2014

Cultural Intelligence: a Model to Empower the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church for Multicultural Ministry

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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE: A MODEL TO EMPOWER THE WEST HOUSTON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH FOR MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

by

Ashwin James Somasundram

Adviser: David Penno
Problem

The West Houston Church is a large multicultural congregation and is located within a large multicultural neighborhood on the west side of Houston. As such, one would assume that the church, with its diverse nature, would have an active and strong presence in the local community. However, that was not the case. Pastoral observation suggested that the members were too internally focused and struggled to relate to people from a different cultural background within the congregation. The consequence was a disconnect between the church and the community. There existed a paramount need for cultural intelligence in the minds of the members if they were to productively engage their community.
Method

A cultural intelligence model was designed, developed, and implemented to empower and equip the members with the tools for multicultural ministry. The project was evaluated to determine the extent to which the members were empowered and equipped through interviews and the extent to which the local community has been impacted by their transformation. Objective measures included looking at church growth, new community ministry initiatives, and an increased profile in the community.

Results

The congregation transformed into a more loving, tolerant, inclusive, and culturally aware community. The church membership grew from 531 to 582 and the average weekly attendance increased by 10% to 603. Five new community ministry initiatives were established and the church profile was significantly raised in the local community.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the implementation of a cultural intelligence model can significantly empower a church to minister multiculturally with success.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE: A MODEL TO EMPOWER
THE WEST HOUSTON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH FOR MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Ashwin James Somasundram
October 2014
CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE: A MODEL TO EMPOWER THE WEST HOUSTON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH FOR MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

A project document presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

by

Ashwin James Somasundram

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ministry Context

The West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church is a large multicultural community of 531 members representing 52 nationalities. The countries represented include Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, China, Cuba, England, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, and the United States. There is no one dominant ethnic group. Pastoral observation notes that the ethnic groups struggle to get along and that conflict arises between them. Thus, this ethnocentric behavior needs to be addressed.

The members are predominantly middle-class with many employed in the medical, oil, gas, education, retail, and IT sectors. This is reflected in the tithe base which was over 1.1 million dollars at the end of 2013. The young adults are the largest membership group, aged from 25-35, and the smallest membership group is the seniors.

The church is located within a large multicultural neighborhood on the West side of Houston, Texas. This community is a melting pot of different races and ethnicities including White, Hispanic, Asian, and African-American. Conflict is common among these ethnic groups. The median age of the community is 35 and is predominantly middle class, educated, and married.

The West Church is the largest and most popular English-speaking Seventh-day Adventist church in Houston. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of the
members live outside the church’s 77043 zip code and commutes to the church, passing by other Seventh-day Adventist churches along the way. The typical Sabbath attendance varies between 550 and 650 and is unique within the Texas Conference in that it is the only church where the attendance is higher than the membership. A contributing factor to this is the variety of worship services offered: contemporary, traditional, Spanish, and Children’s Church. However, the main attraction seems to be the multicultural nature of the church.

I began my ministry at the West Church in May 2009 and have served as the senior pastor for nearly five years. I currently work alongside a youth pastor and full-time secretary. I believe it is no coincidence that God placed me in a large multicultural ministry context. Based on reflection, discussion and prayer, I feel God has called me to be a thought leader in the area of diversity and multicultural ministry. I particularly feel that, within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we lack leaders who are equipped to help us navigate through the choppy waters of the multicultural milieu that our church now faces. Many of our churches are rapidly trending from being monocultural to multicultural and while that is a distinct blessing, it also presents unique and critical challenges. If those challenges are not addressed sensitively and appropriately in our churches, there is a risk of great damage. My vision is to empower and equip church administrators, pastors, and laity through teaching and preaching to reach someone of another culture with the gospel message.

I believe that God has placed this vision of multicultural ministry in my heart and mind. As I reflect on my life’s journey, I can clearly see God’s hand at work. I can identify a distinct global and multicultural pattern in my life and ministry. First, I was
born and raised in London, England to parents of an Indian heritage who themselves were raised under the brutal and horrendous apartheid system in South Africa. Second, I had my ministerial training at Newbold College in England, where I developed strong bonds of friendship with students from all across the globe. In all, there were 50 nationalities represented there and it served to open my eyes to the global nature of the church and to think cross-culturally. Third, my ministry and missionary experience has included assignments in Israel, United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition, my international speaking engagements in Australia, Albania, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Germany, Republic of Ireland, and South Africa have also impacted me.

**Statement of the Problem**

The West Houston Church is a large multicultural church community of 531 members, with 52 different nationalities represented. It is located within a large multicultural neighborhood in West Houston. As such, one would assume that the church, with its diverse nature, would have an active and strong presence in the local community. However, that was not the case. Pastoral observation noted that the members were too internally focused and struggled to relate to people from different cultural backgrounds within the church community. They tended to segregate themselves socially to within their own social groups and there seemed to be an unwillingness to step out from their cultural comfort zones to engage with others both inside and outside the church congregation. Consequently, there was a disconnect between the church and the local multicultural community.

Pastoral observation concludes that transformation of the membership can happen by equipping and empowering them with cultural intelligence. A relatively recent
concept, cultural intelligence or CQ, is defined as the recognizing and understanding of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of a cultural group of people and the ability to apply that knowledge towards the achieving of specific goals. There existed a paramount need for cultural intelligence in the minds of the members if they were to engage productively with each other within the congregation and to those outside in their local community. By equipping the members with cultural intelligence skills, it will enable them to relate better and minister both inside the congregation to one another, and in turn, outside to the local community.

**Statement of the Task**

The task of this project was to design, develop, and implement a cultural intelligence model to empower and equip the members of the West Houston Church with the tools to minister to the local multicultural community. The project was evaluated through interviews to determine the extent to which the members have been empowered and equipped. In addition and in turn, the extent to which the community has been impacted by their transformation was evaluated. Objective measures included looking at church growth, new community ministry initiatives, and an increased church profile in the community.

**Delimitations of the Project**

This project is limited in study to the congregation of the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Description of Project Process

A theological foundation for this project

1. Examined the multiethnic/multicultural implications of Jesus’ ministry.

2. Reflected on cultural pluralism as seen in the early New Testament church at Antioch.

3. Explored Pauline theology to identify his use of cultural intelligence, with particular focus on his mission to the Gentiles.

Relevant contemporary literature was reviewed on cultural intelligence, especially in regard to community outreach, evangelism, multiethnic/multicultural ministry, and transformation. Older seminal works in these areas were also reviewed.

I have developed and implemented a cultural intelligence teaching model to empower and equip members in the West Houston church for community transformation. First, they were equipped with skills to relate better to each other across ethnic lines, the consequence being greater church harmony and understanding. Second, they were empowered with tools to minister actively to people from diverse cultural backgrounds in the outside community. Evaluation through interviews to measure transformation among the members took place. In addition, evaluation through looking at church growth, new community ministry initiatives, and an increased church profile to measure transformation in the community was also undertaken. I conducted the interviews. The interviewees were aged over 18 and come from the congregation and the leadership team.

Definition of Terms

Cultural Intelligence (CQ). The recognizing and understanding of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of a cultural group of people and the ability to apply that knowledge.
towards the achieving of specific goals.

**Glocalization.** It is the seamless connectedness between the local and global, and is affecting the church in ways that never could have been imagined in the first-century church or even in the century.

**Melting Pot and Stew Pot.** Twenty-first century thinking no longer sees North American culture as a “melting pot”, where everyone loses his or her cultural distinctiveness in order to be amalgated into an Euro-American concept of being North American. This thinking defines North American society as a stewpot in which each ingredient maintains its distinctive shape, color, and taste, while at the same time contributing its distinctive flavor to the whole. The resultant culture, therefore, becomes a blend of all diverse cultures. The latter concept (the one I prefer and identify with in multicultural ministry) would include the fact that the integrated culture would be constantly changing as new cultures are added to the blend.

**Multicultural.** Culture refers to ideas, assumptions, values, and behavioral patterns of a particular social group, the term multicultural, as an adjective to describe a church, refers to the presence of more than one set of ideas, assumptions, values, and behavioral patterns interacting together, and hopefully with the result that people experience mutual enrichment and edification. Hence, being a multicultural person, is one who is willing to co-exist and work alongside in harmony, with a diversity of cultural groups within an organization.

**Pastoral Observation.** A term used based on my five years of experience as the senior pastor of the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church. That experience led me to identify the cultural intelligence model as a means of moving the church forward to better engage the local community with the gospel message.

**Worldview.** The comprehensive set of beliefs, values, assumptions, attitudes and opinions that serve as a lens through which a particular social group sees, interprets, and makes sense of the world in which it lives.
CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

Introduction

One of the most poignant, compelling pictures of the church as a multicultural family of believers is found in Revelation, chapter 7. John’s vision captures the beauty and wonder of redeemed humanity worshipping God and at peace with one another.

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:9-10)

The last book of the Bible offers the hope of humankind reconciled to God and to one another. There is no racial tension or ethnic conflict as nations gather to worship God. The natural question, from the perspective of 21st century America, where race relations are in a questionable state, is “How can that be? How can people of multiple cultural backgrounds be so united?” For Christians, the answer to that question lies in the message of Scripture.

This chapter lays a biblical and theological foundation for cultural intelligence and multicultural ministry. It unfolds in three sections: the multicultural implications of Jesus’ ministry; reflection on the cultural pluralism as seen in the early New Testament church at Antioch; and finally, exploration of Pauline theology to identify his use of
cultural intelligence, with particular focus on his mission to the Gentiles.

**Jesus Ministry**

It is essential that a church’s ministry flow out of the teachings of the Word of God. God, through his Word, teaches that ministering across cultures is to be a part of the work of the church. Evidence of this is found in the life and teachings of Jesus. The disciples demonstrated that they understood their Lord’s emphasis in their own teaching and writing. The early church grasped the concept and practiced cross-cultural ministry.

In John 1: 1-14, the incarnation of Jesus Christ is described. This act supports cross-cultural ministry. Verse 14 states, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Special emphasis is given to “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” Ferguson (2001) stated that “following the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, the Christology of the early church was shaped by the thought that the logos, the pre-existent Son of God, had become a human being in the person of Jesus of Nazareth” (p. 75). Philippians 2:6-8 affirms John’s statement:

> Who, being in very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature as a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man.

Ao and Penley (2006) asserted, “The fact that God became man in Christ for the purpose of revealing Himself to human beings takes center stage in the church’s understanding of cross-cultural ministry and communication” (p. 28). The truth is that Jesus left his heavenly kingdom and came to dwell with us so that we may know our Heavenly Father. Indeed, Christ was willing to cross over from his own culture (the heavenly kingdom) and live in the midst of a new culture (sinful mankind) in order to
bring God’s salvation to the new culture. Ao and Penley (2006) continued,

Jesus’ willingness to do this is God stating in the strongest terms that we must be willing to reach out to those different from ourselves for the sake of the gospel; that we must be willing to understand and communicate with other cultures in order to take the Gospel to those cultures. (p. 31)

According to Earley and Ang (2003), cultural intelligence is defined as “one’s capability to function effectively across national, ethnic and organizational cultures; any situation that is characterized by cultural diversity” (p. 11). In Jesus Christ, we find the personification of a culturally intelligent person. He reached across the chasm of cultural difference in ways that were loving and redemptive. Livermore (2009) posited,

Jesus’ incarnation radically embodied the most extreme demonstration of cultural intelligence. He stretched his arms across the ultimate chasm of difference-God and humanity-to become the second Adam. His life and death are what make it possible for us to consider seriously moving beyond the desire to love the Other to actually doing it. (p. 32)

Therefore, cultural intelligence is essential for the church today because it is rooted in a theology of God’s incarnation through Jesus.

When we turn our attention to the gospels, we find that the opening chapter of the New Testament foreshadows the inclusive nature of the gospel. Matthew’s genealogy includes four women from the nations: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. The birth narratives of the New Testament reveal the inclusive nature of Jesus’ ministry as a model for contemporary mission.

In Luke’s birth narrative, he recounts that when Jesus’ parents presented him at the temple, Simeon, a “righteous and devout” man, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, took Jesus in his arms and praised God:

Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
a light of revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory to your people Israel. (Luke 2:29-32)

The visit of the Magi in Matthew’s gospel (2:1-12) likewise foreshadows the inclusive, centripetal, reconciling nature of Jesus’ ministry.

Beyond the birth narratives, Matthew affirms these qualities at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. Matthew announces Jesus’ ministry by quoting from Isaiah 9:

Land of Zebulun and land of Nephtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles - the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light that has dawned. (Matthew 4:15-16)

Historian and Bible scholar Barnett (1999) noted the significance of Jesus’ geographic location:

His home was not the sacred temple-city, Jerusalem, the world center for the rabbinic academies, but Nazareth in Galilee, a region surrounded by Greek states and permeated by Hellenism. It is appropriate that a message that was to be taken to the Gentile world should be centred on the one who was nurtured and raised in Galilee of the Gentiles. (p. 105)

Jesus’ choice of his disciples who would be his closest companions reveals a commitment to foster the horizontal dimension of reconciliation. Among his followers were Matthew the tax collector, a former agent of the Roman occupation, and Simon the zealot, likely a member of a group that advocated the violent overthrow of the Roman occupation. Jesus’ band of followers also included a number of women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, Salome, and Mary the mother of James and Joses (Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40-41).

Christ’s life reflected a strong focus on a ministry of inclusion, giving value to diverse peoples. He strongly challenged the laws and traditions of the predominant, segregated culture of his time and condemned the exclusionary theology of the scribes and the Pharisees, saying, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock
people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them” (Matthew 23:13-14). In contrast to this exclusive approach to ministry, Jesus advocated an inclusive and diverse reign of God where people of all races, genders and cultures from east and west, north and south are welcomed and appreciated. He said, “Whoever comes to me I will not cast out” and sent his disciples as a “light to the nations,” giving them the great commission “to make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18).

The Gospels are full of stories and parables of Jesus that explicitly convey the vision of an inclusive community of faith that Jesus not only preached about, but died for (John 3:16). Throughout his ministry, he welcomed sinners and ate with them (Luke 15:2). He broke all race, class, and gender barriers when he visited Zacchaeus, the tax collector (Luke 19), and healed the child of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15 and Mark 7), the son of the Gentile military officer, and the centurion’s slave.

Jesus demonstrated this openness of God’s kingdom in both his declaration and by his demonstration. There is no better example of this than in his encounter with the Samaritan woman that is described in John 4:1-42. From the outset, it is significant to note that Jesus, a rabbi, is speaking with a Samaritan, more specifically a Samaritan woman. Carroll (2008) stated, “In Jewish tradition Samaritan women were considered to be always unclean; they were categorized as menstruants from the cradle” (p. 118). That this woman is of questionable repute (John 4:16-18) makes Jesus’ dialogue with her even more impressive. As in many Islamic cultures today, morality was to be safeguarded by keeping women in seclusion. By contrast, Jesus spoke openly with a woman so that his disciples are amazed (John 4:27). This led Milne (2007) to observe, “This must have
caused quite a sensation” (p. 29). The extraordinariness of what he does is recognized by the woman herself (“You are a Jew, I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?”) and is emphasized by the text’s side comment, “For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.”

At this point in the narrative Jesus is travelling from Judea to Galilee with his disciples. Samaria lay between the two. The text says, “Now he had to go through Samaria” (4:4). The English “he had” is the translation of the Greek dei, an impersonal verb. A literal rendering of the verb would be: “Now it was necessary for him to go through Samaria.” Why would John point out that it was necessary for Jesus to go through Samaria? To answer this important question we need to look at the historical and cultural setting of Jesus’ time.

A good Jewish leader like Jesus would have gone out of his way not to pass through Samaria for fear of being defiled by contact with the people who lived there. He would have travelled the longer route down from Jerusalem to the Jordan valley, then along the Jordan River, and would have entered Jerusalem via the crossing at Beth Shan. While this route would also have brought the possibility of defilement by contact with the Gentiles, most Jews would have chosen defilement by contact with the Gentiles, as the lesser of two evils. Ao and Penley (2006) wrote, “This was because the Samaritans were regarded by the Jews as despised half-breeds” (p. 36).

When the Assyrians destroyed the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC, they sent many of the leading Jewish people into exile in other conquered lands, while repopulating the Northern Kingdom with persons from the other conquered countries. The Jews who remained in the Northern Kingdom territory intermarried with the new inhabitants from
other places, thus ending their pure Jewish lineage. In order to re-establish a pure and loyal people of God, Ezra put into place a policy while Jerusalem was being rebuilt that excluded Samaritans and others of mixed backgrounds from being considered part of the Jewish state (Ezra 9-10). The antagonism between the groups has grown ever since that time.

This antagonism was marked by a series of betrayals and acts of revenge. According to Carroll (2008), “In 128 BC the Jewish leader Hyrcanus took over Samaria and burned down the Samaritan sanctuary on Mount Gerizim” (p. 117). He continued, “In AD 6/7, during Jesus’s youth, Samaritans infiltrated the Passover celebration in Jerusalem and scattered bones in the temple, thereby defiling it.” This atrocity degenerated into a spiral of violence that led to several interventions by the Romans.

The antagonism had reached such a height that the Jews looked upon the Samaritans with total contempt. Barclay (1956) stated, “One rabbinical statement was that any Jew who eats bread given him by a Samaritan is as he who eats swine flesh” (p. 142). This Jewish-Samaritan quarrel had smoldered ever more bitterly and resentfully for over 400 years, and Jesus was leading his disciples right into the middle of it.

Not only was he leading them, but he was compelled to do so. Ao and Penley (2006) said, “Not because it was the expedient route, but because it was the will of his Father” (p. 37). The word used in verse 4 for “had to go” through Samaria is the Greek word, edei. This word is generally used of Jesus to mean it was the divine will for him to do something. The passage through Samaria was willed by God. This is confirmed later in the story when Jesus tells his disciples in verse 34 that “my food is to do the will of the Father who sent me and to finish his work.”
So why did Jesus have to pass through Samaria? Because God had a divine appointment he had to keep with the Samaritan woman. This appointment would have two results. One was the salvation of the woman and many other Samaritans in the city of Sychar (John 4:39-42). The other was to demonstrate to his disciples that he had come to bring good news to all people, even the hated Samaritans. Jesus would teach elsewhere the truth that the disciples had to reach out to people of all cultures and backgrounds, including the despised Samaritans. One such place was in the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. In this parable, Jesus did the unthinkable and made a Samaritan the hero of the story. Teaching truth is one thing; demonstrating it is another. Here, Jesus did the latter.

While Jesus ministered to the Samaritan woman, the disciples were off looking for food in the town (John 4:27, 31). They were shocked when they returned and saw Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman (John 4:27). She had three strikes against her in their time and culture: (a) she was a woman; (b) she was a Samaritan; (c) she was a woman with a questionable reputation (John 4:17-18). Yet Jesus was not concerned by any of this. He was reaching across all of these barriers to reach her and to teach these disciples that his message is for everyone—those of every culture and standing. As Borchert (1996) wrote: “He was truly cross-cultural in his perspective and concern for others” (p. 210).

Jesus completed His teachings with two statements. Other Samaritans had heard the testimony of the woman Jesus had ministered to and were coming out of the city to meet with him (John 14:28). According to Barclay (1956), “As they came to where Jesus and his disciples conversed, all wearing their white robes they may well have looked like
a field of wheat ready for harvest” (p. 161). Thus, Jesus may well have been observing this when he said, “Do not say, four months more and then the harvest?” (John 4:35). Then, perhaps gesturing to the coming crowd all dressed in white he added, “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35). Barclay (1956) posited, “The crowd was thus the harvest he was referring to” (p. 161). Jesus told his disciples that he had sent them “to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour” (John 4:38). The disciples had been in town the entire time Jesus had been ministering to the woman. All these people coming to see Jesus had been in town. The disciples must have talked to many of them to find the food they had brought back and offered to Jesus (John 4:31). They had been ripe for the harvest as the disciples had mingled among them. They had been prepared ahead of time by God. All the disciples had to do was to tell them the good news, yet they had not done so. Had their prejudices against the Samaritans kept them from reaping what should have been an easy harvest? Had their unwillingness to reach across their own culture to another caused them to miss an opportunity to serve God?

This must have had a great impact on the disciples. It should have a great impact on us also. We must not let our own misunderstandings, discomfort, and perhaps even our own prejudices keep us from ministering to every person in our community, regardless of his or her race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background. Jesus taught the disciples that God’s kingdom is open to everyone.

Jesus not only taught and practiced multicultural ministry, but he prayed for it. Perhaps the most moving expression of a desire for the unity of the church in the New
Testament is found in John 17:20-23, where Jesus prays for his disciples, not only for those who walked with him in his earthly ministry, but for those whom he anticipated would become his followers:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Jesus the Son and the Father model oneness. Therefore, when we become one with Christ, and through Christ, with the Father, we also become one with each other. This is because we are then all indwelling with the same Father and Son through the Holy Spirit. It is a “mirror” of the unity found in the Trinity. Hence, this should lead to a unity among believers, but not a self-generated unity. “This kind of unity cannot be manufactured by human efforts,” asserts Borchert (1996). He continued, “It is the result of God at work” (p. 208). Therefore, when there is unity among believers, especially when it is among believers of greatly diverse cultures, it will allow the world to realize that God really does make a difference. This, then, allows the church where there is a real unity among a diverse group of people to have a powerful witness in its community.

Multicultural ministry is Christ-centered ministry. Rhodes (1998) wrote,

Nothing else, in heaven or on earth, can hold such diversity together. The church of Jesus Christ is not a mere collection of individual cultures, races or ethnic groups that are separate but equal. Rather, the church is the risen body of Christ. In the midst of our cultural diversity, Christ stands at the center to bridge and yet transcend our differences. (pp. 52, 53)

Perhaps the most significant pointer to Jesus’ multicultural vision for the future of his community are his words and actions in the holy shrine of Judaism, the Jerusalem temple, at the close of his ministry. Jesus authenticates his dramatic “cleansing” action
by appealing to Isaiah 56:7: “Is it not written: My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?” (Mark 11:17).

It was this last phrase, with its radical qualification of the divide between Jew and Gentile, which incensed the Jewish authorities and stoked the fires of their determination to kill him. Milne (2007) stated, “In the gospel of Mark Jesus is a preacher of multicultural worship. He envisioned a future that was radically different from the one espoused by the temple leadership” (p. 27).

Thus, the dawn of the new age of the kingdom at Pentecost exhibits a significant muting of nationalistic vision (Acts 2:8-11) and presses irresistibly forward to the explicit inclusion of Gentiles (Acts 8-13). The entire development takes place with a naturalness that underlines its entire congruence with the vision and message of Jesus.

**Antioch**

Luke the historian recorded the carrying out of the multicultural message and vision of Jesus in the book of Acts. As the Apostles carried forth the good news about Jesus, the church was planted in subsequent locations. The church, although initial converts were all Jews, including proselytes, came into being as a multicultural community of faith. On the day of Pentecost, “there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). He lists specifically “Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome; Cretans and Arabs” (Acts 2:9-11). The crowds gathered for the Jewish festival of Pentecost were religiously and ethnically Jewish, with the exception of proselytes, but they comprised a cultural and linguistic mélange. Out of that sundry
group, the church was born. From the 120 followers of Jesus gathered in the upper room on that day, the Jerusalem church grew to over 3,000. As DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey, and Kim (2003) observed, “The church was multicultural and multilingual from the first moment of its existence” (p. 22).

While the church was characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity at its inception, aside from those who had converted from Judaism, it was not truly multiethnic until the time of the church in Antioch (Acts 11-13).

Antioch was a large, complex, pluralistic, and multicultural city. It was the third largest city in the Roman Empire with a population of between 500,000 and 800,000. It was a Roman city with a Greek heritage. Antioch was infamous for its religious practices. Five miles from the city was a smaller community, Daphne. Iorg (2011) observed, “It was a cult center for the worship of Artemis, Apollos, and Asarte. Worship practices included temple prostitution, thus the area was known throughout the Roman Empire for its moral laxity” (p. 15). Antioch was also a center for the worship of Zeus, Poseidon, Adois, and Tyche, a cosmopolitan city of religious pluralism worshipping a pantheon of gods and goddesses.

Iorg (2011) described Antioch as a “multicultural stewpot” (p. 15). Greeks, Syrians, Phoenicians, Jews, Arabs, Persians, and Italians were all part of the city’s population mix. As a port city, a capital city, and a transportation hub, Antioch attracted all kinds of people, creating a cosmopolitan mosaic of nationalities, languages, and cultures.

The church in Antioch was a mix of Jews and Gentiles. The case of the Antioch church is significant because of the social situation in that city. DeYoung et al. (2003)
explained, “Ethnic strife was intense. Enslaved persons composed close to one third of Antioch’s population . . . race riots were common because so many people of differing ethnic and cultural groups lived together in cramped, overcrowded condition” (p. 27). Sociologist Stark (1996) described Antioch as “a city filled with hatred and fear rooted in intense ethnic antagonisms and exacerbated by a constant stream of strangers” (p. 160).

The Antioch church, by contrast, practiced “inclusive table fellowship” patterned after the ministry of Jesus. In the Antioch church, all members of the fellowship experienced affirmation for their cultural backgrounds. DeYoung et al. (2003) observed, “Yet each also adopted a higher calling through their allegiance to Jesus Christ. Jews and Gentiles continued to embrace their culture of origin but broke with certain cultural rules that inhibited their ability to live as one in Christ” (p. 28). Stark (1996) wrote that in a city filled with ethnic tensions, “Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity” (p. 160). According to Green (2004), one of the defining characteristics of the church at Antioch was their “transcultural fellowship,” which was seen even among the leaders as a “mixed cartel . . . with an amazing variety of backgrounds” (p. 154).

This unity in diversity amongst the church leadership team is noteworthy. DeYmaz (2007) suggested that “perhaps the most intriguing thing about the church at Antioch was the diversity of its pastoral leadership team” (p. 23). According to Acts 13:1, “there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers; Barnabus, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”

DeYmaz (2007) noted that “it is interesting that Luke lists these men not only by name but also by ethnicity” (p. 23). Simeon is called Niger because he was from Niger, a
country located, both now and then, in sub-Saharan West Africa. Lucius was from Cyrene, a city near the Northern coast of Africa in what today is Libya. Manaen was from Palestine and Luke’s comment points the reader to Manaen’s privileged upbringing. The passage does not comment on the background of Barnabus or Paul for Luke has already informed his readers that Barnabus was from Cyprus (Acts 4:32) and that Paul was from the Roman city of Tarsus, located in Asia Minor (Acts 9:11). DeYmaz (2007) contended that “it is more than coincidental that two of these men were from Africa, one was from the Mediterranean, one was from the Middle East, and one was from Asia Minor” (p. 24).

It is the intentionality behind this team that is so remarkable. Note also that these men chose not to return to their own land, that is, to environments in which they were most comfortable. Nor did they determine to speak only to the Jews. Rather, they turned from a more natural course to embrace a supernatural one instead. They had a passion to see both Jews and Gentiles become one in Christ. Hence, it comes as no surprise to learn that “the hand of the Lord was with them” (Acts 11:21).

It was significant that it was here that the name “Christian” began to be applied to the followers of Jesus (Acts 11:26). It was a new term for a new people, a newness expressed not least in the diversity of their community. The citizens of Antioch could find no serviceable term to refer to them, either within Judaism or in any other Gentile religious tradition. It was a new thing and required a new name, but one which identified it with its primary focus—Jesus Christ—with its most obvious feature, its welcoming of every race and every type, hence “Christ-ones,” Christians. Milne (2007) asked, “Is it too much to claim that we truly justify our right to the name Christian only when we
practice diversity in unity under Christ?” (p. 47). While I understand the sentiment of Milne’s question, I have to take issue with it. For ethnic unity is not the only true sign of Christianity. Being engaged in evangelism, serving in a church ministry and replicating Christ’s love through our actions are also important facets of true Christianity.

The church in Antioch was also notable as the first to take up a collection for fellow believers living in a foreign land (Acts 11:28-30). As a consequence, it was the church at Antioch and not the church in Jerusalem that first sent missionaries to the world. This led DeYmaz (2007) to posit that “the church at Antioch and not the church in Jerusalem is the most influential church in the entire New Testament” (p. 25).

The core values of the church at Antioch allowed it to become capable of fulfilling the Great Commission. Boyd (2008) wrote,

This multicultural church did not allow people to settle into their comfort zones; rather it created an environment where the ethne of the world and church collided. The mandate of Jesus was not something that needed to be imposed on this church; it was part of its fabric, the reason for its very existence. It produced people with cultural awareness, where bicultural people felt accepted and able to play a part. In Antioch, a church was birthed that had the vision and ability to extend a mission thrust from its local area to the whole world of the Roman Empire. (p. 82)

The Antioch model is a beacon for today’s multicultural church that wrestle with tension between ethnic groups. The Antioch Church demonstrated that church is not primarily about us being comfortable; rather, it is about the growth of God’s kingdom. We need to be mindful that Christ left his own culture and comfort zone (of his heavenly kingdom), to come down to a new culture (sinful mankind) in order to bring God’s salvation to us. Christ’s example beckons us to step out of our cultural comfort zones to reach others with the good news of the gospel. Hence, today’s multicultural church must strive to not only focus on inclusiveness but more importantly mission.
The missional journey involves building community through enthusiastic and broad evangelism. This includes providing the good news to people in a cup that they recognize with love and respect to their unique cultural heritage and traditional backgrounds. Hence, the importance of worship services that utilize different musical styles, languages, and different spiritual expressions of faith, that are meaningful and representative of the congregations’ diverse culture. Additionally, the gospel commission of Matthew 28 needs to be the cornerstone of a church’s vision. That missional vision was the reason for the success of the Antioch Church, and can be so for today’s multicultural church.

Paul and Cultural Intelligence

According to Peterson (2004), cultural intelligence is defined as

the ability to engage in a set of behaviours that uses skills (i.e., language or interpersonal skills) and qualities (e.g., tolerance, flexibility) that are tuned appropriately to the culture based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts. (p. 89)

The Apostle Paul was one of the most culturally intelligent people found in Scripture. The following three passages gives us insights into Paul’s background and allow us to identify some of the key things that made him culturally intelligent:

When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said,

I am a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our father and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. (Acts 22:2, 3)

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. (Philippians 3:4-6)
For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensively I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

The after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days, I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord’s brother. I assure you before God that I am writing you is no lie. Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” And they praised God because of me. (Galatians 1:13-24)

Paul was born in Tarsus. This was the capital city of Cilicia, found on the banks of the Cyndus River in the province of Asia Minor. It was a Grecian commercial center and a city of great learning. In Paul’s day, it was the site of one of the three top universities of the Roman Empire, thought by some to be more prominent than Athens or Alexandria. Boyd (2008) said, “The university at Tarsus furnished tutors to the imperial family” (p. 88). Paul once referred to the status of Tarsus when he called it “no ordinary city” (Acts 21:39).

Paul lived long enough in Tarsus to pick up the world view of the Greco-Roman culture. And this led Boyd (2008) to posit, “Paul was Hellenized as a young man before he reached Jerusalem” (p. 88).

Paul moved to Jerusalem, where he learned the local language, Aramaic. Here he was educated by Gamaliel, reputed to be the top rabbinical teacher of his day. Boyd (2008) wrote,

In those days a boy would be in his teens when he entered the rabbinical school. His training would be thoroughly Jewish, rooted and grounded in the Scriptures of the old covenant and the traditions of the elders recorded in the Talmud. (p. 88)
Paul’s command of biblical truth is displayed in his writings and communication with Jewish converts. He quoted from the Pentateuch, prophets, and the psalms. Boyd (2008) continued, “Paul shows he is a master of the hidden depths of the Word of God and he is able to throw light on obscure passages” (p. 88).

Paul’s life and study in Jerusalem caused him to become quite skilled in Jewish thought and tradition and he fully embraced the worldview of the Jewish people. This process began before he went to Jerusalem, as he had been part of the Jewish community in Tarsus that built its life around the local synagogue. Here, he would have learned the values and traditions of his people and the Scriptures known today as the Old Testament; here, his identity as a Jewish man would have been grounded. His passion for this Jewish identity can be seen in his great zeal to keep the traditions of his people pure. We see this in his persecution of the new sect who were later to be called Christians. Paul’s boasting of his lineage, being of the tribe of Benjamin, shows he fully identified with his Jewish roots.

He lived in Jerusalem until after his conversion. After that, during the subsequent unrest, the apostles sent him back to Tarsus, where he remained for the next 10 years. He was likely to have had friends or relatives there. In those days, relocation and travel were not as common or convenient as they are today, and for general living, help from one’s community was necessary to survive. Thus, Paul’s relocation to Tarsus indicates a high degree of connectedness to it. There is no indication that a church had been established there at the time, so Paul was not able to use the church as a base to help his relocation.

From the time of his conversion, Paul was aware of his call to the Gentiles. It is logical to conclude that during these 10 years in Tarsus, he returned to his Greco-Roman
roots as he prepared himself for the mission of his life. Also, under Gamaliel, Paul spent half of his time learning the Greek language, philosophy, and rhetoric. Boyd (2008) suggests, “This was because Gamaliel’s vision was to prepare his students for the missionizing of the nations” (p. 89). Paul, therefore, was acquainted with Greek culture, philosophy, and literature. This is seen in the didactic style of his letters and in his allusions to other religions. His occasional quotations from Greek poets reveal his understanding of the Greco-Roman worldview.

At this point, his name was Paul. Formerly, he was called Saul, a Hebrew name, but now he was called Paul, a non-Jewish name. This, in itself, suggests an acceptance of his Greco-Roman roots. We know that Paul was able to read and write in Greek, as some of his letters were by his own hand rather than by a secretary. Since the people did not speak Aramaic, we can infer that the originals were written in Greek, the common language.

Paul embraced both cultures and took from each of them whatever was helpful. He did not hesitate to use his Roman citizenship when it suited him to do so, but he also used his Jewish roots to advantage. One of his core values is expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:22 when he said, “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” This was Paul’s “Magna Carta” affirmation of his cultural intelligence.

To summarize thus far, we glean three important facts about his cultural intelligence qualifications. First, he was born in a minority community, interrelating with a group considered to be the host community. Second, Paul spent many years in both cultures to such an extent that he was equally at home in each, and valued both. Third,
this preparation was not something God did in Paul’s life after selecting him for mission work. The Lord prepared him from the day he was born.

Because Paul was culturally intelligent, he could see what God was doing in the Jewish world and could extract the essence of the gospel and transfer it into the Greco-Roman world without attaching Jewish cultural trappings. This was vital because the early Christians were Jewish and it was natural for them to believe that the cultural forms in which the gospel came to them were the only right ones for everyone. Thus, they believed that everyone who comes to Jesus must also convert to Jewish culture. However, God used the apostle Paul, himself a Jew, to teach his generation and ours a different approach. The approach is beautifully articulated in the earlier mentioned text of 1 Corinthians 9:19–22, where Paul relayed his and God’s approach to cultural diversity. Paul said, “While working with Jews, I live like a Jew” but “When working with Gentiles, I live like a Gentile.” His approach, then, was to “become all things to all men, that I may save some of them by whatever means are possible.”

Further evidence of Paul’s cultural intelligence is found in Acts 17. Here we find Paul appealing to the preexisting notion among the Athenians of an “unknown God” when bringing the good news of Jesus. Paul observes that the Athenians have an “altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you” (v. 23). Paul appealed to the preexisting elements of that culture in order to plead the case for Christ. While acknowledging that the Athenians were lacking the full knowledge of God, the apostle believed that he had already begun to reveal Himself to them, through the expression of an unknown God. Paul even went so far as to say that “we are Gods offspring” (v. 29), thus implying that
Paul shares the common parentage of God with the Athenians. Rah (2010) pointed out that

Paul the pious Jewish Christian, shares the image of God with the pagan Christians; therefore, God’s work had already begun among the Athenians. Paul shows respect for the culture of the Athenians, while pointing them to a fuller understanding of the gospel message. (p. 30)

Finally, one has to mention Galatians 3:28 in terms of Paul and his cultural intelligence. Here we read, perhaps, the most concise statement on unity of the body of Christ across culture and all other barriers:

All of you are God’s children because of your faith in Christ Jesus. And when you were baptized, it was as though you had put on Christ in the same way you put on new clothes. Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, or a slave or a free person, a man or a woman. (Galatians 3:26-28 CEV)

Most commentators are in agreement here on the emphasis, especially verse 28. George (1994), for example, remarked, “The redemptive work of Christ and the incorporation into his body have relativized the former distinction of race, rank, and role” (p. 274). Gaebelein and Douglas (1976) stated that “having become one with God as his sons, Christians now belong to each other in such a way that distinctions that formerly divided them lose significance” (p. 468).

Biblical commentator Longenecker (1990) has suggested that this passage was a pre-Pauline baptismal confession: “Early Christians saw it as particularly appropriate to give praise in their baptismal confession that through Christ the old racial schisms and cultural divisions had been healed” (p. 157). Witherington (1998) concurs with Longenecker’s assessment, suggesting that this formula was likely a means of distinguishing followers of Jesus Christ from adherents to other religions, particularly Judaism, and also from Gentile religions and social norms (p. 270).
The parallel passage to Galatians 3:28 is Colossians 3:11. “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.” O’Brien (1982) observed, “Within this new humanity the barriers that divided people from one another, racial, religious, cultural, and social are abolished” (p. 192). The unity toward which Paul is directing the believers in Colossae is specifically unity that bridges cultural differences. His concern in Galatians and Colossians relates to diverse individuals being joined together in one community since there can be unity in the midst of diversity when Christ is at the center.

**Conclusion**

In our multicultural world, we have much to learn from Jesus, Paul, and the church at Antioch about living out the gospel in the midst of our cultural diversity. We learn from Jesus that it is imperative that we step out from the security of our cultural comfort zones, in order to effectively minister multiculturally. Also, as we minister, we need to do so with a tolerant and sacrificial mindset, displaying an attitude of inclusiveness and reconciliation. Jesus not only taught and practiced multicultural ministry, but he also, intentionally prayed for it in John 17. Likewise, today, multicultural church leaders should intentionally spend time praying for its success.

We learn from the Antioch Church that the practice of “inclusive table fellowship” is vital in members experiencing affirmation for their cultural backgrounds. Today, that translates as frequent international potlucks or fellowship lunches on Sabbath and during the week in members’ homes. Additionally, it is important to note the unique aspect of the Antioch church, which was the diverse nature of their pastoral team. If a church today, is to be a multicultural success it must be led by a culturally diverse team.
We learn from the Apostle Paul that we are to apply both our God given cultural intelligence, and learned cultural intelligence to the work of expanding God’s multicultural church. Further, we are to move beyond our cultural hindrances and dominant homogenous culture and embrace other cultures (Galatians 3:26-28).

We also learn that in expecting to reach the lost by creating a monoculturally comfortable environment for unsaved people, the plethora of churches today will be unsuccessful. Paul’s prescription for reaching the lost and the examples of Jesus and the Antioch church are much different. They call us to relate to the unsaved in their cultures, in their comfort zones, not in ours, hence, the importance of cultural intelligence. Yes, it will be uncomfortable for us. We will have to leave our own cultures and experience new ways of doing things. However, the fact that God calls us to this multicultural experience makes it worthwhile.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The second decade of the 21st century brings a new world characterized by globalization, in which people live in increasingly complex ways in a web of interconnectedness as part of a global family. Christian communities are not exempt from the influence of globalization. In their everyday lives and along the path of their faith journey, Christian believers experience interconnectedness with others from all over the globe. Thus, they face a multiplicity of new pastoral and theological challenges posed by globalization which are unprecedented in Christian history.

A study conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in 2008 found that Seventh-day Adventists are by far the most ethnically diverse religious community of any kind in the United States. They are the only Christian group in which no single ethnicity comprises 50% or more of their membership. This presents critical challenges in terms of cultural differences and cultural diversity to the Adventist church. Therefore, it is imperative that the Adventist church recognize and gain an understanding of the cultural intelligence concept in order to successfully navigate through the choppy waters of the multicultural milieu that it now faces (Osborn, 2011).

This chapter will begin to lay a foundation for a cultural intelligence model that equips and empowers the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist church for successful
multicultural ministry. I will structure this chapter around a review of literature on cultural intelligence, multicultural ministry, church empowerment and transformation, and finally, cultural intelligence and multicultural ministry.

**Cultural Intelligence**

In the last few years, from 2005-2010, a proliferation of books has been written on understanding cultural differences. Most of these books are written for the business community, which has been ahead of the curve in recognizing that cultural competency and intelligence are absolute necessities in this global economy and multiethnic, multicultural world. The business community is tapping into the research on cultural intelligence to become more successful in culturally diverse markets. Government officials are being trained in cultural intelligence to become better at working in foreign settings and educational institutions want to know how to accomplish learning objectives among students coming from different cultural backgrounds. Staller (2009) stated that the idea of cultural intelligence has come out from the international business community and is based on a combination of psychology and anthropology.

The reason I chose this cultural intelligence model over others is because it was successfully being employed in the business arena to equip and empower workers to engage cross culturally and hence, I wanted to explore whether this business model could be used to successfully empower and equip a church for multicultural ministry.

The general consensus is that Earley and Ang pioneered the concept of cultural intelligence (CQ). Plum (2008) stated that the concept of cultural intelligence was introduced in an article in the United States in 2002 by the international management expert Christopher Earley, and that he published the first book on cultural intelligence
with Soon Ang in the following year. Livermore (2009) also stated that Earley and Ang built on the research of multiple intelligences to develop the conceptual model of cultural intelligence.

According to Earley and Ang (2003), cultural differences lead to difficulties and conflict. They went on to state that researchers have tried to explore such interpersonal misunderstandings through the elaboration and extension of the construct of intelligence. A number of models of intelligence have been proposed by researchers, including Peter Salovey and Robert Steinberg. Approaches to social behavior such as identifying social intelligence, emotional intelligence and practical intelligence abound. However, what remains unclear is how these culture-bound models might inform the intercultural or international scholar. For example, the behaviors easily understood by someone having high social intelligence within her culture might be entirely misleading or irrelevant in another culture.

These authors asserted that what is missing is a framework to provide a roadmap for understanding cultural intelligence. They identified their work as the first such framework that can be used to understand why people vary so dramatically in their capacity to adjust to new cultures. They built upon the concept of intelligence, the intelligence quotient (IQ), and the emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) in order to introduce the new concept of the cultural intelligence quotient (CQ). It is commonly known that IQ is a measurement of our intellectual ability and in recent years it has been followed by EQ, which is a measurement of how we handle our emotions. EQ helps people to relate and act within their own cultural context. Cultural intelligence (CQ) picks up where EQ leaves off by dealing with people and circumstances in unfamiliar
contexts. Cultural intelligence measures the ability to move effectively in and out of a variety of cultural contexts.

Earley and Ang’s theoretical model consists of multiple facets that explain how cultural intelligence functions. It provides a basis for an intervention that may be used to improve someone’s intercultural interactions. Hence, it focuses on various features of intercultural adjustment by looking at three features of a person’s cultural intelligence: cognition, motivation, and behavior. This leads them to a definition of cultural intelligence as an individual’s capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity.

Many scholars have built upon the work of Earley and Ang. Peterson (2004) took the concept of cultural intelligence in a far more practical direction and defines it as the ability to engage in a set of behaviors that uses skills (i.e., language or interpersonal skills) and qualities (e.g., tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility) that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts. He went on to point out that cultural intelligence is helpful for people who know how culture is important, who realize that international cultural issues affect their daily work, and who want to improve their awareness, understanding, and skills.

Thomas and Inkson (2009) suggested that it is an easy concept to understand, but it takes time and effort to develop high levels of cultural intelligence. They assert that cultural intelligence is essentially learning by doing, which results in outcomes beyond skilled intercultural performance. These outcomes include educational development and an appreciation of foreign travel.

Ang and Van Dyne (2008) posited that since 2003, the concept of CQ has
attracted significant attention worldwide and across diverse disciplines. In 2004, they organized the first symposium on CQ at the academy of management annual meeting. In 2006, they organized the first Global Conference on Cultural Intelligence. At this conference, experts in international management, cross-cultural psychology, cross-cultural management, social psychology, and applied linguistics discussed many different perspectives on CQ and worked collaboratively to develop ideas for future CQ theory and empirical research.

Building upon this work, Livermore (2009) described cultural intelligence as a *metamodel*, due to its multidisciplinary approach that draws from anthropology, sociology, and psychology, as well as literature from the fields of business and education. This *metamodel* provides a coherent framework for dealing with the array of issues involved in crossing various cultures; often many cultures at the same time. Many people working in the 21st century are faced with dozens of cultural contexts even in one day of work. Thus, a *metamodel* is needed to factor in the complexity and breadth of cultures shaping our daily interactions.

Livermore defined cultural intelligence as one’s capability to function effectively across national, ethnic, and organizational cultures. He departed from other writers by identifying love as the motor of cultural intelligence, in particular Christian love. He posited that cultural intelligence is reaching across the chasm of cultural difference in ways that are loving and respectful. He cited God’s greatest commandment in Matthew 22:37-39, “Love God, Love Others,” as a guiding principle. Livermore added that those involved in ministry are on a journey from the desire to love the other to the ability to express that love in effective ways. Cultural intelligence is a pathway to help us along
the journey from desire to action. It is the bridge that helps us more effectively express and embody Christ’s unconditional love across the chasm of cultural difference.

Livermore’s model of cultural intelligence consists of four key factors:

2. Interpretive CQ: The degree to which we are mindful and aware when we interact cross-culturally.
3. Perseverance CQ: Our level of interest, drive, and motivation to adapt cross-culturally.
4. Behavioral CQ: The extent to which we appropriately change our verbal and nonverbal actions when we interact cross-culturally.

Knowledge CQ measures our ongoing growth in understanding cross-cultural issues. It refers to our level of understanding about culture and culture’s role in shaping our behavior. This includes taking the first step to becoming more culturally intelligent by becoming more aware of our own cultural identity. As we become more aware of our culture and values, we are less likely to project our values onto the other. Understanding our own culture protects us from assuming that the actions of the other mean the same thing as when we act that way. In addition, learning the language of a culture is an essential part of the cultural knowledge needed to serve effectively in cross-cultural contexts. Equally important is an overall understanding of the normative customs followed by people within a particular cultural group. These values may include customs as basic as how men ought to greet women or the meaning of the color purple in some Latin American communities.

Interpretive CQ measures our ability to be mindful and aware as we interact with
people from different cultural contexts. It is the ability to make meaning from what we observe accurately. Interpretive CQ and knowledge CQ are symbiotically dependent on each other. Some measure of cross-cultural understanding is needed to make good interpretations and becoming more mindful and aware helps increase our understanding about cross-cultural issues.

Perseverance CQ measures our level of interest, drive, and motivation to adapt cross-culturally. Having a good understanding of cross-cultural issues is central and drawing on that understanding to interpret more reflectively what is occurring in cross-cultural interactions is essential. However, at the end of the day, what matters is our ability to draw personally on the cultural strategic thinking that comes from knowledge CQ and interpretive CQ to actually interact in ways that are effective cross-culturally. It is important to translate our understanding and interpretation into behavior that positions us to communicate and interact effectively; otherwise, all of our knowledge and interpretative CQ will not make much difference.

Effective perseverance CQ requires knowing what keeps us going and slows us down. Cultural intelligence relies on understanding what motivates and drives us and equally important is knowing what drains and depletes our energy. The more we understand what drives our emotions, feelings, and behavior, the better we are able to tune into the other.

Finally, behavioral CQ refers to the actions and words as we interact cross-culturally. It relates to the ability to observe, recognize, regulate, adapt, and act appropriately in intercultural meetings. Our cultural intelligence is judged by how we behave. It is not enough to be willing to try and persevere. A person growing in cultural
intelligence learns what actions are needed to be effective and does them. Behavioral CQ refers to how we behave when we actually find ourselves in different kinds of cross-cultural interactions. It measures our ability to change our verbal and non-verbal actions appropriately when we interact cross-culturally.

According to Livermore, all four of these factors are interrelated and one without the other will hinder the effectiveness of reaching the ultimate goal of expressed love and respect for the other.

In summary, cultural intelligence comes from literature in the fields of business, cross-cultural behavior, and multiple intelligences. It is both a measurement and a coherent framework for enhancing our ability to cross the chasm of cultural difference effectively, lovingly, and respectfully.

**Multicultural Ministry**

In order to have any meaningful discussion on multicultural ministry, one must begin by looking at how the church approaches mission in the 21st century.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, missionaries looked for a change in behavior or belief as evidence of conversion. But though these signs were considered to be leading indicators that Christian conversion had occurred, Hiebert (2008) argues that these are insufficient. He asserts that 21st century mission is going to be characterized by both a conversion of behavior and belief, and of the worldviews that support them.

Elmer (2006) defines worldview as a comprehensive set of beliefs, knowledge, values, assumptions, attitudes, and opinions that serve as a lens through which a particular social group sees, interprets, and makes sense of the world in which it lives.
He goes on to state that everybody has one. A person may be educated or uneducated, rich or poor, liberal or conservative, non-believing or God-fearing but all people act and live in certain ways because they are guided by particular worldviews. It is the interpretive “lens” which helps people make sense of life and comprehend the world around them.

Hiebert (2008) adopts a more anthropological definition of a worldview. He posits that worldview is the foundational, cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people makes about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives. They can also be called “peoples maps of reality” (p.26), and that worldviews operate as the blueprints and guidebooks for individuals and cultures. They also provide emotional and psychological security to cultures in a world that is chaotic and uncontrollable.

For Hiebert (2008), it is at the level of converting people’s worldview’s that mission needs to operate in the 21st century:

Conversion to Christ must encompass all three levels: behavior, beliefs and the worldviews that underlie these. Christians should live differently because they are different. However, if their behavior is based primarily on tradition rather than Christian beliefs, it becomes pagan ritual. Conversion must involve a transformation of beliefs, but if it is a change only of beliefs and not behavior, it is false faith. Conversion may include a change in beliefs and behavior, but if the worldview is not transformed, in the long run the gospel is subverted and the result is a syncretistic Christo-Paganism. (p. 56).

The transformation of worldviews, argues Hiebert (2008), must be the central task of mission in the 21st century.

Elmer (2006) observes that knowing how worldviews work helps us to effectively speak the gospel of Jesus to many different people and cultures. This means that it is important to be mindful in a multicultural ministry context, that each person one comes in
contact with does not come from a historical or cultural vacuum; they come from particular cultures, and have been shaped by particular stories and symbols. It is really valuable to understand how their society and culture have formed them in working out how to engage with them and how to bring the message of Jesus into their lives.

The majority of authors who write in the area of multicultural ministry focus on the Church’s response to the major racial demographic shifts in the USA as a result of globalization at the beginning of the 21st century. DeYmaz (2007) contended, “In light of this, old models of church that focus on reaching a single racial group are not going to be as effective as they have been in the past” (p. 13). He went on to say, “So if the Body of Christ is to adjust to our new racial future, we will have to make bold, biblical steps toward the development of churches situated to meet the needs of people of different races and cultures” (p. 13). Boyd (2008) agreed and quite forcefully stated,

For the Church to ignore the demographic changes in the Western world would be sin at worst and total ignorance at best. For a church not to actively pursue multicultural diversity in a diverse community would be dishonouring to scripture and dishonouring to God.

He further pointed out, “In America today only 7.5 percent of the 300,000 churches are racially mixed” (p. 11).

Boyd (2008) drew attention to three major trends that he felt would have a significant impact on the direction of the church if it is to remain relevant in the 21st century. These trends are the movement away from the village to the city, the reduction of the population in the developed world, and the movement of people from the underdeveloped nations to the economically developed countries of the world. This manifests itself especially in the urban areas and major cities. He asserted,
The issue for the church is that people are moving into the cities. The cities of the world are becoming multiethnic, with people from all over the world converging in these concentrations of humanity. The church of the 21st Century must effectively reach the urban dweller; we cannot move forward in the task of the Great Commission unless we do this. (p. 18)

Continuing on this theme, Sheffield (2005), stated,

The multiethnic world is present with us, particularly in large urban areas. The overlay of cultures in globalizing mega-cities is in fact, producing “hybrid” personalities and cultures. These are people raised in multiethnic communities who actually hold beliefs, values and practices from multiple cultures. They are no longer mono-, or bi-cultural but represent adjusted, re-created, multicultural personalities. The issue before us is how the Christian faith community will respond to this diversity? (p. 39)

The answer to this pertinent question lies in the formation and development of multicultural churches, according to a number of multicultural ministry practitioners like Ao and Penley (2006). They stated, “The church must respond to this multicultural society with multicultural churches or face becoming irrelevant” (p. 25). DeYmaz (2007) added, “Pursuit of the multiethnic local church is, in my view, not optional” (p. 29).

Woo (2009) defined a multicultural church as composed of racially diverse believers united by their faith in Christ, who make disciples of all the nations in the anticipation of the ultimate racial reunion around the throne of God. Emerson (2006) took a more numerical approach when defining a multicultural church. He maintained that a multicultural church is one in which no one racial group comprises 80% or more of the people. That is, to be classified as a multicultural church, more than 20% of the congregation must be racially different than the largest racial group. His approach was based upon findings on research in race relations in multiple contexts, which suggests that 20% constitutes the point of critical mass for a church to become multicultural.
Parker and Girgis (2010) took issue with Emerson’s numerical approach and placed more significance on a church’s ethos. They defined a multicultural church as one that intentionally and actively seeks to recognize, utilize, celebrate, and incorporate the gifts of its diverse membership in various ways. This includes worship, evangelism, and power sharing in ministry. They contended that the key to a successful multicultural church is the practice of mutual inclusion between and among the various cultural groups present in the congregation. Anderson and Cabellon (2010) added to what Parker and Girgis said by highlighting the importance of relationships. He stated that building, maintaining, and repairing cross-cultural relationships form the building blocks for effective multicultural ministry.

This is echoed by Ao and Penley, who maintained that multicultural ministry is not about methods; rather, it is first about people. If you keep talking with people in a multicultural setting, you will eventually penetrate other cultures. They went on to point out that multicultural ministry begins with the church pastor or leader. They asserted, “No church leader can be effective today without serious training in the understanding, penetration, and assimilation of different cultures and generations into one congregation” (p. 18). Anderson and Cabellon (2010) added that “a minister must first become a multicultural person before he can do multicultural ministry” (p. 47). Sheffield concurred that a multicultural leader must have some personal experience in intercultural settings and, through study of Scripture, develop a theology of diversity.

Woo (2009) posited that the theological foundation for multicultural ministry is found in Ephesians 4:1-7. Here, the apostle Paul addresses the tension between the unity believers share in Christ and the diversity believers celebrate as the body of Christ. He
maintained that our shared relationship with Jesus Christ overshadows, overrules, and overwhelms all other differences. Parker and Girgis (2010) took a different view and focus on the work of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. They stated that, at the day of Pentecost, the vision of an inclusive community of faith became a reality. The disciples and peoples from all nations, gathered in one place as a multiracial, multicultural, and multi-lingual assembly, were formed into the first Christian church, united by the Holy Spirit across all boundaries.

Other writers, like Lingenfelter and Mayers (2003), focused on the ministry of Jesus as evidence of multicultural ministry. They suggested that a central thesis of the New Testament is that it speaks to all people and all cultures and that Jesus is the only faithful example of divine love in interpersonal relationships and communication. Rhodes (1998) added that multicultural ministry is Christ-centered ministry. In the midst of cultural diversity, Christ stands at the center to bridge and transcend our differences. Therefore, it is imperative to focus fully on Christ when it comes to the challenge of multicultural evangelism.

Anderson and Cabellon (2010) advocated that a multicultural church must condition its congregation to build bridges to the community because it has already broken down barriers and built bridges across cultural lines within the church. This can only be accomplished if the church is fully focused on Christ and allows the Holy Spirit to crush their cultural comfort zones. Boyd (2008) added, “The key to reaching the nations is to first reach the stranger among us” (p. 23). This gives us the opportunity to develop connected communities that can cross any political, linguistic, or geographical
barrier. It is along these community lines that the gospel can travel and establish itself in totally new locations.

Roberts (2007), describing the challenge of how followers of Jesus must now engage a flat world, coined a new concept called *Glocalization*. It is the seamless connectedness between the local and global and is affecting the church in ways that never could have been imagined in the first-century church or even the 20th century church. It is creating unprecedented opportunities for individuals and churches to live out their faith in real time across the world. Roberts asserted that *Glocalization* explains how the work of the church must shift from the pulpit to the pew, from the church building to the community and world at large. It must glocalize if churches are to have a significant impact multiculturally.

Ministering glocally does open up possibilities for multicultural evangelism. For example, the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist church now streams their services and evangelistic services live on the internet. As a result, some community members visited the church and became members. The church services are also viewed on a regular basis as far off as South Africa, Australia, South Korea, and Europe. Some of these people have visited the church on their travels as a result.

**Empowerment and Transformation**

Koliman (2011) stated that there is no general agreement as to what empowerment is, but said that empowerment can be understood as the language of the oppressed to claim rights they have been denied. This led her to a biblical definition of interpreting Jesus’ ministry to the powerless of his time as empowerment. She cited his interaction with the oppressed, outcasts, women, and lepers as the most significant form
of empowerment. Jesus’ disciples today are to follow in his footsteps by adopting a ministry of empowerment.

Koliman (2011) went on to say that the challenge of globalization today forces us to do our church mission in new ways. Facing the negative impact of the global economic system and the increasing fact of injustice and poverty around the world, we especially need to consider the issue of power in our mission strategies. The inspiration we get from Jesus Christ can become a way to deal with it; we are called to witness the solidarity of God with the powerless that aims to empower them in order to become active agents of God’s kingdom. In this sense, empowerment needs to be considered as a new generative theme of Christian mission in a globalized world.

Jarvinn (2007) posited that a key characteristic of empowerment in the church realm is participation. Participation is crucial since it leads to commitment. He further pointed out that churches generate either internal or external commitment. To nurture internal commitment, participation is needed. Participation also creates a sense of ownership. Another crucial aspect of church empowerment is leadership. According to Gardner and Olson (2010), leaders are in a key position to enhance or inhibit empowerment. They stated that an empowering leader influences his followers in such a way that they become influential too. They are also able to generate new innovations that create an atmosphere of moving forward and success in the church.

Gaventa (2006) outlined five empowering factors that contribute to church success. Based on the biblical empowerment models of David in the Old Testament and the disciples in the New Testament, he first began with belief in and a personal experience of a supernatural God; second, values founded on God; third, a sense of
shared ownership; fourth, a sense of a part to play in a greater cause; and finally, a glimpse of hope amidst earthly existence.

Empowerment and transformation are concepts that are inextricably linked, especially in terms of the church, due to the impact of the Holy Spirit. Webb (2008) asserted that transformation happens in the lives of church and community members as a result of empowerment. They went on to say that transformation requires a plan, a process, and persistence. Transformation involves moving people, emotions, and gifts to a greater alignment with effective ministry. Iorg (2011) said that this transformation can only take place if empowered by the Holy Spirit. Iorg further stated that a transformational church is empowered by spirit-filled leaders like they were at Antioch and beyond.

Roberts (2007) continued this theme. He stated that the early church transformed a world steeped in plurality, immorality, and poverty in miraculous ways. They did so because they lived transformed lives for the world to see; they impacted the church, community, and eventually, the whole world. He added that when the world transforms for Christ, it will not be because we have more preachers and missionaries, but because we have more laypeople who are transformed and are transforming their workspaces and society.

Stetzer and Rainer (2010) focused more on the area of discipleship. They maintained that transformational churches make disciples whose lives are being transformed by the gospel so that the culture around them is ultimately transformed. They added, “Transformational churches know, understand, and are deeply in love with their cities, communities, and people” (p. 127).
Cultural Intelligence and Multicultural Ministry

There is a considerable dearth of material to be found on the cultural intelligence model for multicultural ministry. This could be due to the fact that cultural intelligence is still a relatively new concept in religious academic circles. The primary work was by Rah (2010). He argued that the church needs to follow the example of the business community, which has responded proactively to the challenge of globalization and understanding cultural differences through cultural intelligence. He went on to state that “the church, operating out of the context of communicating God’s truth, should also see the need for cultural intelligence in order to more effectively communicate God’s truth to a changing world and church” (p. 12). He concluded by saying that “the church needs to develop cultural intelligence in order to fully realize the many-colored tapestry that God is weaving together” (p. 12).

Staller (2009) agreed with Rah. He stated that taking the message of Christ to the world is an essential task of eternal consequence for the church, yet we often carry it out at a serious disadvantage. We continue to be ill-prepared for the problems of crossing cultural boundaries. (p. 548) He went on to say that the church needs to learn lessons from the business community, who are successfully addressing their cross-cultural problems through an understanding and implementation of cultural intelligence models.

According to Livermore (2009), a significant number of missional initiatives continue to fail because of cultural differences. He posited that with the growing opportunities for multicultural interactions at home and abroad, the question of how ministry leaders and their organizations can effectively minister in culturally diverse situations is a critical and challenging problem. He suggested that an answer lies in
ministry leaders gaining an in-depth knowledge of cultural intelligence and the inward transformation that comes as a result. When we do, we will be able to interact more lovingly with our ethnically different communities at home and abroad.

Conclusion

I have learned the following principles from this literature review that were essential and foundational in empowering the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church for successful multicultural ministry:

1. The cultural intelligence concept comes from literature in the fields of business, cross-cultural behavior, and multiple intelligences. It is both a measurement and a coherent framework for enhancing our ability to cross the chasm of cultural difference effectively, lovingly, and respectfully. Additionally, and most importantly, cultural intelligence is rooted in scripture and is a biblical principle.

2. God’s vision for the church is to be a loving, inclusive multicultural family, who worship him together in peace and harmony.

3. The life and teachings of Jesus demonstrate a ministry of inclusion of diverse peoples, and that Jesus calls us to join his ministry of inclusion.

4. The multicultural church journey is a challenging and urgent mission, due to the effects of the globalization phenomenon at the beginning of the 21st century.

5. A church leader must first become a multicultural person before he can do multicultural ministry. Hence, the importance of equipping and empowering the church body with cultural intelligence for successful multicultural ministry.

In the Antioch church in the first century, crossing the cultural barrier occurred primarily within the local church environment, rather than out in the mission field. The
church today needs to take back this role and learn how to build multicultural churches so
the gospel can move freely across cultural divides. The bridges are to be the members
who belong to these churches. It is my contention that, in the 21st century, the measure
of a mission-minded church will not be in the number of people it has going overseas on
mission trips, but in how easily the stranger feels accepted in the home church.

Additional research is needed to determine how the Seventh-day Adventist church
can approach multicultural ministry in this globalized 21st century. There is a dearth of
Seventh-day Adventists writing on such topics. Such exploration forms the basis of this
study.
CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE MODEL

Introduction

In the early 21st century, the new frontier of mission for the church is multicultural ministry. The last few years have been characterized by the explosion of globalization and this has resulted in major demographic shifts in the US population.

According to the 2010 US Census, 36.3% of the population ages 18 and older was of a non-white or ethnic minority (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). Even more significant, 46.5% of the population age 18 and under was of an ethnic minority, nonwhite, or both. In 2013, these percentages are surpassing 50%; for the first time in US history, the majority of babies born are to nonwhite parents. The “Browning of America” identified by Ronald Sundstrum in 2008 is now in full flow and is reflected within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A study conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in 2008 found that Seventh-day Adventists are, by far, the most ethnically diverse religious community of any kind in the United States. They are the only Christian group in which no single ethnicity comprises 50% or more of their membership. This presents critical challenges to the Adventist Church in terms of cultural differences and cultural diversity. Therefore, it is imperative that the Adventist church recognize and gain an understanding of the
cultural intelligence concept in order to navigate successfully through the choppy waters of the multicultural milieu that it now faces. It is behind and needs to catch up to address this major shifting social trend (Osborn, 2011).

One of the main issues for the Adventist church is that people are moving into the cities. The cities of the world are becoming multicultural, with people from all over the world converging on these concentrations of humanity. They are looking for security and a future, yet the majority will be confronted with poverty and discrimination. The dream they are seeking will, for the most part, become a lost hope. Most of these immigrants will end up being classified statistically as “the urban poor.” It is in this world, created by declining populations of the West and the move from the rural world to the urban, that the church will face its greatest challenge.

Our world is changing and ethnic diversity is the most obvious and visible form of this upheaval. As Milne (2007) noted, “In such a world the times cry out for a church model that faces this reality directly, and which is able to harness its potential for the Kingdom of God” (p. 68). More and more churches will need to shift from a monocultural to a multicultural mindset if they are to survive, prosper and be relevant. It will require a different kind of leadership, one that is inclusive in approach and philosophy. As Boyd (2008) observed, “It will need to incorporate the influences, practices, and values of diverse cultures in a respectful and productive manner.”

All of this demands theological, sociological and cultural education that more intentionally prepares churches and leaders for the multicultural church. When the church is confronting social and cultural shifts, leadership provides the key leverage point. Thus, training is imperative. For this reason, my project focuses on a teaching
model which empowers and equips the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church with cultural intelligence for multicultural ministry.

**West Houston’s Challenge**

The city of Houston, Texas, is the fourth largest city in the United States and was named in 2012 as the most multicultural city in North America. This cultural diversity is reflected in the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is a large multicultural community of 511 members and home to 52 different nationalities. It is located within a large multicultural neighborhood in West Houston. As such, one would assume that the church, with its diverse nature, would have an active and strong presence in the community. However, that was not the case. Pastoral observation suggests that the members were too internally focused and struggle with ethnocentrism. Hence, they found it a challenge to relate to people from a different cultural background both within and without the church family. The consequence is that there was a disconnect between the church and the community. There existed a paramount need for cultural intelligence in the minds of the members if they were to engage their community productively.

**Project Design**

The project was implemented in two phases. In the first phase, 15 volunteers were recruited from the West Houston Seventh-Adventist Church. They were chosen because of their leadership influence within the church. Five were elders, and 10 were ministry leaders. Also, an important criteria was that they be over the age of 18 and a baptized member of the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church. Additionally, they were chosen to reflect the different continents represented by the church’s 52
different nationalities, which include Africa, Asia, Europe, and South and North America.

The 15 volunteers formed a training group and were exposed to five two-hour training seminars held at the convenience of the participants. These seminars spanned two months. Each participant was given a consent form indicating the purpose of the project, the plan, and possible risks. The participants’ identities were confidential and, therefore, will not be mentioned in any written report. Only I, as the investigator, will have access to this information. The participants were informed that the information gathered was confidential with the exception of discussing it with the investigator. The participants were also informed that there are no known risks for participating in this study.

The training was to equip and empower the participants with cultural intelligence to minister successfully in a multicultural church and community context. I, as the investigator, corresponded with the participants on a regular basis to discuss progress and concerns.

In phase two, there was a church-wide focus on cultural intelligence for multicultural ministry. This took place first, through the ideas and plans gleaned from the training group which will be implemented, and second, through a sermon series and other intentional elements in the weekly Sabbath services. This church-wide multicultural focus spanned three months.

At the conclusion of this five-month project, the participants were interviewed to discuss their overall experiences and to determine any outcomes. Each participant had an individual one-hour interview to evaluate any outcomes. There was also an evaluation through assessing church growth, new community ministry initiatives, and an increased
Vision Team

My project implementation began with setting up a church vision team. I intentionally hand-picked five of my most spirit-filled, influential, and culturally intelligent leaders. Each represented a different cultural and ethnic group. One had a Filipino background, one had an African-American background, another a Hispanic background, and the others had an Anglo background. Three of the team were women and the group ranged in age from the twenties to the forties. Together with my British and Indian roots, we made quite a multicultural group. All five are white collar professionals working in the oil, banking, and education sectors. They are all gifted and skilled in the area of visionary and strategic leadership and were eager to apply those skills to taking the West Houston church forward.

I tasked this group with laying down a five-year strategic plan for the church, which would include a multicultural focus. It was imperative to expose them to my vision to empower the church for multicultural ministry through cultural intelligence. Hence, I spent some intentional time walking them through my church project plan. Thankfully, they were most receptive and agreed that we should have an intentional multicultural focus. They were adamant that each team member be a participant in my project seminar training group so they could be equipped with cultural intelligence.

The first objective of the team was to identify a church vision statement that included an intentional multicultural focus. Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) states, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” A vision statement is an inspirational picture of the future and includes a framework for all strategic planning. It articulates our dreams and
hopes. It also reminds us of what we are trying to build as a church and where we want to go.

Vision is vital for success in all walks of life, but especially for the church. The Adventist Church needs strengthening in that area. Our leaders are chosen on their preaching ability or whom they know, rather than on their strategic, visionary, and inspirational skills. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has departed from visionary leadership as personified through Ellen G. White. Instead we have created a religion that is self-sustaining and self-sufficient. We are no longer in need of miracles and handle our work through the proper channels. Structure increasingly serves the sustenance of the institution rather than the mission. As a result, we are structured and organized, but ineffective in carrying out our mission of spreading the Word of God. This is not the Church’s intent, but it is the reality that the Church is facing.

Hence, the vision team focused on crafting a vision statement with mission as the cornerstone, especially a mission that is grounded and lived out in the spiritual life of each member. This foundation for mission stemming from the spiritual life cannot be mandated from the top down. Instead, it must be a grass-roots movement that begins small and grows proportionately to the growth of its rootedness in Jesus Christ. The deeper the movement’s roots are in Jesus, the greater the impact the movement will have for the Kingdom.

After many hours of reflection and much prayer, the vision team arrived at this vision statement:

“To build a loving multicultural home where everyone is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and passionately preparing people for the second coming of Jesus.”
How do we go about building “a loving multicultural home?” The team identified three factors that could help achieve this goal: first, change the church name to reflect better our multicultural nature; second, plan an International Day to launch our multicultural journey, and third, fully support and participate in helping me equip and empower the church body with cultural intelligence in order to minister better multiculturally.

We grappled for many hours with different church names and found the process quite challenging. Eventually, we came to a consensus with the name CROSSroads. The rationale was that we all come from different roads culturally, ethnically, generationally, and geographically, but regardless of the roads we come from, we all meet and unify at the foot of the cross.

**International Day**

After identifying the new name, we then set about planning an International Day Sabbath, for a number of reasons. The most significant one was to introduce the multicultural church concept intentionally to the whole congregation and raise awareness of its relevance and value to the membership. It also provided me with an ideal opportunity to share and highlight my project plans with the wider church body.

A separate International Day committee comprised of two members of the vision team and myself was set up to organize this special event. The date chosen was April 20, 2013. The committee began meeting and planning in February of that year. The focus was on marketing the event both internally and externally. We felt this was a perfect opportunity to raise the multicultural profile of the church. To that end, we were
fortunate to have one of Shell Oil’s top communication directors on our International Day committee.

The day arrived and was a tremendous success. Over 700 people, many of whom were visitors, were in attendance. They were treated to a parade of nations, multicultural music, international feast, ethnic attire, sermon on multicultural ministry and an official memento booklet in color.

The members were encouraged to attend dressed in their national costume and to bring their national flags. The International Day committee purchased 52 large flags on poles to be carried for the parade of nations. They were to be carried by a representative from each country. The list of the 52 nations was as follows: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Cayman Islands, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, England, El Salvador, Kenya, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Liberia, Lithuania, Mexico, Montserrat, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Russia, Rwanda, Scotland, South Africa, Suriname, St. Croix, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Uruguay, USA, and Venezuela.

The parade of nations was a most impressive visual treat and was accompanied by a running commentary on some important facts and statistics about each nation. However, what was far more impressive was the international lunch. The sights, smells, and tastes of the delicious delights from each nation were truly memorable!

For me, the most important part of the day was my sermon. It was entitled “Igniting Multicultural Ministry” and focused on the epoch-making, multicultural church
at Antioch. The sermon laid out the vision team’s multicultural vision for the church and was delivered in the perfect forum. I was able to present my cultural intelligence project for the church and was grateful for the positive and enthusiastic feedback.

Seminar Preparation

The positive feedback encouraged me to begin the preparation for my project seminars. The first task was to recruit 15 volunteers from my congregation who would form my training group. My criteria for selection were that each participant needed to be over the age of 18, a baptized member of the West Houston Church, and a current influential leader. As a group, they would also reflect the culturally diverse nature of the church.

In June 2013, the 15 volunteers were selected. They represented the following nations: Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, England, Kenya, Mexico, Liberia, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Venezuela. Eight men and seven women who ranged in age from the twenties to the forties were selected.

I planned for the seminars to be held in September and October of 2013. The rationale was that the summer months would be inconvenient for the participants due to vacation commitments. It would also furnish me with a few months of valuable preparation time. That preparation time was much needed as it took me most of June and August (I was on vacation in July), to put together the seminar series.

My main challenge in devising the seminar series was what to leave out, rather than what to put in, as I had so much material to cover. However, after much prayer and reflection, I was able to identify the essential areas of focus and was comfortable in fitting them into five seminar presentations. It was my intention for the seminar series to
be long enough to cover the important subject areas but short enough to be interesting.

The headline title for the seminar series was “Cultural Intelligence for Multicultural Ministry.” The first title was “Cultural Intelligence: God’s Multicultural Vision,” the second was “Cultural Intelligence: Biblical Models,” the third was “Cultural Intelligence: Four Key Factors,” the fourth was “Cultural Intelligence: Cross Cultural Conflict,” and finally, the fifth was “Cultural Intelligence: Responding to the Multicultural Challenge.”

After consulting with a few of the participants it was decided that the best time and place to meet would be at church between 2:00 and 4:00 on Sabbath afternoons. Hence, a quiet and comfortable Sabbath school classroom was chosen as the venue.

**Seminar Launch**

On Sabbath afternoon, September 7, 2013, the first training seminar began. I arrived early to set up the room with the right ambiance. I felt it important to create a warm and relaxed atmosphere. Hence, I dispensed with the tables and placed the chairs in a horseshoe pattern since I wanted to encourage group interaction. I laid out the refreshments, as well as the Power Point handouts and other materials, including folders and clipboards. I made sure my laptop was connected to the large television on the wall and was ready to go. At 1:50 pm, I started to greet the participants at the door with a smile and encouraged them to partake of the refreshments. By 2:05 pm, all the participants had arrived, so I began.

My format for these seminars was as follows: ten minutes for opening prayer, welcome, and housekeeping; ten minutes for an ice breaker; 60 minutes for teaching; 20 minutes for breakout groups; and finally, 20 minutes for sharing and questions. The
intention was to create enough space for interaction, feedback and questions.

I commenced with prayer and followed with a welcome, then explained the purpose and importance of their participation in this exciting multicultural journey. I outlined the process and emphasized my desire for the seminars to be interactive and fun. I believe that if members are contributing and having fun, then they will learn more. Then, I invited questions and attended to some housekeeping matters, which included collecting of their signed consent forms.

The icebreakers needed to be fun, but also relevant to the subject matter. For the first one, I asked the participants to write down what they thought was the ethnic background of the other group members. The participant who got the most correct answers received a special prize, which, incidentally, was a box of high quality British chocolates.

It was instructive to note that the majority of the group struggled with this challenge and verbally expressed their surprise at their failure. Indeed, one participant commented that the ice breaker profoundly illustrated the dire need for my project. I felt it was the perfect comment to begin the series.

Feeling emboldened I launched into my first presentation. I began by defining some important and relevant terms: culture, multicultural, ethnicity, and multiethnic. After laying down a foundation of working definitions, I highlighted God’s multicultural vision in Revelation 7:9 -10:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”
I then shared an important quote from White (2010):

There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of another. Therefore, God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified. (pp. 136, 137)

Following those significant words, I highlighted the West Houston Church’s multicultural vision as outlined in our vision statement. I then spent some time on the critical challenges that needed to be addressed in order for us to realize God’s multicultural vision. They included globalization, glocalization (a recently developed concept), the cultural diversity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a lack of knowledge and training for multicultural ministry.

Finally, I introduced the cultural intelligence (CQ) concept as an essential ingredient in addressing these critical challenges and in equipping people to minister better multiculturally. In so doing, I traced the genesis of the CQ concept as being relatively recent and having arisen out of the business and social science arenas. It builds on from the earlier concepts of IQ (intellectual intelligence quotient) and EQ (emotional intelligence quotient). However, I stressed that the CQ concept is actually rooted in scripture.

I shared some important CQ definitions from some prominent CQ practitioners before a breakout group session. I closed after a question and answer session by asking four participants to pray in their native tongue. We were blessed by prayers in Swahili, Filipino, Spanish, and English. Before dismissing them, I reminded them of their homework, which was to write a short reflection on the first seminar and the beginning of our multicultural journey.

For seminar two, I began my teaching with a short review of the first seminar.
Thereafter, I focused on three important biblical models of cultural intelligence: Jesus’ ministry, the Antioch church, and the Apostle Paul. My intent was to underscore the fact that the cultural intelligence concept is rooted in scripture and that is where we need to look for guidance.

In seminar three, I outlined the four key factors of cultural intelligence which are as follows: Knowledge CQ, Interpretive CQ, Perseverance CQ, and Behavioral CQ. In seminar four, I focused on the dangerous challenge of cross-cultural conflict within a multicultural church context and how it could be addressed successfully through cultural intelligence. Finally, in seminar five, I looked at how we as church leaders need to respond to the multicultural challenge both on an individual and corporate level. A vital part of seminar five also was to spend time in the breakout groups to devise practical ideas and strategies to aid the West Houston Church towards its stated multicultural goal.

These ideas and strategies would then be implemented in a church wide operation for a three-month duration and then assessed to determine any outcomes. At the end of seminar five, each participant was also reminded to write a one-page reflection on the whole seminar series. This was to aid me in my assessment of the effectiveness of the seminar series. They were further reminded that each participant would be interviewed at the end of the three-month period to determine any outcomes.

Another significant part of the three-month, church-wide cultural intelligence implementation process was my sermon series. I elected to focus on the important biblical models of cultural intelligence as seen in Jesus’ ministry, the Antioch church, and the Apostle Paul. The eight-part sermon series was entitled “Connect Like Jesus.”
Conclusion

The principal aim of this research project is to investigate whether the implementation of a cultural intelligence model can transform and empower a church to minister effectively multiculturally. Therefore, I adopted a qualitative approach because it does not deal with numbers, but with ideas and people and for its ability to produce in-depth data on opinions and attitudes.

This qualitative approach first took the form of a training seminar series, which took a group of 15 influential church leaders through a two-month learning experience on “Cultural Intelligence for Multicultural Ministry.” Second, having gone through the training, the group participants were tasked with formulating ideas and strategies, which were then implemented church-wide for a three-month period in order to empower the church to minister better multiculturally. In addition, during this three-month period, I preached an eight-week sermon series on “Cultural Intelligence for Multicultural Ministry.” The sermon series was entitled “Connect Like Jesus” and was focused on cultural intelligence as seen in the multicultural ministry of Jesus, the Antioch church, and Paul’s ministry. The intention was to empower and equip the church further to minister better multiculturally.
CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The principal aim of this research project was to investigate whether the implementation of a cultural intelligence model can transform and empower the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church to minister effectively multiculturally. The research was evaluated to determine the extent to which the members have been empowered and equipped through the seminar training group and church-wide implementation of the training group strategies and interviews. In addition and in turn, it evaluated the extent to which the community has been impacted by the church’s transformation. Objective measures included looking at church growth, new community ministry initiatives, and an increased church profile in the community.

This chapter provides an overview of the project evaluation process. It contains six sections: research method, interpretation of the data, outcomes, lessons learned, my journey, and finally, recommendations.

Research Method

Following the two-month seminar training series and the three-month church-wide implementation (in which the strategies and ideas from the training group were implemented), the evaluation process began. This took the form of 15 personal
participant interviews that was conducted at the end of this five-month period.

I adopted a qualitative approach since I was not dealing with statistics, but with people and ideas. Qualitative research also can produce in-depth data on opinions and attitudes. Hence, I decided on personal interviews as they permit a fuller understanding of the thoughts of the participant. For example, it provides me with the opportunity to ask the “why” questions and to hear in detail in the “why” answers.

The private setting of the church office was used to conduct the interviews at the most convenient times for each of the 15 participants. The interviews were limited to an hour; interviews were face-to-face; they were not recorded either by video or digitally; I did, however, take written notes in response to a written outline of five questions; and finally, the participants were informed that the interview and the data gleaned would remain confidential and that their names were not included in the report.

Before the interviews began, I ensured that the setting was comfortable and that a glass of water was provided. The participant was invited to sit in a comfortable chair; and we exchanged pleasantries – to encourage relaxation. I then proceeded to outline the interview parameters. Thereafter, I invited any questions the participant may have before starting the interview.

The interview questions are reflected in Table 1:
Table 1

*Interview Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
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| Question 1 | Has the cultural intelligence training model improved your understanding of multicultural ministry?  
If so how? |
| Question 2 | What impact has the cultural intelligence training model had on your life in terms of multicultural ministry?  
Has it changed you? |
| Question 3 | What skills have you acquired from this training?  
Have you used these skills to interact or minister to someone from another culture?  
What was the outcome? |
| Question 4 | What did you enjoy most about the training?  
What did you enjoy least about the training?  
What could enhance the training? |
| Question 5 | Has the cultural intelligence training model benefitted the church?  
If so, how? |

**Interpretation of the Data**

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the cultural intelligence training model was focused on the following areas: seminar experience, knowledge, awareness, skills, and finally, impact.

**Seminar Experience**

All 15 participants commented on their enjoyment of the training, especially the
fellowship, teaching material, ice breakers, breakout groups, and ethnic food (They noted the intentional cultural intelligence element behind each aspect of the seminars). At the beginning of three of the seminars, the participants were invited to bring a food dish from their ethnic background to share. The intention was that it would aid their understanding of other cultures. In addition, all 15 participants appreciated and were blessed by the prayer time at the end of each seminar which consisted of four volunteers praying in their native tongue. Every participant also appreciated the diverse nature of the group and felt that the training experience gave them an opportunity not only to learn about each other’s cultures, but also get to know each other better. All of the participants stated that the cultural intelligence training model was a beneficial and worthwhile experience.

Seminar 4 on cross-cultural conflict was the most impactful seminar for the training group and caused the most heated debate. They shared their disappointment that more time was not afforded for more discussion. Hence, it was no surprise that 11 of the participants expressed their opinion that the seminar series was too short and that more sessions needed to be added to allow more time for discussion to explore the topics in more depth.

Seven participants asserted that the seminars should be scheduled on a weekly basis rather than bi-weekly to keep the material fresh in the minds of the participants and to keep the momentum going. Five participants commented that Sabbath (Saturday) afternoons were not the best times for the seminars as it took time away from their families. Six participants observed that the seminar venue was too small and uncomfortable and that tables should have been provided instead of writing boards. Although, it was noted that the diverse nature of the group was appreciated, it was
pointed out by seven participants that there needed to be more youth involved.

On the technical side, eight participants thought that the addition of film or video clips would have enhanced the presentations. Another element to enhance the presentations, according to five participants, would be to share situational and up-to-date examples of cultural intelligence in action.

All of the group members posited that the training was important and needed to be continued in some form. One idea was to keep the training group updated, informed, and motivated towards cultural intelligence and multicultural ministry by a monthly newsletter via email. Another idea to keep the momentum going was to have monthly follow up meetings for the group.

Eleven participants saw merit in taking the whole congregation through the same training process, as they felt it was needed and would be the most effective way of empowering them with cultural intelligence for multicultural ministry.

Knowledge

Every participant stated that their understanding and knowledge of cultural intelligence and multicultural ministry increased significantly and that those concepts were relatively new to them. A major learning for six group members was the fact that they thought they possessed a high level of cultural intelligence, but the training revealed that was not the case. It is interesting to note that these six group members were the oldest and held high-powered jobs in culturally diverse work arenas.

For 13 participants, a different major learning was that the term multicultural meant more than race or ethnicity. The fact that it incorporates many other cultural groups such as generational and gender groups took them by surprise and helped them
gain a deeper understanding of the difference from the term multiethnic.

After studying the life and ministry of Jesus, the Antioch Church, and Pauline theology, all group members expressed their surprise to learn that the cultural intelligence concept is rooted in Scripture and not the business arena. They also reported an appreciation for their deeper learning of multicultural ministry being a biblical mandate.

Awareness

The significant knowledge gained in both areas of cultural intelligence and multicultural ministry led to an increased awareness of other cultures in the minds of all the group members. They all reported an increased attitude of sensitivity, inclusiveness, patience, openness, and tolerance towards people from a different culture. A typical response from the participants was that the training taught them to be more aware of the need to understand others better and to be less judgmental of those from a different cultural background. One participant stated that the cultural intelligence model allowed her to take a look “from the inside out, rather than outside in.” A different participant simply said, “I have gained a greater understanding of what makes people from other cultures tick.”

Another participant stated, “The cultural intelligence model increased my awareness to the cultural baggage that people bring into a church and then how to address that baggage in a Christ-like and sensitive manner.”

Skills

An increased awareness of other cultures through the cultural intelligence model led to the participants’ enhancing their listening and communication skills when
interacting with other cultures. One participant reported that he had learned to “speak less. Listen more.” Another participant had learned to be more intentional. He said, “I now think before I speak to someone from another culture.” Other participants observed that they had learned to be more sensitive and open when communicating with people from a different culture.

Many of the participants reported that they now employ the skills learned from the cultural intelligence model on a daily basis in their diverse environments at work and within their own families.

Impact

All 15 participants responded that the cultural intelligence model had a positive impact on their lives and transformed their behavior. Now they act and speak with a culturally intelligent mind whenever faced with someone who is different from them. One participant commented that “on a daily basis, I’m faced with someone from a different cultural background and as soon as that interaction begins, my mind goes on a cultural intelligence auto-pilot.”

An area where the impact of the cultural intelligence model was felt most was in the participants’ church leadership roles and their ability to minister multiculturally. Having been equipped and empowered by the cultural intelligent model, they were better able to relate and minister to their diverse ministry teams, the wider church body, and the outside community. A participant shared, “I am now bolder in approaching someone from another culture both within and outside of the church family.”

One participant who serves as one of our Homeless Ministry leaders reported, “The training had helped me immensely to more sensitively minister to our multicultural
clients.” He added, “The valuable skills I learned from the training also enabled me to become a more effective multicultural leader.”

Two unexpected areas where transformation was experienced by the participants were their work life and family life. One participant who is Peruvian and married to an Indonesian commented, “We have struggled with cross-cultural conflict and so the cultural intelligence model really helped my marriage. It was an unexpected bonus!” Another participant who is Filipino and married to a Puerto Rican expressed her struggle to relate to and be accepted by her Spanish-speaking in-laws. She went on to share how the cultural intelligence model helped her to transform her behavior and gain acceptance from her in-laws. She also used the phrase, “unexpected bonus!”

The same participant shared her successful experience of reaching out to a shy Muslim colleague at work. She observed that “not only did the cultural intelligence model help me connect to someone of a different faith, but also to witness to that person with sensitivity and Christ-like love. That person is now my friend and interested in visiting our church!” That participant previously did not possess the confidence to approach a Muslim, but now feels empowered. This theme of new-found cultural confidence in the workplace is continued by another participant who observed, “I now see my diverse colleagues at work through the lens of my cultural intelligence filter. I feel more empowered to reach out to them.”

Two English-speaking participants were so impacted by the model that they decided to learn a new language in order to become even more equipped to reach out to other cultures. French and Spanish were the chosen tongues and they report success reaching those language groups in their local neighborhoods with the gospel message. In
addition, a Kenyan participant shared how Spanish-speaking visitors to the West Church are constantly surprised and impressed by his ability to communicate in their language. He credits the cultural intelligence model for his improved ability to reach out to the Spanish-speaking community.

In terms of the impact on the church body, it can be summarized by the following quote from a participant: “Multiculturalism is there but you ignore it. The cultural intelligence model has woken up the church to the realization it is good to be multicultural and that we must embrace it.”

The benefits of the church-wide implementation of the cultural intelligence model were that the body became more inclusive, tolerant, friendly, loving and more appreciative of different cultures, according to the participants. “The church body has become more Christ-like,” they asserted.

Outcomes

In answering the research question “How effective was the cultural intelligence model in empowering the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church for multicultural ministry?” the research is quite conclusive. The indications from the interviews, church growth, new community ministry initiatives, and an increased church profile, the cultural intelligence model did empower the church to minister better multiculturally and was a success.

The interviews revealed that the training group’s strategy for multicultural church transformation was implemented successfully and had a positive impact on the wider church body. The strategy focused on mutual inclusion between and among the various cultural groups present in the congregation. A result of this was a renewed intentionality
towards our worship services where multicultural elements were introduced through
different musical styles, languages, and spiritual expressions of faith that are meaningful
and representative of the congregations diverse nature.

For example, a group from a different country (Brazil, Kenya, etc.) would dress
up in their national costumes and lead out with the welcome every week and then spend a
few minutes sharing something about their culture and expressions of faith. Also,
corporate prayer time took the form of a conversational prayer in Spanish, Portuguese,
Swahili, French, Mandarin, English, and other languages. The youth were encouraged to
contribute their artistic talents in the form of mime and drama. In addition, more women,
handicapped and seniors were encouraged to take part in worship. A multicultural choir
and praise teams were formed and sang songs in different languages. Fifty-two national
flags were hung in the church foyer so visitors would immediately detect a multicultural
presence. Members were encouraged to wear their ethnic attire to church. All of this
helped the church begin the process of transformation into an authentic multicultural
church.

The church membership grew from 531 to 582 during this five-month project
period and the weekly attendance average was 603, a 10% increase. Eighteen people
were baptized during this period and 33 transferred in. Two of those baptized, a mother
and daughter from the Philippines, were so touched by one of the training group
participants singing Via Dolorosa in English, Spanish, and her native Filipino tongue
during a communion service that they responded with a request for both of them to be
baptized.
Another heart-warming story is that of a British training group participant who used his new-found cultural intelligence skills to reach out to a Spanish-speaking homeless man residing in a local park next to the church. The man was desperate and suicidal. However, through that interaction, the homeless man came into contact with the church, was helped, supported, and given Bible studies. Today he is happy and a loved baptized member of the church.

A troubled 19-year-old Vietnamese young woman walked in off the streets and attended one of our worship services for the first time and at the end, she stated that she was so impressed with the diversity she found that she felt at home and that this is where God wanted her to be.

I received a letter from another first-time visitor to our church. She is Brazilian and wanted to share her experience of seeing an Anglo-American lady singing a solo and then breaking down in tears and then witnessing two women, an African American and a Hispanic, rushing up to the platform to console her by placing their arms around her and helping her finish the song. The visitor had never experienced seeing anything like that before and was so impressed with the love across the church cultures that she decided to join our church soon after. She went on to become our church music director.

Another visitor, a Mexican woman who is married to a Muslim from Bangladesh, shared with me how she had visited many churches across Houston, but found that the West Houston Seventh-day Adventist Church was the one where her Muslim husband felt most comfortable. She appreciated the diversity of the church and commented on its uniqueness in the city of Houston.

The fact that I could share many more stories of church growth and
transformation is testament to the success of the cultural intelligence model at West Houston. However, it is instructive to note that, during this period, the church grew more through transfer growth (33 new members) than through conversion growth (18 new members). I will comment on this phenomenon further on in this chapter.

In terms of new community ministry initiatives, there arose a new community health ministry, domestic abuse prevention ministry, prison ministry, a youth-run retirement home ministry, and a new weekly bi-lingual homeless Bible study in English and Spanish, to complement our existing homeless ministry program.

The health ministry team was a multicultural group of health care professionals who planned health fairs, where free health check-ups were offered, and a weekly free health and fitness club for the community. In addition, free English and Spanish language classes are being planned.

The church did raise its profile in the community due to its health ministry and additional homeless ministry programs. Evidence of this was the request of the neighborhood civic resident group to hold their annual meetings at the West Houston Church.

Another positive outcome of the project process was the increased number of its annual Maranatha Mission trips to three from one, including a new youth-only trip. Plans for 2014 include trips to Brazil, India, and the Dominican Republic.

It is important to note that the church members made significant progress toward being multicultural, rather than just being skilled in cross cultural ministry. Pastoral observation noted that there was a greater willingness to change and grow, and that the members had an increased appetite to learn how to become an authentic multicultural
person. Pastoral observation also noted, that members navigated successfully being in another cultural context and that reflected their new found ability to operate in different cultural contexts, alongside their skills.

Lessons Learned

As I reflect on the project process and the data, I have learned the following:

1. The project cultural intelligence model has been a success. The training group members and the wider church body have been empowered and equipped with cultural intelligence for multicultural ministry.

2. The cultural intelligence model needs to be enhanced in the following ways: extend the number of seminars from five (two-hour sessions) to six, thus allowing more time for discussion and assimilation of the subject material; enhance the seminar presentations in the form of video and film clips to make them more appealing; change the meeting time from Sabbath (Saturday) afternoons to enable participants to spend valuable time with their families; change the seminar schedule from bi-weekly to weekly meetings to keep the material fresh in their minds and to keep the momentum; the venue for the seminar training should be comfortable, practical and spacious; finally, there needs to be some form of follow-up and further training for the group members and wider church body. The cultural intelligence model is a foundation that needs to be built on.

3. People do not have a clear understanding of the term multicultural. They automatically associate it with race or ethnicity only. The fact that multicultural meant more than race or ethnicity was a major learning for the group members. In addition, I learned that there was a negative connotation or stigma associated with the term and that
participants from an Anglo-American background were particularly uncomfortable talking about it.

4. A strategy for successful multicultural ministry includes the following: intentional planning and dedicated leadership; building multicultural relationships at both interpersonal and intergroup levels; engagement by the whole congregation that creates a culture of inclusion.

5. Cross-cultural conflict is a reality with positive opportunity, for it moves us toward growth.

6. In future, it might be beneficial to extend the seminar training to a larger group of church leaders, rather than just 15. It might also be beneficial to extend the training directly to a whole church body.

7. The implementation of a cultural intelligence model not only benefits members ministry roles but also, surprisingly, their family and work lives, a positive and unexpected outcome.

8. Not enough literature has been written on cultural intelligence for multicultural ministry. Seventh-day Adventists have published little on cultural intelligence or multicultural ministry.

9. God has called me and empowered me to become a thought leader and equipper in the area of cultural intelligence and multicultural ministry.

10. You must first be a multicultural person before you can minister multiculturally. Being a multicultural person involves one having an intentional attitude of openness, tolerance, awareness and a willingness to change and grow. This attitude is necessary if one is to minister successfully in a multicultural context.
11. A multicultural church attracts families with a multicultural mindset. Hispanic families choose to attend English-speaking multicultural churches like West Houston rather than a Spanish-speaking church because their children feel more comfortable and the parents can learn to speak English better. Also, a surprisingly increasing number of African Americans prefer attending a multicultural church like West Houston because they want their children exposed to a diverse environment.

12. Multicultural ministry is difficult. That is not to say that church ministry in a monocultural church is easy, but I have pastored in both settings and have found multicultural ministry to be the more taxing of the two. This type of ministry can be particularly wearying for pastors in the process of church transition where there is often a struggle to overcome the inertia of tradition and negative attitudes surrounding cultural difference. Pastoral leadership bears the burden of change until key leaders come to see multicultural ministry as biblical and plausible.

My Journey

Undertaking this project has enabled me to gain a deeper knowledge of cultural intelligence and multicultural ministry. It has served to confirm God’s calling to be a thought leader and equiper of laity, pastors, and church administrators in these areas. As I look to the future, I feel excited and passionate about teaching and empowering these groups for multicultural ministry. As I reflect on my project journey I detect growth in my ability to lead and minister multiculturally, and feel that I have become an authentic multicultural person with an increased level of cultural intelligence.

On a different note, the project process has helped me to become a more disciplined and structured person. The writing, research, reading, and teaching were
unexpected and enjoyable experiences. I never thought I would say that at the beginning of the process! Finally, and most importantly, it has drawn me closer to God due to my constant reliance on him for support, strength, and wisdom.

**Recommendations**

Any research project is likely to accomplish two things at the same time. First, the project may answer some questions about the phenomenon under consideration. Second, it will uncover more questions related to the phenomenon. I know that the latter has happened and I hope the former has, as well. What follows are several suggestions that may prove fruitful areas for more in-depth research and ideas for further consideration:

1. More writing must be done by people on the front lines of multicultural ministry. Multicultural pastors on the front lines must be one part practitioner and one part theologian in order to make the necessary contribution. Multicultural ministry extends from the heart of God, not simply from God’s actions alone.

2. If pastors and Seventh-day Adventist churches take intentional steps to embrace multicultural ministry, so should conference leaders and seminaries. Seminary heads should provide cultural intelligence training for students in order to equip them for successful multicultural ministry. In addition, conference leaders should follow suit and provide cultural intelligence training for pastors in the field, for many pastoral colleagues have shared their struggle when transitioning from a monocultural to a multicultural church context.

3. An interesting phenomenon was the discovery that the majority of church growth occurred through transfers, rather than new converts. This could be just part of
the growing process of a multicultural church. Committed believers are attracted with a strong sense of identity as a multicultural fellowship. However, it might be instructive and valuable to conduct a series of interviews exclusively with recent converts who came to the faith through the ministry of multicultural churches. Such a focus would shed further light on the question of evangelism and growth in multicultural churches

4. This study identified cross-cultural conflict as a reality with positive opportunity, to move the multicultural church toward growth. Healthy cross-cultural conflict revolves around a central focus of relationship building. Relationships are organic, evolving and dynamic and do not automatically follow a linear path. Therefore, there needs to be an intentional focus on deepening relationships and that takes time and effort. Unhealthy cross-cultural conflict arises where there is an absence of strong, resilient relationships and teamwork. Hence, it might be fruitful to study whether cultural intelligence could benefit a church experiencing frequent cross-cultural conflict.

5. This study focused on empowering an existing multicultural church for authentic multicultural ministry. It would be interesting to examine whether the implementation of a cultural intelligence model would have any impact on a monocultural church located in a multicultural neighborhood.

6. There needs to be an intentional focus on the need for continued growth in multiculturalism for the West Houston congregation. The journey has only began. The church leadership team has an important role to play in continuing to move the church forward in order to fulfill its multicultural vision.
Cultural Intelligence for Multicultural Ministry

By Pastor Ashwin Somasundram

- Prayer
- Welcome and Housekeeping
- Ice breaker
TITLE OF STUDY:

Cultural Intelligence:
A model to empower West Houston SDA Church for Multicultural Ministry

SEMINARY ONE:

Overview

- God’s Multicultural Vision – Revelation 7:9-10
- Ellen White
- Critical Challenges
- Definition: Cultural Intelligence (CQ)
OBJECTIVE:

To give you an understanding of the importance of Cultural Intelligence for successful Multicultural Ministry.

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing White robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” (Revelation 7:9-10)
Ellen White

“There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of another. Therefore God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified.”

(Historical Sketches of SDA Missions pp. 136, 137)

West Houston/CROSSroads SDA Church
Vision Statement:

“To build a loving multi-cultural home where everyone is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and passionately preparing people for the second coming of Jesus.”
Critical Challenges:

- Globalization
- Glocalization
- Cultural Diversity/Cultural differences of the Adventist Church
- Lack of knowledge and Training for Multicultural Ministry

Globalization:

- The USA has experienced major racial demographic shifts as a result of Globalization since the beginning of the 21st century.
- In 2012, for the first time, the majority of babies born in the USA were to parents with an immigrant background.
- In 2012, Houston was named as the most Multicultural city in the USA.
Glocalization

“It is the seamless connectedness between the local and global and is affecting the church in ways that never could have been imagined in the first-century church, or even the twentieth-century church.”

– Bob Roberts

A study conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in 2008, found that Seventh-day Adventists are by far the most ethnically diverse religious community of any kind in the United States. They discovered that the SDA Church is the only Christian group in which no single ethnicity comprises 50% or more of their membership.
“If the Body of Christ is to adjust to our new racial future, we will have to make bold, biblical steps toward the development of churches situated to meet the needs of people of different races and cultures.” – Mark Deymaz

“For the Church to ignore the demographic changes in the Western world would be sin at worst and total ignorance at best. For a church not to actively pursue multicultural diversity in a diverse community would be dishonoring to scripture and dishonoring to God.” – Che Ahn
“The church must respond to this multicultural society with multicultural churches or face becoming irrelevant.”
– Louis Ao & David Penley

“No church leader can be effective today without serious training in the understanding, penetration, and assimilation of different cultures and generations into one congregation.” – Louis Ao & David Penley
Cultural Intelligence (CQ):
- New concept
- Arose out of the business field
- CQ Abbreviation
- Concept rooted in the Bible

Cultural Intelligence (CQ): Definitions
“Cultural Intelligence: reaching across the chasm of cultural difference in ways that are loving and respectful.” – David Livermore

“Cultural Intelligence is an individual’s capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity.”
– Christopher Earley & Soon Ang
“The ability to engage in a set of behaviors that uses skills (i.e., language or interpersonal skills) and qualities (e.g., tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility) that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts.” — Brooks Peterson

- Question Time
- Announcements
- Date of next seminar
- Closing prayer
REFERENCE LIST


VITA
VITA

Name: Ashwin James Somasundram

Place of Birth: London, England

Education:

- 1998 MA Pastoral Ministry, Andrews University
- 1992 BA Theology, Andrews University

Ordained:


Pastoral Experience:

- 2009-(Present) Senior Pastor of the West Houston SDA Church (Houston, Texas)
- 2008-2009 Senior Pastor of the Milton Keynes & West Bletchley SDA churches (South England Conference, UK)
- 2007-2008 Area 4, Conference Leader
- 2007 Secretary, South England Conference Nominating Committee
- 2005-2007 Planted the Kingston and Epsom churches (South England Conference, UK)
- 2005-(Present) International Speaker [Australia, Albania, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Republic of Ireland, Germany, Israel, South Africa]
- 2001-2008 Ministerial Placement Supervisor
- 1998-2008 Senior Pastor of the Wimbledon International SDA church (South England Conference, UK)
- 1997, Summer Dean of Men, Andrews University (Newbold College campus)
- 1996-1998 Assistant Dean of Men, Andrews University (Newbold College campus)
- 1992-1993 Student Missionary in Nazareth, Israel (Associate Pastor/English Teacher)