (New York: Crown, 2021), 9.

²¹¹ Bush, 9.

²¹² Bush, 9.

to be feared as strangers but welcomed as sojourners.²¹³ In 2006 Bush stated, “New immigrants are people willing to risk everything for the dream of freedom. America remains an open door to trust our country’s genius for making us all Americans – one nation under God.”²¹⁴

Immigration history in the American church has stirred up strong emotions in every generation. For instance, Protestant churches were among those most opposed to waves of Irish and German immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century, because their Roman Catholic faith was perceived as a threat.²¹⁵ There were early adopters in the church in the late nineteenth century with the courage to start churches among Chinese immigrants on the West Coast. With the second great wave of European immigration in the 1880s, advocates for immigration restrictions grew again. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Protestant churches warmed to immigration through personal relationships. One catalyst for Protestant support of the immigrant was an evangelical leader named Howard Grose in *The Incoming Millions*. Grose’s book casts a vision to “carry the gospel to foreigners in our own land” with practical recommendations on how to care for immigrant neighbors beginning with teaching them to speak English.²¹⁶ Evangelical historian Douglas Sweeney notes that the passage of the 1965 immigration

²¹³ Bush, 11.

²¹⁴ Bush, 13.

²¹⁵ Soerens, Yang, and Anderson, *Welcoming the Stranger*, 57.

²¹⁶ Soerens, Yang, and Anderson, 58.

policy proposed by President John F. Kennedy created a boom for Asian and Latino church planting.²¹⁷

Matthew Soerens and Jenny Yang in *Welcoming the Stranger* give practical ways for the local church to practice the heart of Christ to love the sojourner. Soerens and Yang recommend these biblical responses of obedience to scripture:

1. **Prayer:** The biblical mandate to care for the foreign born must begin by asking for the heart of Christ to love the sojourner. Pray asking the Lord to send you immigrant friends and his wisdom to walk with them through the trauma of their displacement. Pray also for government leaders (1 Tim 2:1-2) and for immigration reform to reflect the image of God to restore hope.
2. **Listening and Learning to our Immigrant Neighbors:** The Evangelical Immigration Table is one resource. When Christians befriend their immigrant neighbors, these individuals move from being a stereotype to an image bearer of God. There is a mutual blessing in listening and learning to the heart of Christ in your immigrant friend to teach the beauty of resilience of character.
3. **When Helping Hurts:** Serving and giving in your immigrant community must honor the dignity of the image of God to say no to patronizing attitudes.
4. **Educating Churches and Communities:** A biblical worldview on loving the sojourner is one of the most effective ways to create a culture to practice the heart of Christ. Media has the loudest voice in our culture today. Charles Spurgeon said, “A lie will travel around the world while truth is putting on her boots.” Correcting misinformation with gentleness is needed in today’s culture.
5. **Advocacy:** Engaging in public life allows God’s people to seek the fullness of God through the victory of Christ for the Kingdom of God. Innovation and networking multiethnic leaders in your city to help address root issues.²¹⁸

Building and Leading Multiethnic Churches

Dr. George Yancey of Baylor University states, “Old models of church that focus on reaching a single racial group are not going to be as effective as in the past, so the body of Christ must make bold steps to planting churches that meet the needs of many

²¹⁷ Soerens, Yang, and Anderson, 58.

²¹⁸ Soerens, Yang, and Anderson, 203–13.

cultures.”²¹⁹ Yancey, in *Beyond Racial Division*, says, “There is ample research to show colorblindness and Antiracism do not work in solving racial injustice; the antiracism approach basically says to white people, ‘Your job is to do what people of color say and shut up.’”²²⁰ Yancey believes collaborative conversations move people to personal dialogue instead of cancel culture or homogenous unit church planting.

For the last fifty years, the homogenous unit principle has been the model of church planting and church growth to reach unbelievers. Yet, in America, the HUP has taught the church growth culture to grow big, fast. Mark DeYmaz, in *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, asks, “Does a homogenous church unnecessarily confuse the message of God’s love for all people?”²²¹

DeYmaz in his book *Leading a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church* states, “The intentional planting of multiethnic churches to fulfill God’s promise that all the families of the earth will be blessed to reflect the unity and diversity of God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven is not optional. It is mandated in scripture.”²²² DeYmaz highlights America’s rapidly changing profile and lists three imperatives from within the New Testament for planting multiethnic churches.

²¹⁹ Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments and Practices of a Diverse Congregation*, 1st edition (Jossey-Bass, 2007), xiii.

²²⁰ George A. Yancey, *Beyond Racial Division: A Unifying Alternative to Colorblindness and Antiracism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2022), 88.

²²¹ DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, 4.

²²² DeYmaz et al., *Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, 40.

Figure 2.3 America's Rapidly Changing Racial Profile

America's Rapidly Changing Racial Profile

Year	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Native*	Two or more races
GENERAL POPULATION						
1950	88%	2%	10%	<1%	<1%	**
2000	69%	13%	12%	4%	1%	1%
2050 (projected)	44%	27%	14%	8%	1%	6%
PROTESTANT CHURCHGOERS						
2020	77%	5%	10%	2%	2%	4%

*American Indian, Native Alaskan, and Native Hawaiian.

**This category was not used in 1950.

The 1950, 2000 and 2050 percentages come primarily from U.S. Census data.

The 2020 church data comes from the Faith Communities Today study, www.faithcommunitiestoday.org.

First, the multiethnic church was the prayer of Jesus in John 17:20-23. He prayed that people from different ethnic backgrounds would walk together as one in Christ through the local church. DeYmaz explains the words “so that” in John 17:21 and 23 are translated from the Greek word *hina*. Greek scholars refer to this phrase as the “hina clause,” an if-then propositional truth. Jesus prays that if believers come after his disciples, then they be as one.²²³

Second, in Antioch the believers were first called Christians in Acts 11:26. The name Christian is derived from the Greek word *Cristos*, which means “Messiah.”

²²³ DeYmaz et al., 40.

“Christian” meant then and means now a “follower of Christ,” living to imitate Christ in their actions and attitudes to worship God together as one.²²⁴ Antioch was the fourth largest multicultural city in the Roman Empire. It had eighteen sections of walls to keep the many ethnic groups from conflicts. The love of the Christians brought down these walls. The gospel multiplied and the multiethnic church of Antioch, not the mono cultural church of Jerusalem, became the most influential church in the New Testament.²²⁵

Third, the mystery of the gospel was prescribed by Paul in the Ephesian church as the Jewish and Gentile converts united in worship of Jesus Christ. Paul describes himself a minister of this mystery of the gospel.²²⁶ He asks at the close of his letter in Ephesians 6:18-20 that the Ephesians pray for him to have boldness to make known this mystery of the gospel for which he is an ambassador in chains.

Integrative Approach to Multiethnic Church Planting in US Cities

Enoch Wan in *Church Planting Among Immigrants in US Urban Centers*, believes the immigration wave will only continue to complicate ministry in the church. Wan advocates for “an Integrative Approach” for ministering among immigrants in US urban cities. Wan defines the integrative approach as having a:

high level synthesis of knowledge and skills of multiple disciplines and effective cooperation of related organizations for the sake of: gaining thorough understanding of the complexities of urban context, acquiring comprehensive knowledge of diverse immigrants from many lands, and striving for cooperation/collaboration of related

²²⁴ DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, 41.

²²⁵ DeYmaz et al., *Leading a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, 42.

²²⁶ Eph. 3:7.

organizations to outreach and teach immigrants in the U.S. urban centers for church planting.²²⁷

The integrative approach has three levels -- cognitive, practical, and institutional -- and integrates knowledge, skill, ministry method, and organizational partnership.²²⁸ The cognitive level views immigrants holistically to combine social and behavioral science with a multi-disciplined approach.. Practical integration of knowledge with skills and organizational partnership equips migrant ministry leaders to work with immigrants in U.S. cities. Institutional integration encourages a kingdom-minded vision for the common good of the city instead of denominational or parochial attitudes. Mission to and mission through the immigrant is a high-level integration engaging the city with the gospel, multiplying disciple makers, and training a network of multiethnic church planters. The integration of international students, refugees, migrants, and professionals is essential to the integrative approach through a collaborative migrant ministry network.

Figure 2.4 Integrative Approach to Ministering to Immigrants

Table 1. Ministering among Immigrants in U.S. Urban Centers for Church Planting: An Integrative Approach

PROCESS	LEVEL	INTEGRATION	
PREPARATION	cognitive	knowledge	urban context
			diverse immigrant
PRACTICE towards church planting	practical	skill & methodology /ministry	missions <i>to</i> immigrant
			missions <i>through</i> the immigrant
			missions <i>by & beyond</i> the immigrant
	institutional	complementation /cooperation & partnership	missions <i>with</i> the immigrant

²²⁷ Wan and Casey, *Church Planting among Immigrants in US Urban Centers (Second Edition)*, 11.

²²⁸ Wan and Casey, 13.

Mark Mulder, a sociology professor at Calvin University, states, “By 2060, the Hispanic population in the United States is expected to grow from 60 million to over 110 million.”²²⁹ Latinos are leaving the Catholic Church and converting to evangelical Protestantism in increasing numbers, and evangelical organizations should invest in Latino church planters to plant Latino congregations. Latinos are the fastest-growing group of evangelicals in the country, and Latino Protestants have higher levels of religiosity—meaning they tend to practice evangelism, pray, and read the Bible more often than both Anglo Protestants and Latino Catholic.²³⁰

The Evangelical Council of Financial Accountability (ECFA) report on the new faces of church planting interviewed almost 3,000 pastors from 50 denominations to provide a working definition for defining the multiethnic church is a biblical community of believers: (1) who live the Gospel of grace in every sphere of their city to evangelize, disciple, and pray for a Revelation 7:9 vision of all nations planting churches for the common good of the city, (2) believe that the Gospel of grace changes everything through International leaders called to collaborate in the city in every sphere of society, and (3) Multicultural structures and networks that provide leaders the safe place to be fully known and fully loved in community. The organic structures for new multicultural churches should reflect the cultural character of their communities with an International leader that will model welcoming all nations in their community.²³¹

²²⁹ Meaghan Winter, “The Fastest-Growing Group of American Evangelicals,” *The Atlantic*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2021/07/latinos-will-determine-future-american-evangelicalism/619551/>.

²³⁰ Winter.

²³¹ Warren Bird, “A Snapshot of the Coming Kingdom,” *Outreachmagazine.Com*, September 14, 2022, <https://outreachmagazine.com/magazine/72370-a-snapshot-of-the-coming-kingdom.html>.

Great Commission of Multiplying U.S. Multiethnic Disciple Makers

In migration, Jesus has given the church in America a gift of diaspora disciple making. Scripture speaks of loving the sojourner²³² with his heart that is gentle and humble so that sojourners may find rest for their souls.²³³ Furthermore, in Revelation 5:9-10 a new song of humility is sung together as the ransomed people of God. Diaspora disciple-making is best illustrated with the communion table promise of Jesus that “he is with us always to the end of the age.”²³⁴

Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie, in *The Politics of Ministry*, speak to the power dynamics in ministry, “If we refuse to face the facts of unequal power use in ourselves and our organizations, we will not be able to function responsibly or redemptively.”²³⁵ Labeling the power dynamics in American churches is the beginning place to seek first the kingdom with the gentle and humble heart of Christ.

In *A Theology of Mark*, Hans Bayer suggests that Jesus begins the process of discipleship by posing two core questions to his disciples. First, “Who do you perceive yourself to be?” and second, “Who do you perceive God to be?” In asking these fundamental questions, Jesus leads those who follow him into what Bayer calls a “double crisis.”²³⁶ The heart of disciples is opened to their need for reconciliation with God and a

²³² Deut 10:17,18.

²³³ Matth.11:29-30.

²³⁴ Matt. 28:20.

²³⁵ Bob Burns et al., *The Politics of Ministry: Navigating Power Dynamics and Negotiating Interests* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2019), 67.

²³⁶ Hans F. Bayer, *A Theology of Mark: The Dynamic between Christology and Authentic Discipleship*, Reprint. edition (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2022), 83.

life of dependence on him. The call does not focus on changing behavior but on changing heart attitudes which in turn shape behavior. This reshaping comes as disciples answer who they perceive God to be with the gentle and humble heart of Christ.

Geert Hofstede, Dutch social psychologist and author of *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, coined a term, “power difference” to describe how people belonging to a specific culture view power relationship: superior/subordinate relationships between people, including the degree that people not in power accept that power is spread unequally.²³⁷ The objective measure for how one approaches people as having unequal power is called Power Distance Index (PDI).

Majority culture individuals may tend to operate on an egalitarian basis with the perception that everyone has equal opportunity and equal access. This view would be considered high PDI. Minority culture individuals are more likely to operate with an awareness of how a negative racial history and social systems and structures limit access to power. This view would be considered low PDI.

Not using the language of the PDI, Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie affirm the unequal power dynamic and suggest a path forward. “Because those with more power tend to be less aware of their power, healthy leadership at any level requires us to be students of people’s interests and of the power dynamics in our organizations. Those with less power tend to be most aware of the power dynamic in any given context. Therefore, we should seek them out to learn from their perspectives.”²³⁸

²³⁷ Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind, Third Edition*, 3rd edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010), 83.

²³⁸ Burns et al., *The Politics of Ministry*, 69.

Lastly, there is an unhealthy power dynamic in the church of migrants as outsiders. Xenophobia is the universal fear of outsiders based on the belief that outsiders will not adapt to their host culture but instead change it to fit their previous culture, cancelling out their host culture. There is a connection with social media and increased xenophobia with incidents of violence against immigrants and refugees as migration trends continue to trend upward.²³⁹ What would philoxenia or love of the stranger look like for the church in the United States to equip migrant ministry leaders as apostolic church planters in the number one immigrant receiving country in the world?²⁴⁰

Diaspora Innovation for the Common Good of the City

The integrative approach for diaspora mission in action equips the multiethnic church to innovate emerging frameworks for the common good of the city. Enoch Wan defines two types of diaspora ministry: ministering to the diaspora and ministering through the diaspora.²⁴¹ Diaspora missions is defined as Christians' participation in God's redemptive mission to evangelize their kinsmen on the move and through them to reach out to natives in their homelands and beyond.²⁴²

The four types of diaspora mission are: to the diaspora, through the diaspora, by and beyond the diaspora, and with the diaspora. These terms are an innovative framework for assimilation patterns in multiethnic church planting.

²³⁹ "Does Social-Media Use Increase Xenophobia?," Kellogg Insight, July 10, 2020, <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/social-media-xenophobia>.

²⁴⁰ Wan and Casey, *Church Planting among Immigrants in US Urban Centers (Second Edition)*, 117.

²⁴¹ Wan and Casey, 104.

²⁴² Wan and Casey, 104.

Wan also identifies three primary assimilation patterns.²⁴³ The first assimilation pattern is the ethnic enclave, where immigrants of similar ethnic backgrounds gather in the same geographic location of a city. The second is the cultural threads pattern, where immigrants of similar ethnic groups live in different geographic locations but connect through social networks. The third pattern is described as the urban tribe. Cultural anthropologists believe that as the global culture of cities become more multicultural, people find their identities in smaller communities or urban tribes. This last pattern is one of the most innovative models as leaders reach into a distinct tribe in the city. The urban tribe model also requires the highest level of assimilation because individuals will downplay their ethnic identity in favor of an urban tribe identity.

Gene Wilson, in *Emerging Gospel Movements: The Role of Catalysts*, speaks of the need for the church to innovate in the fourth era of mission. The first era of mission was coastal mission, the second era was inland mission, the third era was unreached people, and now in the fourth era, former mission fields are now sending missionaries.²⁴⁴ Currently, two thirds of the world's Christians live in the global south of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Migrant global south leaders in the US already have global networks.

Dr Matthew Niermann of the Lausanne Movement reports in *The State of the Great Commission* that by 2050 the global south percentage is expected to grow to 77 percent.²⁴⁵ In 100 years the center of Christianity has shifted from the West and North to

²⁴³ Wan and Casey, 107–8.

²⁴⁴ Gene Wilson and Steve Addison, *Emerging Gospel Movements: The Role of Catalysts* (Wipf & Stock, 2022), 2.

²⁴⁵ Matthew Niermann, “The State of the Great Commission Report with Dr. Matthew Niermann: Unveiling the Global Mission Landscape for 2050,” accessed April 6, 2024,

the Global South. Niermann mentions 10 key issues in the Great Commission highlighting 1300 movements of the gospel right now, primarily in Africa and Asia.

Wilson defines a movement of the gospel consisting of four generations of disciples gathered in churches.²⁴⁶ Wilson gives an example of an innovative church planting network that seeks to plant 400 churches in the secular city of Spokane, Washington. Wilson asks if Global South leaders have movement experience and are already part of a network will the Church in America refuse to be grafted in to work.²⁴⁷

Ted Esler in his book *The Innovation Crisis* believes innovation in ministry is much more difficult than business. Esler states, ‘Competition drives business, while ministry competes with abstract changes in fallen culture’.²⁴⁸ The church needs to humanize the migration crises by listening, learning, and lamenting the stories of multiethnic innovators of culture that are missionaries sent to plant apostolic churches.

In his excellent book *The Sacredness of Secular Work* Jordan Raynor competes with the abstract changes in the fallen culture in America. Raynor restores a biblical theology of work by calling the church to examine four ways your work as a baker, accountant, or waitress matters to God. These are the four ways work is eternal:

1. A low regard for work limits our understanding of God and his kingdom.
2. Inspiring ways the kingdom can be revealed in your work on earth.
3. Biblical strategies for how your work matters for eternity

<https://lausanne.org/podcast/the-state-of-the-great-commission-report-the-current-state-and-future-trajectory-of-global-mission-with-dr-matthew-niermann>.

²⁴⁶ Wilson and Addison, *Emerging Gospel Movements*, xi.

²⁴⁷ Wilson and Addison, 35.

²⁴⁸ Ted Esler, *The Innovation Crisis: Creating Disruptive Influence in the Ministry You Lead* (Moody Publishers, 2021), 42.

4. Seeing our work through God’s eyes so we see heaven on earth.²⁴⁹

Covocational ministry is the primary model for multiethnic church planting. Migrant ministry leaders innovating now in the church will model welcoming the sojourner as the foreign-born trends continue to increase as shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 Foreign-Born People Trends Living in The United States

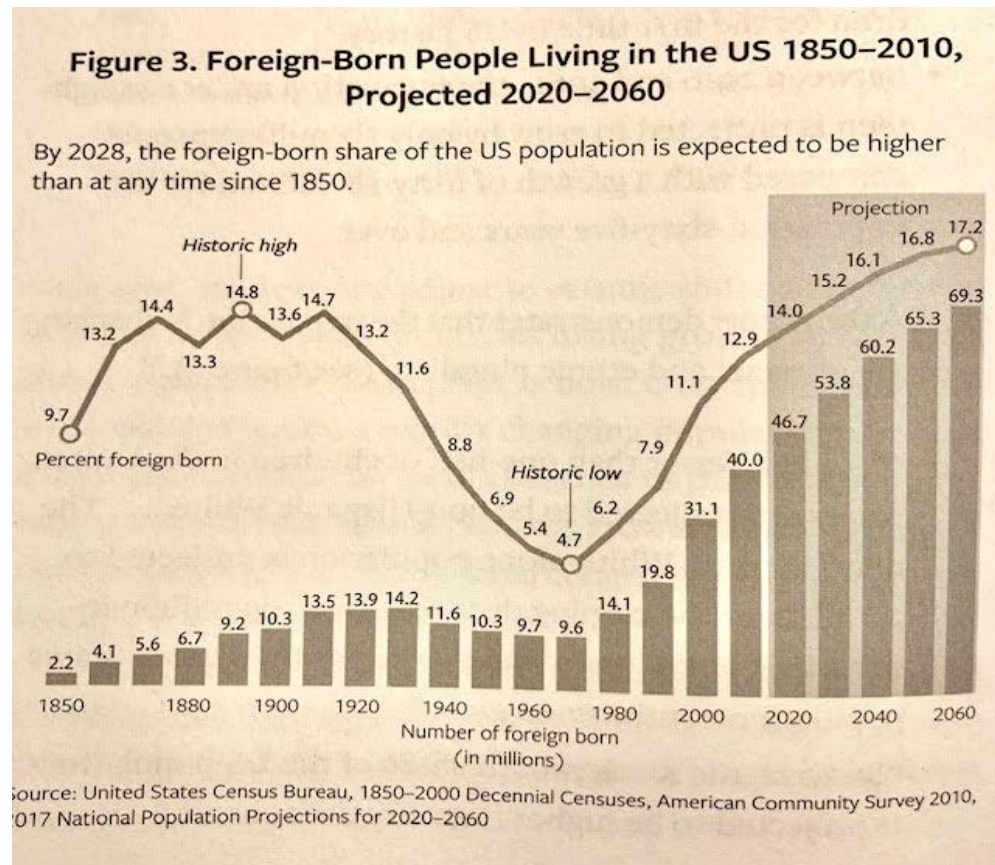


Figure 2.5 reports that in 2028 the US Foreign Born population will be higher than at any time in American history since 1850. Diaspora movements are providing great commission opportunities for the church to partner with migrant ministry movement leaders to multiply multiethnic churches. The trends of the table reveal the

²⁴⁹ Jordan Raynor, *The Sacredness of Secular Work: 4 Ways Your Job Matters for Eternity* (WaterBrook, 2024), 55–60.

heart of the diaspora mission movement has provided a Kairos moment for the American church to be on global mission in our global cities.

Cultural Intelligence and Divine Design in Multiethnic Leaders

Innovation with multiethnic church planting begins with equipping the church culture with cultural intelligence. Ang and Dyne define cultural intelligence in their

Handbook of Cultural Intelligence as:

an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings and interactions. It goes beyond the ability to acquire and understand general knowledge about cultural norms, practice, and conventions to a cultural consciousness and awareness during diverse interactions. Such people can observe others while processing and evaluating information counter to their own cultural influences and adapt their verbal and nonverbal behavior appropriately for that setting. It also includes a sense of self-efficacy that encourages perseverance amid the ongoing need for learning in complex situations.²⁵⁰

Additionally, Dr. David Livermore has written extensively on cultural intelligence. He defines Cultural Quotient (CQ) principles as drive, knowledge, strategy, and action.²⁵¹

Theologian Soong-Chan Rah believes cultural intelligence is essential for growing unity in diversity for multiethnic church planters. Rah states, "Cultural intelligence requires knowledge about our own cultural framework and the immediacy of our cultural environment. But it also requires a willingness to go to another place and to reflect upon your own culture and to see the culture of others from a new angle."²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Soon Ang and Linn Van Dyne, *Handbook of Cultural Intelligence: Theory, Measurement, and Applications*, 1st edition (Routledge, 2015), 7.

²⁵¹ David A. Livermore and Chap Clark, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World*, Illustrated edition (Baker Academic, 2009), 52.

²⁵² Soong-Chan Rah, *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church*, New edition (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 84.

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie in *Resilient Ministry* encourage the integrative approach for developing the character of resilience in the local church to engage culture. They list these five themes for surviving and thriving: spiritual formation, self-care, emotional and cultural Intelligence, marriage and family, and leadership and management.²⁵³ Trust is the most essential bond in walking with immigrants across cultures. The authors state whenever leaders examine the values of a culture, they should always consider the underlying question: “What builds and breaks trust among these people?”²⁵⁴ Trust grows through the character of humility to learn cultural intelligence and divine design by daily walking the fuzzy boundary of culture with the gentle and humble heart to learn to build and repair broken trust with immigrant communities.

Every Disciple Living as Missionaries for the Common Good of the City

D.L. Moody said, “The world has yet to see what God can do with a person fully consecrated to him.”²⁵⁵ Romans 12:1 calls followers of Christ to be living sacrifices desperate for the presence of the Holy Spirit to consume, consecrate, and separate

A. W. Tozer writes, “If the Holy Spirit were withdrawn from the church today, ninety-five percent of what we do would go on, and no one would know the difference. If

²⁵³ Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*, 41108th edition (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 2013), 249.

²⁵⁴ Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, 151.

²⁵⁵ Steve Miller, *D.L. Moody on Spiritual Leadership*, New edition (Moody Publishers, 2004), 22.

the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, ninety-five percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.”²⁵⁶

Tim Keller in *Counterfeit Gods* writes, “The central theme of the Bible is the rejection of idolatry.”²⁵⁷ Abraham was the first sojourner called to leave his land of idolatry and follow the Lord with a promise that all nations will be blessed through his offspring²⁵⁸. No man had ever longed and waited for an heir in a son more than Abraham.²⁵⁹ The promise was fulfilled in his son Isaac, and he became the center of Abraham’s life. The second call of Abraham was to obey from the heart to go to Mount Moriah to see the gospel preached in advance that God by faith provided a ram in Christ as a substitute.²⁶⁰

Daniel Carrol Rodas in his book *The Bible and Borders* references Deuteronomy 26:5 as the identity of Israel rooted in ‘my father was a wandering Aramean’.²⁶¹ Abraham in his early years of sojourning in Egypt with a famine²⁶² also wrestled with not telling the truth about Sarah as his wife to Pharaoh. Famine plays a role in the migration of the Abraham that will reveal the life of an immigrant is full of vulnerability.

²⁵⁶ Larry Briney, *More Grace for the Daily Grind: Daily Devotional Readings* (Independently published, 2018), 134.

²⁵⁷ Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters*, Reprint edition (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 3–4.

²⁵⁸ Gen. 12:7.

²⁵⁹ Gen. 15:1-6.

²⁶⁰ Gal. 3:6-9.

²⁶¹ M. Daniel Carroll Rodas, *The Bible and Borders: Hearing God’s Word on Immigration*, 5th edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2020). Kindle Chapter 1 ‘Experiences of the People of God’.

²⁶² Gen. 12:10.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:24 that as sojourners, Christians are to put away falsehood and let each other speak the truth with his neighbor, as members of one another. They are not to give the devil a foothold, hiding behind lies of angry attitudes toward outsiders but instead are to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed them²⁶³ and be consumed, consecrated, and separated as living sacrifices on mission to love the sojourner with the heart of Christ. Will immigrants feel welcome to speak the truth of their hunger and needs in life in a way that the American church will listen and respond?

David Garrison writes of over 1,000 Muslim converts now leading gospel movements in the nine rooms in the House of Islam, after fourteen centuries of the Dar Al-Islam, as Muslims call their religious community, which now accounts for one in five people on earth. Garrison writes, “Though Muslims everywhere share common bonds such as the five pillars of Islam: prayer, alms, pilgrimage, the Muslim Creed, and fasting. Muslims are by no means monocultural. Muslims vary widely in their culture. Islamic cultural practices are as diverse as the people themselves.”²⁶⁴ Garrison summarizes the key theme that Muslims are coming to Christ because of their desire for self-discovery Muslims want to see Jesus reveal himself to them personally.²⁶⁵

Diaspora Faith And Work for the Common Good of the City

Dan Doriani, in *Work that Makes a Difference*, identifies twelve biblical principles in faith and work. These twelve principles are:

²⁶³ Rom. 15:7.

²⁶⁴ David Garrison, *A Wind In The House Of Islam: How God Is Drawing Muslims Around The World To Faith In Jesus Christ* (Monument, CO: Wigtake Resources LLC, 2014), Chapter 41.

²⁶⁵ Garrison, Chapter 44.

1. The Lord works and ordains that humans work to reflect the image of God.
2. God worked six days and rested one to establish a pattern.
3. The Lord honors both manual and mental labor
4. When humanity rebelled, God cursed the ground, so work became toilsome.
5. We must work in order to live.
6. Our work shapes us.
7. It is biblical to distinguish work and jobs from vocation.
8. The Lord assigns places of work.
9. God respects all human abilities.
10. Many professions would not exist apart from the fall.
11. God calls everyone to full time service.
12. Through our work we become the hands of God.²⁶⁶

Doriani also identifies an essential principle of calling as the “stay, unless because principle” from 1 Corinthians 7.²⁶⁷ God tells his disciples to “stay in their place of calling”²⁶⁸ in three areas: marital status, ethnicity, and work.

Haddon Robinson is the president of the Theology of Work project that has assembled a team of 140 contributors from sixteen countries to publish the *Theology of Work Bible Commentary*.²⁶⁹ Many churches do not intentionally address how people live their faith in their work. As a result, the sacred and secular divide of the perceived distance between God and mundane matters at work is theological. In Genesis 2:15 God created people in the Garden to work as a pleasure to glorify God and enjoy their work.

Steven Garber in *Visions of Vocation* states, “Good stories shape good societies.”²⁷⁰ The word “vocation” comes from the Latin root word *vox* meaning “voice.”

²⁶⁶ Daniel M. Doriani, *Work That Makes a Difference* (P&R Publishing, 2021), 10–12.

²⁶⁷ Doriani, 57.

²⁶⁸ 1 Cor. 7:17.

²⁶⁹ The Theology of Work Project, *Theology of Work Bible Commentary, 1-Volume Edition*, Reprint edition (Hendrickson Publishers, 2016), xxv.

²⁷⁰ Steven Garber, *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common Good* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2014), 15.

People find their voice or calling in life. Garber asks, ‘In the context of one’s calling, how does one learn to see with the eyes of the heart, to see oneself as responsible for the way the world is and isn’t?’²⁷¹ Garber believes that dualism is one of the greatest obstacles to authentic gospel formation. Garber defines dualism as the separation of behavior and belief, or the mind and the body, as separate objects that shape identity formation in worship, work, and family culture.²⁷²

Richard Mouw, in *When the Kings Come Marching In*, connects Isaiah 60 with the New Jerusalem in Revelation. Isaiah 60 begins by contrasting darkness with the light of Zion. Mouw notes that nations and kings will come to the Lord’s light and become “radiant” in worship and “the wealth of the nations” come to Zion.²⁷³

Mouw speaks of this holy city coming down to earth. He states, “Isaiah is very explicit about the new purpose of the Holy City...Isaiah’s interests are more “cosmic” than whether me or my soccer game will appear in Heaven. Isaiah is interested in “corporate structures” and “cultural patterns.”²⁷⁴ He continues, explaining that “wealth of the nations” is the “filling” that God commanded to “fill the earth and subdue it.”²⁷⁵ This cultural mandate of the “filling of all creation” belongs to God²⁷⁶ whose “gates are continually open day and night that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations

²⁷¹ Garber, 38.

²⁷² Garber, 158.

²⁷³ Richard J. Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem*, Revised edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 34.

²⁷⁴ Mouw, 23–24.

²⁷⁵ Mouw, 35.

²⁷⁶ Ps. 24:1.

with their kings led in procession.”²⁷⁷ Living in the tension of the “already and the not yet” is the “filling” of the culture of grace with sojourners walking with Christ.

Darrel Johnson, in *Discipleship on the Edge*, reveals how Revelation provides a discipleship structure for equipping multicultural church planters.²⁷⁸ Johnson states, “The two scenes in Revelation 7 shape the horizons of discipleship in this world. The first scene in Revelation 7:1-8 reveals the ‘servants of God’ are ‘sealed’ so they can persevere through the great tribulation. The second scene in Revelation 7:9-17 reveals the ‘the heavenly reward for those who do persevere’ through the great tribulation.”²⁷⁹ Johnson also notes how John introduces himself in Revelation 1:9 as “your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation, kingdom, and perseverance which are in Jesus.”

Chip Dodd in *The Voice of the Heart* speaks of the spiritual root system of five essential roots of feelings, needs, desire, longing, and hope.²⁸⁰ Migrant ministry leaders all struggle with being uprooted from their culture. Yet, as Samuel Escobar reminds us the struggle provides the personal embrace of the gospel.²⁸¹ Dallas Willard believed that the spiritual formation process is rooted in soul care. He defines the soul as ‘the hidden person of the heart’.²⁸² Willard says, “The people to whom we minister will not

²⁷⁷ Is. 60:11.

²⁷⁸ Darrell W. Johnson, *Discipleship on the Edge: An Expository Journey Through the Book of Revelation*, Illustrated edition (Vancouver: Canadian Church Leaders Network, 2004), 180.

²⁷⁹ Johnson, 180.

²⁸⁰ Dodd, Chip, *The Voice of the Heart: A Call to Full Living (Audible Audio Edition): Chip Dodd, Sage Hill Resources: Books*, Chapter 3 Minute 33.

²⁸¹ Escobar, “Migration and Ethnic Conflict.”

²⁸² Dallas Willard, “Personal Soul Care,” *Dallas Willard Ministries*, 2002, <https://dwillard.org/resources/articles/personal-soul-care>.

remember ninety-nine percent of what we say to them, but they will never forget the character in our life. God is greatly concerned with the quality of character we are building’’.²⁸³

Jeff Vanderstelt spoke at the 2024 KC Micro church conference on character in ministry through these five core spiritual formations rooted in attachment.²⁸⁴ Migrant ministry leaders practice the heart of Christ in character formation through the spiritual root system of these five core heart values of admission, acceptance, attunement, attachment, and alignment. Hese covenant love is the character formation that practices the incarnation of the presence of Christ in you the hope of glory to see community grow.

Figure 2.6 Spiritual Root System of Transformation Process



²⁸³ Dallas Willard.

²⁸⁴ *KC Micro Church Workshop 2: Closer to Each Other: Jeff Vanderstelt* (KC 2024 Micro Church Conference, 2024), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9G-k1wz_w0.

Summary of Literature Review

In summary of the literature examined, three primary themes are explored for practicing the heart of Christ among migrant ministry leader's to plant multiethnic churches that will network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The three main areas of literature review in the study are: diaspora mission, multiethnic church planting, and developing culturally intelligent leaders for the common good..

Diaspora missiology reveals the suffering and the glory of God's world mission. The theme of scattered and gathered in diaspora missiology is one of the anchor literature publications to help the church respond to the global realities of migration. People have been on the move since the Lord God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden and placed a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life.²⁸⁵

Carson and Keller provide four models of cultural engagement that are organic and organized in practicing the heart of Christ in walking the diaspora road of multiethnic disciple-making. God's grand narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration is the practice of the heart of Christ. Multiethnic leaders walk the diaspora stories of immigrants, so the gentle and lowly heart of Christ is seen in their story. Sojourners are welcomed into the Ephesian Moment of community.

The Ephesian Moment of diaspora disciple-making is rooted in multiethnic ministry leaders living Romans 12:1 as consumed, consecrated, and holy lives. The practice of the heart of Christ is multiplied through living the divine design in the power of the Holy Spirit to form the character of Christ. Cultural and emotional intelligence

²⁸⁵ Gen. 3:22-24.

combined with an integrative approach to multiethnic church planting provide wisdom for church planters to enter diaspora communities knowing that Christ is already at work.

Lastly, the twenty-first century multiethnic church planter applying the integrative approach will require disruptive economic practices of faith and work in the local church. Twelve biblical principles of faith and work are identified for engaging the common good of the city with a threefold approach for church economics. The cultural mandate of the “filling of all creation” belongs to God²⁸⁶ whose “gates are continually open day and night that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations with their kings led in procession.”²⁸⁷ Living in the tension of the already and the not yet is the “filling” of the culture of grace through life giving multiethnic churches for the common good and beauty of the changing demographics of the American city.

²⁸⁶ Ps. 24:1.

²⁸⁷ Is. 60:11.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore how migrant ministry leader's plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The assumption of this study was that multiethnic ministry leaders with a collectivist cultural heritage can network strategic partnerships to seek the common good of their city, yet many of the multiethnic ministry leaders are isolated and lonely.

To pursue a gospel multiplication network, the research identified three main areas of focus. The three main areas of literature review for the study are: diaspora mission, multiethnic church planting, and developing culturally intelligent leaders. To pursue best practices for identifying the Ephesian Moment of diaspora disciple making, the following research questions guided the qualitative research:

1. What challenges do migrant ministry leaders face in planting a multiethnic church?
2. How do migrant ministry leaders understand God's story of four movements of creation, fall, redemption, restoration to love the diaspora community?
 - A. (Creation) How is the image of God reflected in diaspora people?
 - B. (Fall) How are immigration systems broken with attitudes of injustice?
 - C. (Redemption) How does the gospel bring healing to the diaspora?
 - D. (Restoration) How can cities flourish with migrant ministry leaders?
3. How do migrant ministry leaders use Cultural Intelligence to serve the common good of the city?
 - A. (Motivation) How does their own diaspora story motivate them ?
 - B. (Knowledge) How do they describe cultural intelligence?
 - C. (Strategy) What scripture influences their cultural work to serve the common good?
 - D. (Behavior) How do they network for the common good of the city?

4. In what ways and to what extent do migrant ministry leaders shape a regional network in the diaspora community for the common good of the city?

Design of the Study

This research followed a basic qualitative research method. Sharan B. Merriam, in her book *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, identifies four characteristics of qualitative research. First, qualitative research focuses on process, understanding, and meaning. The researcher seeks an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, delineates the process of meaning making, and describes how people interpret what they experience. Second, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research. Third, the process is inductive, allowing the researcher to gather data to build a concept or theory. Fourth, qualitative research develops a richly descriptive product, using words and pictures rather than numbers to convey what the researcher learned.²⁸⁸ This qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to enter various cultures with tools of active listening to compile best practices data from diaspora participants living in a unique Ephesian Moment of multiethnic church planting to seek the common good of the city.

This study employed a general qualitative research design, and the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data gathering. This qualitative method engaged the best practices of multicultural and multigenerational church planting participants' perspective about the Ephesian Moment of diaspora disciple to multiply multiethnic churches for the common good of the city.

²⁸⁸ Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th edition (San Francisco, Calif: John Wiley & Sons, 2015).

Participant Sample Selection

This research participants consisted of eleven multiethnic ministry leaders who were interviewed primarily from the city of St. Louis. Ten of the multiethnic ministry leaders represent six continents of the world and now ministering in the metro area of St. Louis. The participants represented seven different denominational backgrounds with various congregational sizes and denominational affiliation. Two of the interviews serve in the northern Midwest as consultants to Africa and Middle East Ministries in the USA.

The researcher intentionally selected a sampling strategy to listen, learn, love, and lament with the story and best practices from multiethnic ministry leaders. The study sample ideal candidates are diaspora leaders who have a whole life disciple making DNA in their multiethnic church and seek to multiply a network of multiethnic church planters.

The researcher has a global network of pastoral relationships worldwide but narrowed the study scope to evangelical diaspora leaders in St. Louis. The researcher intentionally narrowed the scope to multiethnic disciple making leaders seeking to network the common good of their city. The researcher contacted the diaspora leaders through phone calls, Zoom, and email to confirm the individual's willingness to participate in the research and interview. All of the participants are diaspora disciple making leaders of churches in American metropolitan cities. The churches are all evangelical with a vision toward multiethnic and multigenerational church planting. Diaspora leaders were chosen for diversity in ethnicity, socio-economic status, and age, reflecting this study's Revelation 7:9 kingdom vision. The researcher also selected diaspora leaders who modeled grace in processing trauma through building a network of trust to identify best practices. The researcher was seeking to identify the Ephesian

Moment of launching multiethnic leaders to plant multigenerational churches. The final study was conducted through personal interviews with a core eight multiethnic church planting leaders with three supplemental interviews of multiethnic leaders to examine study variance. Nine interviews were all conducted in person and two through Zoom. The interviews were in depth and provided the primary data for this study. All the diaspora leaders have been a member of their church for at least two years and attend Sunday worship service at least 80 percent of Sundays each year. The researcher invited the sampling using an introductory email, followed by a personal phone call. All participants expressed interest and gave written, informed consent for the research. Before the interview, each participant reviewed the purpose statement of the study with the research questions and confirmed the information in the selection criteria described above.

Data Collection

The researcher wanted to engage the heart of the participant with emphatic listening tools for defining social and moral character development living cross culturally. Understanding that some interview questions with diaspora leaders may get lost in translation, the study included additional interviews of cultural advisors to provide cultural translation, especially when the researcher was required to build upon participant responses about complex issues and explore answers with cultural intelligence and patience. Qualitative research recognizes that, as Lamin Sanneh noted, individual responses define the world based on the eternal word of God lived in their respective culture. This worldview format allowed the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to identify best practices of their multiethnic church planting network. The methodology was to identify categories of best

practices, patterns of trusts, revealed trauma, and managing conflicts across the variation of participants as they expressed their perspective on the topic. The literature theories on character and trust were tested to identify best practice categories for usefulness to narrow data collection. The researcher also practiced the participatory learning assessment process to clarify the interview questions during the interview process. To enter the culture of each diaspora leader, the researcher built common ground using the word of God to understand the participants' explanations and descriptions.

To understand the context of the diaspora leader, the researcher met nine of the interviewees in person in room 116 in the Covenant Seminary library to conduct participant interviews. Eight core multiethnic ministry leaders were interviewed for one to one and a half hours. Three supplemental interviews were conducted for data variance purposes for at least one hour. Before the interview, the diaspora leader received an email explaining the time, date, and place. To manage the participant schedules, the researcher met each participant in the most convenient and accommodating location for an uninterrupted interview. The researcher audio recorded the interviews with Zoom, Word transcribe, and Otter ai tools. The goal was to complete eleven interviews in two weeks, so that the researcher could complete the data gathering in the course of four weeks. After each interview, interview notes with participatory learning assessments were transcribed through Microsoft Word, Otter ai and Zoom Transcribe.

Data Analysis

The goal of the researcher was to transcribe each interview on the same day for proper context. Computer software was used to transcribe the digital recording on a computer while typing corrections to each transcript. The researcher also transcribed

when culturally appropriate through professional transcribers. Whether the transcription was personally done, or through a transcription service, the researcher personally revised, clarified, and evaluated the resultant data categories. Merriam warns, “Data often seem to beg for continued analysis past the formation of categories.”²⁸⁹ This study utilized the participatory learning assessment for routinely analyzing the data throughout the interview process by listening to the heart to identifying best practices beyond the respective data categories. The interviews and observation notes were fully transcribed into computer files, printed, coded, and analyzed. The analysis focused on engaging the best practices to identify the Ephesian Moment of diaspora disciple making for multiethnic church planting across the variation of participants, as well as congruence or discrepancy between the different groups of participants.

The purpose of this study was to explore how migrant ministry leader’s plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The following semi-structured interview protocol questions were submitted as a guideline to the multiethnic ministry leaders before the interview:

Interview Protocol Questions:

1. What are the best practices in your community for developing belonging?
2. How does your culture define trust? What trauma does your culture carry?
3. The narrative of Scripture speaks of the four movements of the Story of God in Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. How do you see God at Work through these four movements to reveal the Gospel to your ethnic community?

²⁸⁹ Merriam and Tisdell.

4. What are the challenges multiethnic ministry/church planters face daily?
5. What does a relationship of trust with a network of pastors planting multiethnic churches look like in your city?
6. Deut. 10:12-22 The Lord describes a circumcised heart that loves the sojourner. As a multiethnic sojourner living cross culturally in America describe how you have been loved and how you as a sojourner love the diaspora communities in your city?
7. How does a multiethnic church build a DNA of disciple making to multiply a multigenerational church?
8. Describe what a multiethnic gospel network would look like in your city?
9. How does a church seek the common good of the city?
10. If resources are not a problem, how could your city network together to multiply sustainable multiethnic churches for generations?
11. Tell me a story about a time when you experienced cultural differences in your host city from your home culture that resulted in culture shock or trauma.
12. Matthew 11:28-30 describes the heart of Christ as gentle and lowly to walk with sojourners with a gentle yoke. How do you as a multiethnic ministry leader practice the heart of Christ by walking the diaspora road with immigrants?
13. What have you observed as best practices of multiethnic and multigenerational church planters that seek the common good of a city?
14. When is the Ephesian Moment for diaspora leaders to be launched as a disciple makers and church planters in the city?

15. In Matthew 5:3-16 Jesus describes the Kingdom of God in the beatitudes Blessed are the poor in Spirit, Blessed are those who mourn, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...How do you as a sojourner living cross-culturally see the character of Christ being formed in you and your family and your church as the scripture describes?

Each of the migrant ministry leaders signed the following research participant consent form and understood their rights that are protected and respected in the interview process.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I agree to participate in the research which is being conducted by *Bradley T. Wos* to explore how migrant ministry leader's plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The study is in partial fulfillment for the Doctor of Ministry degree program at Covenant Theological Seminary. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary. I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that they can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, and/or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

- 1) The purpose of the research is to explore how migrant ministry leader's plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city.
- 2) The potential benefits of the research may include best practices for multiplying multiethnic church planting and diaspora disciple making for the blessing of the city. Please note there are no promised direct benefits for the participants but the potential for building a national network through participatory learning.
- 3) The research process will include 6 to 8 multiethnic ministry leaders planting multiethnic churches to network diaspora communities for the common good of the city consisting of various ethnic community. The researcher will seek to connect the heart of disciple makers to building multicultural networks in the city within the context of the American church.
- 4) Participants in this research will engage in best practice dialogue for disciple making.
- 5) Potential discomforts or stresses may include processing past trauma with the eternal word of God for grace based healing that builds trust across multicultural families.

- 6) I release the study to freely use the information gathered to advance multiethnic research.
- 7) Potential risks: There is minimal risk of the Human Rights Risk Level
- 8) Any information that I provide will be held in strict confidence. At no time will my name be reported along with my responses. The data gathered for this research is confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. Audiotapes or videotapes of interviews will be erased following the completion of the dissertation. By my signature, I give informed consent for the use of my responses in this research project.
- 9) Limits of Privacy: I understand that, by law, the researcher cannot keep information confidential if it involves abuse of a child or vulnerable adult or plans for a person to harm themselves or to hurt someone else.
- 10) The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the study.

Printed Name and Signature of Researcher Date

Printed Name and Signature of Participant Date

Please sign both copies. Keep one. Return the other to the researcher. Thank you.

Research at Covenant Theological Seminary which involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to: Director, Doctor of Ministry; Covenant Theological Seminary; 12330 Conway Road; St. Louis, MO 63141; Phone (314) 434-4044.

Researcher Position

The participatory learning process in qualitative research seeks to create cultural intelligence by listening to the heart of the multiethnic ministry leader. Merriam states, “The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis.”²⁹⁰ Some will challenge the cultural bias of a qualitative research. This research seeks to listen to the questions of the validity and reliability of the study since researchers bring their own biases, assumptions, and worldviews into their interviews. To seek the best practices of

²⁹⁰ Merriam and Tisdell.

the interview process and address this concern, the internal validity of active listening is built into the process. The researcher recognizes as Merriam states, “assumptions, experiences, worldview, and theoretical orientation” should be clarified on the outset of the study.²⁹¹

The researcher is a white American pastor in the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA). The researcher worked for fourteen years in the business world at Citibank, Panera Bread Company, and Technology Consulting. During this time, he was also an evangelist planting a PCA Church in St. Louis. At a PCA mission conference the Lord called and sent his family to live and work for fourteen years in South Africa as a sojourner. The researcher worked as a campus minister at two universities in Cape Town South Africa, taught evangelism at a Bible College in the township of Khayelitsha, planted campus churches, and was trained as a certified UEFA Soccer coach who has worked globally in over 30 countries with four World Cup Soccer events and one Olympics. He is aware that his bias, backgrounds, and viewpoint are just a few of the factors contributing to the filter through which he values and interprets his research data. The researcher has served as an EFCA denominational leader planting multicultural churches for the last seven years. Therefore, the researcher acknowledges his bias to serve as a Barnabas to encourage and mobilize the diaspora of multiethnic ministry leaders in America. The diaspora of evangelical leaders blesses the church in America to serve the Ephesian Moment of diaspora disciple making for the common good of the city. The researcher also has a particular passion for and conviction that the local church should reflect ethnic and socio-economic diversity for the common good of the city.

²⁹¹ Merriam and Tisdell.

The researcher may imply that to pursue a Revelation 7:9 kingdom vision, the multicultural church must be the new norm as a healthy church. However, the researcher aims to help all churches engage in the Ephesian Moment of diaspora disciple making.

Study Limitations

Participants interviewed for this study were limited to evangelical diaspora leaders who have planted multiethnic churches. Although the participants reflect a diversity of age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, several other categories of diversity fit within the purpose of this research. Therefore, this is not exhaustive research into the topic. The scope of the research is in the United States of America. Therefore, the findings are particularly applicable within the USA. As with all qualitative studies, readers bear the responsibility to determine what can be appropriately applied to their context. The researcher recognizes the results of this study may also have applications for the church in other parts of the world but are primarily intended for American diaspora movements. There is no implicit or explicit promise implied through this study that the material presented can be imported as a multiethnic church planting plan for all cities.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how migrant ministry leaders plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The study began with the belief that many of the immigrant ministry leaders are isolated and in need of a community. This chapter provides the findings of the eleven multiethnic ministry leader interviews and reports the common themes and relevant insights pertaining to the research questions. The following research questions guided the qualitative research:

1. What challenges do migrant ministry leaders face in planting a multiethnic church?
2. How do migrant ministry leaders understand God's story of four movements of creation, fall, redemption, restoration to love the diaspora community?
 - A. (Creation) How is the image of God reflected in diaspora people?
 - B. (Fall) How are immigration systems broken with attitudes of injustice?
 - C. (Redemption) How does the gospel bring healing to the diaspora?
 - D. (Restoration) How can cities flourish with migrant ministry leaders?
3. How do migrant ministry leaders use Cultural Intelligence to serve the common good of the city?
 - A. (Motivation) How does their own diaspora story motivate them ?
 - B. (Knowledge) How do they describe cultural intelligence?
 - C. (Strategy) What scripture influences their cultural work to serve the common good?
 - D. (Behavior) How do they network for the common good of the city?
4. In what ways and to what extent do migrant ministry leaders shape a regional network in the diaspora community for the common good of the city?

Introductions to Participants and Context

The eleven multiethnic ministry leaders interviewed were primarily from the city of St. Louis. Ten represented six continents and have been ministering in metro St. Louis. The participants also represented seven denominational backgrounds and various congregational sizes. Two have served in the northern Midwest as consultants to Africa and Middle East ministries in the Midwest.

The research participants varied in ethnicity, gender, and age. Each participant was labelled as either a voluntary or involuntary migrant to provide background. The research also identified that the primary pursuit of involuntary migration is freedom, while the pursuit of voluntary migrations is identity. To protect their privacy, the research participants' names and church names were replaced with pseudonyms. The ethnicity (language), age range, and ministry of the eight core participants are in bold text.

Table 4.1 Migrant ministry leaders interviewed

Name	Ethnic (Language)	Age Range	Ministry Family
Sasan (Involuntary)	Iran (Farsi)	41-55	Assembly of God
Oleg (Voluntary)	Latvia (Russian)	41-55	EFCA
Rami (Involuntary)	Jordan (Arabic)	41-55	EFCA/Baptist
Rohit (Voluntary)	India (Tamil)	26-40	PCA
Ebou	The Gambia (Krio)	26-40	LCMS (Lutheran)

(Involuntary)			
Hai Dong (Voluntary)	China (Mandarin)	41-55	EFCA
Jose (Voluntary)	Philippines (Tagalog)	56+	Baptist
Gongda (Voluntary)	China (Mandarin)	26-40	Chinese Baptist
Samir (Involuntary)	Bosnia (Bosnian)	41-55	Baptist
Tswara (Voluntary)	South Africa (Tswana)	41-55	PCA
Ortiz (Voluntary)	Colombia (Spanish)	56+	Non-Denomination

Leadership Challenges

The first research question explored the leadership challenges multiethnic ministry leaders experienced in planting multiethnic churches. Five themes surfaced as leadership challenges: trust, trauma, isolation, conflict, and identity in cross-cultural complexity.

The interviews also revealed that the nine beatitudes listed in Matthew 5:3-11 identify the character of Christ to walk with a sojourner. The five challenges of trust, trauma, isolation, conflict, and identity in cross-cultural complexity corresponded to five beatitudes that shape how challenges develop the character of Christ in multiethnic

ministry leaders. The multiethnic ministry leaders’ desire to practice the heart of Christ will be summarized with the character of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. These five beatitudes are:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Trust).
2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted (Trauma).
3. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth (Isolation).
4. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God (Conflict).
5. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Identity in cross cultural complexity).

Trust

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Merriam Webster defines trust as the “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.”²⁹² The following table defines the word “trust” in the language of each multiethnic ministry participant along with their cultural understanding of belonging or community.

Table 4.2 Trust defined by Language and Culture

Name	Ethnic (Language)	Word For Trust	Culture of Trust
Sasan (Involuntary)	Iran (Farsi)	اعتماد (Tamad) belief, confidence	“We do not trust each other in Iran.”
Oleg (Voluntary)	Latvia (Russian)	Доверять (doveryat’) credit, repay, confide	Trust happens when a person borrows money and pays you back.

²⁹² “Definition of TRUST,” February 9, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trust>.

Rami (Involuntary)	Jordan (Arabic)	ثقة (Thiqa) certainty, Reliance, faith, authentic.	Trust: I love them, and I want to serve them without any benefit
Rohit (Voluntary)	India (Tamil)	நம்பிக்கை Nampikkai hope, belief, commitment	Trust: I can be vulnerable to this person
Ebou (Involuntary)	The Gambia (Krio)	Abop To know the whole person fully	Trust: living in the community, they know you. Time builds trust.
Hai Dong (Voluntary)	China (Mandarin)	相信 Xiāngxìn To have faith in and accept as true.	Trust is built on a need of relationship, idea of relationship in China is really important.
Jose (Voluntary)	Philippines(Tagalog)	Magtiwala to confide, with reliant hope	Trust: Respect in how you treat people by spending time together
Gongda (Voluntary)	China (Mandarin)	相信 Xiāngxìn honoring ones spoken promises	Trust two symbols: character and faith. To fulfill promises, to be credible in character.
Samir (Involuntary)	Bosnia (Bosnian)	Povjerenje mutual respect and honor for elders in family.	Trust is broken by fear, like brothers Cain and Abel Bosnia has no trust at this time in culture.

Tswara (Voluntary)	South Africa (Tswana)	Tsepho Confidence reliability, community	Trust is to spend time with one another in community, Consistent needs of others first.
Ortiz (Voluntary)	Colombia (Spanish)	Confianza Mutual reciprocity of reliability as a confidant.	Trust is time in real relationship to share anything you want, you feel safe.

The definitions of trust and the culture identified in table 4.2 represent a multilevel analysis of collectivist and individual cultures in their understanding of trust and belonging as a reflection of the image of God. Samir and Sasan communicated that their cultures lack trust because of war. Samir likened their culture to the broken relationship between Cain and Abel. Furthermore, they identified a root of bitterness over generations as also contributing to a lack of trust.

Time was the primary way of expressing trust according to four participants from Africa, Latin America, and the Philippines. Ortiz shared, “Trust is time in real relationship to share anything you want and feel safe.” Tswara and Ebou said, “Living in community by pursuing the needs of others for the transformation of community builds trust.” Jose said, “Respect, time together, and how your body language communicates mutual humility builds trust.”

Five participants said that trust is built into belonging through a transactional relationship. Oleg stated that in Russian culture, “Trust is defined by borrowing money to a person, and you can trust the person if they pay you back.” Gongda and Hai Dong noted

that the Chinese culture “highly values the ideal of trust in character and credibility by the transaction of doing what you promise.” Rami and Rohit said, “Trust is built through acts of service and the willingness to confide and be vulnerable in the relationship.”

Each participant identified their daily dependence to trust God as a sojourner by living “poor in spirit” with joy to pursue the journey to the kingdom in the providence of God by being “placed for a purpose.”

Trauma

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

The second ministry challenge word defined by multiethnic ministry participants was the word “trauma.” Merriam Webster defines trauma as an injury (such as a wound) to living tissue caused by an extrinsic agent. The modern word for “trauma” is just as likely to refer to emotional wounds.²⁹³

Sasan and Samir named Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a reason trust has been difficult to rebuild after generations of unforgiveness caused by war.

Sasan told of one of the soccer players on his Iranian national team. The player’s brother had been killed by a passing truck while changing a tire. Sasan explained that *diya*, in Islamic law, is the financial compensation paid to the victim’s family or heirs in the case of murder, bodily harm, or property damage by mistake. Sasan described how the Islamic judge fined the driver only \$100. Such lack of justice has continued to weigh down the generational baggage of unforgiveness.

²⁹³ “Definition of TRAUMA,” February 17, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma>.

Samir described how PTSD afflicted the Bosnian community in the United States, even twenty-five years after involuntary immigration. Samir highlighted a National Library of Medicine study of brain activity on forty-seven refugees with visa insecurity. The study states, “Refugees are exposed to high levels of pre-migration and post-migration trauma including torture, mass violence, and persecution, which places them at increased risk for PTSD and depression.”²⁹⁴ Samir explained that country immigration policies granting temporary residency are a major source of psychological stress because of visa insecurity. Samir stated, “The Bosnian migrant will often feel unwelcomed in America and unwelcomed in his home country, describing what is often called a ‘third culture’ experience.”

Tswara told of apartheid in South Africa. When he was 7 years old living in Welkom, South Africa, the second largest city in the Free State Province, Tswara’s dad was killed by a white boy. The trauma was so excruciating that Tswara was sent to a boarding school in Kimberley, while his mother recovered by moving close to her family living in Mafikeng. One year later, Tswara moved back to Mafikeng to be close to his mother and stayed there until matric graduation. For years, Tswara’s mother and uncles would travel the 200-mile trip each way from Mafikeng to Welkom, seeking a fair trial in a heavily Afrikaans province. The verdict handed down ruled that there was inconclusive evidence, and again the baggage of injustice weighed heavy on the family. Tswara’s mother resolved to not let the process make her bitter toward white people in general. While a junior in high school, Tswara told of a teacher who explained the justice of the

²⁹⁴ Belinda J. Liddell et al., “Refugee Visa Insecurity Disrupts the Brain’s Default Mode Network,” *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 14, no. 2 (n.d.): 2213595, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008066.2023.2213595>.

cross of Christ as the solution for the South African apartheid injustice. Tswara found freedom in the person of Jesus Christ to heal the traumatic wound of the injustice of the apartheid system in the death of his father.

Tswara also explained the healing of the nation through the leadership of Desmond Tutu and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Tswara stated, “Sunday nights at 7 pm the country of South Africa would be glued to their televisions watching apartheid unveiled as a brutal killing machine designed to intimidate to maintain government minority control.” Tswara explained how “the apartheid regime would justify their oppression through biblical references to the curse of Ham.” Tutu at an early age was shaped by the biblical worldview that all people are created in the image of God, and he was driven to lead the church to be honest about the doctrine of sin. The TRC brought together the doctrine of sin with the fruit of forgiveness promised in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Tswara explained, “The TRC brought healing to South Africans like me to form one new nation.”

Each of the multiethnic participants referenced being raised believing that suffering was simply part of the struggle in life and that their worldview provides a unique perspective on suffering and trauma in the American culture. The participants also agreed on the need for a theology of suffering in the American church. Specifically, each agreed that the United States has a need for a similar TRC process to heal the wounds and trauma of unforgiven baggage caused by racial trauma from previous generations. One person said, “When the modern wounds of Michael Brown, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor are not healed through the justice system, there is a call to the church to live her mission to justice by practicing the humble and gentle heart of Christ.”

Isolation

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Isolation is the third word describing the challenge of multiethnic ministry leaders in the study. Merriam Webster defines isolation as when an individual, a population, or culture has withdrawn from society.²⁹⁵

The study revealed that isolation was felt most strongly among multiethnic ministry leaders raised in a communal culture. Jose described his family experience moving from the Philippines to America. “America was a big new world. In the Philippines, we were not rich, but we had five maids with a constant community in the home. In America we were all alone and isolated. Our parents went to work and ran after the American dream. They dropped the kids at school where we felt even more isolated. The kids would come home from school and feel all alone and try to raise themselves. We were broken kids that felt isolated living the American dream.”

One of the reasons Jose became involved with the International Students Ministry was to provide the social connection he longed for as an international student. Jose said, “Most international students feel isolated and lonely in America.” Jose described how only one out of ten international students is ever invited into the home of an American. Jose said, “Consider the isolation of an international student. You arrive at the airport in America; you are a sojourner. You left your country, your culture, your food, your big family. Yes, you’re in a new culture. You’re all alone. Furthermore, the social context in

²⁹⁵ “Definition of ISOLATE,” February 10, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/isolate>.

America immediately does not trust you as a foreigner. International students need friends that can help them break out of isolation and develop social connections.”

Ebou illustrated three vital components of social connection. He described how structurally each person has an invisible public and a private wall of isolation that must be culturally discerned. Ebou said, “In African culture, the outer public wall will be a high wall that isolates and protects the community. Often many African homes have high walls to protect the property. Yet, functionally the inner private wall is low, warm, and welcoming once you are inside the African home. The quality of the degree of relationship is positive as Africans will slaughter their last chicken to make you feel welcome in their home.”

Ebou continued, “In the American culture they have structurally low outer walls in public and be very welcoming and inviting in public. Many American homes have no walls or low transparent fences with welcome mats and welcome signs. Yet, functionally getting inside the American home is very difficult and many people will simply not answer their door. Furthermore, the quality of the degree of relationship once inside the American home is formal and slow and tends toward paternalism.”

Samir noted that along with the trauma of war, many Bosnian families feel structural isolation as Muslims in America. They do not feel welcome, and most do not have any Christian friends. Samir stated, “The war trauma many Bosnians feel is compounded by the structural religious isolation they experience living in a Christian nation.” Samir stated, “A functional social connection between a mosque and a church is one of the healthiest community engagements to simply learn to listen to each other’s stories and

love each other; that will bring down walls of isolation and help to build social connection.”

Hai Dong and Gongda spoke of the cultural history of isolation in China. The identity of China is rooted in the Great Wall, and its primary function was isolation. Furthermore, the church in China is known as the underground church, also a sign of isolation. Hai Dong said, “The structure, function, and quality of social connections in the underground church in China grows and multiplies with isolation.” The Chinese interviews brought a fresh view of isolation for the church.

Rohit spoke of how he grew up with ministry parents who worked with the Amy Carmichael orphanage in Dohnaver. Rohit also spoke of a culture of isolation in India but revealed a dark side. Carmichael wrote of the culture of isolation in *Things as They Are*, describing the Hindu temples as places where little children were rented as prostitutes. Carmichael would enter the culture of isolation to rescue hundreds of children from prostitution. India prosecutors legally charged Carmichael with kidnapping, but her book shaped world opinion by revealing the culture of isolation.

Conflict

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Merriam Webster defines conflict as something being different, opposed, or contradictory: to fail to be in agreement with or accord. The life of a multiethnic ministry leader living cross-culturally will naturally be different and will often fail to agree with the majority culture.

Several of the multiethnic ministry leaders arrived in America because of involuntary migration primarily due to conflict in their home country. Oleg told of when he first came to America, that despite the fact that his parents had been here for two years already, had transportation, and an apartment, he mostly remembered how miserable he was. “The reason? I did not speak English. I was 21 years old. I had a lot of friends and was missing home. I had conflicts with speaking the language. I had conflicts socializing every day. I felt like a dog. Well, I could understand something, but I could not express myself at all. So that put me almost like a depression. You know, and I remember, like for almost a year, 12 months. I hated myself. I hated this country because every day was conflict. I hated this experience that, you know, this whole immigration thing had to put me through. And I was, yes, I was depressed. I now minister to welcome others from that conflict and trial in my life that made me a stronger person.”

Seven of the participants agreed there was a suffering in waiting, stating Isaiah 30:18 as a key verse of hope: “Therefore, the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you...blessed are all who wait for him.” They noted that the Lord waited first and exalts himself to show mercy, so this theme of the Lord waiting first to produce the character fruit of meekness was God’s blessing in disguise. As Jose said, “The command of God is his promise in disguise.”

Several of the participants arrived in America because of war and often referred to it as conflict from without or involuntary conflict, outside of anyone’s control, but also producing conflicts within. Ebou spoke of being held at gunpoint in Gambia when he was 4 or 5 years of age. His memory was faint, but the story retold by his older brothers and parents stirred up conflict from within.

Many spoke of their culture's stigma against counseling to heal the wounds of conflict or trauma. One of the participants had such conflict in his multiethnic church that one third of the church left. The conflict distressed the pastor's heart, and he went to the emergency room three times. The doctors recommended counseling. The pastor's first response was that counseling was an American solution. Yet, during the interview process the pastor commented, "My cultural heritage is to process conflict by stuffing and compartmentalizing issues instead of obeying Matthew 18 with biblical steps of church discipline in conflict. I began to see in my life through counseling that I was a peacekeeper and not a peacemaker in stewarding conflict." A theme of the interviews was the struggle to obey Matthew 18 when many of the cultures have had generations of unresolved conflict and only now are learning the freedom that comes through scripture.

Identity in Cross Cultural Complexity

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Merriam Webster defines identity as the set of qualities that make a person different from other people.²⁹⁶ The interview participants as multiethnic ministry leaders openly discussed their heart of oneness. Their common desire is to be united in Christ as a family instead of being divided by differences.

²⁹⁶ "Thesaurus Results for IDENTITY," accessed February 23, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/identity>.

Ebou came to America when he was five. He felt very American in his grade school years, but as he aged, he sensed a shift in his identity. Ebou said, “I feel very American, but I also feel very African at the same time. It is a very unique way to explain my identity of loving both cultures.”

Ortiz and Sasan found their identities as professional soccer players. Soccer became a platform for building bridges to the American culture. Ortiz stated, “When I was no longer a professional soccer player, I was searching for my loss of identity. The gospel of Jesus Christ set me free to live sonship as my identity.” Sasan added, “There was a freedom in no longer finding my identity by leaving soccer for a time, but now coaching internationals has opened new doors for me to live my identity in Christ as a bridge to multiethnic ministry. I love soccer now not as a job but a delight.”

Hai Dong and Gongda spoke of being from Sichuan province in China, known for its hot and spicy food. Food and sport were international languages, and Hai Dong spoke of how his time at the University of Mississippi shaped his identity through his friendship with a senior researcher. Hai Dong said, “Jim lived the love of Jesus Christ to me every day, and I became spiritually hungry to find my identity in this love. I met my wife through a Bible study, and together we learned a gospel identity in the kingdom of heaven.”

Gongda shared a similar story of a family from Missouri who taught his family English in China. Gongda was so impacted by their identity in Christ, he moved to Missouri as a university student. Gongda shared, “Church used to be so boring to me, but as I struggled with depression in America for two years, I was searching for an identity

that I saw in this family that taught English.” The ministry of L’abri became a shelter for Gongda’s honest questions about his identity and showed him the gentle and humble heart of Jesus Christ as an identity of rest.

Summary of Leadership Challenges

The beatitudes’ practice of the heart of Christ transformed the multiethnic ministry leadership challenges of trust, trauma, isolation, conflict, and identity in cross-cultural complexity. Each participant wrestled through the depression and conflict of living cross-culturally as a sojourner. Ortiz summarized well by stating, “So often in American culture, we are constantly pursuing the destination of our next goal. The beauty of practicing the heart of Christ in the beatitudes is to simply enjoy the journey of the gentle and humble heart of Christ walking with me as a sojourner.” Sport, food, and education were the three common cultural bridges mentioned by participants to manage multiethnic leadership challenges.

God’s Story of Four Movements

How do migrant ministry leaders understand God’s story of four movements of creation, fall, redemption, restoration to love the diaspora community?

- (Creation) How is the image of God reflected in diaspora people?
- (Fall) How are immigration systems broken with attitudes of injustice?
- (Redemption) How does the gospel bring healing to the diaspora?
- (Restoration) How can cities flourish with migrant ministry leaders?

The second research question explored the individual stories of multiethnic ministry leaders as they entered the larger story of God's redemptive plan of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. The interviews highlighted patterns of assimilation.

Enoch Won described diaspora missiology as the emerging missiological framework to the new paradigm of Christian mission in the twenty-first century. Won quoted the integrative approach of multiethnic ministry, which identifies three primary patterns of assimilation: ethnic enclave model, cultural thread model, and the urban tribe model.²⁹⁷ The first assimilation pattern is the ethnic enclave, where immigrants of similar ethnic backgrounds gather in the same geographic location of a city. The second is the cultural threads pattern, where immigrants of similar ethnic groups live in different geographic locations but connect through social networks. The third pattern is described as the urban tribe. Won emphasizes that each city must exegete their multiethnic communities through qualitative research of multiethnic ministry leaders.

The interview data of multiethnic ministry leaders highlighted mixed experiences of these three assimilation patterns. The study categorized two participants in the ethnic enclave model, four participants in the cultural thread model, and five participants in the urban tribe model of assimilation.

²⁹⁷ Wan and Casey, *Church Planting among Immigrants in US Urban Centers (Second Edition)*. P. 107-108.

(Creation) How is the image of God reflected in diaspora people?

Daniel Carrol Rodas, in *The Bible and Borders*, spoke to the priority of the image of God reflected in diaspora people as the starting point for all discussions on immigration and documentation. He quotes Deuteronomy 26:5 as the identity of Israel rooted in “my father was a wandering Aramean.”²⁹⁸ The image of God reflected in the multiple cultures interviewed was a beautiful picture of the radiance of God’s glory.

One of the ways the image of God is reflected in diaspora people interviewed was in their heart to submit to the rule of God in their life through prayer. The desire to submit to God’s rule was reflected in the prayer life of each of these leaders filling the gap R.C. Sproul spoke of -- that the American culture has lost confidence in God ruling over society. Man was created in the image of God to walk with him, and the eleven diaspora leaders interviewed each reflected a confidence in God’s rule through prayer.

A second way the image of God was reflected was in the eleven migrant ministry leaders’ strong desire to assimilate in the American culture. Enoch Wan’s three models of assimilation were applied to the eleven migrants interviews to observe how the image of God is reflected in the diaspora communities.

The two participants in the ethnic enclave model of assimilation were involuntary immigrants fleeing war and persecution. They were also 1.0 generation immigrants. The covenant of creation in their ethnic enclave model was to model the distinction of the gospel as the source of life and healing to seek the hope of an eternal city.

²⁹⁸ Rodas, *The Bible and Borders*. Kindle Chapter 1 'Experiences of the People of God'.

Sasan from Iran explained living the gospel in America as an opportunity to heal the broken image of God between his American neighbors from Afghanistan and Iraq. Sasan said, “So Iraq and Iran were at war for eight years. Iraq is modern day Babylon. So, between the Persians (Iran) and the Babylonians, there was a long history of conflict.” Sasan spoke of his rich Armenian history as part of the largest Christian minority in Iran. The Armenian genocide of one million people from 1890 to 1914 by the Ottoman empire leader Talaat Pasha was based on fear of Armenian independence, but the Armenian diaspora had been occurring for over 1,700 years. The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1978 pushed Armenians to migrate to the United States, so much so that the U.S. Census reported 90 percent of immigration to the U.S. from 1975 to 1980 was from Iran. Sasan reported that most Iranians settled in Los Angeles, renaming the city to “Tehrangeles.” He described how Iranians, Afghans, and Iraqis playing soccer together against other nations created bridges of healing.

Samir also described how his role with a resettlement agency serving Bosnians brought healing to his own heart after the Bosnian War between 1992 and 1995. The transition from Yugoslavian authoritarian rule and the country’s economic crises created nationalistic and ethnic tensions leading to war. Samir summarized, “Creating new housing opportunities for Bosnian families heals my heart daily.”

The four participants in the cultural thread model of assimilation were from China, India, and Russia. These nations formed an inter-government partnership in 2009, the BRICS community: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The BRICS community accounts for 30 percent of the world’s land mass and 45 percent of the

world's population. BRICS exemplified the Christian South global shift in the twenty-first century and was reflected in these nations creating new opportunities.

Rohit, a 1.0 generation young multiethnic leader, described how God's four movements of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration were a new concept learned at seminary. Rohit said, "My sonship in the gospel has freed me to live the gospel in community. I was raised in a culture where ministers put on masks to portray themselves as holy, they make no mistakes, and there is no vulnerability. The gospel has freed me to create a new Indian pastor culture to stop pretending and performing my holiness to create a culture of being transparent about my mistakes."

Oleg, a 1.0 generation immigrant, emphasized that geographical location did not change the human heart. Oleg said, "I grew up in a secular atheistic culture that denied the existence of God, and living in America did not create a new heart in me. My grandfather was a pastor in Ukraine, and the freedoms in America can be more dangerous to run away from God. I believe only the gospel can create a new human heart free from the idols of every culture. Only God can circumcise the inner heart to create a new heart."

Gongda, a 1.0 generation immigrant, said, "I believed Christians were nice people and did nice things so God would love them, until I saw the love of Jesus Christ create a new heart in me that understood God first loved me."

Hai Dong, also a 1.0 generation immigrant, said, "The word 'diaspora' describes my heart as scattered and wandering to try to find happiness. I got very puzzled to try to create happiness in my life and could not find an answer. Money, education, and power

would not give me happiness. I found happiness in a relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship created the desire to multiply relationships of love.”

The five participants from the urban tribe model of assimilation were from the Philippines, Colombia, South Africa, The Gambia, and Jordan. The five participants in the urban tribe model of assimilation communicated a robust theology of the body.

Jose, a 1.5 generation Filipino immigrant, described how being raised in a strong Roman Catholic family created a strong drive to perform. He said, “The honor and shame culture to perform with homework honors the family name, and the culture of our people brought a burden to our family living in America that my parents could not fulfill and created in me a hunger for the righteousness of Jesus.”

Rami, a 1.0 generation immigrant, spoke of God’s creation using the word “good.” He said, ‘God created all things good, and the goodness of God brings shalom or peace to our own body and to the corporate body of our community. We were given authority by God to live in his gift of marriage, family, community, and church as his body. The Bible gives his wisdom to reflect his image to make his name great.”

Ebou, a 1.5 generation immigrant, spoke about the beauty of creation in God’s general revelation of his image in all things. He said, “God was good to create beautiful open doors for our family to come to America, just as you would watch a beautiful sunset. The journey of watching the sunset move across the sky is a beautiful creation describing how God moved our family to create a beautiful story in America.”

(Fall) How are immigration systems broken with attitudes of injustice?

This research question looked at attitudes of injustice that migrant ministry leaders face living in the gap as ambassadors of God's kingdom in a foreign and fallen land. One example discussed was how to choose a marriage partner living in a foreign land. Marriage is God's gift to bridge the gap of missing family culture while living in a foreign land. The family culture was strong, but family struggles were evident in every one of the interview participants.

Most participants were married, all except two. One participant lost his wife to a heart attack in December 2023; the other participant was still in seminary. Three were cross-cultural marriages. Two were married to an American, and one was married to a woman from another country in Africa. All three of the cross-cultural marriage participants were in multiethnic marketplace ministry and not serving as full-time pastors.

Tswara met his American wife in South Africa over twenty-four years ago. He served as a pastor in South Africa for six years in a Reformed Anglican church. His mother-in-law in the United States was walking the cancer road, and his family decided to move to Michigan in 2013 to care for her. Tswara was involved in two multiethnic church plants and preached often. He said, "Humility is the heart of Christ that is a daily battle in the American culture. We do not have it all together and we need to humbly admit I need my brothers from every race, tribe, people, and nation." He described how his multiethnic marriage was a challenge when he first moved to a small Dutch town in Michigan. He said, "We needed to move to a larger city that was much more welcoming for the health of our family."

Ortiz also married an American who spoke fluent Spanish. Ortiz illustrated the movement of God in the fall through the Darien Gap in Colombia. The Darien Gap is a sixty-mile, most dangerous, portion of the refugee highway. Ortiz said, “The gospel of Jesus Christ moves into our sin and brokenness through the finished work of the cross to fill the gap between our fallenness and the call to reflect God’s glory.” He described his multiethnic soccer ministry as a bridge for families walking the dangerous road of seeking identity in another righteousness apart from Jesus Christ. Ortiz said he often invested ten to twenty hours a week walking with families struggling with marriage and family issues by living cross-culturally in America.

Another immigration system struggle discussed is the cost of housing in cities that often limits migrant families to dangerous parts of the city where the children attend low-rated public schools. One migrant family stated, “We came to America to live the dream, and we lost our children in the public school system.” For this reason, there is a shift from the city to the suburbs or rural communities by migrant ministry families to help address the broken system of public schools in the city. Furthermore, the cost of housing in the rural areas is becoming more affordable for migrants than life in the city.

The idea of the fall as a gap that the righteousness of Jesus Christ bridges in the cross and resurrection was a key testimony for every multiethnic participant. Rami best illustrated how his multiethnic church bridged the gap of refugees and immigrants by entering the whole life of the new American. Rami said, “We speak their love language by listening to their needs and serving them in their gaps with housing, friendship, learning to drive, learning English, marriage counseling. They cry because of this love and want to know the love of Jesus Christ.” He continued, “The picture of marriage of

Christ bridging the gap of the distorted image of God with his righteousness to love his fallen bride the church is very attractive when modeled by our multiethnic church serving together as one family in Christ.”

(Redemption) How does the gospel bring healing to the diaspora?

The third movement of God reveals Jesus Christ who stands in the gap of the fall to bring redemption of sin through the finished work of the cross and resurrection. Most participants spoke of their university years in the United States as a time of catching a vision for walking the movement of redemption through disciple making.

A Love China Ministries (LCM) survey revealed that roughly 15 percent of visiting Chinese students in the United States professed faith in Jesus Christ. Yet, the same study revealed that only 20 percent of these students were regularly meeting or discipling other Christians in China.²⁹⁹ The LCM study suggested four lessons learned in diaspora disciple making:

1. Disciples that flourish were highly invested in deep friendships rooted in trust and a heart transformed by the grace of God to live obediently to scripture.
2. Disciples are God’s, not ours. Disciples that flourish were motivated to multiply disciples in the love of Christ not in a disciple making program.
3. Disciple making is God’s journey in the lives of new believers. The Holy Spirit brings the fruit as we journey with diaspora disciples’ stories.
4. Disciple making DNA is woven into the fabric of missional living through the practice of the heart of Christ in all areas of life.³⁰⁰

Hai Dong identified with the first LCM lesson of deep friendship through the International Student Ministry at the University of Mississippi. He said, “Jim was a great

²⁹⁹ Tira, Yamamori, and Wright, *Scattered and Gathered*. P. 608-609.

³⁰⁰ Tira, Yamamori, and Wright. P. 614-615.

man who became my best friend in all life, I saw Jesus in him, and I caught the vision of disciple making from Jim. My wife and I met through this study, and we have been living this disciple making vision for the last twenty years.”

Ebou spoke of the second LCM principle through his work with university students at a major university. He said, “Toby is one of the MBA students I have disciplined from Nigeria. Toby said that what is missing in the United States is simply people spending time together. Toby knows my door is always open to help his new company business plan to launch and through this work I disciple Toby in all life.”

Jose spoke about LCM’s third principle of disciple making. He has served with International Students Incorporated at three major universities and for forty years was a multiethnic church planter. He said, “Because disciple making is God’s plan, praying the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit is how I journey with discipling international students from all over the world. I call it a symphony of disciple making from Revelation 7:9, simply giving people transformation time before the throne of Jesus and not a program that is simply giving information.”

Tswara served as a university pastor and commented on the LCM fourth principle of a disciple making DNA. He said, “Apartheid was intentional. Its architecture was to set people against each other and divide African families. The DNA of disciple making needs to be intentional. The gospel brings people together. One of my friends is from Mexico. They do not speak any English. I do not speak Spanish, but we have sweet fellowship with at a Spanish camp. Yes, we have a language barrier, but that is not going

to stop us with interpreters. Let us produce an intentional solution of a DNA to disciple and practice the heart of Christ to multiply.”

(Restoration) How can cities flourish with migrant ministry leaders?

In November 2021, Harvard and Baylor Universities announced a \$43 million dollar research study to examine the cause of human flourishing.³⁰¹ The study defines human flourishing as “living in a state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good.”³⁰² The study involved 240,000 people from twenty-two countries over a period of five years and identifies five central domains for human flourishing: religious communities, family and friendship, work and well-being, meaning and purpose, character and formation.³⁰³ Tyler VanderWeele published another study on flourishing that looks beyond narrow statistical data on income, demographics, or health.³⁰⁴

David Ehrlichman in *Impact Networks* states, “One way to think about systemic issues is that they are not merely complicated, but they are complex.”³⁰⁵ Ehrlichman presents the Cynefin framework to help leaders differentiate between clear, complicated, chaotic, and complex issues for complex decision making and establishing diaspora networks.

³⁰¹ Harvard Crimson, “Harvard Researchers Launch \$43M Global Human Flourishing Study | News | The Harvard Crimson.”

³⁰² Harvard Crimson.

³⁰³ Harvard Research Human Flourishing Program, “The Human Flourishing Program,” June 15, 2016, <https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/projects>.

³⁰⁴ VanderWeele, “On the Promotion of Human Flourishing.”

³⁰⁵ David Ehrlichman, *Impact Networks: Create Connection, Spark Collaboration, and Catalyze Systemic Change* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021). P. 13.

The word cynefin (kuh-nev-in) is a Welsh word for the multiple intertwined factors in environment and experience that influence how people think, interpret, and act based on rooted relationships in the place of birth and upbringing.³⁰⁶ The framework identifies four categories of networks:

1. Clear issues have a clear beginning and end such as baking bread.
2. Complicated issues have many moving parts that are technical but managed with skilled ability such as building a house.
3. Complex issues have no clear beginning and end with no clear solution, so they require collaborative networks such as a church planting network to serve a city.
4. Chaotic issues are turbulent emergencies that cannot be controlled and require rapid response such as Hurricane Ian recovery teams in Florida.

The Cynefin framework was one of the presuppositions of this paper and was used as a tool in systemic relationships to network the experiences of the sojourner.

The beauty of community was clearly seen in every one of the interviews with the multiethnic ministry leaders. The last movement of God in restoration applied the four Cynefin categories of networks to each of the eleven multiethnic ministry leaders.

The eleven multiethnic ministry participants divided out as follows: two as clear networks, two with complicated networks, five with complex networks, and two with chaotic networks. Abductive reasoning sought the simplest conclusion based on the observations provided in the ninety-minute interview with each participant.

The clear issue network participants were seminary students with a clear beginning and end to their current network. Their seminary network of multiethnic ministry leaders has grown every year, yet it has remained a small network.

Rohit spoke of his multiethnic network in Chennai, India, “I was in Chennai for the last five years before I moved to St. Louis. I was working with the slum community

³⁰⁶ Ehrlichman. P. 24.

doing a lot of complex development work there with the Islamic community in slums.”

Rohit had moved from serving in a chaotic and complex slum network in Chennai to a clear network at the seminary. Rohit also spoke of how the clear network at the seminary also gave him a clear understanding of gospel transformation in his own life.

Gongda was quick to mention that the Chinese character for work is *gong* and is one of the 500 most-used Chinese characters. Gongda said, “I watched my dad work for the Chinese government, and he had a dark, negative view of the world because of a chaotic complex network. I believe the beauty of the church is the gospel makes the complex chaotic issues in life clear. The gospel set my dad free to see life clearly.”

The complicated issues network participants were Oleg and Ebo. Both managed many technical moving parts with skill within an extensive network. Oleg told how he hired a lawyer to plaster as an example of how his business provides work for many immigrants as they find their feet moving to the United States.

In a more entrepreneurial way, Ebou worked for a university that helps immigrants start their own businesses. Ebou explained that each person he helped start a business became a team player in a multiethnic network for the common good of the city. Disciple making through business was a key vision for this multiethnic network.

The five participants in the complex issues network were Hai Dong, Jose, Ortiz, Sasan, and Tswara. Each participated in multiethnic church planting although only two were serving as full-time pastors. They had collaborative, multiethnic disciple making networks connected to the local church.

Sasan and Jose were serving in full-time ministry as pastors and partner in St. Louis. Sasan said, “My role as a pastor is to equip the saints for multiethnic ministry. The

temptation of pastors is to do the work yourself. Yes, be in the work but raise up leaders to lead so collaborative networks are formed.” Jose said, “My role as an International Student Ministry pastor is to equip young immigrant leaders. The challenge is to connect these young university disciple making students with a vision of the local church since many churches run programs instead of making disciples.”

The three multiethnic marketplace complex issue network leaders all mentioned how they swam in multiethnic waters daily, yet the local church was slow to respond to multiethnic ministry. Hai Dong, a university professor of economics, had a global network with underground disciple makers in business, which required time and wisdom to navigate trust. Ortiz had business leaders in his national soccer network with significant financial and social capital, which also required time to build trust within busy schedules. Tswara had a local real estate network with a growing group of multiethnic disciple makers connected to local churches, which often were very slow to catch a multiethnic church vision.

Rami and Samir were daily stepping into stories of chaos as they served new refugees in their multiethnic disciple making ministry. Rami told of an Arabic church planting assessment center where all the Arabic leaders were working solo and needed a network to encourage each other. Samir told of a Bosnian food pantry where five major grocery chains in St. Louis fed 150 families every Saturday through a network started simply by word of mouth among the Bosnian community.

Cultural Intelligence

How do migrant ministry leaders use Cultural Intelligence to serve the common good of the city?

- A. (Motivation) How does their own diaspora story motivate them?
- B. (Knowledge) How do they describe cultural intelligence?
- C. (Strategy) What Bible stories influence their cultural work to serve the common good?
- D. (Behavior) How do they work for the common good of the city?

The third research question addressed migrant ministry leaders' use of cultural intelligence to serve the common good of the city. Each of the participants spoke of their priority to seek first the kingdom of God through a Christ-centered study of the scripture applied to culture. A key theme mentioned was that a culturally intelligent ministry had a gospel-saturated identity rooted in the character of Jesus Christ.

The Ephesian Moment and the church of Antioch were discussed as multiethnic models in scripture pointed to the motivation, strategy, knowledge, and behavior of their own cultural intelligence practice. All the participants spoke of the faithfulness of God to walk with them in their own diaspora story to practice the heart of Christ in loving the sojourners in their city. The participants also discussed their own cultural identity they brought with them to America in one of these three cultural worldviews:

1. Guilt-innocence culture (West) individualistic culture values of guilt and justice.
2. Shame-honor culture is a collective culture (East) value is community expectations.
3. Fear-power culture in tribal context seek spiritual power over fearful evil and harm.

Many spoke of how they believed these three cultural worldviews were no longer geographic in nature. Six identified as shame-honor culture, three identified as fear-power culture, and two identified as guilt-innocence culture.

The interviews summarized three primary ways multiethnic leaders build bridges for cultural intelligence for the common good of the city:

1. Practicing the gentle and humble heart of Christ with intentional cross-cultural friendships.
2. Community development to bring down walls.
3. Multiethnic networks to build bridges for the common good of the city.

Sasan spoke of how learning to practice the gentle and humble heart of Christ by building friendships with Afghan, Iraqi, and other Muslim neighbors through soccer was something he would have never dreamed possible. He has directed a multiethnic soccer network that, for the last fourteen years, has brought together over 500 players from forty nations to seek the common good of the city. Sasan also spoke of his personal growth in a shame-honor culture, where soccer was his professional identity and then became a beautiful gospel catalyst to build gospel friendships.

Oleg spoke with tears of how his dad came to the United States through a special Russian Jewish visa program. Oleg's grandfather was a Ukrainian Baptist pastor with a tendency toward legalism and guilt. The tears in Oleg's eyes came as he remembered how grace set him and his dad free through cultural intelligence. Oleg said it was as though a blindfold had been removed from his eyes. "I could see Jesus as a gentle and humble shepherd." Oleg has run a successful construction company rooted in multiethnic disciple making. He has built a network of Russian-speaking leaders across the United States to create a network to rebuild Ukraine.

Hai Dong has worked in a multiethnic university training students and building global networks around the world. He mentioned how his Chinese culture valued shame and honor so highly that taking a risk to pursue intentional multiethnic friendships was a foreign cultural concept. He said, “Only the freedom of the gospel that I believe welcomes all cultures would give me a love to be intentional to go to other cultures.” Hai Dong practiced community development through education, music, and business to bring down cultural barriers. Yet, he said soccer was one of the most effective networking tools to get to the character of building deep friendships.

Rohit spoke of how he experienced a cultural intelligence righteousness when he arrived at seminary in the United States. He believed that since he was from a multiethnic country, he was well prepared to live cross-culturally in America. Rohit said, “I realized I felt comfortable being monocultural, and I am pretty bad in understanding cultures. Living in America, I have the opportunity to intentionally pursue cultural intelligence and the seminary has really helped me to grow in this grace.” Rohit was the second youngest participant, but his poverty of spirit demonstrated a mature cultural intelligence with a sincere desire to practice the heart of Christ.

Ebou spoke of the difference between warm cultures and cold cultures in how he understood cultural intelligence. Many of the international students he worked with were from collectivist, warm cultures and struggled their first year in America living in an individualistic, cold culture. Ebou said, “One of the ways I help international students break out of their bubble on campus is to drive them north of Delmar to get them out of their comfort zone and be intentional to meet people they may fear.” Ebou practiced community development with business partners all over the city from many cultures. He

built a low power distance network of multiethnic marketplace leaders to partner with inner city Lutheran church planters through community development.

Ortiz spoke of how Paul confronted Peter for not walking in line with the truth of the gospel. He asked, “How did heart change happen in Peter’s life?” Ortiz said, “One way I have grown in cultural intelligence is simply to slow down and spend time with people to listen to their story.”

Multiethnic ministry leaders agreed that cultural intelligence was essential to walking in line with the truth of the gospel. Rapid cultural change required multiethnic ministry leaders to engage the culture with gospel integrity and gospel boldness. Tswara summarized well that the American evangelical publishing houses think they have a corner on the truth of scripture, but they are blinded by thinking that their own cultural understanding of the truth sits in the middle of the throne room of God. Tswara asked, “What if there is a rise in multiethnic evangelical voices in America? Would America have the cultural intelligence to engage with a Revelation 7:17 vision so that the Lamb would be in the center of the throne guiding us to streams of living water and wiping every tear from their eyes?”

Summary of Cultural Intelligence Challenges

The third research question addressed migrant ministry leaders’ use of cultural intelligence to serve the common good of the city. A key theme mentioned was that a culturally intelligent ministry had a gospel-saturated identity rooted in the character of Jesus Christ. All the participants spoke of the faithfulness of God to walk with them in their own diaspora story to practice the heart of Christ in loving the sojourners in their

city. The participants also discussed their own cultural identity they brought with them to America in one of these three cultural worldviews:

1. Guilt-innocence culture (West) individualistic culture values of guilt and justice.
2. Shame-honor culture is a collective culture (East) value is community expectations.
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Many spoke of how they believed these three cultural worldviews were no longer geographic in nature. Six of the eleven participants identified as shame-honor culture, three identified as fear-power culture, and two identified as guilt-innocence culture.

The interviews summarized three primary ways multiethnic leaders build bridges for cultural intelligence for the common good of the city:

1. Practicing the gentle and humble heart of Christ with intentional cross-cultural friendships.
2. Community development to bring down walls.
3. Multiethnic networks to build bridges for the common good of the city.

An African multiethnic leader summarized evangelical cultural intelligence well, stating that the American Church think they know the truth of scripture, but they are blinded by practicing a self-centered cultural understanding of the truth.

Migrant Ministry Leaders Regional Network

In what ways and to what extent do migrant ministry leaders shape a regional network in the diaspora community for the common good of the city?

The final research question referenced the Revelation 7:9 vision of a network of people from every tongue and nation who identify as followers of Jesus Christ for the common good of the city. What does the phrase, “seek the common good of the city”

mean? The common good is anything that benefits and is naturally shared by all members of a city. Common good often has three essential elements:

1. Respect for each person being made in the image of God.
 2. Mutual belief in the contribution of each culture for the good of the city.
 3. Collaborative effort to pursue the peace and flourishing in all of society.
- The eleven multiethnic leaders interviewed represented ten countries and cultures.

All eleven participants affirmed the three essential elements of the common good of the city. Disciple making was the essential motivation for a network for multiethnic church planting mentioned by each participant.

Greg Ogden writes, “The state of discipleship in American churches can be defined with one word ‘superficial.’”³⁰⁷ Ogden lists seven marks of biblical disciple making to define the gap with the reality of disciple making in our churches. The seven marks are:

1. Priesthood of all believers; every member is a disciple maker on mission.
2. Spiritual maturity to practice the gentle humble character of Christ.
3. Gospel lived in every sphere of life to influence every sphere of society.
4. Sojourners living in a community of radical non-conformity.
5. Church as the body of Christ modeling healthy relationships.
6. Bible saturated followers seeking wisdom to obey Jesus in all of life.
7. Bold Ambassadors of the Gospel of grace to seek first Jesus Kingdom.³⁰⁸

Jose used the word “symphony” to describe his network of multiethnic disciple makers. He saw them as a “symphony led by prayer in concert to Jesus as followers worshiping together as one body from every tongue and nation to every sphere of society in the city.” The word “fusion” was used by Tswara to explain “the beauty of the union of

³⁰⁷ Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, 32790th edition (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 2003). P. 22.

³⁰⁸ Ogden. 24-38.

followers of Jesus Christ from all peoples living together in oneness to obey the word of God.” Rami described a multiethnic network as “a beautiful community where every person practices the character of Christ to bring shalom to the city.”

The interview participants’ comments were organized using Ogden’s model:

Figure 4.3 Ogden’s Framework of Jesus Disciple Making Model

	PRE-DISCIPLE	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
Jesus’ role	The inviter	The living example	The provocative teacher	The supportive coach	The ultimate delegator
The disciples’ role	Seekers	Observers and imitators	Students and questioners	Short-term missionaries	Apostles
Readiness level	Hungry to know whether Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah	Ready to observe who Jesus is and the nature of his ministry and mission	Ready to interact with Jesus and publicly identify with him	Ready to test the authority of Jesus to work through them	Ready to assume full responsibility for making reproducing disciples
Key questions	Is Jesus the Messiah?	Who is Jesus, and what is his ministry and mission?	What is the cost of following Jesus?	Will the power of Jesus work through us when we take on his ministry?	Will I give my life entirely to the mission of making reproducing disciples?

Sasan and Rami commented on the Muslim ministry network seeking to build bridges to the 100,000 Muslims in St. Louis, primarily in the pre-disciple and stage 1 phase of Ogden’s model. Sasan engaged Muslims through soccer with the two primary questions, “Is Jesus the Messiah?” and “Who is Jesus?”

Ebou engaged his entrepreneurial network with the stage 2 and stage 3 questions: “What is the cost of following Jesus? Will the power of Jesus work through this business to bless the city of St. Louis?” He built a network of sojourners who seek to live a culture of disruption in radical non-conformity as bold ambassadors in the city.

One specific diaspora network mentioned that sought the common good of the city was The Center for Faith and Work in St. Louis. For the last four years, a diaspora

cohort training network has been multiplying multiethnic disciples. Eight of the eleven interview participants completed or participated in faith and work cohort training. The faith and work cohort network included the following interview participants: Tswara, Oleg, Ortiz, Sasan, Jose, Gongda, Ebou, and Hai Dong, representing seven countries.

Ortiz appreciated the faith and work model as a structure to multiply his network of volunteer soccer coaches with a vision to seek the common good of the city. Ortiz said, “Learning to coach is a process. It is not overnight. You are going to see changes that you can see now. But you have to improve daily as a coach. I learn from the players everyday how to improve the way I teach. The gain is going to change little by little. You do not even notice, and God is doing that. Your coaching is impacting families. Even if you realize it or not, God is faithful when you are transformed by your work.”

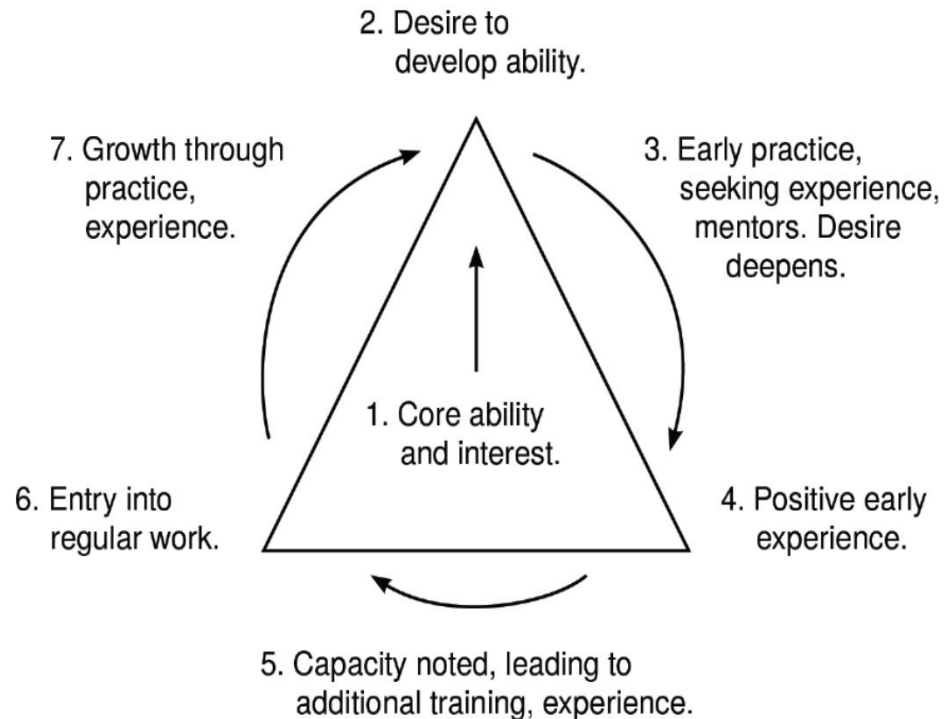
Dr. Dan Doriani founded the Center for Faith and Work in St. Louis and lists the five elements of good work: need, talent, disciplined effort, direction, and correct social appraisal.³⁰⁹ Doriani continues, “Good work *meets real needs*. . . Good work also lets people flourish through education, invention, communication, entertainment, and the arts. When laborers meet needs, they love their neighbors, near and far.”³¹⁰ He illustrates in Figure 4.4 a helpful model for discerning calling to help build networks:³¹¹

³⁰⁹ David Kaywood, “Work That Makes a Difference: An Interview With Dan Doriani,” *Gospel Relevance* (blog), August 2, 2021, <https://www.gospelrelevance.com/2021/08/02/work-that-makes-a-difference-an-interview-with-dan-doriani/>.

³¹⁰ Kaywood.

³¹¹ Daniel M. Doriani, *Work: Its Purpose, Dignity, and Transformation* (P&R Publishing, 2019).

Figure 4.4 Doriani Model of Discerning Calling



Hai Dong and Ebou also found this illustration helpful as they built a network of multiethnic university students learning to discern their calling. Ebou mentioned, “Many students may have an ability and a desire to start their own business, but because of limited capacity they get stalled in the process.” Hai Dong agreed and said, “Humility and meekness are central attitudes of a learner, and I have found that the multiethnic student living outside of their culture generally has a higher capacity to look beyond limited capacity by building a diaspora network of multiethnic leaders.”

Summary of Findings

This chapter examined how multiethnic ministry leaders plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The study began with the belief that many of the immigrant ministry leaders were isolated and in

need of a community. The eleven multiethnic ministry leaders were interviewed primarily from the city of St. Louis. Ten multiethnic ministry leaders represented six continents. The participants represented seven denominational backgrounds with various congregational sizes and denominational affiliation. Two served in the northern Midwest as consultants to Africa and Middle East Ministries in the Midwest area. The research participants also varied in ethnicity, gender, and age. A table in the chapter labelled each participant as either a voluntary or involuntary migration to provide background.

The first research question identified the five challenges of multiethnic ministry leaders as trust, trauma, isolation, conflict, and identity in cross-cultural complexity. The research participants spoke of the honor of walking the diaspora road with Jesus and connected with five beatitudes that shaped how ministry challenges develop the character of Christ in multiethnic ministry leaders.

The second research question explored the individual stories of multiethnic ministry leaders as they entered the larger story of God's redemptive plan of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. These four movements of God's story within the individual stories of the multiethnic ministry sojourners revealed God's heart to restore the entire cosmos. Enoch Won described diaspora missiology as the emerging missiological framework to the new paradigm of Christian mission in the twenty first century. Won identified three primary patterns of assimilation in the United States: ethnic enclave model, cultural thread model, and the urban tribe model. The integrative approach also explored ways scripture addresses the attitude and heart of multiethnic ministry leaders mission to, through, and beyond people in diaspora movements with specific life stories of multiethnic ministry leaders planting and networking churches.

The third research question addressed migrant ministry leaders' use of cultural intelligence to serve the common good of the city. Each participant spoke of the priority to seek first the kingdom of God through a Christ-centered study of the scripture applied to culture. A key theme mentioned was that a culturally intelligent ministry had a gospel-saturated identity rooted in the character of Jesus Christ.

The fourth research question sought to determine how multiethnic ministry leaders network the Revelation 7:9 vision of people from diaspora communities to multiply multiethnic followers of Jesus Christ for the common good of the city. The common good of the city was defined as anything that benefits and is naturally shared by all members of a city. One specific diaspora network sought the common good of the city through The Center for Faith and Work in St. Louis. Eight of the eleven interview participants completed or participated in faith and work cohort training. Discerning calling as a process was a central theme for walking with sojourners in disciple making through the faith and work multiethnic network.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore how migrant ministry leaders plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. The literature review and participant interviews affirmed that God loves to walk with and send the sojourner to practice the gentle and humble heart of Jesus Christ from everywhere to everywhere. The study also explored the missionary heart of God to send his church into the world. The practice of the image of God reflected the diversity of the Trinity in walking with the suffering of all people. The prophetic vision of Revelation 7:9 of the multiethnic church connected the research to the global migration of people today.

This chapter summarizes and applies the findings of how migrant ministry leaders practice the gentle and humble heart of Jesus Christ to multiply multiethnic churches in networking diaspora communities for the common good of the city. The practice of the heart of Jesus Christ walking with migrant ministry leaders is summarized in the three offices of Jesus Christ as prophet, priest, and king.

This research began in a small way, when I signed the 2010 Lausanne Cape Town Commitment on diaspora mission. Cross-cultural mission and multiethnic ministry have been my lifetime calling from my university ministry years. In June 2023, the EFCA launched a diaspora disciple making network in St. Louis called Ambassador City Church. I was asked to serve as the pastor and gospel catalyst to network evangelical immigrant leaders to engage migrant communities with faith and work cohorts. This dissertation final chapter will present a structure for multiethnic church planting residency training to multiply a reproducible pipeline for migrant ministry leaders to

plant multiethnic churches in St. Louis. The eleven study participants said they believed such a multiethnic network was the practical next step and will advise Ambassador City multiethnic church planting in applying this research to love the sojourners in the city.

The Harvard Human Flourishing Program integrates the knowledge of the six domains highlighted in chapter two across disciplines for cities to flourish. The praxis of this chapter is to build on the Harvard study and apply the research of the eleven migrant ministry leaders to establish the Ambassador City multiethnic residency training. One of the first steps for an Ambassador in residence is to visit the Harvard Flourishing Program website and download the Flourishing app on their phone.³¹² The second step is to join a flourishing community of practice that can connect the university campus locations in St. Louis with the local church.³¹³

Chip Dodd in *The Voice of the Heart* speaks of character formation in the spiritual root system of five essential roots of feelings, needs, desire, longing, and hope.³¹⁴ Migrant ministry leaders practice the heart of Christ in character formation through the spiritual root system of these five core heart values of admission, acceptance, attunement, attachment, and alignment. Hesus covenant love is the character formation that practices the incarnation of the presence of Christ in you the hope of glory to see community grow.

Dr. John Perkins is a 94 year old sojourner and co-founder of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA). Many of the community development

³¹² Harvard Research Human Flourishing Program, “The Human Flourishing Program.”

³¹³ Harvard Research Human Flourishing Program.

³¹⁴ Dodd, Chip, *The Voice of the Heart: A Call to Full Living (Audible Audio Edition): Chip Dodd, Sage Hill Resources: Books*, Chapter 3 Minute 33.

principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and Participatory Learning Assessments (PLA) that we have practiced in South Africa were learned from the ministry of Dr. John and Vera Mae Perkins. In a personal interview at his home Dr. Perkins summarized decades of character formation in ministry with one verse on the incarnation as central to transformation.³¹⁵ And the Angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people”.³¹⁶

Many within the church may see the flourishing of the city as a distraction from the gospel, but as Jordan Raynor highlights in *The Sacredness of Secular Work*, Jesus is the gardener of Genesis 1.³¹⁷ The Gospel of John records Mary mistaking the resurrected Jesus for the gardener in John 20:15. Jesus is the gardener who as a grain of wheat fell into the ground and died to bring a grand harvest of all nations.³¹⁸ The contrast shows that the first Adam failed his work in the garden, but Jesus as the last Adam has brought his glory and our good for all the families of the earth.³¹⁹ In summary the Ambassador City multiethnic church plant residency has Jesus as the gardener to flourish the city for his glory and our good. A chorus from a City Alight song states, “so in faith I follow Jesus on the road not understood, for I know that he is working for His Glory and my good.”

³¹⁵ Dr. John Perkins, Incarnation of Christ, Spring 2024, <https://jvmpf.org/>.

³¹⁶ Bibles et al., *ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible*, Luke 2:10.

³¹⁷ Raynor, *The Sacredness of Secular Work*, Chapter 1 50 Minute.

³¹⁸ John 12:24-25

³¹⁹ Ps. 22: 27

Qualitative research recognizes that, as Lamin Sanneh noted, individual responses define a particular worldview, based on the eternal word of God lived in a particular culture. This worldview-sensitive method allowed me to respond to the conversations at hand, to define the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to identify best practices for a multiethnic church planting network. The migrant ministry leader challenge as a sojourner is summarized in Ezekiel 22:29-30:

The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy and have extorted from the sojourner without justice. I sought for a man among them who should stand in the gap... but I found none.

The interview process revealed five core migrant ministry challenges: trust, trauma, isolation, conflict, and identity in cross cultural complexity. Yet, the gentle and humble heart of Christ is the man who stands in the gap to walk with these sojourners.

The study began with the belief that many of the immigrant ministry leaders were from collectivist cultures gifted to build a network for the common good of the city, yet research identified that multiethnic leaders were also isolated and in need of a networked missional community. To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions guided the qualitative research:

1. What challenges do migrant ministry leaders face in planting a multiethnic church?
2. How do migrant ministry leaders understand God's story of four movements of creation, fall, redemption, restoration to love the diaspora community?
 - A. (Creation) How is the image of God reflected in diaspora people?
 - B. (Fall) How are immigration systems broken with attitudes of injustice?
 - C. (Redemption) How does the gospel bring healing to the diaspora?
 - D. (Restoration) How can cities flourish with migrant ministry leaders?
3. How do migrant ministry leaders use cultural intelligence to serve the common good of the city?

- A. (Motivation) How does their own diaspora story motivate them?
 - B. (Knowledge) How do they describe cultural intelligence?
 - C. (Strategy) What Bible stories influence their cultural work to serve the common good?
 - D. (Behavior) How do they work for the common good of the city?
4. In what ways and to what extent do migrant ministry leaders shape a regional network in the diaspora community for the common good of the city?

The beginning of this paper highlighted the Inter-American Highway as an illustration of the opportunity for diaspora mission. The illustration highlighted the Darien Gap, a 60-mile stretch of jungle that is the only unfinished gap in a 19,000-mile highway across fourteen countries. Many migrants fill gaps in their lives by crossing jungles to new citizenship in the hope of freedom, safety, and a prosperous life for their family. This research also recognized the complexities of migration and the border crisis in America, revealing failures in character, culture, and city. The study literature and interviews affirmed that only the gentle and humble heart of Christ will provide the citizenship to the eternal city that every sojourner is seeking. This chapter proposes a practical city network in diaspora communities based on that heart.

Character of Diaspora Disciple Makers (Prophetic Dialogue)

One key finding was how the character of Christ shaped the lives of migrant ministry leaders through sojourning. Walking into God's four movements of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration was a means of salvation for several of the interview participants. Learning to practice the gentle and humble heart of Christ's character through the beatitudes was transformative as well.

The Jubilee Center for Character formation defines character as a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation, and guide conduct.³²⁰ Human flourishing was mentioned by the U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy as the widely accepted goal of society, yet his research revealed isolation and loneliness are experienced by over 50 percent of the American people.³²¹ The Harvard flourishing study mentioned in the last chapter identified character formation as one of the five central domains for human flourishing.³²²

The eleven migrant ministry leaders in this study affirmed the promised blessing of shalom to all nations through Abraham. Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones comments, “There are always two sides to the gospel; there is a pulling down and a raising up.”³²³ The nine beatitudes clearly define the need, filling, and fruit fulfilled in the heart of the citizen of the kingdom of heaven whose character rests on “blessed are the poor in spirit.” The prophetic word in the calling of Abraham as a sojourner, the father of many nations, was a helpful study for applying the three offices of Jesus Christ in the life of sojourners.

Andrew Walls coined the term, “the Ephesian Moment,” from Ephesians 2:19, which reads, “You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members in the household of God.” Walls continued by explaining the Ephesian Moment was the mystery of the gospel hidden for ages past but through Christ

³²⁰ Kristján Kristjánsson and James Arthur, *The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education in Schools, 3rd Revised Version*, 2022.

³²¹ Dr. Vivek Murthy, “U.S. Surgeon General: Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation,” in *U.S. Surgeon General*, 2023, 82, <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>.

³²² VanderWeele, “On the Promotion of Human Flourishing.”

³²³ David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 1st edition (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1973), 33.

now speaks to the character of diaspora disciple making with a call to interdependence. “Each was necessary to the other, each was necessary to complete and correct the other; for each was an expression of Christ under certain specific conditions, and Christ is humanity completed.”³²⁴ The Ephesian Moment of diaspora disciple making is a gospel interdependence between the word of God in the whole person and into all cultures of the world as his followers seek the common good of the city.

Tswara from South Africa explained that his country is called “the rainbow nation” to reflect the promise of all people living together as one nation. Yet, the murder of his father under apartheid was a road he had to sojourn to find shalom and justice in the gentle and humble heart of Christ. Tswara used the word “fusion” to explain “the beauty of the union of followers of Jesus Christ from all peoples living together in oneness from suffering to glory.”

Fusion shaped all the migrant ministry leaders through prophetic dialogue that injected the hope of Christ into their suffering. Suffering and glory together let them “know for certain” that God fulfills his covenant promise to sojourners.³²⁵

The eleven migrant interview participants revealed how the character formation in Abraham to “know for certain” formed through the prophetic dialogue of word and deed in the gentle and humble heart of Christ. The dialogue in Luke 24 on the road to Emmaus fulfills the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15, with the Lord walking between the pieces of brokenness. Sojourners walk a broken diaspora road. Luke 24 provides hope in suffering through prophetic dialogue.

³²⁴ Yang, “Our Modern Ephesian Moment.”

³²⁵ Gen. 15:13

Jane Vella explains that dialogue is how adult learning is best achieved. She notes that dialogue comes from two Greek words: *dia* meaning “between” and *logos* meaning “word,” and thus means, “the word between us.”³²⁶ Vella provides twelve principles and practices of adult learning, so that dialogue shapes the character formation of knowing:³²⁷

1. Needs Assessment: naming what is to be learned.
2. Safe context for learning process.
3. Sound relationship between the teacher and learners.
4. Sequence of content and reinforcement.
5. Praxis: actions with reflection or learning by doing.
6. Respect for learners as decision makers.
7. Ideas, feelings, and actions of mind, emotions, and will of learning.
8. Immediacy of learning.
9. Clear roles and role development.
10. Teamwork and use of small groups to learn.
11. Engagement of the learners in what they are learning.
12. Accountability: how do they know what they think they know?

Vella’s twelve principles paralleled the participants’ hearts of listening, learning, loving, lamenting, and leaders being disciplined in the prophetic word, as described in the Luke 24 dialogue.³²⁸ Jesus walked the word between them in verse 26, especially teaching that God’s suffering servant would be a light to the Gentiles to establish justice and faithfulness through suffering to inaugurate the kingdom.³²⁹ The two disciples on the road to Emmaus describe “knowing for certain” in their burning hearts. The American church is like the two disciples, and as suffering sojourners, we will mature the church with a biblical view of suffering.

³²⁶ Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults*, Revised edition (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 3.

³²⁷ Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*. 4-5.

³²⁸ Luke 24:25-27

³²⁹ “The Servant Songs of Isaiah,” *Tabletalk*, October 1, 2019, <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2019/10/the-servant-songs-of-isaiah/>.

Rami from Jordan described how many Arabic-speaking Muslims have walked a road of suffering to this longed-for fellowship. He said, “Our Muslim neighbors are so thankful for the food and furniture we provide that they gather with us at our Arabic-speaking church. When they see us breaking bread and explaining Jesus Christ as the source of this love, they begin to hunger and thirst for a righteousness outside of themselves as a stream of living water to wipe away tears of suffering. The gospel is attractive when they see Jesus in this fellowship of the burning heart.”

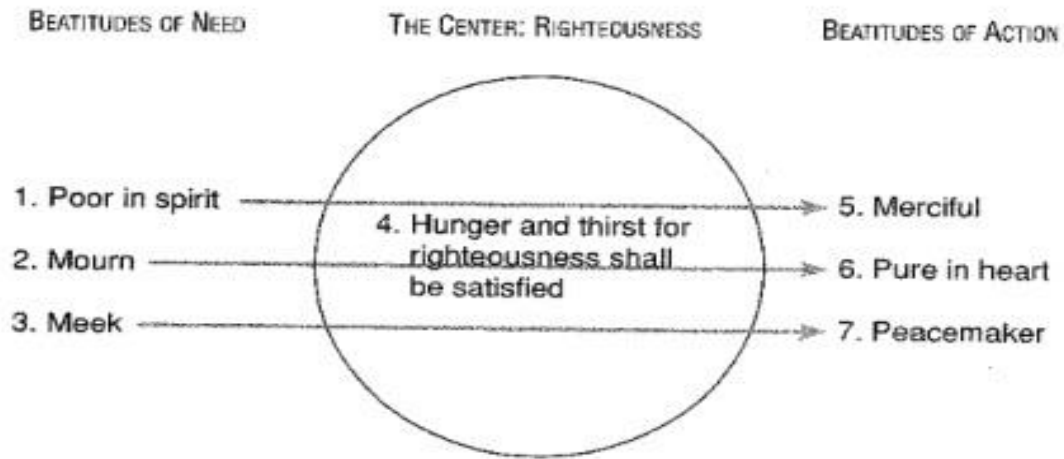
Dan Doriani often asks people to list character traits they admire in people. The beatitude values of meekness, mourning, and poverty of spirit are rarely mentioned. Doriani explains, “Jesus wanted disciples not crowds, so he called a few men to himself to know the blessing of character.”³³⁰ The Greek word *makarios* means “a wholeness and integrity even in the darkest hour,” and is translated “blessed.” Doriani teaches that Matthew 5: 1-16 reveals that real blessedness comes from mature character. This mature character will produce four results: the strength to suffer persecution, the ability to be the salt of the earth, and the ability to be the light of the world, and finally, praise to God.³³¹

Dr. John Perkins highlighted that the incarnation of Christ in you the hope of glory brings the message of character to life with good news, of great joy, for all the people. The spiritual root system of feelings, needs, desire, longing, and hope are rooted in the beatitudes of Jesus Christ. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the nourishment the soul of every sojourner hunger and thirst’s for in the righteousness of Christ.

³³⁰ Daniel M. Doriani, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Character of a Disciple*, Illustrated edition (Phillipsburg, N.J: P&R Publishing, 2006), 36.

³³¹ Doriani, 37.

Figure 5.1 Beatitudes of Mature Character: Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness



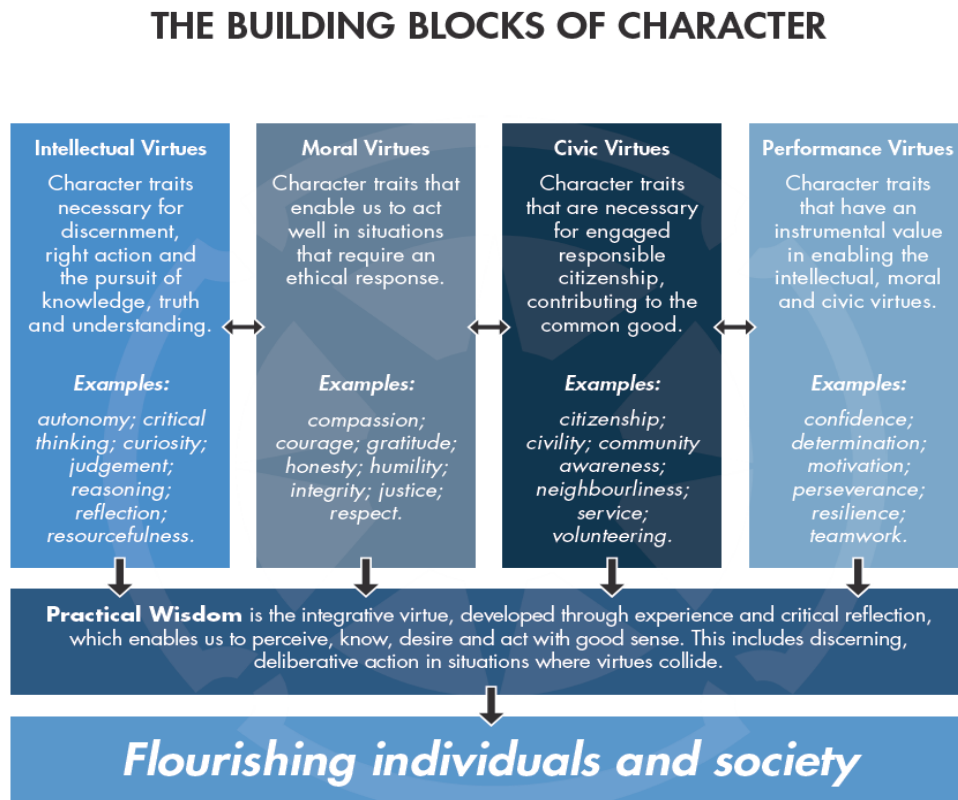
This diagram roots the beatitudes in the daily need for the gospel of Jesus Christ. The beatitudes values (mercy, purity, and peacemaking) flow from the hunger to be fed in the fellowship of the burning heart when walking between the word.

One of the key issues the migrant ministry leaders experienced living in America was being misunderstood, something they identified as part of the suffering Christ used to create a hunger for the filling of Christ righteousness. It was often a thorn in the flesh of migrant ministry leaders. The mature character of a diaspora disciple maker walks among these thorns. The humility to believe that Christ will provide the grace to be strong in weakness³³² was the experience of each migrant ministry leader interviewed.

The Jubilee Center for Character and Virtues has identified the following diagram to help disciples “know for certain” the promise given to Abraham of the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the building blocks of character formation:

³³² 2 Cor. 12:19-20

Figure 5.2 The Building Blocks of Character



The intellectual, moral, civic, and performance virtues above are rooted in what the ancient Greeks called *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. Practical wisdom shapes character formation through lived virtues learned through failures and suffering.

Jack Miller teaches that 2 Corinthians 12 calls every member of the church to humility in evangelism. Miller writes:

Instead of allowing our inadequacies to keep us from evangelism, we should allow them to propel us into it. Not in our own strength, but in God's power working through us. When we do that, we will be powerful witnesses for Christ.³³³

³³³ C. John Miller, *Powerful Evangelism for the Powerless*, 2nd Rev ed. edition (Phillipsburg, N.J: P&R Publishing, 1997), 124.

Evangelism was another common theme the migrant ministry leaders mentioned as they shared their heartbeat for prayer, evangelism, and disciple making across cultures. Keller, Kim, and Doriani provide helpful multiethnic models of preaching character. Keller applies a theology of suffering with the religious affections of Jonathan Edwards to put what Lloyd Jones called “logic on fire.” Logic on fire is the Luke 24 fellowship of the burning heart in walking the diaspora road of preaching to connect the head and the heart to see Christ walk in our suffering. Keller lists three levels of word ministry gifts helpful for migrant ministry leaders to practice the heart of Christ in diaspora mission:

1. Informal conversational teaching.
2. Speaking gifts based on 1 Peter 4:10,11.
3. Formal preaching gifts that communicate the apostolic tradition of scripture.³³⁴

The beauty of this three-level word ministry for preaching structure is that every person in the church can practice the heart of Christ. Keller reminds evangelists of John 3:14 to “look to Jesus” as the one lifted on the cross to remove the poison of sin. Evangelists must be aware of the idolatry of their own hearts, using performance to earn favor, as opposed to rest in the finished work of Christ. As a result, evangelists need to continually apply the gospel to the idol factory of their own heart.

One key question that the survey participants discussed was how migrant ministry leaders practice evangelism and disciple making from 2 Timothy 2:1,2. Relationships rooted in a common interest was the most frequent response, especially interests that

³³⁴ Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), Kindle.

cross cultures, such as soccer, food, music, and marriage. One simple relationship model that participants provided was the **BLESS** model:³³⁵

Begin in Prayer for your new friend from another country.
Listen to their stories and the needs of their family in their sojourning.
Eat together. Only one out of ten international students eat in a US home.
Serve the family you are praying for, so they see the love of Christ.
Share your story of relationship in Christ and offer them grace.

The dialogue model of Jesus walking the road in Luke 24 parallels the **BLESS** model for practicing the heart of diaspora disciple making.

Lloyd Jones in *Preaching and Preachers*, states, “Preachers are there to deal with the whole person, and his preaching is meant to affect the whole person at the very center of life.”³³⁶ Keller summarized with the simple phrase, the “Gospel Changes Everything.”

The character of a diaspora disciple maker is rooted in the beatitude of hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ. The identity of a disciple maker as a peacemaker is rooted in the gospel changing everything. Disciple makers build up migrant families in living the five L’s: listening, learning, loving, lamenting, and leading disciples to practice the gentle and humble heart of Christ in scripture.

Culture of Multiethnic Church Planters (Priesthood of Believers)

Rohit, a study participant, told how learning to live the sonship of Jesus Christ set him free from the culture of holy men in India who perform with outward obedience but whose hearts are far from God. Rohit said, “Jesus Christ creates a new culture of

³³⁵ Rick Richardson, “BLESS: A 5-Step Path to Relational Evangelism,” *Outreachmagazine.Com* (blog), July 20, 2016, <https://outreachmagazine.com/features/18468-bless-relational-evangelism.html>.

³³⁶ Lloyd-Jones et al., *Preaching and Preachers*.

obedience in the cross and resurrection that has set me free to live sonship. The gospel changes my old man-centered culture of performance, trusting in the idols of my heart learned in India, to seek a new Christ-centered culture of freedom in the Holy Spirit.” Rohit told how this new sonship freedom motivated him to plant multiethnic churches with a new culture of grace that changes everything.

Craig Ott in *Teaching and Learning Across Cultures* defines culture as “the way we do things around here.”³³⁷ A more complex definition is a “system that people use to innovate in order to change themselves as their environments change.”³³⁸ Ott is a missiologist and church planter who models the character of a diaspora disciple maker and planted multiethnic churches globally. His book is a gift to train the multiethnic church planting network. Ott says, “Good teachers everywhere become students of their students by personally caring about their students, simply put getting to know them.”³³⁹ Ott defines the five dimensions of culture’s influence on disciple making and learning as cognition, worldview, social relations, media, and environment.³⁴⁰ He describes how the overlapping circles of the five dimensions influence one another. He writes that the essential character of a cross-cultural disciple enters every relationship with a sojourner as a learner. These five dimensions are not categories, but tools designed to explore cultural differences with patience and humility.

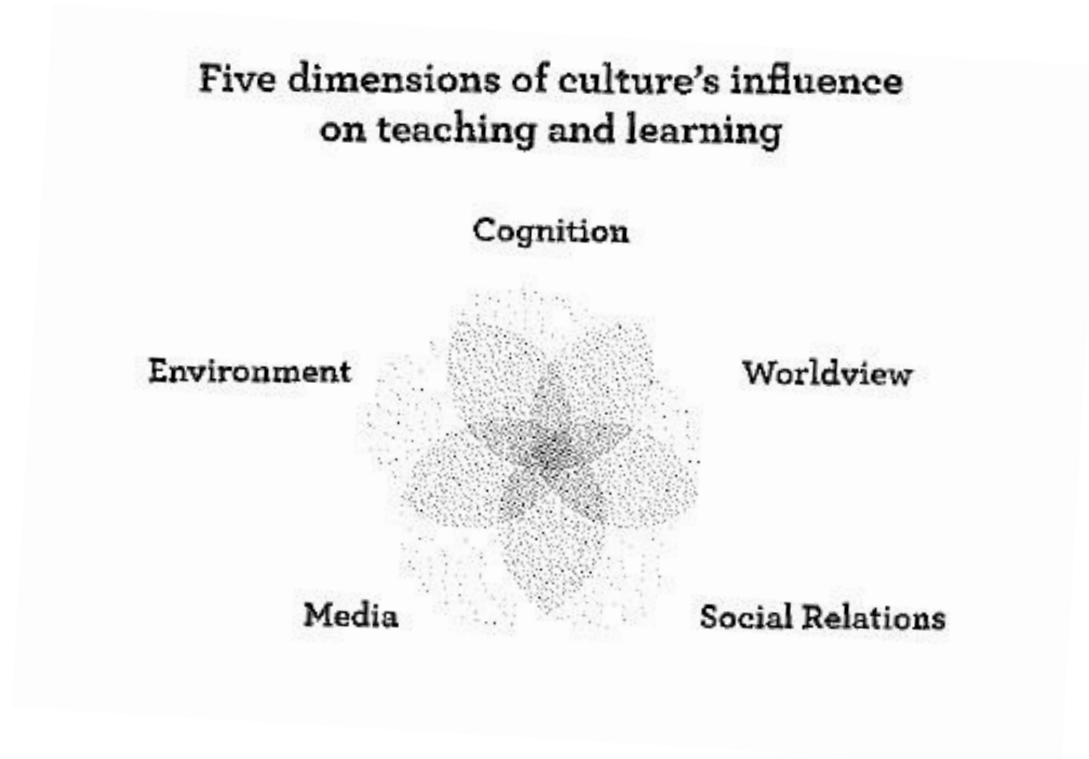
³³⁷ Craig Ott, *Teaching and Learning across Cultures: A Guide to Theory and Practice* (Baker Academic, 2021), 28.

³³⁸ Ott, 28.

³³⁹ Ott, 298.

³⁴⁰ Ott, 24.

Figure 5.3 Craig Ott's Five dimensions of Cultural Influence



This study's eleven migrant ministry leaders were selected, in part, to represent 1.0 and 1.5 generation immigrants living in America. One of the most significant people groups influencing St. Louis in the last thirty years has been the Bosnian community. Samir served them and is himself a Bosnian follower of Christ. He provided excellent stories of how he daily had the honor of walking with Bosnian families through his work with a settlement agency. Samir said:

For many years we have served 150 Bosnian families every Saturday morning through the Bosnian food pantry, providing food donations from five grocery stores. Many of the Bosnian families have trauma from the war, and it is easy to get offended. The gentle and humble heart of Christ has forgiven me for my offense, so I allow Christ to ease their offense. This is important in planting an Eastern European church. There were many individuals in church that are easily offended, leaders need to model grace.

Gavin Ortlund in *Humility* says, “Our pursuit of humility must start with what Christ has done for us in his incarnation and death.”³⁴¹ He calls church leaders to model humility through creating a culture of freedom in choosing to trust others. He says, “To build a culture of trust, we must have our identity rooted in the gospel. When your security comes from Christ, you have the freedom to help every individual flourish in the grace of God, so their gifts build up the body of Christ.”³⁴²

Jose from the Philippines honored his family culture yet spoke of how the gentle and humble heart of Christ “flipped my world.” He said, ‘I never wanted to blame my family culture, but I felt shackled and chained until my eyes were opened to see the gentle and humble heart of Christ create a new culture by giving me a pure heart. For forty years I have labored to plant multiethnic churches that modeled this culture of grace by daily dependence on the Holy Spirit in the power of prayer.’”

Dr. Korie Edwards provides ethnographic research on multiethnic churches in her book *The Elusive Dream*. The title refers to Martin Luther King Jr’s famous speech, and she writes that MLK’s dream remains elusive because culturally, white Christians leave congregations when the worship and church activities as a whole do not center on white comfort.³⁴³ Edwards’ research shows that most multiethnic churches are still majority, white-led congregations. She believes that for multiethnic churches to be successful they must reject the white dominant culture; otherwise, there is a very slim possibility of a multiethnic church planting movement.

³⁴¹ Gavin Ortlund, *Humility: The Joy of Self-Forgetfulness* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2023), 13.

³⁴² Ortlund, 47.

³⁴³ Korie Little Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches*, Updated edition (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 17.

Edwards believes the Civil War was a key cultural defining moment in American church history. She explains that churches were generally integrated prior to the Civil War, but they were also led by white dominant culture. After the Civil War, Black congregants were emancipated by law and no longer required to submit to white leadership. A new culture of Black-led congregations began to flourish. By 1890, Edwards reports, an estimated 90 percent of Black Christians attended a Black-led congregation. She explains that it was not because Black Christians were resistant to worshiping with Christians of other races, but because they were segregated within other churches or excluded from churches completely. Edwards call to reject majority white culture for multiethnic movements uncovers sinful attitudes in American history that the church must address through a new migrant culture.

Several of the migrant ministry leaders spoke to this American wound of racial tension between Black and white church leaders. Tswara from South Africa said, “My observation of the American church culture is that they have never dealt with the wound of slavery in this nation. The German culture condemned Nazism, but America still seems to be fighting the Civil War in the hearts and culture of the church. There is a root of bitterness as a result where many are missing the grace of God.” Jose called himself the “brown brother in the middle.” He said, “I have felt caught in between the American Black church and white leader culture. The time has come for a new culture in the American church with a vision of Revelation 7:9.” Sasan from Iran said, “My Muslim friends see the American church cultural baggage and question the power of the gospel.”

Keller calls the believer and the church to walk in line with scripture in the pressures of cultural attacks. The cultural idolatry of reacting has created a cultural crisis

in the church, pastorate, and in the priesthood of the believer. Keller provides a helpful structure to discern the current season in a church's relationship with culture:

1. Winter describes a church that is in a hostile relationship to culture, bearing little evangelistic fruit, and is embattled and spiritually weak.
2. Spring is a church that is battling and even persecuted by a pre-Christian culture but is growing in faith and bearing fruit (i.e., the Chinese Church).
3. Summer is the allied church, highly regarded by the culture with Christians in every sphere of society and feeling at home in culture.
4. Autumn is the church in the West today, marginalized in a post-Christian culture and looking for ways to reach out winsomely.³⁴⁴

In 2010, I was present to sign The Cape Town Commitment of the Lausanne Cape Town Congress on Evangelism. The 2010 Congress identified diaspora mission as a strategic focus with the creation of the Global Diaspora Network to advance God's mission worldwide. The practical application was to network ambassadors of the gospel to mature churches through these four seasons.

This study's interview process revealed the opportunity for the American church to create a culture of mobilizing migrant ministry leaders as multiethnic ambassadors. Edwards mentions that the elusive dream calls for the setting aside of white dominant culture. The ethnographic research of this study shows the American Black and white church cultural baggage through the eyes of new immigrants is a call to a priesthood of all believers. Global migration is the plan of God bringing immigrants to America to mobilize a culture of Acts 13:1-5 multiethnic leaders to reveal the glory of God in a culture of grace for all nations.

Bryan Loritts in *Right Color, Wrong Culture* outlines a structure for creating culturally intelligent multiethnic ministry leaders. Loritts recognizes that global migration

³⁴⁴ Keller, *Loving the City*, 265.

is changing the demographics of neighborhoods and calls the church to pursue a Revelation 7:9 vision by investing in people. He believes the Revelation 7:9 vision requires the mercy of God to be living sacrifices, giving up personal preferences³⁴⁵ to pursue intentional disciple making by learning from other cultures. He explains how the Apostle Paul modeled the mystery of the gospel, transforming his own life with intentional multiethnic disciple making in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

Our God is a missionary God transforming neighborhoods through global migration to plant multiethnic churches. This research shows that when churches pursue the multiethnic character of Revelation 7:9 to engage the mission of the church across the street, the nations within see the heart of Christ.

Loritts believes within every ethnicity at least three cultural expressions function, representing C1, C2, and C3 leadership. He provides this helpful “divine design” for creating culturally intelligent migrant ministry leaders to plant multiethnic churches:³⁴⁶

- C1 leaders are people from one ethnicity who have assimilated into another culture. The Hellenistic Jews of Acts 6 are Jews who assimilated into Greek culture. The Hellenists were culturally safe but struggling with neglect.
- C2 leaders are culturally flexible and adaptable without becoming ethnically ambiguous or hostile. This leader rests secure in Christ and is the 1 Cor. 9 model of becoming all things to all.
- C3 leaders are culturally inflexible. Paul was a Pharisee who modeled this character in Philippians 3. These leaders relate well to their own demographic but conflict with C3 leaders of other ethnicities.

Acts 6:7 describes how the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many priests became obedient to the

³⁴⁵ Romans 12:1-3.

³⁴⁶ Bryan Loritts, *Right Color, Wrong Culture: The Type of Leader Your Organization Needs to Become Multiethnic*, New edition (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 197–206.

faith. The priests and the Pharisees were C3 religious rulers who opposed Jesus' ministry and then became obedient to the faith.

The eleven migrant ministry leaders in this research study demonstrated a C2 divine design to become "all things to all people" so that multiethnic ministry in word and deed multiplied. Rami from Jordan believed that there is hope for a multiethnic migrant leadership movement. Rami said, "As we plant Arabic churches in America, we are seeing C2 leaders raised up who are bold to stand in cultural gaps with the gospel to see the word of God increase and build bridges among all people." Ebou from The Gambia believes the church must enter the mission field of the multiethnic marketplace to multiply diaspora disciples. He said, "Starting businesses is an international language. When I help immigrants establish a business plan, I help them feel loved, welcomed, and part of the American culture."

Dorani believes churches have a mission opportunity to love the sojourner by equipping immigrant leaders in their faith and work calling. He defines calling as believing the gospel to follow Christ to places and to roles. He explains, "The principle of calling is to stay where you are, unless there is a reason to change, because of an overriding goal."³⁴⁷ When sojourners are equipped with a faith and work calling, they can reform their culture with the four Ps of leadership

- Principle: A biblical idea applied to any field of work in God's creation.
- Position: Authority to equip a team to implement and transform culture.
- Passion: Transformational leaders need a drive to implement a plan.

³⁴⁷ Dorani, *Work That Makes a Difference*, 57.

- Perseverance: Making decisions by faith in the midst of opposition.³⁴⁸

The eleven multiethnic leaders fully affirmed their identity as citizens in the household of God to love and walk with sojourners to seek a network of multiethnic church planters. Tswara spoke of his partnership as a South African with Mexican and Asian multiethnic church planters to see an Acts 13 model of church planting.

The Lost Art of Diaspora Disciple Making (Acts 13 Teams)

In November 1981 I came to faith in Christ through the Navigators ministry in Minnesota. Navigators leader Leroy Eims wrote *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, which has shaped a generation of disciple making using the metaphors in Psalm 1, contrasting the walk of the righteous and the wicked. Psalm 1 reads:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does prospers. The wicked are not so but are like chaff that the wind drives away...for the Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish.

The key word in this psalm is “planted.” The Hebrew word for plant is *oal* meaning “to transplant a tree or vine.” Jeremiah 7:5-10 repeats Psalm 1, also using the word “plant” to describe someone who trusts in the Lord and contrasting the curse of anyone who trusts in personal strength, anyone “whose heart turns away from the Lord.” The research and literature confirm the following principles from migrant ministry leaders to practice the gentle heart of Christ in the lost art of diaspora disciple making.

³⁴⁸ Doriani, 84–85.

The first principle in the lost art of diaspora disciple making is being planted in the one man of Psalm 1, Jesus Christ. The literature and research of this study have connected the beatitudes of Matthew 5 to the heart planted in the person of Jesus Christ. Doriani summarized Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:1-16 as an overture that real blessedness comes from mature character. Mature character will produce four results: the ability to suffer persecution, to become the salt of the earth, to become a light of the world, and praise given to God.³⁴⁹

These four results reveal the gentle and humble heart of Christ walking with the migrant ministry leaders of this study. Sasan, pastoring the Iranian fellowship of St. Louis, was in the hospital for stress three times after suffering persecution from three elders over money, but he experienced the sustaining walk with the one-man Jesus. Hai Dong, a university professor, spoke of the honor of being the salt of the earth through the one-man Jesus Christ in a pluralistic culture. Jose from Philippines testified of the fellowship of the burning heart in prayer for all nations through the one-man Jesus Christ as the light of the world for the city. Oleg from Latvia spoke with tears of praise to this one-man Jesus Christ who walked intimately with him in the recent death of his wife.

The second principle of multiethnic church planting is the mystery walking the road of suffering and glory as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:24-28 records the practice of walking with suffering and glory, having the heart of Christ. The suffering of Paul is a framework for training multiethnic church planters. The cost of discipleship as a multiethnic planter is clearly defined by Paul with these key words: suffering, affliction,

³⁴⁹ Doriani, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 37.

mystery, revealed, glory, proclaim, warning, teaching, mature, struggling, and powerfully.

The core question multiethnic church planters must ask in ministry as a north star in walking the diaspora road is “What is the gospel?” For many years in South Africa, I learned evangelism by walking with Acts 13 teams of multiethnic ministry leaders. The Acts 13 team of multiethnic leaders would ask three specific questions. These three multiethnic questions will ground the planter to practice the gentle and humble heart of Christ as a daily rhythm of life:

1. What is the gospel?
2. Who are you praying for the Holy Spirit to send you to disciple from another ethnicity?
3. How will you walk the diaspora road with this person to ‘know for certain’ the gospel?

One way scripture answers is the Ephesian Moment, highlighting the interdependence needed in multiethnic church planting in Acts 13:1-5. “The Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them.” The context of Acts 13 is a team of five multicultural followers of Jesus Christ: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucious, Manaen, and Saul.

The call of the Holy Spirit sent Barnabas and Saul away on mission. Yet three leaders stayed in Antioch to train leaders for the church. Acts describes how the church in Antioch multiplied. America is welcoming the greatest diaspora of people from all over the world. The Ephesian Moment of whole life diaspora disciple making that transformed the city of Antioch is now the American Moment to mobilize Acts 13 teams to a culture of multiethnic church planting.

An Acts 13 team of multiethnic leaders intentionally enters the gospel dance of the four movements of God's story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. The assumption of this study was that migrant ministry leaders from collectivist cultures will naturally develop a network to serve diaspora communities. The research has shown this to be an accurate assumption, with most participants applying one of the four Cynefin networks defined below:

1. Clear networks have a clear beginning and end such as baking bread.
2. Complicated networks have many moving parts that are technical but managed with skilled ability such as building a house.
3. Complex networks have no clear beginning and end with no clear solution, so they require collaborative networks as a church planting network to serve a city.
4. Chaotic issues are turbulent emergencies that cannot be controlled and require rapid response such as Hurricane Ian recovery teams in Florida.

The specific Cynefin networks represented in the interviews primarily related to the ministry of the participants. One clear observation that confirms Edwards' research is that each of the participants confirmed the need for a white majority culture leader as part of their multiethnic ministry. The Acts 13 team of multiethnic church planting is represented as a complex network in the Cynefin grid.

The third principle of diaspora disciple making from Luke 24 is an intentional plan to train culturally intelligent church planters on the diaspora road mission. Diaspora mission sees God at work to bring his story of redemption from everywhere to everywhere. The diaspora is God's plan to redeem the great dechurching movement of 40 million people leaving the church in the last twenty-five years in America. One plan is to certify culturally intelligent leaders in the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) to provide a network of cultural catalysts to see Acts 13 teams formed across the city.

This study has revealed God is placing the nations within cities for a purpose. Migrant ministry leaders are C2 culturally intelligent catalysts learning the yoke of a

gentle and humble heart of Christ. The Isaiah 57:15 heart of Christ is to walk with the vulnerable sojourner. Christ is weaving together a collaboration of polycentric leaders to network multiethnic church planting as a priesthood of believers. The final goal of this study is to apply multiethnic ministry to this American religious shift to network diaspora communities for the common good of the city.

The fourth principle of the lost art of diaspora disciple making is the multiethnic church planter being rooted in the humility of suffering through lamenting with modern day diaspora stories like the dispersion in 1 Peter and in Acts 10. 1 Peter outlines the themes of suffering and glory in the dispersion. 1 Peter is an explanation of the heart of Christ to love the sojourner through a C3 leader like Peter. Peter learned to walk in line with the truth of the “mystery” of the gospel through the friendship with Cornelius in Acts 10. Peter combines the words “elect exiles” in 1 Peter 1:1, defined by the Greek word *parepidemois*, as a sojourner living as a temporary resident. The word “exile” in Greek is *elektos*, which simply means “chosen.” Peter calls for Christians all over the world to practice the heart of Christ as elect exiles.¹ Peter also teaches suffering and glory in the dispersion, ending with the 1 Peter 5 call to shepherd the flock of God humbly under the mighty hand of God in the midst of a spiritual battle.

The Apostle Paul describes his heart to love the sojourner on the diaspora road with the word “ambassador.” He is an ambassador in chains of the mystery of the gospel to boast in his identity in Ephesians 6:19,20. The word “ambassador” is the Greek word *presbeuo*, meaning “to be the elder or the chief in chains.” Paul also used the word “ambassador” in 2 Cor. 5:20 in boasting of the love of Christ and making an appeal

through the suffering of Christ to create a new creation. The ministry of reconciliation is the fulfillment of the Genesis 12 promise that all nations will be blessed through Christ.

The final ambassador to model the personality of humility in an Acts 13 team of multiethnic disciple makers is Barnabas. The Holy Spirit is the *parakletos* who communicates the rich idea of walking alongside to encourage. Barnabas simply means “son of encouragement.” It was the nickname given to Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus who was also part of the dispersion.³⁵⁰

In the five American church culture challenges communicated by this study’s migrant ministry leaders (trust, trauma, isolation, conflict, and identity in cross cultural ministry), ambassadors like Barnabas are essential. Barnabas practices the gentle and humble heart of Christ by walking with the misunderstood in their trauma, isolation, and their conflicts. Probably the best example was when he was sent as a scout to Antioch and saw the grace of God and was glad.³⁵¹ Multiethnic church planters should pray for a Barnabas on their team. J.D. Payne in *The Barnabas Factors* identifies eight church planter character traits in Barnabas.³⁵² Dick France also wrote an excellent article on Barnabas for The Gospel Coalition to see encouragement as humility.³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Acts 4:36.

³⁵¹ Acts 11:23.

³⁵² J. Payne, *The Barnabas Factors: Eight Essential Practices of Church Planting Team Members*, Kindle (J. D. Payne, 2012), 274–75.

³⁵³ Dick France, “Barnabas—Son of Encouragement - The Gospel Coalition,” *Themelios*, January 2012, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/barnabas-son-of-encouragement/>.

Ambassador City Network of Multiethnic Leaders (Kingdom of Priests)

This study has shown that practicing the gentle and humble heart of Christ by walking the diaspora road will yield the fruit of diaspora disciple making. The church of Antioch was a model of every member engaging in the complex network of the lost art of diaspora disciple making. Antioch served as a refuge for the sojourner and became a church planting network outward, to Ephesus and all nations, for centuries. The See of Antioch patriarchate that claims it was established by Peter, Paul, and Barnabas in AD 34 and continues to present day.³⁵⁴ Ambassador City Network applies the Ephesian Moment to the diaspora network in St. Louis.

An American ambassador in the diaspora was Lamin Sanneh. He was a Yale historian and global authority on Christianity and Islam. Sanneh analyzed the difference between translation and diffusion in the history of Christian mission and Islam.³⁵⁵ He explains that the translatability of the gospel to other cultures is why the Bible is in direct conflict with the secular view of religion and culture in America.

Sasan from Iran commented, “Iran has been the cultural training ground for Islamic leaders for years, but many of the mosques in Iran are empty because secularism has replaced Islam as the faith of the people. Secularism is the false idol now in Iran.” Oleg from Latvia agreed, “I was raised in a secular culture that promoted political stories as narratives for meaning.” Rami from Jordan said, “Islam is a cultural identity that is having conflicts with a secular identity in what is called culture clash. This culture clash

³⁵⁴ “The Patriarchate of Antioch: Founded by Saints Peter and Paul | Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese,” accessed March 12, 2024, <http://ww1.antiochian.org/patofant>.

³⁵⁵ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*.

is leading many Muslims to simply stop practicing their faith or become radical with their faith.”

The praxis of this research was to practice the heart of Christ in establishing Ambassador City Network as a diaspora network for the common good of the city. Migrant ministry leaders agreed that the next step was to bring together the Revelation 7:9 network of all people to mature migrant followers of Jesus Christ for the common good of the city. The common good has been defined as anything that benefits and is naturally shared by all members of a city. Common good often has three essential elements:

1. Respect for each person being made in the image of God.
2. Mutual belief in the contribution of each culture for the good of the city.
3. Collaborative effort to pursue the peace and flourishing in all of society.

Michael Cooper’s *Ephesiology* affirmed the call to seek the common good of the city with a study of the movement of the gospel. The Ephesian church asked the following four questions to apply the gospel of grace to the problem why people are leaving the church and returning to a culture of idolatry:

1. Does our church mission strategy have a clear training to multiply disciples?
2. Do all people know we love them, and do we see idolatry transformed in our city?
3. Does our church seek the glory of God in all areas of life?
4. Do we collaborate intentionally to multiply disciples among all people?³⁵⁶

The missional hermeneutic of the biblical story line of creation, fall, redemption, restoration will help Ambassador City Network to engage the city with biblical models in the church to pursue the image of God in all of life for the common good of the city.

³⁵⁶ Cooper, *Ephesiology*.

Ambassador City Network will apply the lessons from the Ephesian church to St. Louis. There are five specific mission strategies that Ambassador City Network has implemented to walk the diaspora road for the common good of the city of St. Louis:

1. Cup of Nations soccer.
2. Faith & Work business.
3. International Student ministry.
4. Ambassador City multiethnic church planting.
5. North America FIFA World Cup 26™

Each is a complex network in the Cynefin framework. Since 2010, Cup of Nations soccer has built trust among over fifty nationalities, welcoming over 500 people to its tournament in St. Louis. Cup of Nations is an annual World Cup-style soccer tournament for youth and adults, connecting cross-culturally through soccer, music, food, and family. It engages the idol of sport to practice the gentle and humble heart of Christ to love the sojourner through a collaborative network of a city-wide churches serving the migrant. St. Louis is one of over 100 global cities serving as a leader in the global sport discipling network.

Faith & Work has collaborated with the Center for Faith and Work St. Louis since 2019. Ambassador City Network has run three multiethnic faith and work cohorts to bridge the multiethnic marketplace with the monoethnic church community. Ambassador City Faith and Work vision continues to multiply multiethnic business leaders as salt and light for diaspora disciple making in the marketplace. The multiethnic church planting model creates business models through the church.

International Student Ministry collaborates with six university campus locations in St. Louis in sport chaplaincy and campus ministry. This campus ministry and church collaboration contains multiple complex networks. The priority of the International

Student Ministry is to walk with and disciple international students in small group Bible studies and not to create a large campus ministry. The secondary priority is to retain international university students in St. Louis and see them invest in the multiethnic marketplace disciple making culture for the common good of the city.

Ambassador City multiethnic church planting began in 2023 in St. Louis as an intentional multiethnic-led church. Its vision is the One EFCA vision of ReachGlobal and Reach National, partnering to plant a multiethnic church of sojourners like the church of Antioch. St. Louis city is grouped into five quadrants -- north, south, east, west, and city central -- to catalyze diaspora disciple making using fifteen to twenty multiethnic disciple makers in each location. Ambassador City is a member of the EFCA and is also highly networked with other denominational church planting networks to collaborate for the common good of the city. The Ambassador City vision is to mobilize both a global and local network with St. Louis serving like the city of Antioch.

As North America prepares for the FIFA Soccer World Cup™ in 2026, the church in Mexico, United States, and Canada plans to collaborate with God's gift of sport and the diaspora to multiply a gospel network of multiethnic church planters. The church does not have to defend an American identity of exceptionalism or pursue a globalization identity but instead already has an identity in the sonship of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Graham Daniels states, "Elite athletes have a tendency to be rooted in an achieved identity based on their performance in contrast to a biblical identity that is a received identity rooted in a relationship with Jesus Christ."³⁵⁷ Daniels' research on

³⁵⁷ Luke Jones, Andrew Parker, and Graham Daniels, "Sports Chaplaincy, Theology and Social Theory Disrupting Performance-Based Identity in Elite Sporting Contexts," *Religions* 11, no. 12 (December 2020): 660, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120660>.

identity in sport reveals sport does not develop character but instead reveals the source of hope for athletes and teams as either received or achieved.³⁵⁸ Daniels references the Rudd-Stoll-Beller-Hahm (RSBH) Value Judgment Inventory, developed to measure moral and social character,³⁵⁹ to show that sport does not build character but instead reveals character,³⁶⁰ both social and moral character.

Franklin Foer writes for *The Atlantic* and explores cultural, political, and economic forces affecting the daily decisions people make to shape cities, countries, and global movements that shape identity formation. Foer wrote *How Football Explains the World* to share stories of how soccer is not just a sport but a powerful movement shaping societies all over the world. Foer tells how when Iran qualified for the World Cup in 1987, 5,000 women demanded to enter the Azadi men-only stadium and broke through barriers to celebrate, starting this “football revolution.” Some Iranians point to this event when people turned away from Islam and toward secular nationalism in Iran.

Foer explains American culture through soccer, stating, “In every other country around the world football (soccer) is a middle-class working culture, but America inverts the class structure where the elite have created a culture gap that soccer reveals.”³⁶¹ He describes the anti-soccer culture in America as a culture of “American exceptionalism,” striving to be a city on a hill above international laws and culture. Soccer is wrongly

³⁵⁸ Jones, Parker, and Daniels.

³⁵⁹ U. S. Sports Academy, “What Type of Character Do Athletes Possess?,” *The Sport Journal* (blog), March 8, 2004, <https://thesportjournal.org/article/what-type-of-character-do-athletes-possess/>.

³⁶⁰ Academy.

³⁶¹ Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization*, Reprint edition (Harper Perennial, 2010).

viewed as the first step toward the compromise with globalization that must be rejected to maintain the national identity of the American culture.

The Practice of Walking the Geography of the Foreign-Born Population

Dr. Onesimo Sandoval is the professor of demographics at St. Louis University and the leading expert of the foreign-born population living in St. Louis. He has described the 2.8 million people in the metropolitan area of St. Louis as a “demographic winter.” Sandoval has gifted St. Louis with a demographic website that churches can use in their local communities to love the sojourner.³⁶² The Ambassador City Network engages the five quadrants of the city to engage the diaspora communities in the top immigrant locations.

The cities of Chesterfield and Maryland Heights represent 16 percent and 21.1 percent foreign-born population, respectively. Currently, India is the top foreign-born population, followed by Mexico, China, Bosnia, Vietnam, Philippines, Korea, Germany, Canada, Kenya, and Russia.³⁶³ Many of the eleven interview participants are represented in these countries.

Hai Dong and Gong Da said they have traveled across the United States, and because they are from a province in the center of China, they loved living in St. Louis, which is also in the center of America.

³⁶² Ness Sandoval, “The Geography of the Foreign-Born Population,” <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3bef16a598b543c7851ec7461a30f300>.

³⁶³ [CSL STYLE ERROR: reference with no printed form.].

Figure 5.4 Top 20 Immigrant Destinations in the Midwest

Immigrant Destinations

There are 180 immigration destinations in states that border Missouri (excluding Illinois). The following list comprises the top 20 destinations based on the total population size of the cities.

		Percent Foreign born	Foreign-born Population	Total Population
1	Nashville-Davidson metropolitan government (balance), Tennessee	13.7%	93,686	684,103
2	Des Moines city, Iowa	13.7%	29,108	213,164
3	Kansas City city, Kansas	17.7%	27,518	155,438
4	Springdale city, Arkansas	24.2%	20,943	86,705
5	Iowa City city, Iowa	13.7%	10,286	74,878
6	Bowling Green city, Kentucky	13.9%	10,038	72,385
7	Rogers city, Arkansas	18.8%	13,167	69,961
8	Bentonville city, Arkansas	16.5%	8,968	54,513
9	Smyrna town, Tennessee	13.8%	7,433	53,760
10	Grand Island city, Nebraska	16.9%	8,946	52,822
11	Chesterfield city, Missouri	16.0%	7,939	49,645
12	La Vergne city, Tennessee	16.2%	6,263	38,553
13	Maryland Heights city, Missouri	21.1%	5,931	28,099
14	Garden City city, Kansas	25.2%	7,038	27,933
15	Dodge City city, Kansas	26.1%	7,224	27,721
16	Marshalltown city, Iowa	18.7%	5,154	27,511
17	Coralville city, Iowa	15.3%	3,436	22,494
18	Liberal city, Kansas	29.2%	5,583	19,099
19	Carthage city, Missouri	14.2%	2,207	15,491
20	South Sioux City city, Nebraska	31.2%	4,320	13,835

Chart created by J.S. Onésimo Sandoval, Saint Louis University
Source: U.S. Census, 2022 5 Year ACS Estimates • Created with Datawrapper

Jose from the Philippines has lived in St. Louis for over fifty years and said he loved the family values that make St. Louis home. Samir from Bosnia said the Bosnian people loved how St. Louis has intentionally welcomed them since 1995 by creating a community neighborhood where they could feel like family. Russian-speaking Oleg from Latvia said there was no better place to raise a family than in St. Louis.

Rohit from India said he was amazed how fast the people of India were flowing into St. Louis. He commented how two new Hindu temples have been built in West county to create a culture of belonging to welcome new Indian immigrants.

The gospel themes of welcoming, family, community, and belonging were reflected in the survey data of the interview participants. Romans 15:7 says, “Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Ambassador City Network desires to practice the heart of Christ in walking the diaspora road through listening, learning, loving, lamenting, and discipling leaders. The network also engages multiethnic disciple makers with legacy churches in St. Louis to bridge the gap in the diaspora road of immigrants of the city.

Ambassador City Church believes the four movements of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration are at work as the Lord sojourns in the lives of migrant ministry leaders. Ambassador City Church is mobilizing migrant multiethnic church planters to practice the humble and gentle heart of Christ to speak boldly with fresh eyes to see the idolatry of the city of St. Louis. As Paul prayed for boldness as an ambassador in chains, so Ambassador City seeks to boldly apply the gospel to redeem the idolatry of St. Louis. Micah 6:8 is the heart of the Lord, to walk with sojourners to practice his heart to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly. The primary idols of St. Louis can be summarized with 3 P’s: parochial, prejudice, and pride:

- Parochial: St. Louis has a strong Roman Catholic structure, small parish communities of Irish, Italian, and German Roman Catholic immigrants. Roman Catholic and Lutheran immigration services have continued to welcome immigrants for many generations. The parochial culture creates a “stay in your lane” small neighborhood culture. Sojourners can seek love by crossing these walls with the gospel.
- Prejudice: In 1857 the Supreme Court voted 7-2 against the Dred Scott case seeking freedom over slavery. This decision was a catalyst for the Civil War. The 1857 *Dred*

- Scott* decision and 2014 Michael Brown killing revealed the prejudices of the city needing gospel healing. Sojourners can seek gospel justice against the prejudice.
- **Pride:** In 1876 St. Louis became the nation's first home rule or independent city. By 1890 St. Louis was the fourth largest city in America, but this independence created division between the city and the county of St. Louis. Sojourners practice the humble heart to heal pride.

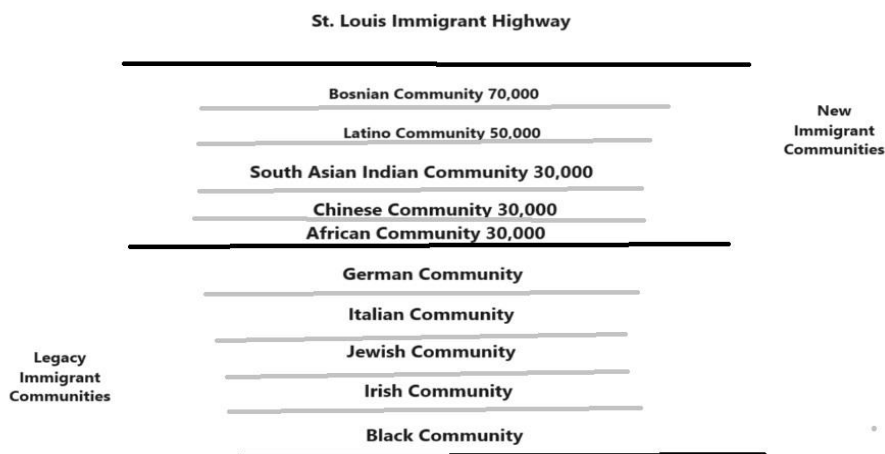
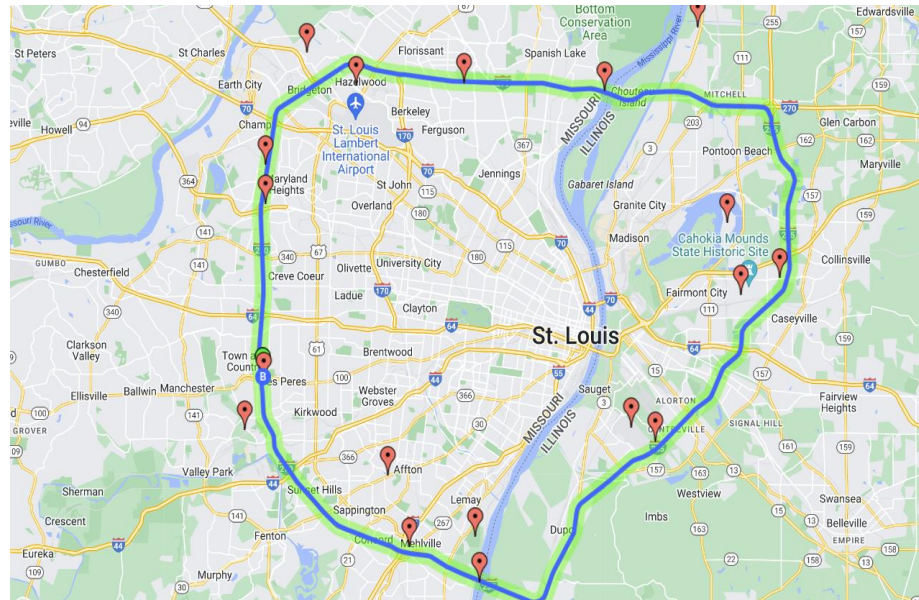
The praxis of the demographic study is to mobilize sojourners in St. Louis with Ambassador City Network to navigate the complex network of multiethnic church planting to bring the four movements of God's story together in five St. Louis communities. The city has set a goal to once again be the fastest growing foreign-born city in America by 2025. Highway 270 illustrates the context of the flow of the immigrant highway to the city. Figure 5.5 shows Highway 270 as a circle around the metro area of St. Louis. The drawing represents the recent flow of new American immigrant communities (1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 generation) into the legacy generations of immigrant communities on 270 (3.0 and beyond).

I created the St. Louis immigrant highway map on a white board to pursue practical wisdom on how to network the diaspora communities in St. Louis. I explained that the Ambassador City One EFCA vision is to see a network of one nation in Christ from many generations pursuing the common good of St. Louis. The participant migrant ministry leaders agreed, wanting to see the four movements of the gospel bringing together new immigrant communities and legacy communities to address parochialism, prejudice, and pride.

Ortiz from Colombia told how, as a soccer coach, he worked with the nations listed on this highway. Ortiz said, "Many undocumented families in the city are caring for immigrant children in daycare, baking bread, and repairing cars for other immigrants. God sent his son Jesus Christ as a sojourner to live among us; he grew up in the same

messy immigration. He was one of us, you know, and somehow the church keeps missing the incarnation message. We are called to love the sojourner by walking together as one. The kingdom of God is a movement of the Holy Spirit that the church must enter the daily in people's stories."

Figure 5.5 Ambassador City Network of Loving the Immigrant: Highway 270



Ebou from The Gambia said, "We have to create a network that immigrants will be fully known and fully loved to see the opportunities they have in the city. The church

has often treated immigrants like Samaria and walked around them. Jesus went to the well in John 4 and offered living water to the Samaritan woman. The church has the living water of Jesus Christ and a network to serve the immigrants shows we love the sojourner.”

Hai Dong from China said, ‘The Ambassador City network is building bridges across the parochial, stay-in-your lane culture through the common ground of soccer, business, community development, and, I would add, education. Education with international students is how I saw the gospel redeem the idols of my heart. Discipling international students is what I believe is the best investment for the city.’”

Jose from the Philippines said, “The International Institute hosts the festival of nations every year, where 100,000 people come to Tower Grove park to celebrate their cultures as one American people. Yet, the practice of oneness does not happen. Each culture still stays in their lane. We set up an International Students booth, and many churches give lip service of oneness, but we the church in St. Louis are missing the opportunity to be a symphony to sing together.”

In summary, the interview participants agreed that building the Ambassador City network of multiethnic leaders was essential to redeem the idolatry of parochialism, prejudice, and pride in St. Louis. The center church network, bringing the legacy of immigrants and new immigrant communities together, will take time to build trust and work through cultural misunderstandings. Several the participants noted that the complex network dynamics will require a covenant agreement developed by the network to be signed for the common good of the city.

Summary of the Study and Findings

The 19,000-mile Inter-American highway illustration at the beginning of this study communicated the gaps in the diaspora road, calling the church to stand in the gap with sojourners. This study has followed the heart of our missionary God in his global movement of people to love the sojourner by walking the diaspora road between broken pieces to demonstrate his covenant faithfulness in the one-man Jesus Christ.

This migrant ministry leader study has revealed that character, culture, and loving the city are essential practices of the gentle and humble heart of Christ for the American church today. The grand narrative of God's four movements of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration reveal his story of loving the sojourner. The gentle and humble heart of Jesus Christ walks with the sojourner to develop mature character so that the manifold wisdom of the church from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation declare His Glory.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused on how migrant ministry leaders plant multiethnic churches to network the diaspora community for the common good of the city. As with any study, there are cost-benefit limitations as to how the research will benefit the praxis before reaching a point of diminishing returns. Therefore, the primary benefit of this study has been to draw near to the gentle and humble heart of Jesus Christ who is the one man standing in the gap to love the sojourner perfectly. Barnabas modeled in Acts 11:23 the honor it is to be entrusted with powerful migrant stories of the grace of God among many nations brings gladness of heart.

Three ideas for further study focus on collaborative teams reflected in the Acts 13 model in Antioch may motivate the following areas of study:

1. In Chapter 2 Samuel Escobar mentions John Calvin himself being a migrant escaping persecution in France to Geneva Switzerland. There are 5,000 immigrants flowing into Geneva, a town of only 10,000 people. This study focused on the urban context, but a rural study of migrant ministry leaders planting multiethnic churches would be an idea for further study.
2. In Chapter 2 N.T. Wright mentions that one of the positives of the Reformation was that people were able to read the scriptures and worship in their own language. Yet, churches have been divided by language and ethnicity. Further research could find cities living the Ephesian Moment with immigration of all nations together as one in Christ on earth as it is in heaven to fulfill the cultural mandate for the shalom of cities.
3. In Chapter 2 W. Daniel Carroll Rodas speaks of the sojourner stories in scripture and how God commanded Israel through his law to love the sojourner. Further study could address legislation in America that can transform the current immigration policies to reflect rehumanizing immigrants to reflect the image of God in all of life.

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