

## The Global Become Local

The challenges posed by the changing patterns of world Christianity today, however, are not only encountered globally. Increasingly, these are being experienced locally.

Migration is transforming the religious life of Europe and North America. This has always been so, of course. Religious migrants have shaped the history of Christianity in the United States. But attention needs to be focused on how that reality is continuing today, in ways often not fully understood or appreciated.

Commonly we view immigration as introducing large numbers of non-Christian religions into U.S. society. Important scholars like Harvard's Diana Eck have documented the fascinating increase in religious practice in the United States, particularly in her classic work, *A New Religious America*.<sup>i</sup>

Yet, popular assumptions about the impact of immigration on non-Christian religious practice in the U.S. disregard more fundamental realities. In fact, immigration to the U.S. is having its most dramatic religious effects on the Christian population of the country. That's because, first of all, an estimated 60% of all present immigrants arriving in the United States are Christian.<sup>ii</sup> Moreover, many come with practices, traditions, and expressions of their faith that have been shaped in a non-Western context. As the introduction to a major study on religion and these new immigrants states:

*Even though significant numbers of new immigrants are Christian, they are expressing their Christianity in languages, customs, and independent churches that are barely recognizable, and often controversial, for European-ancestry Catholics and Protestants<sup>iii</sup>.*

But these new Christian immigrants will have a dramatic effect on America's future religious life in ways that already are beginning to be experienced. Consider this. According to the 1990 Census, 19.7 million people in the U.S. were born in another country.<sup>iv</sup> By 2010, there were 43 million foreign born residents in the United States. 74% of these were Christians. 5% were Muslim, 4% Buddhist, and 3% Hindu.<sup>v</sup> While those proportions will shift somewhat in the future, the overwhelming reality is that immigration to the United States is having its major effects on the Christian population in the country.

Not surprisingly, the highest number of immigrants living in the United States come from Mexico, totaling 12.9 million. 95 % of these are Christian. The Philippines provides the second largest number, totaling 1.8 million, nearly all of whom are Christian. Out of 1.1 million immigrants from El Salvador in the U.S., 1 million are Christian. 740,000 Christians from the Dominican Republic live in the U.S., along with 700,000 from Guatemala and 860,000 Christians from Cuba.<sup>vi</sup>

An estimated 214 million people in the world today are migrants, living in a country different from where they were born. Nearly half of these migrants are Christians—about 105 million, far more than the proportion of Christians in the world, which is about 33%. And for these Christians who are on the move, United States is their chief destination, presently accounting for about 32 million, or 13% of the Christian community in the U.S. That percentage will continue to rise.

Not only do the numbers of these Christian migrants to the United States tell this story. It's also the intensity of their belief and religious practice. Jehu Hanciles, a native of Sierra Leone who now is Chair of World Christianity at the Chandler School of Theology in Atlanta, has done pioneering studies of non-Western Christianity. He observes:

*Certainly, the vigorous growth of immigrant churches and congregations in metropolitan centers throughout the country over the last three to four decades suggests that they represent the most dynamic and thriving centers of Christian faith in America.<sup>vii</sup>*

### ***The New African Diaspora***

Hanciles observes “that every Christian migrant is a potential missionary.”<sup>viii</sup> Indeed, many African Christians drawn to the U.S. for a variety of reasons come with a missionary mind-set, reflective of the congregations that have nurtured their faith. While immigrants from Africa to the U.S. comprise a modest share of the country's foreign-born residents (3.9% in 2009), the growth of this community has been striking. In 1960, 35,355 African-born residents were living in the U.S. 50 years later, that number had increased 40 fold, to 1.5 million.<sup>ix</sup> Many bring non-Western expressions of Christianity nurtured in the soil of Africa.

A decade ago I struck up a conversation with Rufus Ositelu, Primate of the Church of the Lord (Aladura) during a meeting of the WCC Central Committee. I knew

almost nothing about his church. He had shared with me that he had been working as a computer expert in Germany, but had been called to the position of Primate of his church, headquartered in Nigeria.

As we talked together on a pleasant day in Geneva at the beginning of September, Rufus told me he had just recently come from a special time of retreat, with prayer and fasting, held each year. The Primate explained that the leadership of the church gathers together, and no major decisions are made without this special period of prayer. Further, he said that at the end of this period, the wider members of the church are invited to come and share in this experience of retreat and prayer.

Anxious to learn more, I asked Primate Ositelu how many people from the church at large joined for the conclusion of this retreat.

He replied, "About 1 million."

Suddenly I realized I was talking with the leader of a church whose scope and ministry was beyond anything I had imagined.

Founded in 1930 by 28 year old Joshua Ositelu, who had severed his ties with the colonial Anglicanism, the church has grown to 3.6 million members. Congregations flourish not only throughout Nigeria, but in other neighboring African countries such as Liberia, as well as Great Britain, Germany, and the United States.

The Church of the Lord (Aladura) is just one example of thousands of such churches belonging to the Organization of African Instituted Churches. The organization represents 60 million Christians in denominations and congregations throughout the continent and in the African diaspora. Totally independent from the church structures of Western mission, the AIC churches forged indigenous expressions of Christian faith, often in opposition to the harsh and controlling forces of colonial rule. Increasingly, AIC churches are finding homes within the United States through the migration of Christians from Africa.

### **Unintended Consequences**

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson stood at the Statue of Liberty and signed the Immigration and Naturalization Act, called the Hart-Celler Act, a major reform of U.S. immigration law. At the signing ceremony, however, he said, "This bill that we will sign

today is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions."<sup>x</sup> The President could not have been more mistaken.

The new law eliminated race and national origin as a basis for immigration, intending to put all nations on an equal footing. It also placed a priority on the reuniting of families as well as admitting those with needed skills. No one, it's fair to say, envisioned the consequences.

Robert Kennedy, testifying as Attorney General to a House subcommittee, gave this assurance about possible immigration from Asia under the proposed law:

*"I would say for the Asia-Pacific Triangle it [immigration] would be approximately 5,000, Mr. Chairman, after which immigration from that source would virtually disappear; 5,000 immigrants would come the first year, but we do not expect that there would be any great influx after that."<sup>xi</sup>*

In fact, the 1965 Act was a watershed in Asian immigration, as well as opening up the flow of non-white immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. The provision for uniting families had a particularly strong effect on Asian immigration. In 1965, the Asian-American population in the U.S. was about .05 percent of the total. By 2002, 7,300,000 Asians had arrived in the U.S., significantly exceeding Robert Kennedy's estimate.

According to 2010 U.S. Census data, 17.3 million Asian-Americans now are residents of the United States. In the last decade, the Asian-American population grew by 46%, a faster rate than any other racial group. The Census Bureau estimates this group will grow to 40 million by 2050.<sup>xii</sup>

The Christian community in the United States has been notably affected by this influx of Asian immigrants. Sociologists estimate that 44% of all Asian Americans are Christian. The Korean American community, totaling some 1.7 million, is about 80% Christian, compared to about 30-40% of the population of Korea. At least 13% of those studying for the Catholic priesthood in the U. S. are Asian, and most are Vietnamese.

An impact is also seen among students from abroad studying in the U.S. In 2011, of 723,000 international students, 60% were from Asia. Among that group, 157,000 were from China.<sup>xiii</sup> Frequently, these visiting students are welcomed by Chinese-American churches and by Chinese and Asian Christian fellowship groups on campuses. Such hospitality often leads to conversion as one joins this community of faith,

gathering with fellow sojourners in a new land. Asian-American Christians, with their high levels of education and deeply rooted spirituality, will have a growing impact on Christianity in the U.S.

### **Hispanic Immigration**

Hispanics, either foreign born or by ancestry, now total 50 million people in the U.S. Almost 33 million are from Mexico. The influx of Mexicans immigrants to the United States over the past 4 decades has been unprecedented in our history for a movement of people from any single country. While present practices and economic circumstances now have virtually halted net immigration from Mexico, the birth rate of the overall Latino population in the U.S. will result in substantial growth from the present 50 million residents.

About 70% of the Hispanic population in the United States is Catholic. And about 35% of U.S. Catholics are now Hispanics, who account for 71% of the growth of U.S. Catholics since 1960.<sup>xiv</sup> That figure will continue to rise. In Los Angeles, for example, 70% of Catholics are estimated to be Hispanic.<sup>xv</sup>

It's critical to realize that Hispanic Catholics bring their own contextualized practices of their faith. Not only is that reflected in images of the Virgin of Guadalupe throughout Mexican neighborhoods in U.S. cities. Their forms of Catholic piety reflect the enculturation of Christianity in Latin America. Moreover, it is estimated that 54% of Latino Catholics identify themselves as charismatic, and thus incorporate the practices of spiritual healing, speaking in tongues, and gifts of the Holy Spirit common in Pentecostal circles.<sup>xvi</sup>

About 23% of Latinos, however, are Protestant, accounting for a sizable 9.5 million Christians in the U.S.<sup>xvii</sup> There are more Latino Protestants in the U.S. than Episcopalians. The great majority of these are Pentecostal or evangelical—about 85%. Many can be found in the thousands of store-front churches and chapels that dot Hispanic neighborhoods in large U.S. urban areas. So the Protestant world as well is experiencing the rising influence of Latinos, with their frequent combination of evangelical theology, Pentecostal style, and social justice commitments. As the Hispanic

community—Catholic and Protestant—is projected to grow to 106 million by 2050, their presence will become one of the defining features of American Christianity.

Global trends will insure that migration, particularly from the South to the North as well as from the East to the West will be a growing part of the world's future. Further, the majority of those on the move will continue to be Christian. And if, in fact, every Christian migrant is a potential missionary, we are witnessing a major, non-Western missionary movement in the world. Think of it this way. As the West becomes post-Christian, non-Western Christianity is coming to the West.

### **Under the Ecclesiological Radar**

This reality is particularly present in certain states and metropolitan areas. Three-quarters of all immigrants are in these six states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois.<sup>xviii</sup> Further, major cities become magnets for immigrants. In fact, Los Angeles and New York are home to a full one-third of all foreign born residents in the United States.<sup>xix</sup>

Immigrants find their new homes both within major cities but also in suburbs. Chicago, for instance, has 590,000 immigrants in its city limits, but 984,000 foreign born residents live in Chicago's suburbs.<sup>xx</sup> The last decade has also witnessed the rapid growth of immigrants in several other cities through the middle of the country. Charlotte, Raleigh, Nashville, and Indianapolis all had more than 100,000 foreign born residents by 2010, and cities with some of the fastest growth rates of immigrants in the past decade included Baltimore (72%), Orlando (71%), Las Vegas (71%) and Atlanta (69%).<sup>xxi</sup> Recall that about two-thirds of these immigrants are Christians, and thus are establishing mono-ethnic congregations, joining multiracial churches, and finding ways to nurture and deepen their faith.

Congregations of these immigrants are generally not on our ecclesiological radar. Yet such congregations are growing. Mark Gornik in Word Made Global estimates that New York City is host to at least 150 various African immigrant congregations.<sup>xxii</sup> Hundreds more immigrant congregations thrive and grow within the radius of that world city.

This picture continues. Minneapolis-St. Paul, for instance, long known for its Scandinavian and German heritage, has seen an influx of immigrants from Africa, Asia,

and Latin America. A decade ago, Frieder Ludwig, then a faculty member at Luther Seminary, discovered 67 congregations of Asian immigrants, and 73 congregations of African immigrants in the Twin Cities.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Moreover, the faith of Christian immigrants—and that of other religious immigrants for that matter—usually becomes stronger and more intense through their whole experience of migration. Stephen Warner, a discerning sociologist who has probed deeply the significance of the religious lives of immigrants and their congregations, puts it this way:

*...immigrants (do not)...merely cling to what they had before they left their home countries. As religion becomes less taken for granted under the pluralistic and more secular conditions prevailing in the United States, adherents become more conscious of their tradition and often more determined about its transmission. Religion identities nominally assigned at birth become objects of active persuasion.*<sup>xxiv</sup>

These immigrant congregations in the U.S. also have important influences on practices, livelihood, and ministry of churches in their homeland. Increasingly, the flows of people, ideas, money, and media go back and forth within a world of global connections. Nigerian pastors in Minnesota return to their homeland for evangelistic crusades. Radio broadcasts of church services in immigrant congregations in New York or Houston are followed by those in Monrovia or Accra. These two-way flows provide means for missional connections and outreach to occur in creative and mutually reinforcing ways.<sup>xxv</sup>

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, a noted theologian and scholar from Ghana, describes perceptively the ways in which the power of Pentecostal experiences are transmitted and shared through the media:

*The expansion and appropriation of modern media technologies—particularly television, radio, and the internet—have enabled the transmission of charismatic power across the borders in ways that were unthinkable a decade ago. For example, people call into the early prayer morning sessions on Accra's **Joy and Peace** FM stations from New York and Toronto asking for prayers as they pursue employment opportunities or wrestle with immigration problems.*<sup>xxvi</sup>

## A Fresh Theological Encounter

Now that Christianity is centered in the global South, and non-Western expressions of the faith accompany faithful Christian immigrants to the global North, a fresh theological encounter becomes possible, and is crucial. What we are experiencing locally, if we are attentive to newly arrived Christian immigrants, reflects how the realities of world Christianity are reformulating theological assumptions and understandings. Andrew Walls, a pioneer in portraying the dynamics of world Christianity, puts it this way:

*The most striking feature of Christianity at the beginning of the third millennium is that it is predominantly a non-Western religion....We have long been used to a Christian theology that was shaped by the interaction of Christian faith with Greek philosophy and Roman law....These forms have become so familiar and established that we have come to think of them as the normal and characteristic forms of Christianity. In the coming century we can expect an accelerated process of new development arising from Christian interaction with the ancient cultures of Africa and Asia, an interaction now in progress but with much further to go.<sup>xxvii</sup>*

The heart of this theological encounter, in my view, centers on the clash in worldviews shaped by Western and non-Western cultures, which then influences the way in which the Bible is read, and faith is understood.

Consider, for example, how an African worldview shapes one's understanding. The noted African author John Mbiti, author of African Religions and Philosophy, explains that in the traditional African perspective, the distinction between the spiritual world and the material world, which we assume in the West, doesn't apply.<sup>xxviii</sup> As Harvey Kwiyani further explains:

*The religious world of the African is spiritually vibrant. As such, for the African, the spiritual realm is real—so real that life is not imaginable without it. Africans usually say that the spiritual realm is just as real as the physical one. It is only invisible, and even though the two of them are distinguished, they cannot be separated. They are inter-connected and they work together.<sup>xxix</sup>*

Such a worldview, embedded in various non-Western cultures, collides with worldviews entrenched in Western culture. Shaped by the Enlightenment and the modern era, what we commonly call a “secular” framework for shaping culture and society is taken for granted. Simply put, such a view seeks to understand and structure social, political, economic, and cultural life without reference to God, or any religious and spiritual realities. Religion is then confined to the private, personal sphere.

Optional space for religious practice is certainly guaranteed, but also circumscribed, both intellectually and practically.

Of course, a thousand qualifications are in order. Nevertheless, the operating world view which frames contemporary societies in the West is shaped by secular assumptions that reinforce a practical materialism and functional individualism. Inevitably, but in highly complex ways, this cultural worldview influences how Christian faith is understood and practiced.

Dave Gibbons, author and pastor of New Song, an innovative, multi-ethnic church with sites in southern California as well as Bangkok, Mexico City, and London, describes those influences in this way:

*Being part of the Western cultural machine, our American churches tend to gravitate toward the gods of pragmatism, materialism, and consumerism. And today, people around the world can't see anything supernatural about that. The global village is longing for something deeper.<sup>xxx</sup>*

By contrast, non-Western Christianity brings a worldview and understanding of life which challenges assumptions of modern life in the West, and collides with many theological viewpoints and practices of churches in the West.

Author and theologian Akintunde E. Akinade describes the development of non-Western Christianity in this way:

*Christianity has blossomed in societies outside the Western hemisphere and has become more powerful and nuanced in the process. The anti-structural character of the non-Western phase of world Christianity plays itself out in characteristics such as charismatic renewal, grassroots revival, massive exorcism, vibrant house churches, robust indigenization efforts, and effective lay leadership. Churches from the Third World are vigorously defining Christianity on their own terms. The new day that dawns will permanently alter the place and nature of Christianity in the twenty-first century.<sup>xxxi</sup>*

This is why fostering places and spaces which welcome the interaction between Christian traditions of the West, rooted in the established churches of the global North, and non-Western expression of Christianity, emerging from the new geographical center in the global South, is so essential. As Western culture becomes increasingly secular and post-Christian, the urgent need is for a genuine pluralism to develop, where voices and practices of Christians, as well as those of other faiths, which are rooted in an alternative spiritual vision from the prevailing culture, are respected and engaged in public

discourse, and make a contribution in shaping the common good of society. Christians whose roots of faith and life have developed outside of the West, and now have migrated there, will become particularly critical to the development of such a genuine pluralism.

### ***The New Ecumenical Frontier in Cities***

Immigrants find their new homes both within major cities but also in suburbs. Chicago, for instance, has 590,000 immigrants in its city limits, but 984,000 foreign born residents live in Chicago's suburbs.<sup>xxxii</sup> The fact is that nearly any of the major metropolitan areas of the United States are home to concentrated groups of foreign residents.

The last decade has also witnessed the rapid growth of immigrants in several cities through the middle of the country. Charlotte, Raleigh, Nashville, and Indianapolis all had more than 100,000 foreign born residents by 2010. Here in Kentucky, the total immigrant population is around 140,000 to 150,000. While small compared to other states, the rate of growth of Kentucky's immigrant population between 2010 and 2012 was 70%--a faster growth rate than all but six other states. We can assume that this rate is continuing.

Recall that about two-thirds of these immigrants are Christians, and thus are establishing mono-ethnic congregations, joining multiracial churches, and finding ways to nurture and deepen their faith with the community of believers across the cities of this state and throughout the nation. And in my view, all this represents the new ecumenical frontier of our time.

If this challenge is to be taken seriously, what would we do? How would we go about building new bonds of fellowship for our witness and mission? Here are the steps I'd suggest:

1. Discover who is there.

The first step is to discover the immigrant congregations that already are there, but unnoticed and neglected. As we've already seen, that requires attentive work. Then, like all ecumenical efforts, the beginning point is building relationships of trust. Any fundraiser will tell you that "people give to people," not to an organization that lacks a personal connection to them. That same is true in ecumenical work. People—including

pastors and denominational leaders—join an ecumenical fellowship or council because they have developed trusted relationships with the people who are its key leaders. Relationships continue to define the foundation for any fresh effort to discover and make visible the unity of the church.

2. Listen to one another's stories of faith.

Next, beginning such a fresh initiative among those who have been unacquainted with one another, such as Orthodox priests, evangelical personalities, Korean pastors, Hispanic Pentecostals, African independent church leaders, Catholic bishops, Methodist ministers, African-American pastors, Lutheran bishops, Indonesian Presbyterians, Nigerian Baptists, Coptic Orthodox Christians, and Kenyan Anglicans requires listening to one another's stories of their Christian pilgrimage.

The practice of sharing those stories, as we discovered in the formation of the Global Christian Forum, is a simple yet powerful way to build trust which can transcend, or at least suspend, the multiple stereotypes, mistaken assumptions, and unspoken judgments which most will bring into the room. That practice should become a regular feature of such an initiative.

3. Enter into theological dialogue.

Then, as trust begins to grow and the bonds of community begin to feel secure enough to be tested, such an emerging ecumenical body can enter into activities they can do together. These are not in a sequential or prioritized order. One is deep theological exchange. The need for in depth theological encounters between the churches today that define world Christianity, and which are present in urban areas, is essential.

4. Work together for justice in the community.

Next, possibilities of working together addressing specific areas of injustice, violence, and suffering within one's city should be embraced. This might be immigration issues, poverty, or hunger. The possibility of common ground for action in some of these areas is wider than what some might assume. And when nearly all the churches in a city are united around a common social issue, they have a significant capacity to make a difference for the sake of God's Kingdom.

5. Explore common mission and evangelism.

Such a growing fellowship should explore areas of common witness, mission and evangelism. Here is where the interchange can become especially engaging and creative. Many of the immigrant congregations in cities bring the sense that they are part of a plan for carrying out God's mission in the U.S., which they experience as a materialistic, hedonistic, secularized society. Some have been sent with that explicit purpose. Sharing that missional call with others and discovering how churches well established in this culture respond, will be mutually enriching for all, and for the sake of God's mission.

#### 6. Worship and pray together.

Finally, all these actions must be undergirded by worship, prayer, and celebration. Once again, that presents deep challenges, but such a group will discover that some of its richest experiences come as they learn how to pray and worship together.

When we reflect on the religious impact of immigration, particularly within the Christian community, one of the more important practical questions becomes where immigrants worship. For all kinds of obvious reasons, many immigrants are drawn to congregations comprised of those like themselves. They join with others from their country of origin, and from their particular denominational affiliation, in mono-cultural congregations. In the midst of all the challenges of adapting to life in a new culture, such a congregation becomes a place of security, strength, and an affirmation of their identity.

But that is not the only option. Other immigrants are drawn to congregations that are multi-racial, and in which they are a minority. The question, always, is whether such congregations learn the practice of radical hospitality which allows their own life to be genuinely transformed by the presence of those who, in biblical words, are "sojourners and strangers in the land."

The challenge of developing such multi-racial congregations, defined by when at least 20% of the group is from a racial-ethnic background different from the majority, is arduous. Statistics compiled from national studies in 2008 indicated that of the estimated 350,000 congregations in the U.S., only about 7% met that definition of being multi-racial. In my book I tried to give careful attention to the dynamics and difficulties of developing such congregations. The question is crucial, because research shows that

attitudes, relationships, and patterns of racial reconciliation are decisively influenced by participation in multi-racial congregations.

But in recent years, the commitment to this vision of congregational life has deepened, with expanding resources, networks, conferences, and inspiring examples. The Vineyard church in Columbus Ohio, for example, includes immigrants and refugees from 104 nations comprising 28% of its 9,000 members. Recently, Michael O. Emerson of Rice University, one of the leading authors and researchers of multi-racial congregations, has documented a marked increase to now 13.7% of U. S. congregations. Such a trend is significant because multi-racial congregations are often the portals through which the unique experiences and perspectives of immigrants shaped by non-Western Christianity are shared with others at the most local expressions of the church.

A key question, then, is whether local congregations in the global North, experiencing through patterns of immigration the presence of the global church in their midst, can become places which discover unity in the face of the divisions within world Christianity. The task of building multiracial congregations is painfully difficult in part because the rifts in the body of Christ are so pervasive and deep, and because the sin of racism is so strong. Persevering in that task is not only a response of simple faithfulness to the gospel, but also, in our time, a critical form of participation in our common ecumenical journey.

### ***Practices to Share***

#### 1. Mission comes first.

Those who are building multiracial congregations, and those who study them, seem to agree that becoming multiracial isn't the goal in and of itself. Rather, it results from a deep, internalized sense of the congregation's mission. For instance, it may also be the fruit of a commitment to evangelistic outreach, or to expressing concrete acts of justice and solidarity in the community. The stark and indicting reality, confirmed by the research of Michael Emerson and his colleagues, is that in the U.S., *"the vast majority of congregations are substantially less racially diverse than the neighborhoods in which they reside"*

A multiracial congregation is one of those rare and powerful exceptions that, at

times, becomes even more racially diverse than its neighborhood. Often, a missional attentiveness and commitment to the world right outside its doors is a first step leading a congregation on a path toward becoming more multiracial.

## 2. Intentionality is essential.

The desire for a multiracial future has to be genuinely owned by the congregation. Moreover, this needs to be embraced not as a strategy, or a means of survival, but as a biblically rooted commitment to justice and equity. Whether through means of a

mission statement, consistent teaching, discernment of vision, or the calling of pastoral leadership, welcoming the gift of a multiracial future needs to become deeply and intentionally grafted into the hopes, dreams, and prayers of the congregation.

## 3. Diversity in Leadership.

No one can doubt that multiracial leadership is essential to a multiracial congregation. Developing that leadership early, and intentionally, is essential. Again, this isn't merely good strategy. New Testament scholar Thorsten Prill argues that it reflects what was happening in Luke's account of the New Testament churches in Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, and Corinth:

*It is significant that the leadership of these churches reflected not only the diverse local church membership but also the diversity of the whole body of Christ....It follows that it is mandatory for multi-ethnic churches to select their leaders on this basis and to avoid mono-ethnic leadership.*

## 4. Mixed Ministry Teams

Not only the leadership, but the various teams, task forces, and mission groups that make up a congregation's life need to reflect however possible the multi-ethnic diversity that is being desired. This becomes particularly important in building a congregational life with new immigrants. The posture of established members serving new immigrants, while initially a natural expression of mercy and compassion, has to be transformed into mutuality, allowing for those opportunities for God's mysterious presence to turn the tables of hospitality.

## 5. Ongoing Christian Formation

As the congregation grows on its journey, its mission, vision, and values

require continual reinforcement through its efforts in the forming of disciples. The biblical practice of hospitality, and its radical meaning within both the Hebrew Scriptures and the life and ministry of Jesus, needs to be absorbed by the hearts and minds of congregants. Likewise, addressing the sin of racism, and utilizing the tools of anti-racism training in an ongoing way are all part of an overall process of Christian formation for a multiracial community of believers.

#### 6. Prepare for a Long Journey

Building a multiracial church is a slow, careful, and often painstaking process. People in a congregation are at different points in their own journey to embrace a multiracial community. Pastoral patience is required as they move through steps in this process. Further, for the congregation as a whole, this is a pilgrimage which moves through stages. That's particularly true for an existing congregation which makes a commitment to a multiracial future, in contrast to a multiracial new church plant. But for all, this is an arduous journey requiring discernment, perseverance, time, and trust in the working of God's Spirit.

These six qualities, in my judgment, are essential spiritual quest of any who feel called by God to participate in the building and shaping of a multiracial congregation as a visible witness to the prayer of Jesus that we all may be one.

So the invitation is simply to walk together, with old and new partners, on a common pilgrimage. In this post-Resurrection period, we can remember the two disciples walking together to Emmaus, as we share with each other "all that is happening" in our common attempts to follow Jesus. When you have accompanied one another faithfully and honestly, and come to a table to eat together, in unexpected grace-filled moments, you will suddenly know the very real presence of Christ in your communion with one another. Then you will race to tell others.

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- <sup>i</sup> Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (Harper, San Francisco, 2001)
- <sup>ii</sup> Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, p. 7
- <sup>iii</sup> Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Stalzman Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations* (AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, California, 2000) p. 14.
- <sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.
- <sup>v</sup> This information is found in the Global Migration and Religion Database, a project of the Pew Forum and Religion and Public Life. An interpretative article, "Faith on the Move: The Religious Affiliation of International Migrants" was released on March 8, 2012, and can be found at: <http://www.pewforum.org/geography/religious-migration-exec.aspx>
- <sup>vi</sup> All these figures are also from "Faith on the Move," cited above, which features interactive maps with multiple and rich resources of information
- <sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.
- <sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.
- <sup>ix</sup> Kristen McCabe, "African Immigrants in the United States," *Migration Information Source*, July, 2011, published by the Migration Policy Institute: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=847>
- <sup>x</sup> President Johnson's remarks can be found at: <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/651003.asp>
- <sup>xi</sup> U.S. Congress, House Hearings, 1964, p. 418, cited in a 1995 study on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bill, found at: <http://www.cis.org/articles/1995/back395.html>
- <sup>xii</sup> U. S. Census Bureau, "Facts for Features: Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month: May 2011," April 29, 2011: [https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb11-ff06.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb11-ff06.html)
- <sup>xiii</sup> From a talk given by Joel Carpenter, "World Christianity Right Here," to the Commission on Christian Unity of the Reformed Church in America on October 12, 2012. Dr. Carpenter is Director of the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- <sup>xiv</sup> "Hispanic Catholics in the United States," Backgrounder, prepared by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/upload/hispanic-catholics.pdf>
- <sup>xv</sup> Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, p. 294
- <sup>xvi</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295
- <sup>xvii</sup> Bruce Murray, "*Latino Religion in the U.S.; Demographic Shifts and Trend*," National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference website: <http://www.nhclc.org/news/latino-religion-us-demographic-shifts-and-trend>
- <sup>xviii</sup> Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, p. 244.
- <sup>xix</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.
- <sup>xx</sup> From the website of the Government of Illinois, New Americans, "Immigrant Demographics", 2012: <http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/newamericans/Pages/Demographics.aspx>
- <sup>xxi</sup> Audrey Singer, "Immigrants in 2010 Metropolitan America: A Decade of Change," Speech given to National Immigrant Integration Conference, October 11, 2011, available on the website of the Brookings Institution: <http://www.brookings.edu/research/speeches/2011/10/24-immigration-singer>
- <sup>xxii</sup> Gornik, *Word made Global*, p. 4.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Dana K. Nelson, *Mission and Migration: 52 African and Asian Congregations in Minnesota* (Lutheran University Press, Minneapolis, 2007) pp. 10-11.

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- <sup>xxiv</sup> R. Stephen Warmer and Judith G. Wittner, (ed.), *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration* (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1998), p.17.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Some sociologists focusing on religion of immigrant communities are giving new attention to the significance of these “transnational” movements of ideas, beliefs, and practices between immigrant congregations and those in their original homeland. See, for example, Helen Rose Ebaugh, “Transnationality and Religion in Immigrant Congregations: The Global Impact,” *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 2010, pp. 105-119.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Mediating Spiritual Power: African Christianity, Transnationalism and the Media,” in Afe Adogame and James V. Spickhard, *Religion Crossing Boundaries: Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora*, (Brill, Leiden and Boston, 2010), p.88.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Andrew F. Walls, “Eusebius Tries Again: The Task of Reconceiving and Re-visioning the Study of Christian History,” in Wilbert R. Shenk (ed), *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History* (Orbis Book, Maryknoll New York, 2002), p. 1.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Praeger, New York, 1969).
- <sup>xxix</sup> Harvey Kwiyani, unpublished dissertation “Pneumatology, Mission, and African Christians in Multicultural Congregations in North America: the Case of Three Congregations in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA” Luther Seminary, p. 24.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Dave Gibbons, *The Monkey and the Fish: Liquid Leadership for a Third-Culture Church* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2009), p. 22.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Akinunde E. Akinade, (ed.), *A New Day: Essays on World Christianity in Honor of Lamin Sanneh* (Peter Lang, New York, 2010), p. 5.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> From the website of the Government of Illinois, New Americans, “Immigrant Demographics”, 2012: <http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/newamericans/Pages/Demographics.aspx>