Multicultural Ministry: The Theory
By Caleb Rosado*

As we enter the 21st century, the new frontier of mission for the church is multicultural ministry (1). The 1980s were characterized as a decade of greed, selfishness and exclusivity, where people fended for themselves. Unfortunately, that same model was mirrored in the church, particularly in the Church Growth Movement, whose heart is the Homogeneous Unit Principle. According to the founder of the Church Growth Movement, Donald McGavran, "Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers" (2). If there ever was a church growth principle that is far removed from the essence of the Gospel, it is this one. The point of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is *change,* change which saves us *from* our sins and not *in* them, even if the outcome is unprecedented growth! Numerical growth has never been the goal of the Church, "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14) (3). The Church's only goal is obedience to the principles of the Kingdom of God, "by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

The 1990's, however, were the beginning of a period of compassion, caring and concern. The reason for the shift is the realization that we cannot long survive on this planet operating out of selfishness, greed and self-preservation, even of my group. The selfish survival tactics of nationalism, which the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset regarded as the last gasp of exclusivism(4), and so characteristic of the '80's, are beginning to give way to global thinking, inclusiveness and a unity in diversity. But this economic and political interdependence needs a unifying spiritual undergirding which recognizes the common ground and sister/brotherhood of all humankind, and carries out ministry consonant with the Gospel as enunciated in Galatians 3:28. "There is no longer Jew or Greek [no division based on ethnic differences], there is no longer slave or free [no division based on class and status differences], there is no longer male and female [no division based on gender differences]; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

There is a model of ministry that encompasses the needs and challenges of the multicultural 1990s and into the 21st century–*multicultural ministry.*

What is Multicultural Ministry?

Multicultural ministry is the development and implementation of heterogeneous models of communicating the Gospel, through beliefs and behaviors which are sensitive to the needs of the culturally diverse population within a church's field of service, creating a community which celebrates unity in diversity in Christ. For too long the Christian Church has been operating on exclusive, homogeneous models of ministry and styles of worship in a heterogeneous church and society.

It is time for a more inclusive model of ministry, sensitive to the diversity within the church body and in the community (5).

Multicultural ministry is not an exercise in "church bussing"–forced integration! While people should be free to chose where they desire to worship. multicultural ministry suggests a diversity of worshippers and worship experiences within the united body of Christ. The key to successful multicultural ministry lies in understanding the diversity of value systems operant in the church. This diversity of "thinking systems" has a far greater impact on a multicultural church than the diversity of races, ethnicities, and cultural expressions could ever have. Even in what appears to be a homogeneous congregation, there is much diversity: age, gender, class, occupation, values, interests, statuses, etc. But especially is this diversity reflected in value systems–the worldviews, the set of priorities, paradigms, mindsets, organizing frameworks for deep-level thinking at the bottom-line, out of which emerge the diversity of thought, behaviour and attitudes that often divide and fragment a church. These differences reflect different cultural ways of thinking and doing things, for even men and women reflect different cultural ways of life (6). Youth and adults differ, single and married, families with or without children, all have different needs.

There is a difference between a "multiethnic" church and a "multicultural" church. A Multiethnic Church is one that has a diversity of ethnic groups in the congregation, but the church's "seven Ps" (perspectives, policies, purposes, programs, personnel, practices, and power–see below) do not necessarily reflect the diversity of the church. A Multicultural Church, on the other hand, is one that incorporates these differences into a wholistic program of ministry. It is sensitive to all the experiences and differences that people bring, and not just differences of race, ethnicity and culture. The concern in multicultural ministry is a respect for others and what they bring to the altar to present before God.

This broad, inclusive definition of multicultural ministry, however, should in no way divert the focus from racial and cultural differences and become a substitute for not dealing effectively with racism in the body of Christ, as reflected in the local congregation. Otherwise, one can be very inclusive across all differences and end up essentially with a white congregational structure that "perpetuates racism under the guise of multiculturalism" (7).

Multicultural ministry is a *proactive* model of ministry, which has a clear vision of where society is heading (8). People of Color have far surpassed the White population in the United States in terms of percentages of growth, and in the 21st century will do so in terms of actual numbers. Traditional racially homogeneous congregations will be challenged by these changes. There are three types of responses the church can take. The first is *run,* as in the white-flight pattern of the 1960s. Churches that take this position tend to follow the Homogeneous Unit Principle of church growth, and claim that by so doing they are living the Gospel by only working for "our kind of people" (8).

The second type of response is *resignation,* feeling trapped due to the inability of selling the church building and accommodating to what is perceived to be a negative situation. This response results in a static stance toward what could otherwise be a dynamic opportunity.

The third response is *renewal,* a dynamic sense of revival as the church experiences the transformation of its old wineskin structures into the new wineskins of multiculturalism.

What Is Multiculturalism?

Let me put forth an operational definition of multiculturalism: *Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society.*

Let's take it apart. Notice the four pairs of action phrases that give substance to the definition: "beliefs and behaviors," "recognizes and respects," "acknowledges and values," "encourages and enables," and a fifth one, "empowers." Multiculturalism is a "system," a wholistic framework, a set of interrelated parts–in this case, beliefs and behaviors–which make up the whole of how humans experience todays world. It includes what people believe about others, their basic paradigms, and how these impact and are impacted by behavior. The outcome of this praxis of beliefs/behaviors are seven important actions.

The first is *recognition* of the rich diversity in a given society or organization. For the longest time racial/ethnic minorities, the physically disabled, and women have not been given the same recognition as others. The one-sided approach to history and education has been a testimony to that fact. There is an African proverb that declares: "Until the lion has its own historian, tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." What do "tales of the hunt" say about the history of people of color? What do "tales of the hunt" say about the contribution of women? This is why recognition is the first factor in understanding multiculturalism, for without a much overdue recognition of the value and worth of marginalized groups and their contribution, efforts at change will merely be empty gestures.

With recognition should also comes *respect*– the process whereby the "other" is treated with deference, courtesy and compassion in an endeavor to safeguard the integrity, dignity, value and social worth of the individual. It means treating people the way they want to be treated, the essence of the Golden Rule. Respect and recognition are not the same, since recognizing the existence of a group does not necessarily elicit respect for the group. In a slave economy, for

example, the presence of slaves was recognized but their humanity was not respected. The presence of American Indians in the Western expansion of the American continent was constantly recognized by whites, but their environmentally conscious cultures were never respected. The contribution of women has usually been relegated to a footnote status. The United States as a nation, like most other nations, has a long history of not respecting the rights of the powerless.

Multiculturalism also entails *acknowledging* the validity of the cultural expression and contribution of the various groups. These cultural expressions and contributions usually are only acknowledged when there is an economic market for them, such as the music of African Americans, native Indian dances for tourism or Mexican cuisine. When the business sector wants our money, the advertising industry pictures people of color in a positive light. But in most other cases the entertainment media simply caricatures minority stereotypes, such as women usually in supportive roles, and people of color in a non-visible status. Multiculturalism thus means *valuing* what people have to offer, and not simply rejecting it because it differs from what the majority, or those in power, regard as important.

Genuine multiculturalism will also *encourage* and *enable* the contribution of the various groups to society or an organization. Many people are discouraged because what they bring to the group is regarded of little value and worth. Not everything can be utilized nor is of the same worth and value, but it does have value, even if it is for the effort invested in bringing it forward. Such efforts must be encouraged, for who knows from where the next great idea may come–from a youth, from an elderly person, from an African American, from a single parent, from a lesbian, from a high school drop out, from a business executive, etc.? The word *enable* here is important, because what lies behind it is the concept of *empowerment* –the process of enabling people to be self-critical of their own biases so as to strengthen themselves and others to achieve and deploy their maximum potential. People's sense of self-worth, value and dignity is most often not only determined by the kind of encouragement and enabling they receive from others, but also from how willing they are to be self-critical of negative behaviors on their part. If I am practicing self-destructive action, all the external help will go for naught.

The essence of multiculturalism, the undergirding concept of multicultural ministry, is the ability to *celebrate* with the other the power of the Gospel to transcend all barriers and bring about a oneness, creating a new humanity in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22). It was this oneness about which Jesus prayed, and of which He declared that its manifestation would convince the world that God had sent His Son (John 17:23). Multiculturalism enables us to look upon the other, especially the other that the world has taught us to regard with distrust and suspicion, not as a "potential predator, but as a profitable partner" (9).

The last part of this definition of multiculturalism–"within an inclusive cultural context"–is most important, because it is here where many people get off and refuse to go along with an inclusive approach to society or to ministry. Many people fear multiculturalism will bring in "foreign" concepts and ideas which will deviate the nation or church from its historic course and transform the United States and the Church into something different from what they have been. We need to realize that America has always been a multicultural society, whether or not many have been willing to admit it. So also the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Seventh-day Adventist church, like the United States of America, has never been a "melting pot," which conjures up images of a homogeneous, purée-like product. A *Stew Pot* is a better metaphor to describe the reality of America as a multicultural society, and especially the Seventh-day Adventist church, as the most ethnically diverse Protestant church in the world today, with a visible presence in over 200 countries. We are a heterogeneous body, a rich cultural stew, where the various ingredients–while maintaining their distinctiveness–have contributed their unique ethnic flavors, all richly blended by the heat of group tension. This is what makes a stew, not just the ingredients tossed in together as in a cold salad, but the application of heat to the pot.

In American society "heat" has come from racial and ethnic tension and conflict. Fire, however, is dangerous, because if one turns up the heat too high or leaves the pot on the fire too long, or simply neglects it, the stew will be burned. The American stew-pot has been burned on many occasions–recall Detroit, Watts, Newark, Miami, New York, Chicago, Yonkers, Bensonhurst, and South Central Los Angeles. All have experienced the fires of racial riots, revolts and rebellions. Watched carefully the heat of this group tension will bring out the creative juices of the various cultural groups seeking to resolve their conflicts. The result is a special cultural blend which gives the people of the United States of America their unique character in the world, which character even differentiates them from former compatriots in the very countries from which they came.

Such a process cannot be described as assimilation, perhaps the most inappropriate concept by which to describe the American ethnic experience. Assimilation–from the Latin, *assimilare,* to make similar–is the process whereby newcomers to society are encouraged to give up their cultural way of life and accommodate as quickly as possible the values and culture of the host society. It is an ethnocentric, one-way process of cultural exchange, in that only the newcomer is expected to adapt, with the implied promise that group acceptance will be the social reward. Yet few groups in American society have been completely absorbed to the point where they have lost sight of their ethnic heritage and cultural contribution to the nation.

A more appropriate concept reflective of the real American experience of group interaction is *Transculturation,* a term coined by the renowned Cuban

anthropologist, Fernando Ortiz. *Transculturation is the reciprocal process by which two cultures, upon contact, engage in a system of give and take and adaptation to each other's ways, though often not in an equal manner, resulting in the emergence of a new cultural reality* (10). It is a two-way process of cultural exchange, where the various groups learn from each other, each impacting the other, without totally losing their unique distinctiveness. This rich blend of ethnic groups, coming together on the basis of coalitions of interests and not of color, with a shared set of values, is what makes the United States of America distinct and gives us the competitive edge in the world today.

At question here is what constitutes an American? For many persons living in the United States, what comes to mind whenever they try to visualize what an American looks like, is a Northern European phenotype, blond and blue-eyed. Those that differ from this visual image of what is perceived to be an American, have experienced rejection. As long as this view of what constitutes an American prevails many will never be included because they cannot change their skin color.

It is this latter point that led Eduardo Seda Bonilla to conclude that:

> There have always been "two ways" of adaptation for minority groups in the United States. One way was designed for the ethnic or "cultural" minorities, the immigrants of different nationalities. The other way was for the "racial" minorities. For the former–the Irish, the Germans, the Italians, the Jews, etc.–all they simply had to do to assimilate and be accepted was to change their ethnic identification, discard their culture. Once their cultural identity subsided under the American cultural identity, which essentially was English, the door to the "silent" or socially invisible world of the majority was open; because they were "white."
>
> For the second type of minority group, identified on the basis of "racial" stigma, the issue was more complex, it was biological, and as a result the shedding of culture made no difference in their acceptance. They were never seen, nor have been seen as "genuine" Americans, only as hyphenated Americans: Native-Americans, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, etc. The implication is that they are not quite yet Americans, nor can they ever be because of phenotypical differences (11).

They have simply not been accepted as genuine Americans. Robert Blauner declares that in American history there have been "two major processes through which new population groups are incorporated into a nation." The first is through immigration with assimilation as the endgoal and result. The other one, and lesser known, is through colonization resulting in segregation. The educational

systems of the country, as well as the popular media have always touted the nation's history as being the result of the first, but have said little to nothing of the second approach. Yet, it is as a result of the second where lies much of the conflict divides us as a nation (12).

So what is an "American"? Multiculturalism is redefining who is an American by challenging the taken-for-granted definition of American as "white." It is telling the people of the United States of America that an "American" is any person that is a citizen of this country either by birth or naturalization, no matter their skin color, physical features, cultural expressions, national origins or means of incorporation. The result is a delicious stew, a beautiful mosaic, that reflects the beauty of God's diverse family.

Tribalism vs. Globalism:

Obviously, the more ethnically diverse a group, an organization, a church or nation is, the greater the possibility for group tension and ethnic conflict. This is what sociologist Lewis Coser declares: "The greater the structural or cultural diversity of those who unite in a coalition, the more their interests other than in the immediate purpose are likely to be divergent if not antagonistic" (13). This is what is now happening in the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout the world. Robert S. Folkenberg, in a dialogue with the Editor of the *Adventist Review* (September 22, 1994), recognized the forces of diversity as a "threat" to unity. "I believe one of the greatest threats to organizational unity, and therefore mission, will be ethnic balkanization and tribalism, in which the desire for control and 'upward mobility' will subversively dominate the agenda." Folkenberg is right. The forces of diversity that make change and potential conflict inevitable are already in place in our society. And if not managed well can end up being a destructive force. Yet if we are going to be successful, we are going to have to take change seriously. For as Max DePree reminds us: "We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are" (14).

But some may protest and declare, "Why do we need to change? Have we not been successful with what we have been doing?" And the response is that success itself may be a threat to the very survival of the church. Thus Steve Wilstein reminds us that, "It's dangerous to believe you will remain successful simply by doing the same things that once brought success. *That will be true only if the world doesn't change. . . .* To be successful over the long haul, you need to change before it stops working. It's hard because nobody wants to change something that's working" (15). This is because as long as an action, policy or structured situation satisfies our needs, we will not change. Thus, most persons and organizations will not change unless forced to. Yet there is an Arab Proverb that states: "The dog barks but the caravan moves on." Those opposed to change may woof, woof all they want, but the caravan of change moves on.

Among these are what the *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* is calling, "three sweeping transformations of the worldwide cultural landscape" (16).

> 1. The increasing *wave of refugees,* displaced population groups searching for survival and a new home. As of 1995 there are 25 million people worldwide in this state of political dislocation.

> 2. The breakup of what appeared to be unified countries, resulting in *internal political strife and disunity.* What happened to the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are the merely the tip of the iceberg. Such internal divisions will be especially evident among indigenous cultures and less developed societies "whose traditional ways of life have been altered by contact with the outside world." Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti are all examples of internal disunity, political disruption/corruption, and socio-economic chaos.

> 3. Perhaps the most impacting force, however, is *the revival of ethnic nationalism.* José Ortega y Gasset says that this last gasp of exclusive nationalism intensifies on the very eve of its disappearance, "in a direction opposite to that of the principle which creates nations" (17).

All three transformations result in part from attempts to shirk off the remaining vestiges of 19th century colonial efforts by Western nations to restructure the world according to their needs. The result of these global transformation is the development of two opposing yet potent forces that are set to collide if not understood–"Jihad versus McWorld." In an article by the same title (18), Benjamin R. Barber sees these two forces, "the two axial principles of our age–tribalism and globalism," as a threat to the very survival of our planet. Jihad represents narrowly conceived *faiths* against every kind of inter-dependence. McWorld represents the onrush of economic, ecological, *technological* forces that demand integration and uniformity. Jihad is a heterogeneous, centrifugal, fragmenting force pushing for separatism, while McWorld is a homogeneous, centripetal force pushing for uniformitY (19). Religion is the operative factor of the first; technology is that of the second. Both forces are destructive of democracy. Both forces collided on February 26, 1993, with the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City, by Islamic Fundamentalists. It was not coincidental that the World Trade Center was the site chosen for the attack, since it is the symbol of the forces of McWorld.

The significance of all this is that McWorld–led by the United States–and all that it represents in terms of creating a global, politico-technico-economic world market without borders, creates a sameness which seldom recognizes the uniqueness of the other. The result may end up being a global telecommunity, modeled after a Western worldview that does not acknowledge the uniqueness and contribution of smaller nations and groups that have much to contribute, but like small farms absorbed by multinational agribusinesses, end up in historical oblivion. It is this danger that the Jihad-oriented nations–the less developed

nations–seek to avoid, thus their concern with an ethnocentric, nationalism that moves to the other extreme, with an "ethnic cleansing" mindset and methodology.

The result of these socio-political transformations that are creating havoc in our world, is that our world is disintegrating at the very time that it is coming together. The push/pull, centripetal/centrifugal forces of tribalism and globalism are creating what Harold Issacs calls the "paradox" of our time.

> The fragmentation of human society is a pervasive fact in human affairs and always has been. It persists and increases in our own time as part of an ironic, painful, and dangerous paradox: the more global our science and technology, the more tribal our politics; the more universal our system of communications, the less we know what to communicate; the closer we get to other planets, the less able we become to lead a tolerable existence in our own; the more it becomes apparent that human beings cannot decently survive with their separatenesses, the more separate they become. In the face of an ever more urgent need to pool the world's resources and its powers, human society is splitting itself into smaller and smaller fragments (20).

The solution to the paradox lies in maintaining in balanced tension unity in diversity–a process for working together that recognizes and respects diversity, while working for unity. Ichak Adizes, one of the leading management consultants in the world today, regards this as one of the great challenges of leadership today. "The challenge of leadership on any level–individual, family, organization and society–is to change continuously and, nevertheless, always remain together" (21). And how does one do this, change and yet remain together? Adizes suggests that this is done by taking the initiative for change rather than by letting change happen on its own or worse still, by seeking to avoid change.

> The false assumption is that the way to prevent a system from falling apart is to prevent change. That is tantamount to committing suicide. It is the ultimate "falling apart." In other words, if you do not assume responsibility for breaking the system the way you want it broken and then intgegrating it to a better plateau, it will break by itself to a worse plateau. So inaction does not save you; it gives the power of your demise to outside forces. The way to remain healthy is to take charge of your destiny by changing that which needs to be changed (22).

Thus Adizes concludes that "the role of leadership is not to prevent the system from falling apart. On the contrary, it is to lead change that causes the system to fall apart and then to reintegrate it into a new whole" (23).

As our society has changed from an Industrial Society concerned with nationalism and uniformity, to an Information Society concerned with internationalism and diversity, on the way to the Global Society of the 21st century concerned with the environment and interconnectedness, the ethnic make-up of society as well as of the church has also changed. This ferment of change, brought about by the "new wine" of multiculturalism, is putting pressure on the old "wineskin" structures of the church and of ministry. And unless these old brittle structures are willing to make the necessary changes, the result will be social spillage–protests, disturbances, apathy, drop in financial support, and a voting with the feet as people seek alternatives to spirituality elsewhere. Look around at the world today, and everywhere one looks one will see the new wine of multiculturalism, the ferment of change and the resulting socio-political spillage–the demise of the Soviet Union, the end of apartheid in South Africa, the conflicts in the Middle East, violence in our cities, social ferment in college campuses, and demographic changes in churches. *The number one problem confronting world society today is the problem of racial and cultural insensitivity– the new wine of racial/ethnic ferment in conflict with the old wineskins of intolerance.*

Long ago Jesus gave us a most important principle which we have yet to put to practice–the principle of new wine in new wineskins. "No one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins" (Luke 5:37,38). A new age demands new methods and new structures, for the ferment of change cannot be contained in the old structures, but will burst these. It is the old problem of "new wine in old wineskins." This truism of Jesus is so clear that one wonders how people throughout the ages can continue making the same old mistakes in the face of inevitable change. Yet Jesus Himself gave us the reason why people continue making the same perennial mistake. In the very next breath, He declared, "No one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, 'The old is better'" (vs. 39). What He is telling us here is that even in the face of inevitable change, no one really wants to change; people still prefer the old. The bigots would rather see spillage than change their self-preserved, sacro-sanct, social structures. They will woof, woof, while the caravan of change moves on. When change is inevitable, they desire that change which will not necessarily change the old structures. The result is a lot of fine rhetoric, but slow to change, because the concern is with reformation not revolution.
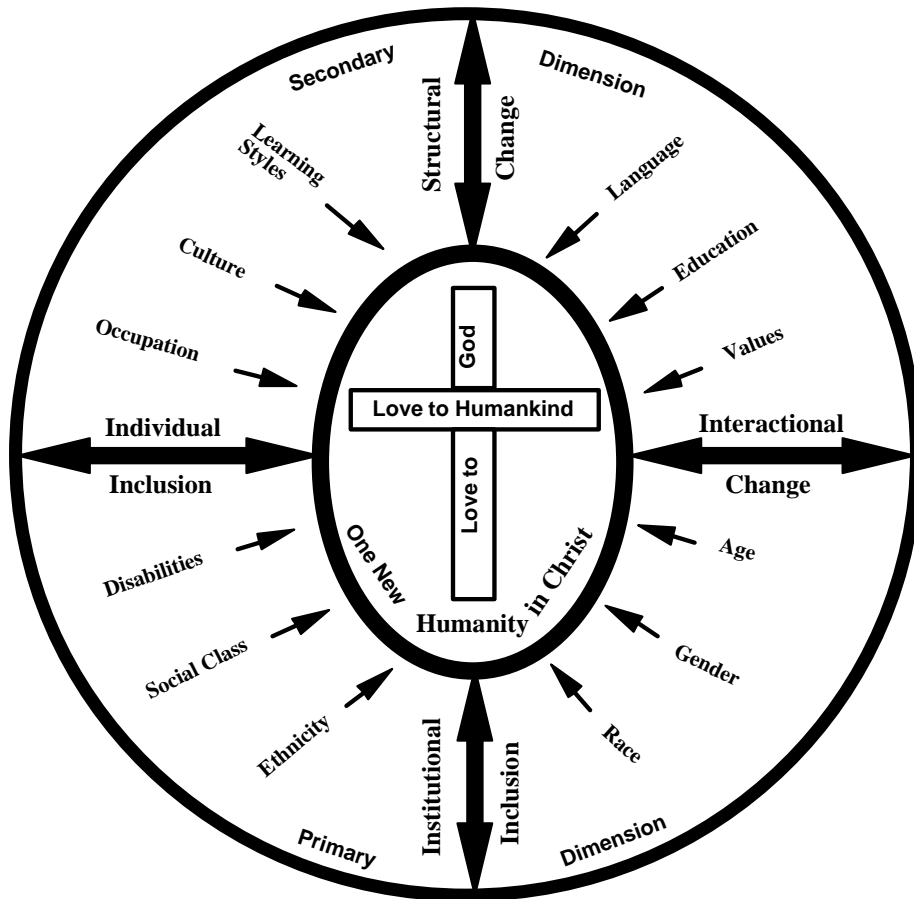
Unity In Diversity In Christ:

What's the solution to conflict arising out of diversity? Well first of all, a definition of diversity is in order before a solution can be attempted. Diversity refers to the biological, cultural, physical and socio-economic differences (such as race/ethnicity, age, gender, disabilities, socioeconomic, education, and values) that people bring to the church body, which have the potential of giving rise to conflicts, but when managed well can result in a synergetic unity in diversity,

where the effect of *all working together* is greater than the sum total of all the parts working independently. We have always had differences, but not diversity. Diversity is the structural response to the differences that people bring to an organization. This is what makes a church "multicultural"–a structural response. Without such a response, one merely has a "multiethnic" church. Failure to have a systemic response can result in conflict, as Coser has made clear.

Thus, Lewis Coser continues, "Such a coalition, if it is not to fall apart, must attempt to keep close to the purposes for which it was formed" (24). And what purposes are these? For the nation these are the major values of America, found in our Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, which spell out our purpose for existence as a nation: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all [persons] are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these, are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." For the church, the solution is found in the essence of the Gospel– *inclusiveness*– oneness with God and oneness with each other. The central dynamic which must guide the church through the uncharted waters of change is the essence of the Gospel, "unity in diversity in Christ".

"Unity in diversity in Christ" is an expression of *The Principle of Inclusiveness– Since we are one with God, we are also one with each other, equal before both* (John 17:23; Acts 10; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:14-22). In the past diversity has been managed quite well, but for purposes of *exclusion,* at the both individual and the institutional dimensions. Look how well Hitler's Third Reich managed diversity for exclusion at the cost of 11 million deaths. Today, multicultural ministry, as the frontier of mission for the 21st century, is demanding a new paradigm or model, one of *inclusion.* This Principle of Inclusiveness gives rise to a new paradigm or model, The Christ-Centered Model of Diversity in Christian Unity (See Graphic), which serves as the model for multicultural ministry (25).

A CHRIST-CENTERED MODEL OF
DIVERSITY IN CHRISTIAN UNITY

Secondary
Dimension
Structural
Change
Learning Styles
Language
Culture
Education
Occupation
Values
God
Love to Humankind
Individual
Interactional
Inclusion
Change
Love to
Age
One New
Disabilities
Humanity in Christ
Social Class
Humanity
Gender
Ethnicity
Race
Institutional
Inclusion
Primary
Dimension

Unity in Diversity in Christ

* * * * *

**"Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we
approach the center, the closer we shall come together."**

—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages,* Vol. 1:259

This model [26] has nine key features basic to the removal of ethnic, gender and race balkanization, resulting in inclusiveness:

1.   *Illustrates Inclusiveness*
The proposed model illustrates the new paradigm of inclusiveness.

2.   *Centers on Christ*

The model centers on the cross of Jesus Christ as that which not only draws all people (John 12:32), but is the foundation on which all find a oneness in Christ (Galatians 3:28).

3.   *Supports a Bifocal Vision*
The inner graphic is an ellipse with two foci giving us a bifocal vision—love to God and love to humankind. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:34-40). It is only as we love God supremely that we will be able to love each other impartially (James 2:8-13; 1 John 4:19-21).

4.   *Clarifies Relationships*
The model illustrates God's action of breaking down the "dividing wall" of hostility between groups and creating "one new humanity" in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22).

5.   *Operates on Two Dimensions*
The model operates on two dimensions of change: The Horizontal—the individual interactional change dimension (embracing and valuing diversity); and The Vertical—the institutional structural change dimension (harnessing and empowering diversity).

6.   *Values the Two Dimensions of Diversity*
Diversity has two dimensions the *primary* (mainly biological, usually visible: age, gender, race, ethnicity, social class, disabilities), and the *secondary* (sociocultural, usually invisible: language, education, values, occupation, culture, learning styles, etc.), that people bring to an organization, which have the potential of giving rise to conflicts, but when managed well can result in a synergetic unity, where the effect of *all working together* is greater than the sum total of all the parts working independently.

7.   *Illustrates Koinonia*
This vision or paradigm will give rise to a Christian fellowship (koinonia) and oneness found in the Early Church, resulting in the emergence of community, symbolized by the outer circle.. It is here where our differences—racial, ethnic, cultural, biological, physical, and social—that normally divide us in society, find the level ground of the cross in a spirit and behavior of equality, which results in a "new humanity in Christ."

8.   *Symbolizes Mission*
The arrows reaching out from the center and back again, are symbolic of our mission to the world to bring people into the fold of fellowship, the church.

9.   *Reflects the Gospel*
The end result of this model is a reflection of the Gospel in a church fellowship that reflects the unity Jesus prayed for in the Garden. This unity in diversity will reveal to the world a correct picture of God, as a loving, carrying, compassionate Friend, the God of all nations (John 17).

Ellen G. White concurs: "The secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ. The reason for all division, discord, and difference is found in separation from Christ. *Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the center, the closer we shall come together*" (27).

This Christ-Centered Model of Diversity in Christian Unity has at its heart two basic goals. The first is: To create a church body that transcends all social barriers of age, class, culture, disabilities, ethnicity, gender, race, etc., and reflects the love and oneness of a "new humanity" in Christ, while respecting differences. The second goal is: To develop an inclusive mindset and culture within the church that recognizes, respects, and values diversity in Christian unity as *integral* to the Gospel. The church needs to provide training and indoctrination in diversity in Christian unity at all levels of church life for its various entities, in the same manner people are indoctrinated and trained on the Doctrine of the Sabbath and proper Sabbath observance. In fact the principle of diversity in Christian unity should be taught as a "testing truth" doctrine in the public and personal areas of church life and evangelism. Instruction in diversity in Christian unity should also be integral to the curriculum of all educational entities in the church, from kindergarten to graduate education. Such action will go a long way in lessening much of the present conflict throughout the world field.

The key dynamic for an effective multicultural ministry is to keep these two dimensions of "unity in diversity" in balanced tension. This is only possible "in Christ" (Galatians 3:28), for it is "in Christ" where the two estranged parties are reconciled into one through the destruction of exclusive structures (Ephesians 2:13-19). It is only "in Christ" where the two dynamic dimensions of "unity in diversity" are maintained in balanced tension, without erring to either side. Erring on the side of unity results in uniformity and sameness at the expense of our human uniqueness and distinctiveness. Erring on the side of diversity magnifies differences and separation at the expense of our common, shared humanity. Unity is not synonymous with uniformity, neither is diversity synonymous with separation. The solution to the tension is to respect and value diversity while working for unity, otherwise exclusion is the result. Thus the strength of the church lies in unity in diversity in Christ.

TWO EXTREMES TO AVOID IN HUMAN RELATIONS

| Similarities		Differences
"	**+**	"Nothing in Common"
McWorld		Jihad
Uniformity	UNITY IN DIVERSITY	Separation
Exclusion	Inclusion	Exclusion
←	→ ←	→

* * * * *

Two extremes must be avoided. The first is similarities where no differences between humans and cultures are recognized. This is the direction of McWorld resulting in uniformity. But at whose expense? In the end it ends up being exclusive. The other extreme is differences, where because of sociocultural differences, the different groups are regarded as having nothing in common. This is the direction of Jihad, resulting in separation. But like the other, this one is also exclusive. The solution lies in the center, focused on the cross, where the ground is level and where unity is desired while valuing and respecting diversity. The result is inclusion.

These are the values that multiculturalism elicits and seeks to protect and enhance. Our other values, such as racism, sexism, intolerance, xenophobia, must be discarded, as they destroy what is best and admired most of the Gospel, the values of freedom, equality, justice and inclusiveness.

What Makes a Church Multicultural?

The mere presence of an ethnically and racially membership, due to legal, moral or social imperatives, does not make a church multicultural This is merely being concerned with affirmative action. The church and its various institutions and organizations have to get beyond "affirmative action" (28). This was the main accomplishment of the 1960s and 70s, giving people access to the system. In the 1980s the concern was with "valuing differences**."** In the 1990s the push is for "managing diversity." But in the 21st century the focus of the church's behavior will be on "living diversity" (see graphic, The Process of Change).

THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Affirmative Action	Valuing Differences	Managing Diversity	Living Diversity
1960s and 70s	1980s	1990s	2000s
→	→	→	→
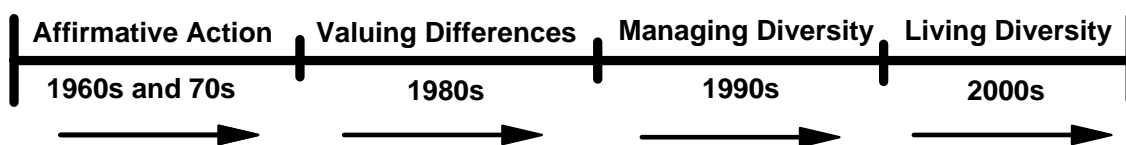
Many churches and organizations, however, haven't even begun to address affirmative action, much less focus on living diversity. However, the mere presence of a number of ethnically diverse people sitting in the pews does not make a church multicultural. All that this may simply represent is that people have gained access to the church—they've gotten through the front door. But if all a church does is to give access, then people may leave just as quickly out the back door.

Neither is it merely a concern for understanding, respecting, valuing and celebrating the differences among the various groups in a congregation. Valuing diversity is important, as it may engender an awareness of and a sensitivity to differences, but it does not necessarily translate into structural changes.

What makes a church multicultural is whether or not its "seven Ps,"—*perspectives, policies, purposes, programs, personnel, practices, and power*—implement four imperatives: (1) reflect the heterogeneity of the organization—the dynamic of Affirmative Action; (2) are sensitive to the needs of the various groups—the dynamic of Valuing Differences; (3) incorporate their contributions to the overall mission of the organization—the dynamic of Managing Diversity; and, finally, (4) create a cultural and social ambiance that is inclusive and empowers all groups—the dynamic of Living Diversity.

In other words, at the heart of what makes a church multicultural lies managing diversity—the proper management of the diversity in an organization for the empowerment of all groups, which includes changing mindsets as well as the underlying culture of an organization, especially if this culture is what is impeding change, in order for the church to begin *living diversity* so as to more effectively accomplish its mission. This is what makes a church multicultural. The point behind this is that diversity in Christian unity needs to be the basic premise of *all* that is done in the church.

How does one go about this? Part two of this article presents a workable plan to move one from model to modeling. This is where the seven "Ps"—Perspectives, Policies, Purposes, Programs, Personnel, Practices, and Power—come into play, because the rapid changes taking place in society are forcing institutions to move away from a lethargic business-as-usual, reactive mindset, to a proactive one that anticipates and implements change.

Perspectives refers to "vision," without which people as well as organizations perish (Proverbs 29:18). What is "vision"? Vision is the bifocal ability to see what lies ahead (farsightedness), as well as the various impediments in the present (nearsightedness), and how to avoid them in order to arrive at the future. It must be bifocal, for focus on the future at the expense of the present, or vice versa, will result in loss and in a detour in the mission of the organization.

This sense of vision, will lead to appropriate *Policies,* the guarantees that make known the intents of the institution. Policies give rise to *Purposes,* the *raision d' etre* of the organization. Purposes result in *Programs* that put in action what the institution is all about. But effective programs cannot be run without the right *Personnel,* reflective of the diversity in the organization. Then there is *Practices,* the actual conduct of the company, in both its staff and administration. And finally *Power,* who has it, who controls it, who has access to it, and who is left out.

Of these seven Ps, the most important one is the sixth one, "practices." An institution such as the church may have the best perspectives, policies, programs, and personnel, but these are only cosmetic until practiced. And it only takes a small number of personnel who, in their practice, refuse to go along with a program or fail to implement policy, for an otherwise well designed plan to be sabotaged. As the saying goes in Spanish, *"Podemos destruir con nuestros pies lo que construimos con nuestras manos"*— "we can destroy with our feet what we build with our hands."

These seven "Ps" have to alter present structures and cultures, especially if these are exclusive and do not benefit everyone in the organization or society. Why? Karl Mannheim, the renowned German sociologist, gives us the reason [29].

> To live consistently, in the light of Christian brotherly love, in a society which is not organized on the same principle is impossible. The individual in his personal conduct is always compelled—in so far as he does not resort to breaking up the existing social structure—to fall short of his own nobler motives.

This is why structural change—a new paradigm of inclusion—is necessary, because otherwise it will be impossible to live out the claims of the gospel beyond the spiritual dimensions, in the behavioral realm of day-to-day life.

What is at issue in multiculturalism is not just sensitivity to other cultures and racial/ethnic groups that are marginal to the dominant culture, but an entire *paradigm shift*—a different mindset. This gives rise to a whole new way of seeing the world, as inclusive, and brings a change in institutional and societal structures, so as to create an environment (local, national and global) which is inclusive of all groups, is safe for differences and where everyone benefits. The basic measure in of how well we are managing diversity is this: "If when all is said and done, you look around and notice that everyone looks [and thinks] like you, you have done it wrong!" [30].

Managing diversity is an on-going process that unleashes the various talents and capabilities which a diverse population bring to an organization, community or society, so as to create a wholesome, inclusive environment, that is safe for differences, enables people to reject rejection, celebrates diversity, and

maximizes the full potential of all, in a cultural context where everyone benefits. Multiculturalism, as the art of managing diversity, is an *inclusive* process where no one is left out. Diversity, in its essence, is a "safeguard against idolatry" [31]. It prevents one group from serving as the norm for all other groups. Therefore, one of the dangers that must be avoided in grasping a proper understanding of multiculturalism is *bashism.* Bashism is the tendency to verbally and/or physically attack another person or group based solely on the negative meaning given to group membership—due to biological, cultural, political or socioeconomic differences (such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, political party, class, education, values, religious affiliation or sexual orientation), without regard for the individual. The motivating factor for bashism is fear, arising out of ignorance of the other.

One of the backwashes of a narrow view of multiculturalism, especially as espoused by some women and persons of color, is what I call "white maleism." White Maleism is the tendency of minority groups to blame white males for most of the social evil in the world today, especially as it relates to sexism and racism, and view them as selfish, ruthless, unrepentant and unredeemable, and, as a consequence, refuse to recognize and accept the contribution that many white males have made, continue to make, and desire to make, to remove oppression.

While much of oppression today has been the historical by-product of the abuse of power by white males, not much is gained in terms of creating an inclusive, caring, compassionate church and society, by reversing the process and excluding many white males who have been instrumental in creating the "house of abundance" and structures of inclusion. Some of us persons of color would not be where we are today if it were not for culturally, politically and morally concerned white males who opened institutional doors, made decisions, implemented policies, and stood in the breach to bridge the gulf of intolerance. The effective management of diversity includes, empowers and benefits all persons concerned, whites included.

But some are threatened by this inclusive process, and may woof, woof change. Why? Because they see multiculturalism as having to give up power in order to make room on the stage of life for new characters in the play. Unfortunately, the beaches of time are strewn with wreckage from the many ships of Christians that set sail for ports unknown in search of power, but who ran into the gale winds of greed and the coral reefs of corruption, and ended their journey drowning in seas of racial despair. Life is a journey we Christians have to take. The going may not be smooth, the set course will not always take us through sunny, tropical waters, and the crew will not always be harmonious. Once in a while the storms at sea may deviate us from our desired destination into the heavenly port. But how one runs the good ship the Church, how one treats the crew, and how one maintains the course on through to the 21st century, will determine a successful docking at the heavenly port in the days ahead or a shipwreck on the beaches of time in the here and now.

Multicultural ministry is the new frontier of ministry for the church into the 21st century. It is a ministry that reflects the Gospel, which serves as the compass that enables us to become true Christians and at the same time *world citizens* — a people who are able to transcend their own cultural, socio-political, gender and religious reality, and identify with humankind throughout the world, at all levels of human need. They are a *transcending* people who are not limited by the usual sociocultural boundaries, and whose operating life-principle is *compassion.* This is the principle that models our conduct, and is a reflection of the Gospel that will guide us into our heavenly port. May the church have the courage to enter this new frontier.

References:

*Caleb Rosado is Professor of Urban Studies and Director of the MA in Urban Studies in Community Development at Eastern University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He received his doctorate in sociology from Northwestern University and has been an international consultant on multiculturalism and issues of diversity to universities, corporations, government agencies, school districts and churches since 1978. In 1979 he founded one of the first truly multicultural churches in the United States, the All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan, with some 65 different ethnic groups comprising the membership. This article was originally written in 1996. Revised in 2006.

[1] An earlier more modified and reduced version of this article was published in *Spectrum,* The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums, April 1994, Vol. 23:5, pp. 27-34.

[2] Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), p. 198.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, all the Scriptures cited are from the New Revised Standard Version.

[4] José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1932).

[5] Caleb Rosado, "Multiculturalism: A Challenge For the Church," *Journal of Music Ministry,* 16:1, January-March 1989.

[6] Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Men and Women in Conversation* (New York: Morrow, 1990).

[7] Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice,* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1996), p. 212.

[8] See C. Peter Wagner, *Our Kind of People* (Atlanta: John Know Press, 1979).

[9] Samuel Betances.

[10] This definition is adapted from Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).

[11] Eduardo Seda Bonilla, "Ethnic Studies and Cultural Pluralism," in *The Rican,* Fall 1971, pp. 56-65.

[12] Robert Blauner, "Colonized and Immigrant Minorities," from *Racial Oppression in America,* (1972).

[13] Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict.* (New York: The Free Press, 1956), p. 144.

[14] Max DePree, *Leadership Is an Art* (New York: 1989).

[15] Steve Wilstein, "Getting What It Takes To Win," Hemispheres, June 1994.

[16] Timothy J. O'Leary and David Levinson, editors, *Encyclopedia of World Cultures, Volume 1: North America.* Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., 1991, p. xvii.

[17] José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses.* (New York: Mentor Books, 1932), p. 136.

[18] Benjamin Barber, "Jihad Versus McWorld," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1992).

[19] For a fuller explanation of the implications of these forces to diversity see Samuel P. Oliner and Caleb Rosado, "Author's Introduction" of the Special Issue, "Race, Gender & Ethnicity: Global Perspectives," of the *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations,* 1993, Vol. 19:2. The concept "Jihad" is used in this article in a generic sense to describe groups opposed to change, and should in no way be regarded as a perjorative term toward Islam.

[20] Harold Isaacs, *Idols of the Tribe,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 2.

[21] Ichak Adizes, *Managing Corporate Lifestyles,* NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1999, p. 9

[22] Adizes, p. 9.

[23] Adizes, p. 9.

[24] Coser, p., 144.

[25] The implications of this model for the world church were presented in a previous article by Caleb Rosado, "United in Christ: Diversity and the Mission of the Church," *Adventist Review,* June 22, 1995, pp. 8-12.

[26] This model is primarily the work of Caleb Rosado with input from members of the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee of the NAD Multicultural Commission of the Office of Human Relations, consisting of: Robert Dale, Chair, Rosa Banks, secretary, Delbert Baker, Bj Christiansen, Ramona Pérez Greek and Caleb Rosado.

[27] Ellen G. White, *Selected Message, Vol. 1* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1958) p. 259.

[28] By affirmative action I mean social policies encouraging favorable treatment of socially disadvantaged minority groups, especially in employment, education, and housing, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, in order to reverse historical trends of discrimination and to create equality of opportunity. For a discussion of affirmative action from a Christian perspective, see two articles by Caleb Rosado, "Affirmative Action and the Gospel," *Message,* July-August 1995, and "God's Affirmative Justice,"*Christianity Today,* November 1995; and "Affirmative Action: Time for Change?" *Latino Studies Journal,* Vol. 8, No. 3, Fall 1997.

[29] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1936), p. 195.

[30] Samuel Betances, "Harness the Rainbow: Diversity and the Bottom Line," 1992 video lecture presentation. Distributed by United Training Media, 6633 W. Howard Street, P. O. Box 48718, Niles, IL 60714-0718.

[31] Brian Wren, "What Language Shall I Borrow? Worship: Language & Gender." Lecture given at The Second International Conference on Adventist Worship, April 7-10, 1993, La Sierra University.