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ONE BODY WITH MANY MEMBERS:
CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE IN DIVERSIFYING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

A DISSERTATION IN THE PRACTICE OF MINISTRY
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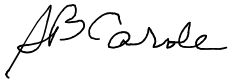
We, the undersigned, determined that this dissertation has met the academic requirements and standards of Nazarene Theological Seminary for the Doctor of Ministry program.



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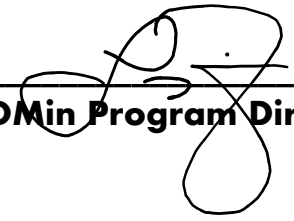

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[1] 1 Cor. 12:26.

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[2] James 1:17.

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One Body with Many Members:
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This dissertation intends to address the fragmentation that exists within the church along racial and ethnic lines by proposing a holistic discipleship model that incorporates Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a spiritual practice. Such a model can produce Christlike disciples that have a greater understanding of the global body of Christ. The vast majority of churches in the U.S. are ethnically homogeneous, yet local communities, particularly communities in Christian higher education, are becoming increasingly diverse. CQ aims to help individuals navigate a globalized and diversifying world in ways that cultivate honor and respect for cultural difference. So often, we attach cross-cultural learning only to those with a specific ministry calling. Reimagining cross-cultural learning as an expansion of discipleship detaches it from missional calling and attaches it to our membership and identity in the global church. CQ as a spiritual practice for every Christian, I will argue, can offer us a way forward towards unity in the church.

CHAPTER 1:
THAT THEY MAY BECOME COMPLETELY ONE

Introduction

The Book of Revelation offers beautiful imagery of a "multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all the tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" worshiping God.[3] This is a heavenly image of God's people—diverse, global, united, and existing as one. Our earthly reality is far from that image as Christian communities, particularly in the United States, are fragmented with ethnically homogenous congregations and individual-focused discipleship models. We have been taught to pray, "Your Kingdom come…Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."[4] This future vision has been revealed to us so that we can actively live out this heavenly reality in the present.

Currently, American congregations are navigating the effects of an increasingly globalized world, necessitating discipleship models that cultivate cross-cultural understanding. Our previous patterns of homogeneity must be abandoned and replaced with a more wholistic and expanded framework of discipleship that cultivates cultural understanding. To address this fragmentation, I would like to propose Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a spiritual practice, a globally-recognized way of assessing and improving effectiveness in diverse situations that is both measurable and cultivates honor and respect for cultural difference. CQ can offer a way forward that aligns with following Christ faithfully while expanding our discipleship through greater cross-cultural understanding among the diverse and global membership of the body of Christ. Cross-cultural understanding will strengthen our global church identity and help guide us toward that heavenly image of a united body with many diverse members.

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[3] Rev. 7:9-11.
[4] Matt. 6:10.

A Fragmented Body

There are indications of a need for the church to ascertain how to navigate cultural difference. The National Congregations Study (NCS) over the years has provided us with a comprehensive portrait of the state of American congregations. In 1998, the first NCS was conducted and concluded that 90 percent of American congregations are made up of at least 90 percent of people of the same race.[5] This study indicated an overwhelming consensus that American Christians, no matter their ethnic background, prefer to worship and be discipled in spaces of familiarity. In response to this research, authors Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith claim that "rather than attributing this congregational homogeneity to white prejudice, or even to the need of minority groups to create places of refuge from the dominant society, we argue that in the face of social and religious pluralism, the organization of American religion powerfully drives religious groups toward internal similarity."[6] Internal similarity and homogeneity create distinctions and boundaries from other groups through shared values and identities, often used as tools for church growth.

Homogeneity Normalized and Justified

The acceptability of homogenous congregations has been argued most notably by seminary professor C. Peter Wagner in what he calls the "homogenous units principle." His argument consists of a belief that ethnic and racial groups are amoral in and of themselves. People prefer to worship in their cultural groups. Congregations composed of one cultural group experience growth and are more vital, and ultimately, this is acceptable because the primary mission of Christianity is to evangelize.[7] For Wagner, groups must create unique collective

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[5] Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 135-136.

[6] Ibid., 136.

[7] Ibid., 150.

identities to provide meaning and belonging, which becomes more difficult with heterogeneous groups. Emerson and Smith identify the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination, as an entity that practices the homogenous unit principle.

Twenty years since the first NCS, the most recent NCS reported that American congregations have become more ethnically diverse. "In 1998, only 14% of people attended a congregation in which no ethnic group constituted at least 80% of regular adult attendees. In 2018-19, 25% of people attended such a mixed congregation."[8] The section in this study on race and ethnicity concluded by questioning how this particular form of increasing pluralism might change or not change congregations. Other data reports contend that although American congregations are growing in diversity, unity continues to be the greatest challenge.

The Problem of Diversity as the End Goal

A research study called *Beyond Diversity* compiled by Barna Group notes that multiracial churches often were predominately white churches aiming for a greater diversity of race and ethnicity in their congregations. These churches' existing norms, traditions, preferences, and structures remain while the demographics of the congregation change with an increase of congregants of color. "This invitation often comes with the expectation, explicit or implicit, that people of color also assimilate or fit in by embracing songs, styles, messages, structures, and communities which may be very different from those in their own racial and ethnic culture."[9] This study reports more than one quarter (27%) feel pressured to give up part of their racial or ethnic identity in a multiracial church.[10] Assimilation often results in people of color hiding cultural values and norms to be accepted by the majority culture. The practice of hiding cultural

[8] Mark Chavez, Joseph Roso, Anna Holleman, and Mary Hawkins, *Congregations in 21st Century America: National Congregations Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University, Department of Sociology, 2021), 44.
[9] Barna Group, *Beyond Diversity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2021), 29.
[10] Ibid., 27.

values and norms to be accepted is called "code-switching," presenting in certain ways that belie identity and culture to belong.

Furthermore, an implicit or explicit expectation of assimilation centers church practices and culture around White normativity rather than the pursuit of meaningful steps toward unity. Although diverse gatherings in common worship spaces are increasing, fragmentation continues because existing formational practices are not equipping members to receive counterparts who are culturally and ethnically different in the fullness of their identities. Rather than engaging in formational practices of cross-cultural learning, the church has largely chosen to minimize the cultural identities of people of color through unhelpful ideologies.

Ideologies used by the church, such as *colorblindness,* have minimized the cultural identities of Christians of color. Daniel Hill offers the following definition stating, "Colorblindness minimizes the racial-cultural heritage of a person and promotes a culturally neutral approach that sees people independent of their heritage."[11] This ideology has been a solution circulating in Christian contexts to respond to race relations. However, this ideology ignores cultural and ethnic identity and releases the responsibility to learn and understand the cultures of others. Rather than seeing others who are different as equal, this ideology negates different cultural identities. Hill argues that the ideology of colorblindness is justified by theological truths such as being equals and one in Christ through faith. This creates a belief that our belonging to the family of God somehow erases cultural and ethnic identity. The misapplication of theological truths to cultural identity can thwart authentic engagement with those in the body of Christ who are culturally different.

[11] Daniel Hill, *White Awake: An Honest Look at What it Means to be White* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 41.

Discipleship of One: Individualized and Privatized

Another indication of a need for the church to ascertain how to navigate cultural difference is that current discipleship practices foster growth only for individuals. Discipleship practices also must foster the unity of the body. The distinctiveness of the body of Christ is "oneness" within its diverse membership. Christ said, "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me."[12] However, the American value of individualism has subverted discipleship practices, especially in the evangelical church. Emerson and Smith note that contemporary White American evangelicalism is perhaps the strongest carrier of the "free-will individualist" tradition dating back to shortly after the sixteenth-century Reformation.[13] The emphasis on the individual is guided by an evangelical bedrock emphasis on a "personal relationship with Christ" being the only way to salvation and Christian maturity. Social psychologist Christena Cleveland argues that "American Christians have automatically and unknowingly adopted a Western cultural viewpoint on Christian faith that significantly differs from other viewpoints."[14] Cleveland contends this is due to the intertwining of individualism and Western Christianity, which is problematic for the ecclesial unity of the church, particularly cross-cultural interactions among Christians. The Western cultural focus on the individual and a personal relationship leads to discipleship in isolation and, therefore, an independent formation disconnected from culturally different members within the body of Christ.

A recent study on the state of discipleship by *The Navigators* has substantiated the continual emphasis on individualized discipleship in the American church. This study reveals

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[12] John 17:21, NLT.

[13] Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 77.

[14] Christena Cleveland, *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 145.

that "among the nine out ten Christians who say spiritual growth is important (90%), it's notable that more than one-third say they prefer to pursue spiritual growth on their own (37%). Similarly, two in five of all Christian adults consider their spiritual life 'entirely private' (41%)."[15] Limiting the goal of Christian discipleship to a personal, privatized spirituality prohibits an identity grounded in the fullness of the ecclesial community. Individualized discipleship cannot foster an environment of mutuality and belonging among members because existing in and navigating through difference is not a norm in American evangelical discipleship. Discipleship, in the American evangelical context, functions as a life united with Christ yet separated from the oneness with Christ's body. Therefore, when diverse cultural perspectives and theological understandings arise, it is perceived as foreign or "other," resulting in fractures and fragmentation.

Furthermore, discipleship with a central focus on the individual can often negate the unique realities of lived experiences of communities of color. Specifically, in regards to the problem of racism, it limits the capacity to recognize social structures that continue patterns of inequality and acknowledge them as important. This anti-structuralism view is substantiated by the individualist emphasis that "invoking social structures shifts guilt away from the root source—the accountable individual."[16] The evangelical understanding of sin emphasizes personal choice. Because of this understanding, racism is not viewed as a systemic problem but rather a result of poor decisions by individuals. The Barna Group reveals how various ethnic groups understand racism within the church. It reports:

> Three in five white practicing Christians (61%) take an individualized approach to matters of race, saying these issues largely stem from one's own beliefs and prejudices causing them to treat people of other races poorly. Meanwhile, two-thirds of Black

[15] The Navigators, *The State of Discipleship: A Barna Report Produced in Partnership with the Navigators* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2015), 45.

[16] Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 79.

> practicing Christians (67%) agree that the greater danger is racial discrimination that is historically built into our society and institutions. Hispanics are fairly split (49% individual, 44% systemic), and Asian practicing Christians are more likely to believe individual prejudice is the greater problem (59%).[17]

This clearly demonstrates that Christians are divided along racial and ethnic lines on how to approach matters of race. For many in the American church, racism is primarily a heart issue and, in a greater sense, a formational issue for a large portion of American Christians. Racist beliefs and prejudices are learned behaviors and are in contradiction to the Christian faith. However, for others, primarily members of color, racism goes beyond individual causation and is embedded within societal structures and systems. While there is disagreement about the root of the problem of racism, an overwhelming majority would conclude that the stubborn disease of racism persists and remains a current reality, continually attempting to further fracture the oneness of the church.

The problem of ecclesio-communal fragmentation stems from the normalization of congregational homogeneity, which does not allow opportunities for cross-cultural engagement and learning in worship gatherings and discipleship. As noted by the aforementioned Barna Group study, even when congregations become ethnically and racially diverse, cross-cultural learning does not occur because of implicit or explicit expectations to assimilate to the practices of the majority culture. Furthermore, individualized discipleship that focuses on privatized faith cannot produce disciples that are culturally intelligent because the sole emphasis is on a personal relationship with God and not a relationship with God's people, who represent many nations, cultures, and languages. Therefore, discipleship practices that cultivate cross-cultural learning and engagement with the global body of Christ must be considered to address this fragmentation.

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[17] Barna Group, *Beyond Diversity*, 63.

Discipleship of Oneness: Shaped by Christ and His Body

The preceding analysis of the problem of ecclesio-communal fragmentation suggests that the task is to shift the paradigm of discipleship practices that expand beyond individualized faith and towards oneness in the body of Christ founded on cross-cultural learning reflecting the heart of Christ and his followers. At the conclusion of *Divided by Faith,* Emerson and Smith appeal to evangelicals to engage in more serious reflection on race-relation issues in dialogue with educated others. "To address successfully the complexity of American race relations, this evangelical tendency toward quick-minded activism should be modified… Good intentions are not enough. But educated, sacrificial, realistic efforts made in faith across racial lines can help us together toward a more just, equitable, and peaceful society."[18] The defragmentation of the body of Christ necessitates a greater awareness of the complexity of the whole body. Moreover, the body of Christ has members representing many nations, cultures, ethnicities, and languages. Therefore, a new discipleship paradigm that cultivates understanding and honors the uniqueness of each member is necessary to be one body. This means that our ecclesial identity cannot be dominated by one part of the body or the values of Western culture, but it should always exist as a diverse collective unified by God's Spirit of love. Scripture says, "If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body… If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."[19] Therefore, this diverse collective membership must move toward practices with measurable learning outcomes that can lead to a greater understanding of the stories and cultural experiences of its many members.

[18] Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 171-172.
[19] 1 Cor. 12:19-20, 26.

Often, cross-cultural learning is attached to the disciplines of missiology, anthropology, and sociology. Although this is appropriate, it could lead to an understanding that cross-cultural learning is only for those who have a calling to international ministries, such as missions. Cross-cultural learning needs to extend beyond the disciplines of missiology, anthropology, and sociology because of the uniqueness of the global identity of the body of Christ. Therefore, it is vital that the practice of cross-cultural learning extend beyond those who have a missionary calling but rather be a spiritual practice for all members of the global body of Christ. Constant awareness of our global church identity would require learning and engaging in the diverse stories and values of the many members that make up the church in order to have a greater understanding of how we can function as a single body of believers. Becoming truly mindful of the unique experiences and stories of many would lead to greater awareness of the whole.

Addressing the problem of ecclesio-communal fragmentation necessitates a practical, attainable, and measurable solution that will guide the church in innovative and corrective patterns of discipleship, connecting the diverse members of the body of Christ together through practices that embody sacrificial love, grace, and understanding. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a spiritual practice for the church is central not only for cross-cultural understanding but also to shape our discipleship grounded in our global, ecclesial identity. David Livermore explains, "as the world becomes increasingly more connected and accessible, the number of encounters we have with those who are culturally different are growing daily…, therefore, learning how to reach across the chasm of cultural difference with love and respect is becoming an essential competency."[20] CQ has become a way to develop critical skills in greater awareness of others

[20] David A. Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 11.

from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, recognizing that we are living in a rapidly diversifying and globalized world.

Recognizing the trajectory of the increasing ethnic and racial diversity of our communities, this project develops an expanded understanding of discipleship using Cultural Intelligence as a spiritual practice to cultivate understanding among the diverse and global membership within the body of Christ and offer a way forward toward unity in the church. Cultural Intelligence as a spiritual practice is an educated, sacrificial, and realistic effort made in faith across racial lines that can assist the church in developing rhythms of engaging in cultural difference through its four capabilities: CQ Drive (motivation), CQ Knowledge (cognition), CQ Strategy (meta-cognition), and CQ Action (behavior). Each of these capabilities is designed to capacitate people to function in globalized spaces.

First and foremost, this paradigm shift begins with a desire, a *drive* to go beyond the superficial attempts of unity from the past. As a follower of Christ, pastor, University Chaplain of a Christian university overseeing campus ministries and discipleship, and person of color from a Latina/o heritage, my heart aches for the state of the church in the U.S. The church does not reflect "one body with many members" and has yet to learn to exist in unity within its diversity. Moving towards the biblical vision of unity among "every nation and tribe" requires the Spirit's transformative power to grow in Christlike humility and grace towards one another as we engage in cultural difference. Engaging in the *knowledge* of cultural difference must, therefore, include an openness to examine and learn from theologies birthed by the experience of communities of color, particularly in the American church. Examining diverse perspectives unique to communities of color impacts our *strategy* of implementing expanded spiritual practices, our vision of God, and our ecclesial discipleship. Ultimately, it confronts the current understanding

of discipleship and spiritual practices and presses us towards *action* through the ways we are shaped to live more fully in the image of Christ.

Our understanding of the body of Christ will need to be examined through a biblical, theological, and ecclesiological lens to address why cultural intelligence as a spiritual practice is necessary. Examining the body of Christ through these lenses is necessary because it creates accountability for our claims as a global church. This examination will also identify the void of discipleship practices that cultivate unity across cultures, races, and ethnicities. Unity and reciprocity with Christ and Christ's body through the intentional practice of Cultural Intelligence will teach us to habitually learn from one another. It will teach us the heart of Christ for people from every ethnicity and culture and Christ's desire for oneness among his followers. Furthermore, actively engaging in the spiritual practice of cultural intelligence will position Christ-followers in a posture of humility and openness of heart, allowing more receptivity to the Holy Spirit's transformative power.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified the reasons for ecclesio-communal fragmentation in the American church. It commenced with the normalization of ethnic homogeneity of congregations while also pointing to an increase in multiracial congregations over the past twenty years. This increase in ethnic and racial diversity in congregations has also revealed the minimization of cultural and ethnic identity among people of color through explicit or implicit expectations of the majority culture and practices. This minimization of cultural identity along with a privatized, individualized discipleship creates an ecclesial environment where members are not being shaped to understand and belong within the global body of Christ. Because of these reasons, cultural intelligence becoming more than a cross-cultural tool for the preparation of a few

members called into missions, but rather a spiritual practice for all members as a means toward ecclesial unity is necessary. Cultural intelligence as a spiritual practice will help defragment the cultural and ethnic divides by developing the skills of cross-cultural learning, understanding, honor, and proximity in all members in ways that shape us more in the likeness of Christ and brings us closer to his desire of oneness for the church.

The following chapter will begin by examining the fragmentation of the American church and its educational institutions along racial and ethnic lines from its inception through the present. The church's complicated history with colonization, slavery, segregation, and its continued patterns of homogeneity has shaped race relations in American Christianity. Throughout this history, theological understandings emerged shaped by the cultural experiences of communities of color, particularly in Black and Indigenous communities. These unique theological viewpoints by prominent theologians of color emerged in protest to White Christians who were silent to the injustices towards communities of color and as a reclamation of cultural identity expressed in theology, faith, and discipleship. Lastly, this chapter will further address various ways the church has historically addressed cultural difference and explore the ways cultural intelligence can be expanded beyond missiology into discipleship. Looking toward the past helps assess why current ethnic and racial fragmentation exists and identify what changes are necessary for a more unified church moving forward.

CHAPTER 2:
RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE CHURCH'S FRAGMENTATION

Introduction

The previous chapter identified the current reality of the American church's existence in racial and ethnic homogeneity. The American cultural value of individualism has informed discipleship practices reinforcing the church's fragmented state. The present chapter offers an overview of this fragmentation throughout the history of the American church and how it has been addressed. In the same manner that Western culture shaped theology and discipleship in American evangelicalism, race relations have also shaped the church and its educational institutions. The church's engagement with race relations in the United States saw the emergence of various theological and ecclesiological understandings and practices through the lens of culture.

Throughout the history of the American church, diverse theological understandings have derived from the experiences of people of color. Theologies, such as Black Liberation theology and Indigenous theology, emerged as a way to resist scriptural and theological misapplications causing harm to their communities. These also gave a voice to communities whose stories and narratives had been distorted and faced the threat of erasure. Although some in theological and ministry circles are dismissive of these perspectives, there is an opportunity for a greater understanding of Christ and Christ's body as a global and multicultural entity.

This chapter will highlight key voices in areas of race relations, theological frameworks shaping communities of color in the U.S., and sociological and ecclesial methods of addressing cultural difference in the American church. This literature review is presented with the goal of deeper examination and understanding of the gaps in our discipleship and spiritual practices that Cultural Intelligence (CQ) can help address. Furthermore, it is presented in a posture connected

to the first two CQ capabilities, *drive* and *knowledge*, which will be explored in the following chapters. The core of these capabilities is a willingness to understand the experiences of those from different cultures and ethnicities. Through the Spirit's guidance and power, this practice can guide us toward greater unity in the body of Christ.

Race Relations and the Church

The following section will highlight the parallel realities of race relations and the church in the United States. Understanding the parallel realities of race relations and the church requires a wholistic viewpoint that includes historical, sociological, and psychological lenses. Identifying the events, patterns, and rationale within this historical survey is essential in the practice of cultural intelligence. This section will increase drive and knowledge that makes strategy and action attainable. This historical survey will highlight the church's response through significant historical markers such as the age of slavery, the beginnings of ethnically homogenous congregations, and the civil rights era. Confronting and confessing how the church's actions have been complicit in divisions along racial and ethnic lines can lead the church to take corrective steps towards unity.

Key Voices of Race Relations and the Church

The following authors and researchers are key voices in the aforementioned fields of study. The first is Jemar Tisby, author of *The Color of Compromise: The Truth About the American Church's Complicity in Racism*. Tisby offers a historical account of race in America, highlighting how the church has responded to the realities of racism and segregation throughout history. He provides an in-depth diagnosis of racial division in the American church and offers ways forward that are equitable and inclusive. Tisby's current book, *How to Fight Racism,* provides a practical framework to confront racism and journey towards unity in the midst of

diversity. Through the simple model of "the ARC of racial justice," Tisby points out that awareness, relationships, and commitment are needed to counter racist strategies of dehumanization and division effectively.

Key voices in the evangelical community that offer insight through a sociological lens about the church's response to race relations are Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, co-authors of *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America.* In this book, Emerson and Smith write a brief historical account of the church's response to racial tensions while providing data gathered from a nationwide survey and face-to-face interviews. The authors contend that the evangelical movement's emphasis on individualism, free will, and personal relationships makes invisible the pervasive injustice that perpetuates racial inequality. Emerson was also a principal researcher in a study conducted by the Barna Group in 2021 called *Beyond Diversity.* This study reveals that "the Church is divided about the character and significance of racial history, the realities and effects of contemporary racial discrimination and how and in what form the Church should work to address inequalities, among many other issues."[21] It identifies that those outside of the church are more unified on issues of race than those in the church. As a result, the body of Christ is fragmented and in need of renewal.

In addition to these voices, other authors are worth noting in this conversation about the church's response to race relations. Christena Cleveland, a social psychologist, offers us a unique perspective as a researcher who studies individuals and how they are affected by social situations. In her book *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart*, Cleveland shares how differences and biases about the other are affected by who we are as the church. Cleveland offers us tools that help us dismantle false categories and other obstacles that

[21] Barna Group, *Beyond Diversity*, 20.

get in the way of unity. The other is George Yancey, the author of *Neither Jew Nor Gentile: Exploring Issues of Racial Diversity on Protestant College Campuses.* Yancey writes on issues of diversity and diversity initiatives within predominantly White Protestant colleges and how they are perceived by racial and ethnic majority students and minority students. Although he is writing as a researcher outside of the Christian higher education as a professor from the University of North Texas, Yancey presents survey data on the application of diversity initiatives by a wide variety of Protestant colleges. Yancey also demonstrates the difficulties these institutions may face because of the history and patterns of racial homogeneity of sponsoring denominations. These findings can offer insight into the dissonance on Christian college campuses, where students engage with diverse perspectives of faith, culture, and society. It is essential to examine Christian colleges because of their unique nature as denominationally sponsored academic entities.

Spiritual Dissonance in the Age of Slavery

Tisby commences his analysis of the history of race relations and the church, particularly among Black and White people, before the formal beginning of the new American nation. Tisby begins this historical analysis in 1619, marking the first arrival of people from countries of the African continent transported to the British colonies as enslaved people. By the time the U.S. claimed independence from Britain, slavery was legal in all thirteen colonies. However, from the inception of slavery in the land that would become the U.S., there has been an apparent "spiritual dissonance" in the hearts of those within the Christian church. Many people who were enslaved and transported from African countries to the Americas were baptized by European missionaries. European missionaries worked hard to convince slave owners that people of color were not "mere beasts without souls."

Nevertheless, slave owners feared that slaves would demand emancipation once they became Christian. As a result, according to Tisby, many preachers carefully crafted messages that maintained the social and economic status quo. Instead of highlighting the dignity of all human beings, European missionaries told Africans that Christianity should make them more obedient to their earthly masters. "From the beginning of American colonization, Europeans crafted a Christianity that would allow them to spread the faith without confronting the exploitative economic system of slavery and the emerging social inequality based on color."[22]

The fear of slave owners that their slaves would desire to be emancipated because of becoming Christian is worth noting. The preservation of the social order became more important than the equality of African brothers and sisters in Christ. Emerson and Smith note that the consensus of the church was that enslaved people who put their faith in Christ and were baptized would not only be free from sin but also slavery. Yet those living in the colonies recognized that it would be impossible to realize their economic ambitions and visions without slave labor. The co-authors note that "clergy, being part of the same socio-cultural environment and eager to see Christianizing taking place, quickly stepped in to refute and change this perceived custom."[23] To preserve the social order, church leaders implemented a threefold strategy. First, clergy encouraged several colonial legislatures to declare that slaves would remain slaves even when baptized. Second, they urged Anglican bishops to request formal statements from Britain's attorney general stating that baptism did not negate slave status in the British Kingdom. Third, clergy argued that Christian liberty in no way changed temporal bondage, but instead became an opportunity for slaves to cast off their "heathenism" and embrace the Christian faith.

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[22] Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 38-39.

[23] Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 23.

The preservation of the social order informed the foundations of the United States as a nation, creating the racial hierarchy reflected not only in legislation but also in the church. Regarding legislation, citizens had to navigate whether slaves would be counted equally on representation and taxation. The government came to a compromise in 1787, stating that every three out of five slaves would be counted as people. This legislation stated that slaves were considered "less than human" and influenced racial segregation in the church.

In the American church, the unequal treatment of African-descended people divided Christians along racial lines. Early on, Black Christians worshiped in the same congregations as White Christians, although under segregated seating, as this was a pragmatic decision on the part of slave masters to control and monitor slaves. Yet as time continued, ethical and theological divisions led toward an exodus of Black Christians leaving White congregations and forming their own. Black Christians were identified as members of the body of Christ yet experienced injustice, inequality, and racism by White Christians. Being members of the body of Christ should have meant justice, equality, and full recognition of the image of God for Black Christians. However, the continual preservation of the social order became more important to White Christians than the equality of African brothers and sisters in Christ.

Black Congregations and White Congregations

Tisby indicates that one of the earliest examples of Black Christians exercising agency to escape racism and inequality in the church is the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in 1816. He continues by saying, "Harsh though it may sound, the facts of history nevertheless bear out this truth: there would be no Black church without racism in the white church."[24] The separation of congregations into ethnically and racially homogenous groups came

[24] Tisby, *The Color of Compromise*, 52-53.

out of necessity and survival for Black Christians. The creation of the AME church provided space for the emergence of Black church leaders and afforded brief moments of respite from their oppression. The church would become a symbol of hope and not a continual reminder of the bondage and injustice toward their community. Slavery continued to be the dividing issue through the 1800s through the Civil War, with it finally becoming abolished with the ratification of the thirteenth amendment in 1865. Although slavery was abolished, the pattern and system of segregation continued for nearly 100 years.

Division in the Church during the Civil Rights Era

During the Civil Rights Era of the 1950s and early 1960s, Black Christians were highly invested and active in creating legislative change that addressed segregation and inequality in the U.S. However, Emerson and Smith acknowledge that the story was quite different among White Christians, particularly White evangelicals. Southern evangelicals generally sided against Black evangelicals on the segregation issue, and northern evangelicals seemed more preoccupied with other issues—such as evangelism, fighting communism, and theological liberalism. Emerson and Smith argue, "Most evangelicals, even in the North, did not think it their duty to oppose segregation; it was enough to treat the blacks they knew personally with courtesy and fairness. Evangelicals in the North opposed personal prejudice and discrimination, but not the racialized social system itself."[25] The opposition to personal prejudice and discrimination rather than systemic racism has become the pattern of response by White evangelicals.

It is interesting to note the "individual-focused" response to segregation from White evangelicals. As mentioned earlier, the Western cultural value of the individual has become synonymous with American evangelicalism. An emphasis on the "personal relationship with

[25] Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 46.

Christ" points to a vertically aimed faith between the individual and God, thus leaving a void in the horizontal and interpersonal relationship with others. In a sense, the high importance of a relationship with God can make engagement with others non-essential to faith and spiritual growth. Social Psychologist Christena Cleveland supports this claim arguing that "individualistic American Christians are less likely to see more extrinsic and social faith practices as valuable…as a result, collectivistic faith practices are less valued and, in some cases, not even considered legitimate Christianity."[26] This mentality creates an understanding that although systems are oppressive, it is not their responsibility to change systems as part of faith practices. Instead, the responsibility is to not engage in oppression individually.

The response to civil unrest from prominent church leaders differed along racial and ethnic lines. Most notably were Martin Luther King Jr. and Billy Graham and their responses to a string of urban uprisings involving Black inner-city residents and their conflicts with police. King, known for his stance on non-violence, recognized that rioting is the "language of the unheard."[27] He was pointing to the frustrations and experiences of the Black community. This statement didn't condone rioting, but it revealed the exhaustion of being ignored and unheard in the fight toward justice and equality.

In a sermon titled "Rioting or Righteousness," Billy Graham stated, "There is no doubt that the rioting, looting, and crime in America have reached a point of anarchy." In another instance, while boarded on a helicopter viewing the scene of the Watts neighborhood in Los Angeles, Graham said, "It cannot be overlooked that this kind of disturbance is being used by those whose ultimate end is to overthrow the American government."[28] He continued by saying

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[26] Cleveland, *Disunity in Christ*, 146.
[27] Tisby, *The Color of Compromise,* 141.
[28] Ibid., 142.

that the nation needed “tough laws” to crack down on such flagrant disregard for authority. Tisby argues that White Christians like Graham were not denying that Black Americans were discriminated against or that conditions in the inner city were troublesome. But they believed the solution was to trust the system rather than act to change the system to create equal conditions for Black Americans.

This section has discussed how the church has responded to race relations during significant markers of history. Tisby, Emerson, and Smith portray the American church divided along racial and ethnic lines from its inception. This division has resulted in ethnically homogenous congregations and differences in response to racial tensions by church leaders. This division is clearly seen in the church. The following section will discuss how the church’s response to issues of race has informed the practices and culture of Christian higher education.

Impacts of Church Homogeneity on Christian Higher Education

There is evidence that many of the effects on the church in the U.S. have carried over into their educational institutions. Racial tensions, segregated congregations, and differing opinions addressing injustice and inequality have often created sides among American Christians. In addition, the cultural influence of individualism has guided a neglect in advocating for people of color, particularly those in the Black community. Although laws and policies integrated communities, private Christian education continued in cultural and ethnic homogeneity patterns.

In 1954, *Brown vs. Board of Education* made it illegal for public schools to forbid the entrance of students of color, thus beginning the movement of integration in the public school system. George Yancey argues that Christian education had already been a racially segregated experience, and this court decision exacerbated that segregation. Yancey says, “this resulted in an exodus of white Christian students to private schools that ensured they would not have to deal

with their parents' fears of integration… This exodus started a process that would, over time, make Protestant educational institutions even more racially segregated than the rest of society."[29] Some Christian colleges and universities were relatively late in eliminating the prohibition of Black students in their schools. Bob Jones University, a Christian university in South Carolina, was well known for not allowing African American admissions until the 1980s and its ban, until recently, on interracial dating.[30] However, as laws were moving toward integration of public schools, private Christian colleges and universities continued in practices that have contributed to an inhospitable social environment on these campuses for students of color that also affected the ability to attract students of color. Yancey states that there is further evidence of the relative unwillingness of Protestant schools to adopt programs of diversity. "For example, a little more than a third of all conservative Protestant schools (38.6%) and a little under half of mainline Protestant schools (45.3%) offer scholarships that target African Americans. This is against the general trend within higher education to use financial incentives to attract students of color."[31] This reflects a disregard for racial inclusion and multiculturalism in churches where racial and ethnic homogeneity is the norm. A disregard for racial inclusion suggests the church's lack of understanding and commitment to its identity as a globally diverse church.

In many multicultural church congregations, members are divided by race and ethnicity with minimal overlap in corporate worship, discipleship, and life together in fellowship. Diversity in the church in the U.S. has been chiefly expressed through multicultural and multiethnic models separating non-majority culture congregations from the majority culture because of preference of language or worship styles. The state of preservation often brings like-

[29] George Yancey, *Neither Jew Nor Gentile: Exploring Issues of Racial Diversity on Protestant College Campuses* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3.
[30] Ibid., 37.
[31] Ibid., 34.

minded people together, thus creating homogenous communities. Yancy reflects on the homogeneous nature of the Protestant church. He states, "the racially homogeneous nature of Protestant churches prohibits the development of productive cross-racial relationships among Christians…the lack of exposure reinforces the individualist, color-blind ideology promulgated within their churches, since there are few voices of color to challenge this ideology."[32] Yancey argues that the homogenous ideology of church congregations is mirrored in religious institutions of higher education because of the inability to promote a healthy racial vision to which people of color can relate.

This seems to be the intentional and unintentional consequences of failing to live among and in community with others who are different than ourselves. In the book *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*, Soong-Chan Rah makes the argument of embracing multiethnic and diverse evangelicalism to minister to our rapidly globalized context in North America. As he examines the North American church, he believes that it has been influenced more by the culture than by the characteristics of the Bride of Christ. Rah says:

> I believe in the future of the church. It is not a hope based upon what I see now, but in the promise of not yet—the promise that what Christians have repeatedly damaged, Christ is able to restore and heal. It is for the church that Jesus was willing to lay down his life. It is for the church that Jesus longs to return. It is for the church that Jesus has a greater promise beyond Western, white cultural captivity.[33]

With the increase in recent years of ethnic and racial diversity of student populations at Christian colleges, the church, and its educational institutions have the opportunity to help break the cycles of division that have influenced Christian faith in the U.S. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates

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[32] Yancey, *Neither Jew Nor Gentile*, 11.

[33] Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 23.

that the U.S. will have a majority-minority population by 2044. This demographic shift also parallels changes in the American religious landscape as the percentage of White mainline Protestants and White evangelical Protestants, since 1988 and 2008, respectively, has declined.[34] With changing demographics in the church, this also impacts Christian higher education as student populations will become increasingly diverse.

The Rise in Diversity in Christian Higher Education

Christian higher education provides a liberal arts private education for young adults in Christian community through practices that mirror the church. The practices of corporate worship, reading scripture, prayer, and spiritual formation become part of the overall experience of Christian higher education. However, practices that guide students in navigating culturally diverse spaces are absent even though the church has a globally diverse identity. When students begin their journey on a Christian college campus, they soon realize they are in a new space surrounded by new people—people from different backgrounds and stories—yet the common goal to receive a college-level education in the context of Christian community is a desire shared by all. As Christian colleges have become more accessible to students of color over the years, student populations have become more ethnically diverse. The rise of ethnic diversity in student populations requires shifts in faith practices that can hold ethnic diversity well and creates space for connection and belonging.

A National Impact Report completed for the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) in 2015 reported an increase in Black, Asian, Hispanic, and other non-

[34] Karen A. Longman, *Diversity Matters: Race, Ethnicity, & The Future of Christian Higher Education* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2017), 13.

White students in CCCU schools from 17.8% reported in 1999 to 34.1% in 2015.[35] This means that many students from diverse backgrounds are entering into a new experience of being spiritually formed together. This intersectionality of church-mirrored practices in Christian colleges can become a unique experience for young Christians to journey alongside one another in an ethnically diverse Christian community.

Over the past decade, Barna has interviewed nearly 30,000 Millennials in more than 200 studies. This research validates findings in The Navigators' State of Discipleship study that Millennials desire meaningful relationships, often feel overwhelmed, and struggle to make connections between faith and the rest of their lives.[36] However, personalized faith rooted in and encouraged by the culture of American evangelicalism is the setting in which many emerging adults that identify as Christian in the U.S. have been formed. In the Christian university context, emerging adults live and learn in community with others from diverse cultures, backgrounds, perspectives of faith, and worship practices. Yet, many often surround themselves with others who affirm their own identities and mirror who they are and what they believe. There is a normal response to preserve what is personally understood to be true and remain in a comfortable space.

The lack of proximity between people groups and exposure to the ethnic and racial diversity in the church creates an "otherization" and fear of those who look, sound, and think differently. The American church is being discipled and formed separately. Christian college students commonly engage in chapel as part of their college experience. Because many students come from ethnically homogenous church communities, worshipping in an ethnically diverse setting can be challenging. It can possibly be an uncomfortable worship space to gather with

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[35] "Building the Common Good: The National Impact of Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) Institutions," *Econsult Solutions*, December 12, 2017, https://www.cccu.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CCCU-National-Impact-Final-Report-12.12.17.pdf.

[36] The Navigators, *The State of Discipleship,* 87.

people who are different and listen to preaching and teaching that doesn't reflect them—their values, theology, politics, and understanding of Christian faith.

Students navigate through the dissonance of operating in their current paradigms of family, faith, social engagements, and culture while also being presented with diverse perspectives, ideas, and formational experiences through interactions with new students, staff, and faculty. Often, many students struggle to navigate the new terrain they encounter at a Christian college. Kinnaman acknowledges the rapidly changing culture that emerging adults are navigating while also stating that the church is not adequately preparing them to follow Christ faithfully in the midst of it.[37] In what he describes as the "dropout problem," he believes the core reason emerging adults leave the church is a faith-development problem. The formation that the church is offering them is not full enough to be experienced in the world, a place that is globalized, diverse, and full of difference.

Emerging adults live in a time and space where they have exposure to the rest of the world, both physically and virtually. Multiple institutions are forming emerging adults outside of the church to celebrate diversity, be inclusive of difference, overcome racial divides, embrace multiculturalism, and to avoid being narrowly judgmental toward others who are out of the ordinary. This seems to be a contrasting difference from the world of their elders and also their view of religion.[38] Many emerging adults who identify as Christian hold this value of inclusivity closely, becoming a point of tension between their formation and the culture they are navigating into adulthood. Kinnaman states, "The great struggle of this emerging generation is learning how to live faithfully in a new context, to be in the world but not of the world. For the next

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[37] David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church…and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 21.

[38] Christian Smith and Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious & Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 80-81.

generation, the lines between right and wrong, between truth and error, between Christian influence and cultural accommodation are increasingly blurred."[39] These "blurred lines" have often led to an understanding of self-evident morality and a distancing of religion altogether. For those seeking to remain engaged in the Christian faith, Smith and Snell would argue that the search for more inclusive religious traditions has moved emerging adults to theologically liberal mainline Protestantism, which are among the worst in retaining and recruiting emerging adults.[40] Some continue to be part of congregations, but few would name their congregations as a place of social belonging.

The view of most emerging adults of avoiding judgment of what is different and being socially inclusive has the unintended consequence of generalizing religion as a whole and, therefore, not appealing to most emerging adults. Emerging adults who identify as highly religious find themselves constantly negotiating this tension mentally and socially. One group among emerging adults is those identified as highly religious and reject the common governing notions of inclusion and equal acceptance altogether.[41] This group often finds themselves at odds with their peers and on the outside of their peer group.

The work of Christian higher education to model and offer a glimpse of Christian community that reflects the Creator's image and the diversity of humanity will continue to be challenging. It is challenging because it will need to begin with realigning the church's vision to be a place where different people are formed, bound together, and made into a community that should overflow into the vision and ethos of its educational institutions. The emerging adult needs a Christian community that will offer space for their full self to be welcomed, their doubts

[39] Ibid., 12.
[40] Ibid., 81.
[41] Ibid.

held with grace, and a place where their individuality can be part of something larger and diverse, a community to belong. It is essential to recognize that in order to navigate the rise in the diversity of student populations, new systems of support for students of color must be in place so that the institution can thrive as a diverse community. This includes a posture of intentionality that students of color, particularly, feel seen, known, and heard in a majority White educational spaces. It also includes recognizing that cultural experience varies among communities of color, which can impact the educational journey of diverse students.

This section has identified the ways Christian higher education has continued the patterns of ethnic and racial homogeneity reflected in the church. As laws were passed for racial integration, private Christian education was a way to continue patterns of segregation. Although Christian colleges historically have had a low enrollment of students of color, racial and ethnic diversity of student populations is increasing in these institutions. The need for practices that foster unity, cross-cultural understanding, and belonging for all students is imperative for increasingly diverse campuses. Because Christian higher education mirrors the church, the discipleship practices of cross-cultural learning and understanding must be grounded in the church.

The following section will discuss the ways cultural experience impacts theology. As mentioned earlier, the Western cultural value of individualism has informed the theology and practices of the American evangelical church. In the same ways, the experiences of communities of color have impacted their understanding of God and the ways faith is expressed. The theologies rooted in Black and Indigenous communities will be examined to engage in cross-cultural understanding. It is worth noting the commonality of theological viewpoints differing from other perspectives. The same can be true when viewing theology through the lens of

cultural experiences. These theologies give the church insight into the cultural experiences of the Black and Indigenous communities and also a greater understanding of Christ and his body.

Impact of Cultural Experience on Theology

This historical overview reveals that the experience of White Christians and Black Christians has been and continues to be opposite from one another in terms of equality, justice, and freedom. To trust the system that has been used throughout history to oppress and suppress was not an option for Black Americans. In moments when Black Christians were seeking solidarity from White Christian leaders in their struggle against inequality, the inaction and lack of response proved to be disheartening. Black Christians longed for a church that could be better. Yet, they knew that the church's actions or inactions were not reflective of the God in Scripture. Among Black and Indigenous communities in the U.S., the development of theology through the lens of cultural experience was a vehicle to reclaim and rename the God they knew to be true.

Theologies that have emerged from Black and Indigenous communities often draw from experiences of suffering and pain caused by unjust systems and actions against their people while finding a deep connection to the narrative of the God who sees and is for those who are oppressed. In Genesis 16, Hagar gave this name to God, "El-Roi," meaning the God who sees me.[42] Hagar felt seen and known by God after she and her son were expelled from their home; therefore, her response was to give God a name reflective of her experience. Again, cultural experience offers us a lens through which we understand God and live our faith. Through this lens, Black Liberation theology and Indigenous theology will be examined.

[42] Gen. 16:13.

Key Voices in Black and Indigenous Theologies

There are various voices whose theological viewpoints draw from a cultural perspective. The following section will introduce key voices in Black and Indigenous theologies. These two cultural perspectives, Black and Indigenous cultures, are highlighted because of their connection to the church in the United States. Although these theologies have not been fully embraced by various theological circles in the American church, it informs how the American church can better understand the experiences of communities of color and God's heart for all people.

The first voice is Theologian James Cone, who authored highly influential books on Black Liberation theology. Black Liberation theology views scripture in ways that address and connect to "blackness" and the liberation of the poor. Cone, who draws inspiration from both the Black Power Movement and the Civil Rights Movement, argues:

> The doctrine of God in Black theology must be of the God who is participating in the liberation of the oppressed of the land…because God has been revealed in the history of oppressed Israel and decisively on the Oppressed One, Jesus Christ, it is impossible to do anything about God without seeing God as being involved in the contemporary liberation of all oppressed peoples. The God in Black theology is the God of and for the oppressed, the God who comes into view in their liberation.[43]

Cone is holding both the liberation of Black people and the revelation of Jesus Christ, the one who is presently breaking the power of White racism, as one single reality. Cone shares the uniqueness of the Black cultural experience with the church and helps us understand that Christ is present in the story of the Black community. Just as God was revealed in the oppression of Israel and through Christ, God is also revealed in the oppression of Black people in America. Cone argues that Christ is on the side of the oppressed. He challenges White Christians who follow Christ yet oppress Black people. Cone believes this is inconsistent with Christ from scripture, who came to serve and liberate the poor, captives, and the oppressed. Therefore, it is

[43] James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 64.

essential to dismantling the ways Christ has been falsely used to dehumanize the Black community and empower a White majority.

Similarly, theologian Richard Twiss speaks of how he and his people were forced to forsake identity and culture to embrace the White culture, assimilate, and become Westernized as their new Christian identity. With ideas such as "manifest destiny" and the doctrine of discovery sanctioned by the church, missionaries would take it upon themselves to rid Indigenous people of local behaviors that went against European identity, which they deemed "Christian identity." Twiss speaks of his own experiences as a new Christ-follower asking a pastoral leader how he was supposed to relate to his Native culture as a Christian. The pastor read from Galatians 3:28, explaining we are all one in Christ, and commented how all cultures should all blend together and ended by saying, "…don't worry about being Indian anymore—just be like us…essentially…saying…, 'Forget your Indian-ness and embrace our white culture as the only Christian culture.'"[44]

Twiss decided to view himself truly as he is, a Lakota man committed to following Jesus, guiding him toward a process of personal decolonization and the exploration of Indigenous spirituality in relationship to biblical faith. Twiss states:

> What we are seeking is a place where the gospel brings freedom and spiritual power to follow Jesus with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength, while still fully embracing our tribal identity, traditional customs, cultural forms, worldview and rituals. We seek a place where we are no longer seen as the perpetual mission field of the dominant culture church, but rather a place where we are honestly embraced as coequal participants in the life, work and community of Christ's followers—as Indigenous people.[45]

Twiss's book proposes the integration of Indigenous practices within the Christian framework to create a way of understanding Jesus through a cultural lens. Holding cultural and ethnic identity

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[44] Richard Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Way of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 104.

[45] Ibid., 93.

in tandem with faith and scripture is the guiding principle shaping the theological understandings of Cone and Twiss. Black and Indigenous theologies viewed through the lens of understanding the cultures and experiences of communities of color can shape our collective theology and our ecclesial identity.

Black and Indigenous theologies point us to a God who deeply knows us, is with us in our suffering, and desires to liberate God's people from their oppressors. In a country where blackness was dehumanized, James Cone connects the black experience to the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Similarly, Twiss reclaims the cultural and tribal values to understand Christian identity through an Indigenous lens. Twiss challenges the doctrines of European settlers who destroyed the cultural identity of Indigenous peoples and forced them to assimilate to Western Christianity. By reclaiming the Indigenous cultural identity and connecting it to Christian faith, Twiss guides the church to understand the Creator, whose image is in all people expressed through their unique ethnic identities.

The following section will examine Black Liberation Theology more in-depth, focusing mainly on Cone's book *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. This book connects with the history of the United States and the lynching of Black people. Cone connects the lynching tree to the cross of Jesus. Throughout the examination of Cone and his book, I will highlight how this cultural application in theology helps and challenges the church better to understand the experiences of our Black brothers and sisters.

Black Liberation Theology and the Cross

Cone connects the experience of lynching in the Black community, "America's cross," to the cross of Jesus, which is at the heart of the Christian gospel. Cone argues, "White theologians

do not normally turn to the black experience to learn about theology."[46] Cone leads us in remembering the horrors of the Black experience, recalling the numerous people who have been murdered through the practice of lynching. Cone's hope for us as readers is to see how their suffering and death are connected to the suffering and death of the crucified Christ. This theological work helps us see the cross as more than a symbol of religious piety. It is the way we are confronted with the great sin of racism, leading us to confession and repentance, and moving us toward the hope that the cross offers us.

In his book, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree,* James Cone offers us a compelling connection between the cross of Jesus and the horrific practice of lynching of the Black community throughout the history of the United States. Cone says, "Though both are symbols of death, one represents a message of hope and salvation, while the other signifies the negation of that message by white supremacy."[47] It seems evident that these two instruments of torture and death used to exert power over oppressed populations would be connected. Yet, Cone presses Christians in America—particularly White Christians—why this connection has not been made. Cone believes that the cross, a Christian symbol of salvation, has been detached from any ongoing human suffering and oppression. He argues, "Until we can see the cross and the lynching tree together, until we can identify Christ with a 'recrucified' black body hanging from a lynching tree, there can be no genuine understanding of Christian identity in America, and no deliverance from the brutal legacy of slavery and white supremacy."[48] The connection of the cross and ongoing human suffering for the church is essential to our understanding of our identity in Christ.

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[46] James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 64.
[47] Ibid., xiii.
[48] Ibid., xv.

Because of the failure to connect the lynching tree to the cross of Christ, White Christians are unable to see their complicity in these evils. The complicity of White Christians came through their silence and, often, their endorsement and engagement in the execution of Black bodies. For the Black community, Cone argues that it is not easy to talk about Christianity publicly because the Jesus they embraced was also, at least in name, embraced by Whites who lynched Black bodies. "Indeed, it was white slaveholders, segregationists, and lynchers who defined the content of the Christian gospel."[49] The Jesus that White Americans worshiped ignored Black bodies and did not affirm their humanity as image-bearers of God.

This led to the Black community going straight to the stories of the Bible, finding themselves in stories of God siding with the "little people" just like them as a place of connection to God and the greater story of scripture. God as the liberator of the poor becomes the central lens by which God is understood, shaping the worship life, discipleship, and a longing for hope for the God who frees those who are oppressed. The Black community finds themselves in the suffering of the Israelites crying out for liberation and in Jesus, who endured the pain of the cross while inviting us to take up our cross as well. Theologian Walter Brueggemann provides insight into both the story of slavery in Exodus and the cross of Christ. He says:

> The crucifixion, then, is not an odd event in the history of faith, although it is the decisive event. It is, rather, the full expression of dismantling that has been practiced and insisted upon in the prophetic tradition since Moses confronted Pharoah. As with Moses, so Jesus' ministry and death opposed the politics of oppression with the politics of justice and compassion. As with Moses, so Jesus' ministry and death contradicted the religion of God's captivity with the freedom of God to bring life where he will, even in the face of death.[50]

Being a seminary-trained theologian, Cone studied the Western theologies that shaped White Christians in America. In his book, he is grieved by the inability of White Christians to

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[49] Ibid., 118.
[50] Walter Bruggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 99.

stand up against White supremacy and the lynching of Black bodies. In Cone's critique, he specifically points out the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who was regarded as a leading voice in social thought and public policy. Cone explains that, "unlike the advocates of the Social Gospel, who often suggested that we could through love build the Kingdom of God on earth, Niebuhr placed justice, rather than love, at the center of Christian social ethics."[51] Niebuhr believes Christian faith is centered in the one who was born in a manger and who died upon the cross. Niebuhr argues that "the revelation of God's transcendent love hidden in Jesus' suffering on the cross is not simply the 'keystone' of the Christian faith; it is the very key to history itself. The crucified Messiah is the final revelation of the divine character and divine purpose."[52]

And yet, Niebuhr fails to see the connection between the cross and the lynching tree. He fails to connect Jesus's cross to what Cone describes as "the most obvious cross in American society." Cone believes it is due to his failure to empathize and step into the vantage point of the Black community and see the world through their eyes. He says, "Niebuhr had 'eyes to see' black suffering, but I believe he lacked the 'heart to feel' it as his own…it has always been difficult for white people to empathize fully with the experience of black people. But it has never been impossible."[53] In his book *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Cone criticizes John Wesley, stating that Protestant reformers like him and Calvin did little to make Christianity a religion for the politically oppressed in society and did very little about slave-holding.[54] Cone is grieved by the inconsistency of White Christians—whose theologies based on love, holiness, and justice—have not helped them acknowledge the suffering of the Black community, of Black sisters and

[51] Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, 33.
[52] Ibid., 35.
[53] Ibid., 41.
[54] Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 35-36.

brothers in Christ. The love of neighbor that is preached in the pulpits of America has failed to be embodied in actions of empathy and solidarity.

Wesley, in his writings, conveyed that holiness moves beyond personal piety but is lived out in ways that extend into the realms of our society. According to Wynkoop, "Holiness, to Wesley, could not ignore or become insensitive to or withdraw from one's fellows… The evidence for holiness, to Wesley, was the recognizable social fruits of love." She quotes a foundational Wesleyan statement: "The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection."[55] For a Wesleyan, holiness is social because God is social creating humanity in God's image to be in relationship with God and with one another. Our relationship with Christ and one another means not only being in proximity with one another. It also means that we are to exist in mutuality, allowing ourselves to share in life, joy, pain, and suffering with one another. The heart of the Wesleyan understanding of holiness is transformation by God's Spirit to love in ways that reflect Christ's character and care for all humanity.

Similar to the examination of Black Liberation theology, the following section will examine Indigenous Theology more in-depth, focusing on theologians Richard Twiss and Mark Charles. Earlier in this chapter, Richard Twiss was introduced along with a brief synopsis of the cultural impact on his theological understanding. The following section will explore the impacts of Western Christianity on the lives of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Both Twiss and Charles desire to decolonize their faith in order to reclaim their cultural identities as Indigenous Christians. The reclamation of Indigenous cultural expressions of worship and faith within

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[55] John Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: William Strahan, 1739), vii; quoted in Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972), 87.

American Christianity can continue to expand the church's understanding of our globally diverse identity.

Indigenous Theology as a Reclamation of Identity

The cultural impact of the Indigenous theology is founded on understanding God and faith in Christ through the rediscovery of cultural identity. In his writings, Richard Twiss discusses how he and his community were forced to forsake cultural identity and assimilate to a Westernized culture as a new Christian identity. In his book, *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way,* he offers insight into how Indigenous cultures and lands were forced towards a movement of cultural eradication through colonization in the name of Christianity. Many Indigenous people were removed from their homes and families to forcibly assimilate into Western culture and religion through Christian missions and boarding schools. Twiss's work helps to recover cultural practices and rituals that give a unique expression of the Indigenous Christian faith and understanding of God.

Twiss begins his book by discussing whether there is truly a current Indigenous contextualized expression of the Christian faith among the tribes of the United States and Canada. Twiss states that contextualization is not a principle, formula, or evangelistic strategy. "Contextualization is a relational process of theological and cultural reflection within a community—seeking to incorporate traditional symbols, music, dance, ceremony and ritual to make faith in Jesus a truly local expression."[56] Although Twiss seems reluctant to use the word *contextualization*, he desires to reclaim practices of worship that are uniquely founded in Indigenous cultural identity rather than conforming to Western expressions of worship.

[56] Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel*, 15.

Twiss shares stories of "divine interventions" in the early 1800s, ways in which Creator was preparing the way for the reception of the gospel of Jesus. In one particular instance, a man by the name of Shining Shirt was granted a vision of "fair-skinned men in black robes" who would come and teach them how to live in a new way. It is recorded that the Indigenous peoples who received the gospel had purity and genuine faith. Twiss argues that this genuine faith came as a result of "faith birthed from the witness of Jesus-following Indigenous people to their own tribes. They spoke the contextual gospel from their hearts among the people. This was not simply the 'white man's gospel!"[57] This divine intervention in the form of a vision is Twiss's understanding of the Creator's presence and activity already at work in their lives. Although it was recorded that Indigenous people had genuine faith, European-American missionaries insisted on Western-centered Christian worship and doctrine. Twiss argues that their paternalism, ethnocentrism, colonial collusion, and modernism made them blind to the reality of the already existing work of the Creator in these native lands and, instead, "civilized" this movement of Indigenous Christian faith.

The Indigenous peoples of the United States had not only culture stripped from them but also language and land. Manifest Destiny was the way in which European settlers would justify the taking of land. The church sanctioned these actions claiming Europeans were chosen to claim it for God's purposes. In his book, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery,* Mark Charles, who identifies himself as part of the Dine Indigenous peoples, argues that the Doctrine of Discovery "gave theological permission for the European mind and body to view themselves as superior to the non-European body and minds."[58] He

[57] Ibid., 22.

[58] Soong-Chan Rah and Mark Charles, *Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing Dehumanization Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2019), 21.

argues that this doctrine created an insider perception for European settlers, while it created an identity of inferiority for African and Indigenous bodies only worthy of subjugation. In the minds of European settlers, their value was based on their "chosenness," supremacy over others to expand God's work on these lands.

This notion of being chosen informed early missionary movements. Twiss writes, "A primary theme for Puritan missionaries was a reenactment of the Exodus narrative revolved around a powerful theology of 'chosenness' that was to be decisive for the course of colonization as well as for the later American self-concept."[59] Manifest Destiny and Christian mission were perceived as one and the same, which led to the atrocities against the Indigenous peoples of America. For example, Indigenous people were forced out of their land, and many were sent to Christian boarding schools. In these boarding schools, Indigenous people were not allowed to speak their language or engage in cultural practices leading to the erasure of many Indigenous languages and cultures. Instead, they were Westernized through forced assimilation of learning English, adapting Western customs, and Christian faith. Europeans viewed Indigenous cultures and practices as inferior. They believed they needed to be led to a moral way of life, which from a European perspective, was considered to be a "civilized" and "Christian way of life."

However, Twiss rejects the notion that Christianity is equal to Western culture. Rather, he begins to imagine what it would be to see Jesus through the lens of his own culture. Twiss shares the ways by which he "innovates," adopting traditional Indigenous practices such as sweat lodges as opportunities to pray and reflect. Twiss writes, "The sweat lodge ritual is a sacred place of divine encounter where a Holy Creator helps us face the frailty of our humanity, and pours grace, forgiveness, healing and love on a willing recipient in the name of Jesus."[60] Whether it is a

[59] Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel*, 88.
[60] Ibid., 148.

sweat lodge, powwow, or singing in an innovative Indigenous hymnody, these are ways by which the identity and experience of the Indigenous people are seen and known, connecting culturally to the Creator.

The Indigenous experience of God helps to change the narrative for Indigenous people—that their culture has much to offer and can shape Indigenous communities and the collective body of Christ. Our Wesleyan understanding of valuing experience should lead us toward openness to see the importance of cultural experience. Through God's Spirit, cultural experience can connect us to God and the global body of Christ in new and better ways. Moreover, valuing the cultural experience of all ethnicities represented within the global body of Christ as a practice for all Christians will lead us to greater understanding, appreciation, and love for one another.

The beginning of this chapter discussed the racial and ethnic homogeneity of American church congregations along racial and ethnic lines. This has shaped the American church to the present. As a church, we believe through a biblical, theological, and ecclesiological understanding that our identity is grounded in our "oneness." In recent years, the American church has made efforts toward unity and defragmentation. The following section will examine various ways cultural difference has been addressed in the church. It is essential to access ways the church has addressed cultural difference in order to learn from them their success and failures and continue in efforts toward unity. This assessment can help identify gaps in these processes and offer other possibilities in the ways we address fragmentation so that the body of Christ can live faithfully as one.

Addressing Cultural Difference in the Church

An honest examination of the church will elicit a confession that not every member's experience, stories, cultural expressions, and understandings of God are regarded equally. The

current understanding of discipleship within the American church context does not enfold cultural learning or the navigation of cultural difference within the body of Christ. Patterns within many years of existing in a fragmented state have shaped an understanding in many members that the church can never exist in a united reality. Barna Group's *Beyond Diversity* report is telling of the church's inability to practically address and engage cross-culturally.

The data in this report reveals that although unity is desired, each group has a distinct vision of how unity is achieved. For example, although the vast majority (68%) disagree that "it is helpful to have churches where the races worship separately from one another," Black practicing Christians followed by Hispanic worshipers see value in separate worship.[61] The reasons for this sentiment are founded on cultural preservation for marginalized communities, empowerment, support, and freedom of being fully who they are. Many people of color have experienced multiracial church models and yet have experienced hurt, pain, and a sense of hopelessness. Church members of color have often felt unseen or minimized in their cultural identity. Barna Group's report revealed that three in ten Black practicing Christians in a multiracial church (29%) say they have experienced racial prejudice on some level.[62] More than a quarter of Black practicing Christians feels pressured to give up part of their racial or ethnic identity in a multiracial church (27%) and find it difficult to build relationships there (28%).[63] The vision of ecclesial unity in diversity is not being witnessed by many, particularly our members of color. In numerous circumstances, diversity is viewed as an impediment to unity, creating a narrative that church unity is unattainable.

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[61] Barna Group, *Beyond Diversity,* 31-32.
[62] Ibid., 26.
[63] Ibid., 27.

Additionally, many believe disciple-making can help address race relations. The Barna Group asked the question "*How can churches improve race dynamics in our country?*" to active church members. The report shows a variation among Christians from diverse cultures and ethnicities. It states the following:

> About half say helping people become Christians is an effective personal means to improve race relations (47%). This approach is especially favored by White practicing Christians (51%, compared to 40% Black, 36% Hispanic and 41% Asian). One-third of practicing Christians (34%) emphasizes sharing biblical teachings that encourage special kindness to marginalized groups, a tactic they support as strongly as fostering economic thriving for people of color (34%). Practicing Christians also chose advocacy for leadership opportunities for people of color (26%), though notably less frequently than the general population.[64]

The same data demonstrates a high priority among Christians to address race dynamics by welcoming people from all races and ethnicities (82% White, 75% Black, 76% Hispanic, and 81% Asian). However, when it pertains to the church's role in teaching about race and ethnicity, Black Christians overwhelmingly see this as a formational practice and function of the church. The report shows that 57% of Black Christians believe that teaching about race and ethnicity can improve race dynamics as opposed to 49% Hispanic Christians, 44% Asian Christians, and 36% White Christians.[65] This proves how challenging it is to address race in the church. For White and Asian Christians, coming to faith and welcoming all people is the priority and the pathway toward unity. Coming to faith and welcome are tied to belonging, belonging to God, and God's family. Black and Latino/a Christians prioritize much higher the church's role of teaching about race and ethnicity. Belonging is the invitation to unity, and formation preserves unity.

The research reveals a desperate need for the church to address cultural difference and race dynamics. The desire for diversity in church congregations must be met with a new way of

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[64] Ibid., 105-106.
[65] Hill, *White Awake,*109.

spiritual formation that remains biblically centered and aims to lead us toward unity in the body of Christ. A new way of discipleship with practices that teaches and practices the values of human dignity, the fullness of humanity, and the *imago Dei* in all people is necessary for the formation of the American church. This way of discipleship must also challenge the false narrative that cultural difference is a barrier rather than a gift. This false narrative must be challenged and replaced with the truth; unity in our racial and ethnic diversity is Christ's vision for the church.

Key Voices in Addressing Cultural Difference

Addressing cultural difference in the church is challenging. There are differences of opinion on addressing cultural difference; however, we know it needs to be addressed. This section will identify several key voices in addressing cultural difference both in the church and outside the church. Including external voices helps recognize that the church is not the only place trying to navigate cultural difference.

The first is Brenda Salter McNeil, a professor and pastor equipping emerging leaders to be practitioners of reconciliation in their ministry and vocational spaces. The next author is Lisa Sharon Harper, president of FreedomRoad.us, an organization that works with faith communities to build their capacity for collective engagement toward justice in the world. Harper is the author of *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right.* Lastly, Ibram X. Kendi is a professor and program director for the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University. Kendi's voice, although external, is helpful in understanding the guiding conversations outside the church when addressing cultural difference and racism.

Addressing Cultural Difference: Biblical Reconciliation

Addressing cultural difference in the church necessitates more than short-term transactions of understanding. Salter McNeil believes that the absence of hostility is possible without a spiritual dimension. However, people need to learn how to relate even after forgiveness and justice have occurred. Reconciliation is an ongoing process involving forgiveness, repentance, and justice that restores broken relationships and systems to reflect God's original intention for all creation to flourish.[66] This section will examine biblical reconciliation and discuss the ways it has been a resource for unity in the diversity of the church.

In her book *Roadmap to Reconciliation,* Salter McNeil begins her argument of biblical reconciliation by discussing why diversity exists. She builds a biblical argument of diversity and difference as something God ordained to offer a fuller understanding of who God is and who we are as the body of Christ. Salter McNeil states, "When God commanded the first human beings to 'fill the earth,' it was a decree to create cultures, because no one culture, people or language can adequately reflect the splendor of God."[67] Salter McNeil offers us a view of intentionality and beauty in the diversity of our world that points back to the greatness of the Creator. She argues that biblically, diversity is not seen as an obstacle to overcome but as a gift to embrace.

One of the stories within scripture often used to speak about the diversity of the world is in Genesis 11, the passage of the Tower of Babel. In this ancient story, all of humanity is portrayed as monolingual. In their attempt to make a name for themselves and avoid being scattered across the world, they decide to build a tower toward the heavens. As God observes what they have done, God confuses them with different languages and scatters them across the

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[66] Brenda Salter McNeil, *Roadmap to Reconciliation: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness and Justice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 22.

[67] Ibid., 24.

world. One could propose several interpretations. After reading verse 6, which says, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them,"[68]one could argue that God is possibly threatened by the potential of humanity's progress. Another way of interpreting this story is seeing it as a functional story of how humankind gained diverse languages and cultures, possibly viewing diversity as a curse from God. Salter McNeil offers the latter interpretation of the text through a lens of a God whose mission is to fill the earth with God's image. She argues:

> The kinship group that we encounter in Genesis 11 was refusing to migrate any further. They refused to fill the earth with the *imago Dei.* They chose instead to disregard the diversifying process and hold fast their homogeneity…God's response to the people's refusal to migrate in Genesis 11 was to confuse their language and scatter them in order to bring about the divine will and original purpose of humanity, which is to fill the earth with the glory of God.[69]

The holding fast of homogeneity, or as Salter McNeil describes as being in a "state of preservation," does not offer a way forward for unity within Christian community.

Since God's design for humanity is to live and thrive in our diversity, we must learn the ongoing process of reconciliation to preserve this design. Diversity and reconciliation are not the same. Reconciliation helps us to flourish in diversity. Existing together within our cultural difference is challenging and has caused fractures and divisions, especially in the church. However, Salter McNeil argues that reconciliation is possible only if we approach it primarily as a spiritual process that requires a posture of hope in the reconciling work of Christ. It also requires a commitment from the church to be and proclaim this type of reconciled community.[70]

Reconciliation where God's *shalom* can reign also necessitates the naming and confronting of injustices that currently exist so that justice can begin to emerge. In her book, *The*

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[68] Gen. 11:6.
[69] Salter McNeil, *Roadmap to Reconciliation*, 26.
[70] Ibid., 21-22.

Very Good Gospel, Lisa Sharon Harper addresses this in chapter nine titled, "Shalom and Race." The foundation of her arguments comes from the creation account in Genesis chapter three, where God declares that creation in its fullness is "very good." She speaks of race being about power, a political construct created by humans to determine who can exercise dominion and that over time, "whiteness was created to define who would wield it" and that "the core lie of Western civilization is that God reserved the power of dominion for some, not all."[71] She continues to challenge us that if we are to be a people who live into God's shalom for this world, we would need to be submerged in the cleansing waters of Christ, rising with new eyes able to see the image of God in those who have been oppressed, particularly people of color. We would need to believe that they too were created with the inherent call and capacity to exercise dominion and are able to lead us all into a better world.

The ability for all to exercise dominion is a move toward the equality that the Kingdom of God reflects. As demographics in our communities reflect increasing racial and ethnic diversity, one of our greatest needs is more diverse congregations and leadership models. There is much to learn from the immigrant church and second generation-multiethnic congregations. The children of immigrants have learned to see the world through a multicultural lens, adapting to the culture of where they reside while also retaining the culture, language, and customs of their ethnic backgrounds. Soong-Chan Rah speaks of a "third consciousness" that second-generation folks express as they interact with those from first generations and those from the majority culture and the "multiple consciousness" that is expressed in biracial and multiracial

[71] Lisa Sharon Harper, *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2016), 150.

Americans.[72] This experience of triple consciousness or "third culture" can provide a common link and bridge across various ethnicities.

This section has discussed addressing cultural difference through biblical reconciliation. Biblical reconciliation requires our commitment to desire God's design for humanity of diversity rather than preserving patterns of homogeneity. This means going beyond bringing diverse people together. It includes changing systems, structures, policies, procedures, and exercising dominion in a way that leads us toward a collective humanity that reflects God's glory in our world. God has reconciled to us through Christ and has given the church the ministry of reconciliation.[73] Christ followers are called to be reconcilers and to live new patterns that draw us away from the state of preservation. Cross-cultural understanding must become a norm in the rhythms of our practices to desire God's design for humanity of diversity.

Addressing Cultural Difference: Antiracism

The state of preservation in the previous section has been expressed in homogeneity. It has also been expressed in racism and discrimination towards other races and ethnicity. The previous section identified the need to challenge and change systems and structures that preserve patterns of homogenous preservation. This section will highlight antiracism as a way to address cultural difference. One of the leading voices of antiracism is Ibram X. Kendi, who argues that antiracism helps us move beyond the rejection of old systems and structures toward lasting change.

Ibram X. Kendi is a professor and historian of race and discriminatory policy in America and is one of the leading voices in the antiracism movement. Kendi is considered an external voice, although he is connected to the church by heritage. Kendi's parents began their involvement at InterVarsity's Urbana '70, which led them to later join the Black Power

[72] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism*, 183-184.
[73] 2. Cor. 5:18.

movement. He writes about his dad attending a class of James Cone and asking him the question, "What is your definition of a Christian?" Cone's response was, "A Christian is one who is striving for liberation."[74] Kendi believes this is where his antiracism journey began—with his parents' strivings for liberation as Christians. Likewise, he has a secular striving for antiracism. Although Kendi does not consider himself a person of faith, the foundations of his work come from a theological framework that rejects the oppression of the Black community. For Kendi, the idea of not being a racist isn't good enough for lasting change. One must become an antiracist to combat racism effectively.

There are only two choices for Kendi: to be a racist or an antiracist. He defines a racist as "one who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea."[75] An antiracist is "one who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing, and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequality."[76] The root of racism, for Kendi, lies not in ignorance and hate but rather lies in the economic power, political and cultural self-interest of the racist power. From economic power, political and cultural self-interest of the racist power comes racist policies and racist ideas that support these policies.

The antiracism movement addresses powers, structures, and policies that continue to create cycles of White supremacy. To be an antiracist is to acknowledge that systemic racism is present and to work toward dismantling these systems so that equality can be achieved. Christians who work toward being antiracist must be willing to engage in dismantling systems that oppress others.

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[74] Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist* (New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2019), 17.
[75] Ibid., 22.
[76] Ibid., 24.

The rejection of systemic racism has been challenging for the majority of the American evangelical church. The previous notes that the evangelical understanding of sin emphasizes personal choice. Because of this understanding, racism is not viewed as a systemic problem but rather a result of poor decisions by individuals. The primary response by many in the church has been the denial of systemic racism. According to the Barna Group's Report:

> Many White practicing Christians are reluctant to acknowledge systemic racial injustice, despite reports from their Black peers in the Church. Three in five white practicing Christians say personal prejudice is a bigger problem than discrimination built into institutions; two-thirds of Black practicing Christians say institutional discrimination is a bigger problem than personal prejudice.[77]

The reluctance of White practicing Christians to acknowledge systemic racial injustice is because systems and structures over American history have favored White people. This highlights American evangelical formation that prioritizes personalized faith, which allows a view of not engaging in racism as abstaining from treating others unfairly.

When it pertains to cultural racism, Kendi contends that whoever creates the cultural standards places themselves at the top of the hierarchy. Historically, White western European cultures have placed themselves as superior. He argues that "being an antiracist implies that one sees all cultures in all their differences as equals and regards cultural differences as just that—cultural differences."[78] This specific focus of seeing all cultural differences as equal and receiving these differences as such is necessary as practice in Christian formation.

This section has examined biblical reconciliation and antiracism as ways to address to cultural difference. Biblical reconciliation is grounded in scripture and the desire to live in the gift of diversity that God has given us. Antiracism is grounded in moving past the rejection of racist behavior and towards the rejection of systems and structures that continue the patterns of

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[77] Barna Group, *Beyond Diversity*, 6.
[78] Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist,* 39.

racism. Both are necessary and needed for action, lasting change, and the pursuit of equality for all people. Biblical reconciliation offers a rationale that leads us to God's heart for humanity. However, neither address cultural difference and divisions through the vehicle of formation and practice. Neither address practices that cultivate honor and a deeper love for those who are culturally different. If we are to be a united body of Christ, growth in love and honor for all members is necessary.

The following section will briefly introduce cultural intelligence and envision it as a spiritual practice to address fragmentation in the body of Christ. This introduction will highlight key voices in cultural intelligence and the ways cultural intelligence is effective to help the church grow in its unity as a globally diverse body. Further development of cultural intelligence as a spiritual practice will be discussed in chapter four. Finally, this introduction will help us to understand the importance of cross-cultural learning as part of our formation and practices.

Cultural Intelligence

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) offers cultural tools that help provide the capability to function effectively across various cultural contexts in a way that honors differences in cultures other than your own. It is essential to learn how to navigate a globalized world and cross-cultural contexts in various areas of ministry and vocation. CQ has become a helpful tool to guide businesses to function and thrive in an increasingly globalized world. David Livermore believes CQ helps expand the ideas of multiculturalism to not only ethnic and national cultures but also organizational and generational subcultures, arguing that "Understanding is an essential part toward more effectively loving the other."[79] Practicing Cultural Intelligence leads us to the fullest expression of awareness; empathy for our neighbor. Livermore's work will be highlighted

[79] Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence*, 141.

in greater depth later as CQ is offered as a spiritual practice that can lead the church towards unity through cross-cultural engagement and learning.

Key Voices of Cultural Intelligence

The main voice that I will draw from to speak about the application of CQ is David Livermore, the president of the Cultural Intelligence Center. The Cultural Intelligence Center offers training, certification, and resourcing for CQ worldwide. CQ has mainly been a tool for the business world, missions, and both ministry and secular leadership. Livermore started his research in the area of short-term missions accessing the ongoing gap in the ability to adjust to new cultural norms that North American students were encountering. The majority of the training, Livermore discovered, was better suited for long-term experiences where individuals would be spending extensive time living or working in a different cultural setting.

The goals of this type of training for short-term trips were unrealistic. The training focused on learning a new language and understanding the complexities of a particular culture. Livermore recognized that these individuals had the desire to become culturally sensitive and aware, realizing that cross-cultural encounters happen daily in our globalized world. As Livermore was introduced to the research on CQ, he believed it to be a better alternative. Rather than emphasizing mastering specific information and behaviors for effectiveness in an individual culture, CQ focuses on developing an overall repertoire of understanding, skills, and behaviors for making sense of the barrage of cultures we encounter daily.[80] The practices of CQ lead us to the fullest expression of awareness; empathy for our neighbor.

The second author is Dr. Duane Elmer, a respected author in missiology and cross-cultural ministry. Elmer is a professor and cross-cultural trainer for relief and development

[80] Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence*, 141

agencies, missions organizations, educational institutions, and Fortune 500 companies. His approach to navigating cross-cultural connections or conflict is founded on biblical principles and a desire to provide practical models for conflict resolution. Elmer argues, "The body of Christ, when its members live together in unity, becomes the visible manifestation of the triune God. The contrary is also true. A lack of unity in our relationships veils the glory of God."[81] Elmer stresses the importance of unity among the Christian community as our identity and also as being vital to the fulfillment of God's mission in the world.

As a missiologist in an evangelical context, Elmer guides conversations and training for many to navigate cross-cultural spaces. Elmer has a deep conviction that unity within diversity is God's idea and is rooted in the creative activity of God. "It was God who authored human diversity. This fact calls all of us to deal with cultural diversity, see it as he sees it—as good—and honor it as the handiwork of the wise and sovereign Creator."[82] Therefore, it is vital to preserving this unity, particularly among cultural difference. Unity within diversity is essential to the church's witness and God's sovereignty.

A supplemental voice is Oliver Phillips, a CQ trainer and former USA/Canada Mission Strategy Coordinator in the Church of the Nazarene. I have a desire to see the application of CQ as a spiritual practice in the denomination I serve in ministry. Therefore, it is important to include Phillips' voice in this conversation. Neither Livermore nor Phillips discusses CQ as part of discipleship and spiritual formation. However, their conviction of the importance of developing culturally intelligent people, particularly within the church, would affirm this expansion of CQ in the area of discipleship and spiritual formational practices to address the

[81] Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 27.

[82] Ibid., 23.

fragmented body of Christ. CQ to the church is a vital resource to navigate diverse spaces because it begins with a strong biblical and theological foundation of culture and ethnicity. Phillips states:

> Since we as a people gathered from all over the earth are created in the image of God, we have worth and dignity. Our worth is not predicated on our place of birth, our native tongue, or our economic status. Imago-Dei says that God's imprint on humans is what gives them their worth independent of the color of their skin or which side of any border they were born. Imago-Dei proclaims that God's image is reflected in multiple colors, language, and cultures.[83]

Shifting our understanding of culture and ethnicity as gifts from the Creator rather than obstacles to overcome can produce in us a fuller view of those around us that leads to improved cross-cultural thinking.

What Makes CQ as Spiritual Practice?

Each of the unique ways of addressing cultural difference is founded to correct inequalities and repairing what is broken between culturally different people groups. Biblical reconciliation and antiracism have merit in their approaches. However, beyond addressing the problem of racial tensions and offering various methods toward wholeness, the desired outcome of this dissertation is to designate a pragmatic cross-cultural learning tool into the fabric of our discipleship practices. Cross-cultural learning methods such as CQ cultivate life-long practices that are accessible or appealing only to those with a calling to missions. This research intends to reimagine and expand discipleship with the spiritual practice of CQ while also informing the whole of discipleship practices through the lens of cross-cultural learning. With these daily and habitual practices, unity with Christ and his global body will become the aim for all believers, not just those who are called.

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[83] Oliver R. Phillips, *Culture Trumps Religion, Every Time: The Ethno-cultural Challenge for the Church* (Orlando, FL: CulturePhillips, 2013),152.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to provide an overview of the fragmentation of the American church and the church's response throughout history. The nation's inception was marked by the age of slavery and colonization, which was the foundation of division among White Christians and Christians of color, particularly from Black and Indigenous communities. From these cultural and ethnic divisions, cultural identity and experience influenced differences in theological perspectives. White evangelical Christians were profoundly shaped by the Western value of individualism. In contrast, Black and Indigenous Christians were shaped by a desire to reclaim cultural identity and a theological and biblical understanding of a God present in their pain and suffering.

The church's fragmented state has been evident throughout American history, marked by tension over the church's response or lack thereof to racial injustices towards communities of color. From slavery to segregation, the church has been fragmented by the hurt caused by the American church's commitment to preserving social order rather than God's desire for unity in the body of Christ. This has created patterns of ethnically homogenous congregations and formation in homogeneity. A reason why the diverse members of the body of Christ are unable to understand their cultural differences is that they are not in proximity to one another. Another reason is that spiritual practices are aimed explicitly at cultivating cross-cultural understanding are non-existent.

Although various models and ideologies for church unity have been attempted, the church continues in its fragmented state presently. This suggests the need for a different approach for an expanded model of discipleship with cross-cultural learning and understanding practices, such as the spiritual practice of CQ. The next chapter introduces a paradigm shift in

discipleship that seeks to extend into the realm of cross-cultural learning through a biblical, theological, sacramental, and credal rationale of the global church's identity. Recognizing that Christian communities are continually increasing in ethnic and racial diversity, the call to be a unified body amid our cultural difference remains.

CHAPTER 3:
PARADIGM SHIFT TOWARDS A CROSS-CULTURAL DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the fragmented state of the church along racial and ethnic lines brought an emergence of theological understandings influenced by cultural identity and experience. Each of these unique perspectives offers a greater glimpse into the vastness of God's character and the distinct experiences of culturally different members of the body of Christ. Although these theological perspectives amplify how God is understood, they remain separated from one another because defragmentation is yet to occur among members of the body of Christ. As a result, each cultural perspective of God remains in its category rather than enriching the experience of the entire global body of Christ. The problem thus comprehended suggests the need for cross-cultural learning to unify the global body and remain accountable to the confessions made about the church's identity.

This chapter aims to demonstrate a rationale for a paradigm shift towards cross-cultural discipleship with practices that guide the church to greater unity. This paradigm shift expands discipleship to include cross-cultural learning to address ecclesio-communal fragmentation. The first section will further examine the American church's understanding of discipleship, highlighting key voices influential in discipleship and identifying ways to cultivate our identity as a globally diverse church. The following sections will develop the rationale for a paradigm shift towards cross-cultural discipleship by examining our ecclesial identity theologically, biblically, sacramentally, and confessionally through creedal statements.

Current State of Discipleship

A paradigm shift in discipleship requires examining the church's understanding of discipleship. It is vital to define discipleship in the American church to understand how

Christians are being formed or not formed. Understanding the intended outcomes of formation leads us to identify how formation needs to shift to address fragmentation in the church. This section will guide us towards a greater understanding of discipleship in the American church.

Guiding this section is a 2015 report called *The State of Discipleship* conducted through a partnership between the *Barna Group* and *The Navigators*. *The Navigators* is an organized movement with discipleship and disciple-making at its core. Their research was conducted to see how closely the perspectives on discipleship of U.S Christians compare to *The Navigators* movement. The data they collected offered responses from a wide variety of people who make up the church in the U.S., such as educators from Catholic and Protestant seminaries and Bible colleges, leaders from churches and parachurch ministries, online and telephone surveys to senior pastors and discipleship pastors, and church members from the ages of 18 and older from various denominational backgrounds.

According to this report, the top ranked description of discipleship among Christians is the following: "Discipleship is a lifelong process and journey rooted in the relationship with Jesus."[84] This definition offers us an understanding of a commitment to spiritual growth and a desire to know Jesus in transformative ways. This report also identifies that Christians have a deep desire to grow and become more like Jesus. The top three reasons Christians want to grow spiritually are to know Jesus, or God, more (43%), to improve or grow in all things (39%), and a desire to be more like Jesus (35%).[85] So desire and intention are there, yet how a Christian is spiritually formed varies.

The relational aspect of discipleship is mainly understood by practicing Christians in the U.S as a personal faith journey with Jesus. When asked about the most effective method of

[84] The Navigators, *The State of Discipleship*, 18.
[85] Ibid., 34.

discipleship, church leaders value a collective approach while church members value an individual approach. Church leaders prefer discipleship in small groups (52%), while church members who say spiritual growth is very or somewhat important prefer discipleship on their own (38%).[86] This data continues to confirm an individualized faith mentioned in the previous chapters between the Christ-follower and Jesus. The report reveals that the pluralities that prefer solitary spiritual pursuit are worrisome for long-term spiritual health.

Even in a solitary, privatized spiritual pursuit, formation happens whether we know it or not. Rich Villodas argues:

> whether we know it or not, see it or not, or understand it or not, we are always at risk of being shallowly formed. We are formed by our false selves, our families of origin, the highly manipulative presentations of social media, and the value system of a world that determines worth based on accomplishments, possessions, efficiency, intellectual acumen, and gifts. So we need to be regularly called back to the essence of our lives in God…Christ being formed in us.[87]

Villodas reminds us of external factors outside of the church shaping us. These external factors do not lead toward deep-rootedness in Christ. Discipleship needs to be in community with those we belong to in the body of Christ. In community we experience connection, accountability, and encouragement to grow in Christ. This is why mentoring and small groups are essential. Growing alongside others allows us to experience the presence of Christ in one another. It creates space for the body of Christ to both edify its members and also point out areas of growth that have been unnoticed or unseen.

There is a need for the physical presence of others in our discipleship. However, in a virtualized age, it is possible to have extended amounts of time without physical touch and face-to-face interactions in community. The report by *The Navigators* states the following:

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[86] Ibid., 47, 49.

[87] Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life: Five Transformative Values to Root Us in the Way of Jesus* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook, 2020), xv.

> Millennials (and older adults, too) isolated by personal technology crave real-life, face-to-face relationships with individuals and small groups. The younger generation also desires wisdom—not just knowledge—to navigate changing times and culture. One-on-one mentoring is the ideal setting to deliver this type of guidance, fostering deep relationship that leads to transformation and serves as an anchor for continuing engagement with the Church. In a culture of isolation, discipleship relationships are an open door for spiritual transformation.[88]

Providing meaningful in-person interactions continues to be the challenging yet necessary work of life in community. "Spiritual transformation is not a solo event. God works in us through others…We all need a circle of friends to encourage, support, and speak the truth to us. Without their authentic voices, we may never see who we are."[89] Experiencing the presence of God working in and through others in our lives is essential to a deeper connection to God and God's people.

At the same time, discipleship needs to be lived out in tangible and embodied ways. Our spiritual formation practice must move us into action. Dr. Preston Sprinkle says, "Discipleship is more of an identity than an activity; understanding and believing who we are shapes what we do…The types of discipleship activities should also be re-examined…Discipleship is both about learning and doing, which are rooted in being."[90] Discipleship rooted in being calls for an assessment of who we are. As disciples of Jesus, we make up a global body of Christ whose stories and cultures face unique challenges within the brokenness of our world and the fragmentation within the church. Yet, there is hope for the church if we are willing to change the ways we are formed.

This section has examined what discipleship means to American Christians. The heart of discipleship is spiritual growth and becoming more like Christ. Although most practicing

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[88] The Navigators, *The State of Discipleship,* 89.

[89] Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015),172.

[90] The Navigators, *The State of Discipleship,* 73.

Christians prefer to engage in the journey of discipleship alone, pastors and church leaders understand the value of discipleship in community. Discipleship in community allows for members of the body of Christ to encourage and challenge one another to become more like Christ. The shift to a more collective approach to discipleship is an area of growth and expansion for American Christians. This shift must also include practices of cross-cultural learning to be formed with and by the global body of Christ.

The following section will highlight leading voices in discipleship and spiritual practices. These pastors and theologians have shaped discipleship in Western Christianity and around the world. The previous section concluded that a shift to a collective approach to discipleship was an identified area of growth and expansion. In the same way, the contributions of these pastors and theologians to discipleship will be examined to determine needed shifts that expand spiritual practices toward cross-cultural learning.

Leading Voices in Discipleship and Spiritual Practices

Understanding the current state of discipleship gives us greater insight into the spiritual practices of the American church. There are voices who have been considered leading voices in discipleship and spiritual formation in recent times, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, James K. A. Smith, and Dallas Willard. All are White males, and we need to confess that although there are pastors and theologians of color who have offered their contributions to discipleship and spiritual formation, they have not been elevated in the ways that White voices have. These practitioners of discipleship have offered a paradigm of discipleship within the framework of Western Christianity. Although the contributions of these practitioners are of great value, there are still more ways to expand and shift the paradigm of discipleship to include practices that shape and unite the global body of Christ.

The first discipleship practitioner to be examined is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Out of the three practitioners mentioned earlier, two are non-American. Bonhoeffer's experience of war and genocide in his country of Germany deeply shaped his understanding of Christ and the embodiment of his discipleship. Although he does not explicitly mention cross-cultural learning as a spiritual practice, Bonhoeffer's discipleship is impacted by the cultural experiences in his homeland and those he encounters within the global church. The following sections will discuss Bonhoeffer and examine the ways cross-cultural engagement shaped his discipleship and his understanding of Christian community.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

There are key moments of cross-cultural learning embedded in the works and life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose understanding of discipleship stirred him to give his life for the cause of persecuted Jews under the Nazi regime. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German theologian and pastor who not only had a radical understanding of following Jesus Christ, but his discipleship informed his entire life—a life that led him to death. He believed that "as we embark upon discipleship, we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death…when Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die."[91]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in 1906 in Breslau, Germany, on the eastern side of the country, to a family of seven children. At the age of sixteen, he was sure he wanted to study theology. Bonhoeffer studied theology at Tübingen and Berlin, as well as at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He studied under Karl Barth, who was a significant influence on his theological development, but he gradually moved away from Barth's emphasis on revelation to

[91] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 89.

develop what Bonhoeffer believed was a more Christocentric approach.[92] Bonhoeffer pastored churches in Barcelona, London, and Berlin. He also served as part of the theological faculty at Union Theological Seminary for a year. During his time in the U.S., he became fascinated by Negro spirituals and the struggle for equality for Black Americans. He later returned to his home, and when the "walls went up around Germany," Bonhoeffer introduced his students to these songs and spirituals.[93]

There are two works that speak of the essence of his fundamental message of what it means to live with Christ: *Life Together* and *The Cost of Discipleship*. Both of these books came out of his reflection upon the meaning of being a Christian in the midst of severe crises. *Life Together* comes out of his time in the fellowship of the underground seminary and his reflections on Christian community. Although he is writing during difficult circumstances, there is a tone of thanksgiving as he shares about the role of personal prayer, worship in community, work, and Christian ministry. *The Cost of Discipleship* offers a call to a deep commitment to following Christ in what he calls "costly discipleship of radical obedience to Jesus Christ." He speaks about the difference between "cheap grace" and "costly grace" and how grace is costly because it compels one to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him.

In his work, *Life Together,* Bonhoeffer largely speaks about life and ministry in community. Yet, there is a chapter that I would like to focus on that speaks to the need to seek out the contemplative disciplines that aid in our personal transformation for the sake of the community. In chapter three, titled "The Day Alone," Bonhoeffer focuses on the disciplines of solitude and silence, meditation, prayer, and intercession. He is addressing the issue of the

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[92] John R. Tyson, *Invitation to Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Anthology* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 390.

[93] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1954), 9.

misuse of community as a distraction to forget loneliness. “Only in fellowship do we learn to be rightly alone and only in aloneness do we learn to live rightly in discipleship. It is not as though the one preceded the other; both begin at the same time, namely, with the call of Jesus Christ.”[94] He believed that both are required because our solitude informs how we engage in fellowship with one another. If we are in solitude and in silence, it will change the way we speak and engage with one another in community. Right speech comes out of silence, and right silence comes out of speech.

As we continue to live in right silence and solitude, our meditation on God’s Word becomes vital for our discipleship. Bonhoeffer explains that in our meditation, we believe that God has something personal to say to us for this day and our Christian life because God’s Word is not only for the church but also for us individually. It is important that the Word “penetrates and dwells within us.” It should follow us for a long time, stick to our mind, disturb us or delight us without the ability to do anything about it so that God’s Word would enter in and remain with us. Our meditation on God’s Word should lead us to and guide our prayers and intercession for others.

In the second movement of his book, *The Cost of Discipleship,* Bonhoeffer focuses on discipleship through the lens of the Sermon on the Mount. He writes about the paradox between our visible discipleship in what he describes as the “extraordinary” and the “hiddenness” of our discipleship in righteousness, prayer, and the devout life found in chapters five and six of Matthew. Bonhoeffer notices the invitation in chapter five to “let your light shine” before all, while in chapter six, there is a call to not call attention to one’s self when giving, praying, and fasting. He reconciles both by saying we must hide the visibility of our discipleship from

[94] Ibid., 77-78.

ourselves and turn towards Christ to whom we look toward and obey. Bonhoeffer says, "Christ's virtue, the virtue of discipleship, can only be accomplished so long as you are entirely unconscious of what you are doing. The genuine work of love is always a hidden work."[95] Our witness is about a life of obedience and humility that points to Christ and Christ alone.

When the Nazi government came to power, Bonhoeffer accepted a call to pastor two congregations in London because he refused to have any part in what he called the "German-Christian compromise" with the Nazi government. In 1934 Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, and others urged German Christians to stand apart from the state Lutheran Church because it supported the Nazi regime. Those who resisted the Nazis established the Confessing Church movement putting many in grave danger. As the state church and its institutions, such as seminaries, continued to fall in line with the Nazi ideology, Bonhoeffer began an "illegal" clandestine seminary for training young pastors. This underground seminary moved several times and continued in operation until Bonhoeffer left Germany and returned to New York to join the faculty of Union Theological Seminary. Yet, within two weeks, he felt compelled to return to Germany because he believed he could not live safely in exile while the Confessing Church faced Nazi persecution.[96]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is also known for his involvement in a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler and overthrow his government alongside his brother-in-law and several high-ranking military leaders. It is evident that he struggled with this decision, particularly since he had been deeply influenced by the non-violent movements of Mahatma Gandhi and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. In the book *Life Together*, it says:

> The man who felt all the force of the pacifist position and weighed the "cost of discipleship" concluded in the depths of his soul that to withdraw from those who were

[95] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship,* 159.
[96] Tyson, *Invitation to Christian Spirituality*, 390.

> participating in the political and military resistance would be irresponsible cowardice and flight from reality. Not…that he believed that everybody must act as he did, but from where he was standing, he could see no possibility of retreat into any sinless, righteous, pious refuge. The sin of respectable people reveals itself in flight of responsibility. He saw that sin falling upon him and he took his stand.[97]

After two failed attempts against Hitler's life, Bonhoeffer and others were discovered and sent to prison. After two years of imprisonment, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged by the Gestapo. He died in 1945, just one month before the end of the war. A testimony from a fellow prisoner who was an English officer wrote about his final moments. "They said, 'Prisoner Bonhoeffer, come with us.' That had only one meaning for all prisoners—the gallows. We said goodbye to him. He took me aside: 'This is the end, but for me it is the beginning of life.'"[98]

In summary, the life and works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer were formed by the cultural experiences around him and life in community with the body of Christ. Bonhoeffer's understanding of God's presence at work in his life and in the world informed his understanding of Christian discipleship to be a life of radical obedience to the way of Jesus. This influenced the entirety of his life, which gave him the boldness to speak out against a church that was aligning itself with a leader and an ideology that ignored recognizing the image of God in the Jewish people and supported the superiority of whiteness and Nazism in Germany. It gave him the courage to not abandon his fellow sisters and brothers of the Confessing Church who were being persecuted and standing for justice and truth. It gave him the humility to have a posture of learning and be shaped by movements around the world that fought against injustice and inequality. It compelled him to continue writing, mentoring leaders and pastors, and calling his sisters and brothers to follow Christ faithfully in a world filled with war and evil.

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[97] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 11.
[98] Ibid., 13.

It caused Bonhoeffer to also see the importance of an individual transformation for the sake of transforming the entire community. Bonhoeffer's identity was in his belonging to and in the body of Christ. He believed that "Our community with one another consists solely in what Christ has done to both of us."[99] It is recognizing the presence and transforming work of Christ that offers a life of peace and true knowledge of one another. A genuine encounter with the divine led him to places of danger, imprisonment, and death. According to Bonhoeffer, "To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more self, to see only him who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us. Once more, all that self-denial can say is: 'He leads the way, keep close to him.'"[100] Christian discipleship for Bonhoeffer was about tangibly embodying and being united in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ within the fellowship of the body of Christ.

The following section will examine the contributions to discipleship of James K. A. Smith. Smith is also a non-American from Canada. This section will focus on Smith's understanding of cultural formation and how it shapes our core identity and our loves. The formation of our loves directly affects the practices we engage in. The relationship between love and practices has implications for the ways we engage in cross-cultural learning for the sake of unity within the diversity of the body of Christ.

James K. A. Smith

James K. A. Smith is a professor of philosophy at Calvin University. Smith's understanding of discipleship and practices focuses on matters of the heart. This is deeply connected to the ways he has been shaped by the writings of North African theologian and philosopher Augustine of Hippo. For Smith, we are what we love, desire, and long for. This

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[99] Ibid., 25.
[100] Tyson, *Invitation to Christian Spirituality*, 393.

determines how we worship and the practices we engage in. Discipleship is ultimately love embodied.

In similar ways to Bonhoeffer, Smith sees spiritual practices as a way of being conformed to the way of Christ in real and visible ways of love embodied. Smith says, "The Body of Christ is that unique community of practice whose members own up to the fact that we don't always love what we say we do—that the 'devices and desires' of our hearts outstrip our best intentions. The practices of Christian worship are a tangible, practices, re-formative way to address this tension and gap."[101] This community of the body of Christ is a place of confession of who we truly are and the ways we fall short. This also has implications for the unity of the church. Our identity as the body of Christ is to be one body with many members, and yet we are fragmented. Therefore, Smith believes that Christian practices of "re-formation," practices that shape us back into Christ's desire for us, are essential in response to our confessions.

For Smith, our loves guide and shape us, changing our very identity and actions. He writes:

> If you are what you love, and your ultimate loves are formed and aimed by your immersion in practices and cultural rituals, then such practices fundamentally shape who you are. At stake here is your very identity, your fundamental allegiances, your core convictions and passions that center both your self-understanding and your way of life. In other words, this contest of cultural practices is a competition for your heart—the center of the human person designed for God, as Augustine reminded us. More precisely, at stake in the formation of your loves is your religious and spiritual identity, which is manifested not only in what you think or what you believe but in what you do—and what those practices do to you.[102]

The formation of our ultimate loves presses against all that we value. Smith understands that cultural practices shape us and transform the core of who we are, our hearts, and our spiritual

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[101] James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016), 30.

[102] Ibid., 22.

identity. Smith understands the influence of cultural practices to be in competition of our hearts. However, engaging cultural practices that lead us to a greater understanding of one another in the Body of Christ re-forms us in God's desire for ecclesial unity. Moreover, engaging in cultural practices and cross-cultural learning sheds light on how our limited love has not been extended to those who are within the body of Christ. Through God's Spirit, our love and care for one another as members of the global body can be embodied in the engagement of our practices. Engaging in cross-cultural learning is our love expressed for members of the body of Christ who are culturally different and our desire to be united with them.

The following section will examine the contributions to discipleship of Dallas Willard. Willard is an American philosopher whose writings on spiritual formation and discipleship have profoundly impacted the American church. This section will focus on Willard's understanding and application of classical spiritual disciplines and the ways it shapes our shared life within the global body of Christ.

Dallas Willard

In his writings on the spiritual discipline of fellowship, confession, and submission, Dallas Willard offers a vision of shared life within the body of Christ. Our lives, according to Willard, require regular and profound conjunction with others because Christian redemption is not intended to be a solitary thing. Willard believes this to be true about the spiritual practice of fellowship. "Personalities united can contain more of God and sustain the force of his greater presence much better than scattered individuals. The fire of God kindles higher as the brands are heaped together and each is warned by the other's flame. The members of the body must be in contact if they are to sustain and be sustained by each other."[103] His understanding of spiritual

[103] Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 1988), 186.

practices has collective and corporate realities within the body of Christ. To be the body of Christ with diverse members means so much more than just a gathering of people in the faith. The fire of God kindles higher when members—diverse members—are in community with one another. Our diverse experiences shaping one another making us more like Jesus is part of what it means to be in fellowship.

In the practice of confession within fellowship, Willard explains how we let trusted others know our deepest weaknesses and failures in confession. Certainly, this practice can lead to a transformation of heart and mind as we speak the truth about ourselves and our world honestly by the ways we have fallen short of love. The *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* defines confession as "the process whereby the Holy Spirit opens my heart to what is true about me…embracing Christ's gift of forgiveness and restoration while setting us on the path to renewal and change."[104] But confession also leads to deep bonds within community. "Confession alone makes deep fellowship possible, and the lack of it explains much of the superficial quality so commonly found in our church associations. What, though, makes confession bearable? Fellowship. There is an essential reciprocity between these two disciplines."[105] For Willard, confession is essential for the depth of our connection as members of the body of Christ.

It leads to connection, but it also leads to justice and restitution. Willard continues by saying that restitution cannot be omitted within the practice of confession. As people who belong to the body of Christ, we must confess the many ways we have harmed other members through things that have been done or left undone by participating systems that offer some advantages over others. Because the body of Christ represents people from all nations, cultures, and languages, this confession also means asking for forgiveness for the ways our actions or

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[104] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook,* 101.
[105] Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines,* 188.

inactions have affected communities in all places of the world. This must lead to repair and making things right. Willard says, "It is difficult not to rectify wrong done once it is confessed and known widely. Of course, not all sin calls for restitution. But it is unthinkable that I should sincerely confess to my brother or sister that I have stolen a purse or harmed a reputation and then blithely go may without trying to make some restoration for the loss."[106] It is the confession of the way our love has fallen short towards our sisters and brothers that demands tangible ways towards restoration and healing.

For Willard, the highest level of fellowship involving transparency, humility, truth-telling, as well as confession and restitution, is sustained by the spiritual practice of submission. He says:

> The Way of Jesus knows no submission outside of the context of mutual submission of all to all… In submission we engage the experience of those in our fellowship who are qualified to direct our efforts in growth and who then add the weight of their wise authority on the side of our willing spirit to help us to do the things we would like to do and refrain from the things we don't want to do. They oversee the godly order in our souls as well as in our fellowship and in the surrounding body of Christ.[107]

Submission is not about a hierarchy of power but mutuality and living in the reality of our oneness in Christ. It is a tangible expression of life in the kingdom of God where those who find themselves powerless in the kingdoms of this world find themselves being lifted up and invited to a seat at the table of grace by King Jesus. When addressing the question "Are These Disciplines Adequate?" Willard says that these practices are more than adequate to help us to receive the "Christ-full life." However, he continues by saying, "The walk with Christ certainly is one that leaves room for and even *calls for* individual creativity and an experimental attitude in such matters… Other disciplines can be added, but these are the foundational ones."[108] I would

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[106] Ibid., 189.
[107] Ibid., 190.
[108] Ibid.

argue that these foundational practices are adequate if they are practiced in ways that shape us as a global, ethnically diverse body of Christ. Undoubtedly, there is space for other practices that can help Christ-followers to receive the "Christ-full life" particularly as we understand the life of Jesus to value and prioritize cross-cultural engagement and learning as a practice of the kingdom of God.

This section has highlighted the influence of Bonhoeffer, Smith, and Willard on discipleship and spiritual practices in Western Christianity. Through the examination of the ways these key voices understand discipleship, it was identified that cultural experiences, cultural practices, and life in community with the body of Christ are essential to our formation. Particularly in the examination of Bonhoeffer and Willard, there is an emphasis on the importance of being shaped in community as members of the body of Christ. Therefore, it is important for the church to understand what the body of Christ and Christian community means. If we confess to being one body with many diverse members and yet we are a fragmented church, we need to have practices that lead toward becoming united and giving witness to what we confess to be.

The following sections will discuss how the church confesses its ecclesial identity as the body of Christ. The importance of our global ecclesial identity expressed theologically, biblically, sacramentally, and confessionally through creedal statements can help us understand the importance of cross-cultural learning and understanding. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun argues that "the family of God is not simply a utilitarian concept; it is a loving organism where every part belongs and finds its health in right relationship to every other part."[109] The church's oneness

[109] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 150.

grounded in God's vibrant love and expressed in and through its diverse members is our identity as the body of Christ.

Trinitarian Theology Shapes our Unity

This section will discuss the theological rationale of our ecclesial unity. The theological emphasis will be on God's triune nature and how that informs our unity. The foundation of who we are as the Body of Christ must begin with our understanding of who God is. Because God is love, unity, and diversity, we who dwell in God and God in us can exist in love, unity, and diversity. Our trinitarian theology comes from what God has revealed through Scripture about God's nature of existing in unity within diversity.

Our theological understanding of our unity as Christ followers begins with Jesus's desire for his disciples and those who would believe in Jesus through their message. In Jesus's final words recorded in John chapters 14-17, he uses language that expresses his desire for unity and connectedness for his disciples to reflect his relationship with God the Father. We understand these words to be essential as this is his farewell discourse to his disciples before the painful journey toward the cross. Jesus using the imagery of a vine, says to his disciples, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."[110] After Jesus's discourse to his disciples, he prays for them, saying, "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me."[111] Jesus uses the distinctness of trinitarian language to describe the relationship he desires to have with his followers and his followers with each other.

[110] John 15:5, NIV.
[111] John 17:21, NLT.

This language of "oneness" is a theme throughout Scripture, describing God's very own nature as Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three-in-one. The Trinity exists in "complete unity" while also existing in diversity. Therefore, we recognize that the biblical vision of unity sees diversity as an essential component of its uniqueness and "otherness." In the book *The Orthodox Way,* Eastern Orthodox Theologian Kallistos Ware offers insight into God's unity in diversity, which he names as "triunity." He writes:

> There is in God genuine diversity as well as true unity. The Christian God is not just a unity but a union, not just unity but community. There is in God something analogous to "society." He is not a single person, loving himself alone, not a self-contained monad or "The One." He is *triunity:* three equal persons, each one dwelling in the other two by virtue of an unceasing movement of mutual love.[112]

It is through this theological lens of understanding this unique "trinity" of God that the body of Christ finds its identity. God desires for the members of Christ's body to exist in an "unceasing movement of mutual love" even when it is challenging to exist together amid our differences. Mutual love is a calling of the body of Christ to learn, understand, listen, and embrace other members because we are united with one another. Since God is both diverse and united, the church, therefore, must be as well. Being "one" is not about individuality but about living united within the gift of diversity that exists through God's Spirit.

In summary, this section has discussed the ways trinitarian theology informs our identity as the body of Christ. The body of Christ is identified by oneness, the same oneness that exists in the Triune God. The oneness that Jesus desires for his disciples is not uniformity. Rather, oneness is expressed through diverse and unique members being united as one.

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[112] Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 27.

Biblical Vision of Unity in Diversity

This section will discuss how our global ecclesial identity is expressed biblically, particularly focusing on the accounts of the early church in the book of Acts. The inception of the early church as people of diverse backgrounds sharing life with one another was possible in and through the power of God's Spirit. God's Spirit initiates a multicultural, multilingual, and ethnically and racially diverse body of believers to be God's agents of love in our world. This is the biblical foundation of who we are as the church.

The origins of the church are offered to us in the Acts of the Apostles. The beauty of the diverse fellowship and unity is the overflow of Pentecost that is described in Acts 2. Samuel Solivan argues that the Pentecost event informs our attitudes towards diversity because it is "not a suspension of difference but the free and liberating inclusion of difference mediated by the Holy Spirit in hope, love, and peace."[113] The image that is offered in this passage is the scattered world being re-collected in all of its difference to bring glory to God's name. The imagery of Pentecost seems like the narrative of the tower of Babel told in reverse. Rather than humanity desiring to reach toward the heavens to make a name for themselves, God's Spirit comes down towards humanity, who then surrender to God's will and purposes. Language is no longer a source of confusion but a gift to offer the good news to people from many tribes, nations, and tongues. Salter McNeil states: "Although not the fullness of the kingdom, it was a sign of the kingdom, and it was empowering humanity to surrender to the design of God. It was the reception of the Holy Spirit that first offered the church hope of a social and spiritual community composed of people from 'every tribe and nation' and unified by the centrality of Christ."[114] It

[113] Samuel Solivan, "The Holy Spirit-Personalization and the Affirmation of Diversity: A Pentecostal Hispanic Perspective," in *Teología en Conjunto: A Collaborative Hispanic Theology,* ed. José David Rodriguez and Loida I. Martell Otero (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 60.

[114] Salter McNeil, *Roadmap to Reconciliation*, 25.

was a glimpse of a Christ-centered community where different individuals are gathered together as one body through the power of the Holy Spirit to offer the world something reconciled and made new.

The book of Acts continually offers signs of the kingdom through the common unity that exists among this early church fellowship. The community of Jesus-followers is filled with the Holy Spirit, living out this unity in tangible ways. In Acts 2, it says:

> All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.[115]

This gathering of people, the *ekklesia,* is a community birthed out of both the desire of Christ for his followers and the empowering of the Holy Spirit to live with and belong to one another. Robert Banks explains that this gathering is "not merely a human association, a gathering of like-minded individuals for a religious purpose, but is a divinely created affair."[116] As this Christian community continued to add to their number, their community's progress was expressed in the living out of their beliefs in physical expressions: baptism as a sign of community membership; the laying on of hands as a physical action that normally accompanied the gift of the Spirit; the sharing of the common meal as a means of fellowship and fully expressed in its deepest meaning of remembering the life, death, and resurrection of Christ; the exchange of kisses to greet one another and offer the peace of Christ among people of different races, classes, and families; and, lastly, and the sharing of possessions as a mark of a loving and generous heart and as those who would be willing to follow Jesus, even to the cross.[117]

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[115] Acts 2:44-47.

[116] Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Cultural Setting*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 31.

[117] Ibid.,77-87.

As mentioned in the previous section, "oneness" within Christian community is how the church is identified as distinctive in the world. Bonhoeffer describes what Christian community means. Bonhoeffer states, "It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity."[118] Belonging to one another is not only because of Jesus, but through Jesus. The oneness of the church is made possible in and through Jesus, the one who was "made flesh and made his dwelling among us."[119] Former University Chaplain of Point Loma Nazarene University, Dr. Ruben Welch, shares his reflections on community life in and through Jesus. He writes:

> You see, I have come to believe with all my heart that the life that Jesus brings is a shared life. The life of God in the world does not have its meaning in isolated units, but in a fellowship of those who share that life in him… The point is that Christians are not brought together because they life each other, but because they share a common life in Jesus and are faced with the task of learning how to love each other as members of the family.[120]

It is this familial identity that compels us to remain connected. It is the life of Christ that binds us together and shapes how we live together.

Therefore, our oneness as a mark of the church must also be grounded in rhythms and practices that shape our unity as Christ-followers. From the beginning of the New Testament church, recorded in the Book of Acts, spiritual practices were part of the basic rhythm of those who were followers of Jesus. We read, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."[121] Through the Holy Spirit's power, these common practices created an ethos where "all the believers were together and had everything in

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[118] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 21.

[119] John 1:14.

[120] Ruben Welch, *We Really Do Need Each Other: A Call to Community in the Church* (Nashville, TN: Generoux Nelson, 1973), 34-35.

[121] Acts 2:42, NIV.

common" and "one in heart and mind."[122] Each time there were divisions within the early church—particularly divisions among different ethnic groups—they were addressed by way of pastoral letters of exhortation pointing them back to the characteristics and life of Jesus and the unity of the body of Christ. These intentional practices helped point these early Christ-followers to their identity as a Christian community.

In summary, this section discussed that our ecclesial identity is initiated as an ethnically and racially diverse church. This is the work of God's Spirit to bring together people from many nations and tongues in loving unity. This unity is sustained by common practices that continue to remind them of their oneness with Christ and with each other. The sacraments of the eucharist and baptism are two particular practices that cultivate ecclesial identity. As we come to the table and enter the waters of the baptism, we join together with sisters and brothers all over the world in unity as Christ's body.

Sacramental Practices of *Re-membering*

This section will discuss how sacramental practices unite the diverse members of the body of Christ. The church's sacramental practices of the eucharist and baptism are not only for the purpose of remembrance but also for *re-membering* as we are continually called back to gather at the Lord's table together. In these practices, the Christ follower is invited to bring to mind and heart our identity in Christ and one another. In doing so, we proclaim our oneness with Christ and with one another as the body of Christ.

These intentional shared practices helped shape the unity of the Christian community and were essential to remain true to ecclesial identity. The previous section mentioned the practice of breaking bread together. Often, breaking bread would be defined as sharing a common meal and

[122] Acts 2:44; 4:32, NIV.

table fellowship. This also would be defined as the sacramental practice of the eucharist in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for us. Through Christ's broken body and shed blood, we are reconciled to God and one another. This meal proclaims our union with Christ and one another.

Within the liturgy of the eucharist—or as some churches call it, the Lord's Supper—these words are often spoken before a congregation prays the Lord's Prayer: "By your Spirit make us one in Christ, one with each other, and one in the ministry of Christ to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory."[123] In reference to partaking in this sacrament, the Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthian church, offers a view that partaking of one bread and one cup together would constitute their oneness as Christ's body. "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."[124] Paul continues to exhort the Corinthian church to "examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup."[125] There were rumors of divisions and factions in the church. Often, these divisions we along racial and ethnic lines between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Therefore, Paul's appeal to the church is not only for self-examination but also to partake in a manner that is worthy of belonging to one body founded in sacrificial, Christ-like love.

The continued increase in diversity of the early church went beyond the distinctions along national, social, and gender lines that existed in the Roman Empire. Paul is guiding the church through the worshiping and gathering of males and females, slaves and free, and Jews and Gentiles. Paul's language in describing God's people shifted to a more secular term such as the "body." This term described an image of the church's vision of unity that both Jews and

[123] Church of the Nazarene, "Section 700: Lord's Supper," in *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene 2017-2021,* https://2017.manual.nazarene.org/section/lords-supper-sacraments/.

[124] 1 Cor. 10:17.

[125] 1 Cor. 11:28.

Gentiles could understand as they continued to move towards greater ethnic and racial diversity. Theologian James D. G. Dunn explicates such a shift. Dunn says:

> Paul shifts the corporate image of the Christian community from that of the nation state (historic Israel) to that of body politic, that is, from a community identified by ethnic and traditional boundary markers to one whose members are drawn from nationalities and social strata and whose prosperity depends on their mutual cooperation and their working harmoniously together.[126]

Dunn argues that this shift in identity creates a shift of understanding in the community "where the key distinguishing factor is a sense of mutual interdependence in Christ, expressed in a mutual responsibility one for another which manifests the grace of Christ."[127] This is a culturally-crafted shift that is inclusive of this increasingly diverse Christian community while being true to Christ's desire for unity for his followers.

In the twelfth chapter of the letter to the Roman church, Paul urges to not "conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."[128] He continues by advocating for a humble posture, mindful of ourselves and others, to understand the larger purpose of our identity as one body with many members belonging to all the others. Perhaps as we consider the patterns of the Roman world, we would understand that the way of Jesus is countercultural to the way of Rome.

Theologian Michael Bird gives insight into the culture of the Roman empire. Bird writes, "Despite the historical grandeur, cultural wealth, and the promotion of virtues like justice…, the Roman empire was cruel, repressive, and merciless, especially to non-elites and those on its margins."[129] These patterns of fear often produce cultural stereotypes which lead to otherization,

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[126] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 551.

[127] Ibid., 552.

[128] Rom. 12:2, NIV.

[129] Michael F. Bird, *The Story of God Bible Commentary: Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 415-416.

nativism, and ethnocentrism. Yet, Paul calls the church to reject conformity to the way of Rome and embrace transformation and renewal of our thoughts and our way of being. Instead of pursuing honor and status, we are to cultivate humility as a way of pursuing community within the corporate body. Like Dunn, Bird also suggests that Paul borrows a secular metaphor about the "body politic" to stress that "while the members are diverse in their function, they remain inalienably dependent on each other."[130] Practicing the sacrament of the eucharist reminds us that the way of Jesus is not the way of Rome. The way of Jesus is about being a people who are blessed, broken, and given in union with Christ and each other.

Within church history, the sacraments were often viewed as common practices that enhanced unity and commitment within the church. This is a view strongly emphasized and developed by Augustine in reference to the sacraments. "In no religion, whether true or false, can people be held together in association, unless they are gathered together with some share in some visible signs or sacraments."[131] The understanding of the sacraments as a central function of unity continued to be reinforced during the Reformation era in the writings of Martin Luther. In his 1519 treatise, *The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ,* Luther asserted that the sacrament of the eucharist was to reassure believers that they truly were members of the body of Christ. Luther explains:

> To receive this sacrament in bread and wine, then, is nothing else than to receive a sure sign of this fellowship and union with Christ and all the saints. It is as if citizens were given a sign, a document, or some other token, to assure them that they are indeed citizens of the city, and members of that particular community… In this sacrament, therefore, we are given a sure sign from God that we are united with Christ and the saints, and have all things in common with them, and that Christ's suffering and life are our own.[132]

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[130] Ibid., 425.

[131] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction,* 4th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 428.

[132] Ibid.

Luther argues that engaging in the sacrament of the eucharist is a sign of our ecclesial identity. The eucharist unites us with Christ and those who put their faith in Christ. This has global implications because of our commonality with all members of Christ's body who come to the table. Luther uses the language of citizenship, indicating that we belong to Christ and one another. While each individual is unique, all members, in their unity, represent something greater than themselves. These members come together as one body.

Another sacramental practice that cultivates our unity with Christ and one another is baptism. As the church, we are also called to remember our baptism as a sign of our ecclesial identity. The sacrament of baptism is a sign of our unity with Christ and one another. Paul offers us language relating baptism to unity with the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. In his letter to the Roman church, he writes, "Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."[133] Baptism in its expression through immersion offers us a physical and visual understanding of being "buried" as one is submerged into the waters and raised up and out of the waters.

Throughout the church's history, baptism continued to be a sign of the Christ-follower's belonging to the body of Christ. In the second century, baptism was the final part of a long process of initiation into the church. Early Christians would engage in a rigorous catechumenate that could last as long as three years. During this time of catechesis, they were considered "hearers of the Word" but could not join the congregation in practices such as prayer, the passing of the peace, and the Eucharist. Although this process of initiation was extensive, those who had

[133] Rom. 6:4-5.

been through it were willing to die (and frequently did) for their faith.[134] Once one was baptized, this new member of the church would participate in the common practices of the church for the first time.

Over the years, practices of Christian initiation have changed, yet baptism continued to be at the center of membership and belonging. In 1982, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, made up of mainly Protestant denominations, met in Lima, Peru, and published a theological statement titled "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry." This was a product of several years of ecumenical study dialogue to identify sacramental beliefs that could be affirmed together by these various denominations. The following statement was part of their conclusion as they examined baptism as part of the incorporation into the body of Christ:

> Administered in obedience to our Lord, baptism is a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place. Our common baptism, which unites us Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity. We are one people and are called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in all the world. The union with Christ which we share through baptism has important implications for Christian unity. "There is...one baptism, one God and Father of us all…" (Eph. 4:4-6). When baptismal unity is realized in one holy, catholic, apostolic Church, a genuine Christian witness can be made to the healing and reconciling love of God. Therefore, our one baptism into Christ constitutes a call to the churches to overcome their divisions and visibly manifest their fellowship.[135]

This statement is faithful to the language offered in Scripture while addressing the issue of fragmentation and division in the church. At the heart of this ecumenical dialogue was a reminder of the common practices that *re-member* the body of Christ and remind us of our global, diverse, ecclesial identity in Christ with one another.

In summary, this section discussed the sacramental practices of the eucharist and baptism as ways of re-membering. These sacraments remind us of our ecclesial identity as one body with

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[134] James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 226.
[135] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology Reader,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 596.

many diverse members. This is important because as we are reminded of our oneness, we must therefore be willing to engage in practices that guide us in better understanding those we belong to. The sacraments remind us of our oneness, but it also reminds us of the larger picture of the global church. Members from north, south, east, and west participate in the sacraments to proclaim that they belong to the body of Christ.

This is why cross-cultural learning as a spiritual practice is essential for addressing fragmentation in the church. Christ's commission to the church is to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[136] Disciples of all nations are baptized to belong to one another as the body of Christ in the name of the triune God. The church needs spiritual practices that cultivate our ecclesial identity of oneness regularly. We need practices that connect us and make us aware of our racially, ethnically, and culturally different sisters and brothers as an act of love for them and the unity of the church. We confess as a church to be united as one body with members. Therefore, a shift in our practices must include ways that cultivate unity in diversity and keeps us accountable to what we confess as a church.

Creedal Confessions of Ecclesial Unity

This section will discuss the collective statements of the church that confess ecclesial identity and our corporate beliefs. Our biblical, theological, and sacramental understandings of church guide and inform our creedal confessions of our ecclesial unity. We as the church are marked in our oneness, our pursuit of holiness, our catholicity, and our apostolic witness of being commissioned by Christ to engage in God's redemptive mission in our world. These have cross-cultural implications because we confess to being one body with many diverse members.

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[136] Matt. 28:19.

A central theme of ecclesiological unity is offered within the marks of the church stated in our creedal confessions. These marks describe the Christian church's characteristics, functions, and ecclesial identity, guiding our understanding of it as a large, vibrant, diverse, and global family. The church's marks as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic "have been of importance to ecclesiological discussion since the fourth century."[137] This is our confession of our identity, demonstrating how the church functions as a collective through the power of God's Spirit.

The marks of the church's oneness and holiness are intertwined. As mentioned earlier, the trinitarian nature of God makes God distinctly "other," a holy God. The church's oneness speaks of its distinct holy purpose of being united in God and united with its diverse membership. When the church lives into its oneness, it reflects the holiness of God in truer ways. Cyprian of Carthage said this about the unity of the church: "The Church is one, and by her fertility she has extended by degree into many…cut off the ray from the orb of the sun; the unity of light cannot be divided…So it is also with the Church. She is flooded with the light of the Lord, and extends her rays all over the globe. Yet it is the one light which is diffused everywhere, without breaking up the unity of the body."[138] Cyprian's understanding is aligned with Jesus's words of exhortation in Matthew 5: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."[139] As the church shines its "one light with rays all over the globe," it gives witness and glory to God.

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[137] McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 408.
[138] McGrath, *Christian Theology Reader*, 492.
[139] Matt. 5:14-16, NIV.

The same is true in the church's marks of apostolicity and catholicity. The apostolicity of the church comes from its commission from Christ to continue in its evangelistic and missionary tasks carrying on the succession of the apostolic ministry, which also shapes the catholicity or the larger, global nature of the church. In the final chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus offers the words we call the "Great Commission." In it, Jesus speaks of his authority in heaven and earth and charges his disciples to "go and make disciples *of all nations.*"[140] The evangelistic mission of Jesus values the inclusion of people from every nation and tongue. This is a call to shift from a monocultural movement to a global identity. Jesus asks them to "go," which calls them to be in proximity with people from other ethnicities. Furthermore, the call to "make disciples" expresses a desire for proximity in their discipleship and formation together. Diversity and multiethnicity are at the core of Christ's vision of the church's distinctiveness as a continuation of his earthly ministry.

Through these various ways and lenses, we understand the unity of the body of Christ. Unity is the way by which the church is identified to be distinct in the world. Our oneness in Christ and with each other declares to the world to believe and know that Jesus was sent to the world and that God loves the world.[141] The church's unity within its diversity is the witness of Christ's love and Spirit in us as a body. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."[142]

In summary, the credal confessions of the church as being one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church are the collective statements we claim about ourselves and proclaim to the world. The cross-cultural implications of these confessions shape our ecclesial understanding of

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[140] Matt. 28:19, NIV.
[141] John 17:21, 23.
[142] John 13:35.

what we claim to be. Our confessions of oneness and holiness point to the distinct otherness of God, God in three persons, while pointing to the otherness of the church, one body with many diverse members. Our confessions of apostolicity and catholicity point to the movement from a monocultural movement to a multicultural, global church. Our credal confessions must align with the practices we regularly engage in to be accountable to our ecclesial, global identity.

Our ecclesial identity as a globally diverse body of Christ must be examined in every way to understand the importance of what our oneness means. The current understanding of discipleship and the examination of our ecclesial identity theological, biblically, sacramentally, and confessionally indicates that more is required in our formation as a church to address fragmentation so that we can be the united church we profess to be. A paradigm shift in our discipleship needs to be made to include practices that directly address and nurture cross-cultural learning and understanding because of the ethnically and racially diverse nature of the body of Christ.

The following section will discuss the shift to a cross-cultural paradigm for discipleship. Cross-cultural learning and understanding not only shape us in our ecclesial identity it ultimately addresses the goals of discipleship. Cross-cultural learning as a spiritual practice guides us towards spiritual growth in unity in the body of Christ and in Christ-likeness. It also cultivates in each member the value of cultural difference and the ways each culture uniquely points to the greatness and otherness of our Holy God.

Shifting to a Cross-Cultural Paradigm for Discipleship

One of the main reasons I contend that cross-cultural learning and understanding should be a spiritual practice for all Christ followers is because of Jesus's own identity as the incarnate God. Hebrews starts by saying, "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways

by the prophets."[143] David Livermore argues that one of the ways that uniquely distinguished Israel's God, Yahweh, from the other gods of the ancient world was the way God personally communicated with God's people. "Yahweh communicated to his people using accessible language and symbols."[144] The second verse continues by saying, "but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds."[145] God communicates in the most personal way through the incarnation of Jesus; God made flesh. "The language of God is Jesus. The incarnation is the ultimate form of contextualization, the fullest embodiment of cultural intelligence."[146] God entering into the story of humanity by taking on flesh in the person of Jesus is the way by which God is made known and understood to the world.

Another reason why cross-cultural learning and understanding should be a practice for all Christ followers is that Jesus's ministry is expressed in the gathering of all people to God and proclaiming God's Kingdom was near. Jesus engaged in his own Jewish culture embracing Jewish law and being part of everyday Jewish life and culture. At the same time, Jesus would often defy cultural norms that were discriminatory against the poor, marginalized, and those considered culturally other. One of the moments where Jesus defies cultural norms is found in the fourth chapter of the gospel according to John. This passage is about Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. It says, "But he [Jesus] had to go through Samaria."[147] It is believed that most Jews would avoid going through Samaria because of the hostility between Jews and Samaritans and hostility toward each other's holy sites. In 128 BC, a Jewish king

[143] Heb. 1:1.
[144] Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence*, 33.
[145] Heb. 1:2.
[146] Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence*, 33.
[147] John 4:4.

named John Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, Samaria's most holy site. In the first century AD, a group of Samaritans entered the Jerusalem temple secretly and desecrated it with corpses, leading to the Samaritans' permanent exclusion from Jerusalem's temple.[148] By going through Samaria, Jesus goes against the cultural boundaries that separate two culturally different people groups, cultural gender norms, and religious traditions. Livermore argues that Jesus is "giving us a living picture of what it means to incarnationally reach across the chasm of difference while fully maintaining the integrity of who he is as God."[149]

For Jesus, this is not only part of his life but also part of his teaching and formation of his followers. In the Gospel according to Luke, in chapter ten, Jesus, in a conversation with an expert in the law about eternal life, teaches through a parable that highlights a Samaritan offering neighborly care and compassion.[150] As part of the conversation, it is pointed out that loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbor as ourselves is required to live eternally. Jesus's parable of loving neighbor as ourselves offers an image of a Samaritan man who stops to help a Jewish man ignored and passed by two Jewish leaders. This parable elevates the Samaritan man in a story told to a Jewish crowd. Through this parable, Jesus is changing a cultural narrative that vilifies another ethnic group and expanding the understanding of "neighbor" that includes people outside the Jewish ethnic group.

Interestingly, the previous chapter, chapter nine of the Gospel according to Luke, records a hostile interaction between Samaritans and the disciples after they were not received. It says, "When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to

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[148] Craig S. Keener and John H. Walton, *NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 1828.

[149] Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence,* 40.

[150] Luke 10:25-37.

come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them."[151] This parable not only addresses cultural tensions, but it also communicates new rhythms of love for his followers and invites them into a new way of being. Again, Jesus is expanding the idea of "neighbor" to those outside of our culture and those we are often in conflict with due to cultural difference. This is also consistent with interactions with Gentiles during Jesus's life and ministry, such as the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:5-13), the Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7:24-29), the feeding of the four thousand in the Decapolis region (Mark 8:1-8), as well as Jesus's interactions with those who found themselves on the margins of society. As followers of Jesus, if our identity is founded on becoming more like Jesus, we must consider the priority in Jesus's life and ministry to engage cross-culturally.

As the church continues to affirm and confess its uniqueness as a global body, it is accurate to assume that its membership should also identify in the same way and formulate its discipleship practices accordingly. As the church maintains a constant awareness of its global existence, its members must be prepared for a transformation of mind by which the word "cross-cultural" is attached to "identity." As members of the global body of Christ, we are to be mindful of our global family because God is mindful of the world. "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor."[152] Rich Villodas, in his book *The Deeply Formed Life*, says, "God is for us. This is the foundation of mission…To affirm that God is for us is to confess with clarity who is *us.* If by *us* we mean fellow Christians—especially those who believe

[151] Luke 9:54-55.
[152] Ps. 8:4-5.

as we do—that *us* is much too confined. The *us* that God is for always extends to all people and to the entirety of creation."[153]

The *us* is a global *us*, and this is our ecclesial identity as the body of Christ. As we saw in the previous chapter, the racial fragmentation in the world and culture has also been present in the church. Again, the twelfth chapter in Paul's letter to the Roman church begins with an appeal to the "brothers and sisters" to not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds.[154] Transformation through the renewal of the mind is for the purpose of fostering new patterns that foster unity and our common identity through Christ, who binds us to one another. This chapter continues to demonstrate the results of the transformation of the mind. It results in genuine love, showing honor to one another, extending hospitality to strangers, and living peaceably with all.[155] This is all within the context of being one body with members in Christ.

In Philippians 2, Paul urges Christ-followers to "let the same mind be in you that was in Christ."[156] Paul repeats similar phrases two other times; "be of the same mind" and "being of full accord and of one mind." The way of being of "one mind" is through being others-focused. Paul asks the church in Philippi to "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."[157] A transformed mind that is mindful of others points to the character, obedience, and nature of Jesus. Jesus saw the humanity in the Samaritan woman, the faith of the Roman centurion, the Canaanite woman and commanded his followers to make disciples of

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[153] Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life*, 186.
[154] Rom. 12:1-2.
[155] Rom. 12: 9-18.
[156] Phil. 2:5.
[157] Phil. 2:3.

nations. Cultural Intelligence as a spiritual practice can be a tool that helps us see others the way Jesus sees them and helps to develop rhythms that cultivate the "mind of Christ" in us.

The report by *The Navigators* concludes that "Churches are in need of new models for discipleship. Current programs capture only a minority of Christians, and most believers do not prioritize an investment in their spiritual growth. At the same time, church leaders desire a clear plan and lack systems to evaluate spiritual health."[158] The need for new models is an opportunity for a discipleship that goes beyond prayer, personal devotional Scripture reading, and church attendance, but a discipleship founded on the values of the kingdom of God, forming us in ways that make us more like Jesus while also bringing the body of Christ together in the process. This includes the value of oneness among diverse members of the global body of Christ. This is essential for the witness of the church and cannot be left to a few members to learn the value of cultural difference. This practice must be embraced, not only by the few and "called," but by all members as we collectively identify as a global church. Therefore, the global church must shift to a new paradigm of discipleship with practices and rhythms that form and lead Christians towards unity among all the diverse members that make up the body of Christ.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the current model of discipleship necessitates a paradigm shift that goes beyond the current spiritual practices to guide Christ followers towards unity with Christ and the global body of Christ. Although leading voices in the area of discipleship don't specifically enfold cross-cultural learning and understanding, there are connections. However, a paradigm shift of discipleship for a global church demands intentionality in cross-cultural learning and engagement for the sake of unity in the body of Christ. A thoroughly formulated

[158] The Navigators, *The State of Discipleship*, 12.

biblical, theological, sacramental, and credal rationale was developed to argue the necessity and the belonging of a spiritual practice of cross-cultural learning such as Cultural Intelligence. This rationale was founded on the confessions of the church's identity as a united, global body. The church's oneness and global diversity are the foundation of the church's identity.

The next chapter will explore Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a spiritual practice. The method of CQ will be explained in detail and examine its cultural learning function within discipleship as a spiritual practice. The spiritual practice of CQ will shape and cultivate a global church identity by guiding us in patterns to become more connected with ethnically and racially diverse members in the body of Christ as a practice to cultivate unity and address fragmentation in the body of Christ. Recognizing that the body of Christ is diverse in its membership, CQ as a spiritual practice is essential for every member to lead us toward unity and greater understanding of the global church.

CHAPTER 4:
THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE (CQ)

Introduction

The previous chapter argued for a paradigm shift in discipleship that expands into cross-cultural learning. Traditionally, cross-cultural learning has been placed in the context of missional calling. However, I would argue that since our ecclesial identity is global, a paradigm shift is needed in discipleship practices that specifically enfold cross-cultural learning. These spiritual practices will cultivate unity in the body of Christ and address fragmentation that exists along racial and ethnic lines. This paradigm shift makes way for CQ as a spiritual practice that can lead the body of Christ forward towards unity.

This chapter aims to present CQ as a spiritual practice to address fragmentation that exists along racial and ethnic lines in the church. In chapter one, Cultural Intelligence (CQ) was defined as a globally-recognized way of assessing and improving effectiveness in diverse situations that is both measurable and cultivates honor and respect for cultural difference. As a spiritual practice that addresses fragmentation in the church, CQ will be accessible to all members of the body of Christ to develop rhythms of cross-cultural learning that honor other members who are culturally different, while helping the church navigate spaces that are increasingly becoming multiracial. The first section will initially discuss the value of the practice of cross-cultural learning to address fragmentation and bring members into proximity, both in body and of heart, with other ethnically and racially diverse members. The following sections will present CQ and its four capabilities, explaining how each capability connects to spiritual practices and is applied to our daily journey towards Christlikeness within the diverse body of Christ. Furthermore, I will demonstrate how each capability serves as a corrective to fragmentation and lead toward unity in the body of Christ.

Practice of Cross-Cultural Learning to Address Fragmentation

Since the beginning, fragmentation along racial and ethnic lines has been present in the American church. The review in chapter two demonstrates the division, particularly among Black and White Christians, that has led to homogenous congregational patterns, differences in theology, and differences in response to racial tensions. Amid this history of fragmentation, practices that address these divisions and lead toward unity have been largely absent. Cross-cultural learning has been a practice placed in missiology. However, cross-cultural learning as a spiritual practice will shape our discipleship and lead the church towards the rediscovery of its ecclesial identity; oneness.

Throughout the church's history, spiritual practices have been the means by which Christ's followers have addressed their longing for God and transformation. It is important to recognize that spiritual practices in and of themselves are not transformative. However, these practices open us to the Spirit's work of addressing the ways we desire and need to grow. Calhoun argues that spiritual practices allow us to "bring our ache for change, our longing for belonging, our desperation to make a difference."[159] God then works within our lives to transform us in ways only God can do. As the church continued to exist in fragmentation, the body of Christ hurts and longs for ways to be one. The spiritual practice of cross-cultural learning will intentionally make space in our lives to address the aches for change and desires for ecclesial unity.

Addressing fragmentation involves proximity, both in body and of heart, with those who are culturally different. Proximity "in body" means that we physically need to be in diverse spaces, dislocating ourselves to be with the diverse members of the body of Christ. This involves

[159] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 21.

crossing cultural boundaries; the lines of cultural distinction and the ways racial and ethnic groups have been divided by the nation-states. It also means crossing the boundaries that have been created due to homogeneity and race relations in the church. These boundaries include cultural, community and neighborhood, political, sexual identity, and all other boundaries where figurative and literal walls have been raised, keeping members of the body of Christ apart. The spiritual practice of crossing boundaries normalizes what we have considered to be foreign and "other," leading members of the body of Christ towards understanding and the Spirit's work of uniting the church.

As someone from the Latino/a culture, crossing the U.S-Mexico border is familiar to me. It has shaped my heritage and faith, precisely because I come from a family of migrants. Since my earliest memories, many of my family and friends have crossed the border. About nine years ago, crossing the border became part of my ministry rhythms as a college campus pastor serving with students alongside the Latina/o migrant population, immigration advocates, and church partners. However, crossing the border had never come to mind as a spiritual practice for most of my life.

In 2014, a theologian from Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Dr. M. Thomas Thangaraj, led the Wiley Lecture Series at Point Loma Nazarene University called "Crossing Cultural Boundaries as a Spiritual Practice." In these lectures, he presented a perspective that the practice of moving across boundaries such as cultural, linguistic, musical, community, and neighborhood is formative for the church. I must confess I don't remember the entire lecture series. However, it opened my eyes to see spiritual practices in an expanded way that includes the formative practice of dislocation and proximity with others who are culturally different.

Dislocation and proximity physically place members of the body of Christ to experience the realities and experiences of those who are culturally different. It also gives us awareness, the ability to know our ecclesial identity, and ways to address our desire for unity in the church intentionally. Awareness and deep knowledge of our ecclesial identity must also include the transformation of heart. Unity and defragmentation require that members of the body of Christ be changed in the very core of their beings to empathize and desire to be in proximity "of heart."

Chapter two discussed the cultural impacts on theological understanding in Black and Indigenous communities. In this section of the chapter, I highlight theologian James Cone's frustration towards White Christians, particularly directing his disappointment of theologian Ronald Niebuhr for his failure of empathy and step into the vantage point of the Black community. Cone said Niebuhr had "eyes to see" the suffering of the Black community but lacked the "heart to feel" it as his own. The failure of the body of Christ to have a heart that feels and empathizes with the pain, experiences, and injustices experienced by its own members and their communities continues to keep us apart. Proximity of heart allows us to draw near to the heart of Christ to truly know the unique experiences of all who belong to Christ's body.

Proximity of heart through practices of cross-cultural learning allows us to engage in mutuality, sharing in the ways our hearts feel and the relationship between multiple members in the body of Christ. Elizabeth Conde-Frasier identifies the ability to embrace mutuality, partnership, and constant mindfulness of one another as "mestiza/o consciousness."[160] A mestiza/o is one who continually navigates from one culture to another. Mestiza/o consciousness is a way of understanding how opposing ideas can interact with one another. Genuinely engaging in understanding more about the cultural realities of others leads to knowing the entirety of the

[160] Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, S. Steven Kang, and Gary A. Parrett, *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 176.

body of Christ deeply. Conde-Frazier points out that "who knows one culture, knows no culture. We come to self-knowledge on the boundary."[161] The church's pattern of homogeneity and existence in fragmentation has formed members who only have known a monocultural understanding of the church.

I would further argue that Christians who know and exist in one culture don't know the "culture" of the body of Christ. The culture of the body of Christ is multicultural, multilingual, and diverse in every way. Chapter three discusses the various ways the church confesses the oneness of the body of Christ. This oneness is not uniformity but unity within diversity. This unity in diversity is our ecclesial identity, the mark of our distinctness, and how we reflect the Triune God. Therefore, it is vital for Christians to engage in practices that place them in proximity in body and of heart with the diversity of the church. Cross-cultural learning practices open our hearts for God's Spirit to transform us and lead us towards defragmentation and unity in the church.

This section has discussed the value of the practice of cross-cultural learning to address fragmentation and bring members into proximity. Our proximity must be "in body" that dislocates us, moves us away from homogenous spaces, and crosses boundaries to engage in the experiences of those who are culturally different. Also, our proximity must be "of heart" guiding us towards empathy and constant mindfulness of the fullness of the body of Christ. Cross-cultural practices move us towards one another, guiding us back to the unity that Christ desires in the body of Christ. CQ as a spiritual practice develops rhythms that address fragmentation along ethnic and racial lines in the church through a robust and pragmatic structure of cross-cultural

[161] Ibid.

learning and understanding. The following section will present CQ as a spiritual practice for the church as a way toward ecclesial unity within diversity.

The Spiritual Practice of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

As I present the spiritual practice of CQ for the ethnically diverse and global body of Christ, it is important to articulate a desire for unity and belonging for all members. As mentioned in chapter three, this spiritual practice is part of an expanded paradigm of discipleship that enfolds cross-cultural learning and understanding for the purpose of defragmentation. It is disheartening that Christian communities have continued in patterns of homogeneity in mostly monocultural congregations. Although there have been attempts to confront this problem, these attempts have lacked the depth to address a divided church adequately. However, this spiritual practice is presented with a heart longing for unity and a posture of being, in the words of the prophet Zechariah, a "prisoner of hope."[162] The heavenly image of God's people—diverse, global, united, and existing as one is what we as the church should move toward. The spiritual practice of CQ will help the church honor the uniqueness of each ethnically and racially diverse member by growing through CQ's four capabilities of drive, knowledge, strategy, and action.

The practice of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has become a way to develop critical skills in mindfulness of others from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, recognizing that we live in a rapidly diversifying and globalized world. CQ develops our awareness to navigate different cultural contexts, similarly to the development of rational and intellectual ability awareness (IQ), as well as emotional intelligence (EQ). The practice of CQ incites movement toward a greater understanding of self and others, recognizing the interconnectedness of our actions and responses. It creates opportunities for people to engage cultural differences in a posture of

[162] Zech. 9:12.

humility, recognizing the value of that particular culture and allowing space for exchange that is more mindful of the collective experience rather than the individual.

Research on intercultural theory and the intelligence approaches led to the conceptualization of Cultural Intelligence. CQ is rooted in the same foundations as IQ and EQ, but its focus is solely on the skills needed to navigate our globalized and interconnected world effectively. "The first publication of cultural intelligence research was in Earley and Ang's 2003 book *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures…* A year later, a report in the Harvard Business Review described cultural intelligence as a core capability essential for success in twenty-first century business."[163] Earley and Ang's book was written primarily for an academic audience, yet it offered a different approach than other training on cross-cultural competency. Rather than focusing on personality traits, which cannot be changed, it focuses on learned capability. Because it is based on intelligence research, it emphasizes the capability to "reformulate one's concept of self and others rather than just learning about cultural thinking and behavior."[164]

CQ has the marks of spiritual practices because of its ability to reformulate. Spiritual practices can be understood as an inward discipline because it helps us to discover the heart of Jesus for all people in our world. Most likely, the practice of CQ would be considered an outward discipline by the way it develops how we interface with the world. Practices around multiculturalism, diversity, and cultural understanding don't find themselves attached to traditional Christian practices such as prayer and scripture reading. Yet because CQ focuses on learned capability and reformulation of self and others, it becomes a way of openness to God's

[163] David Livermore, *The Cultural Intelligence Difference: Master the One Skill You Can't Do Without in Today's Global Economy* (New York, NY: AMACOM, 2011), 26.
[164] Ibid., 27.

work of transformation in us and through us to move towards ecclesial unity. A spiritual practice of CQ helps us develop learned capabilities to have a desire to engage, willingness to learn, develop awareness and empathize, and respond in love and honor to the realities of culturally different members. These learned capabilities are developed through CQ's four capabilities; Drive, Knowledge, Strategy, and Action. The following section will introduce CQ's four capabilities.

The Four CQ Capabilities

CQ develops a learned capability that increases mindfulness and brings greater cultural awareness of one's self, our present surroundings, and all those who inhabit those surroundings. As followers of Christ committed to becoming culturally intelligent in the diverse body of Christ and our globalized world, we must also be committed to continually strengthening this "muscle" of cross-cultural learning understanding. Regularly practicing CQ as part of the church's formation comes from acknowledging our ecclesial identity, our commitment to ecclesial-communal defragmentation, and our commitment to oneness as the body of Christ that exists and will always exist in diversity.

CQ's four essential capabilities shape our cultural understanding cognitively and metacognitively. Effective cross-cultural learning must go beyond the collection of knowledge about a particular culture that is surface level. Cross-cultural learning must lead towards a deeper and transformative mental conditioning that challenges us. These four capabilities guide us to be self-aware, confessing the ways we need God's Spirit to change us. These four capabilities also teach us to be others-aware, confessing the ways need others to grow in this journey toward defragmentation.

These four capabilities are CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, and CQ Action. CQ Drive assesses our motivation and willingness to persevere on the journey of learning about the experiences of those who are culturally different. This first capability develops a constant assessment of our desire to stay engaged, knowing that the journey is complex and challenging when encountering and learning about cultural difference. The second capability, CQ Knowledge, develops an understanding of different cultures and the role culture plays in the formation of communities. Understanding cultures and their impact develops great insight into the differences and values of various people groups. The third capability, CQ Strategy, creates awareness of ourselves, awareness of the ways we respond, and awareness of our surroundings in diverse settings. The keyword "awareness" is an invitation to be fully present with and attentive to others who are culturally different. The last capability, CQ Action, is the application of appropriate responses in diverse environments that care for and honor others who are culturally different.

The role of these CQ capabilities is to create better and necessary patterns in us to draw the members of the body of Christ together. Through God's Spirit, this practice can transform our hearts, minds, and bodies in ways that are corrective to the church's fragmentation. Livermore believes that the "cultural intelligence framework allows for an appreciation of what we have in common with our fellow Christians and other image-bearers while emphasizing the rich, robust things learned by exploring the profound differences… Cultural Intelligence is the pathway toward more effectively loving our neighbor, near and far."[165] Our intentionality as Christians to understand culturally different members of the body of Christ, particularly those with profound differences, reveals our desire for a life of unity that Christ calls us to live.

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[165] Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence,* 55-56.

In summary, this section has presented CQ as a spiritual practice as a way to address fragmentation and guide the church towards unity. CQ is a spiritual practice because it focuses on learned capability and reformulation of self and others, becoming a way of openness to God's work of transformation in us and through us. The four capabilities, CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, and CQ Action, were introduced and demonstrated ways each addresses fragmentation. The following four sections will discuss in-depth each CQ capability individually and their sub-dimensions. Each capability will connect to discipleship practices and their application to our spiritual journey towards Christ-likeness and discuss how each is corrective to the church's fragmentation leading towards ecclesial unity.

CQ Drive

The first factor interacts with one's ability to be motivated. This is the starting point and, most likely, the most significant hurdle one must face when engaging in cross-cultural situations. CQ Drive is defined as "the extent to which you're energized and persistent in your approach to culturally diverse situations. It includes your sense of self-confidence in your abilities as well as your sense of the rewards—both tangible and intangible—that you will gain from functioning effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity."[166] Each of the CQ factors includes three sub-dimensions anchored in research in particular areas. CQ Drive derives from the science of motivation and is applied to multicultural situations. The sub-dimensions of motivational strategies include intrinsic, extrinsic, and self-efficacy.

In the sub-dimension of intrinsic, one must navigate through natural tendencies of bias, connection, and fear. Livermore recognizes the truth of biases. Biases stem from the socialization process that occurs subconsciously. "Most of us feel the greatest trust and warmth when we're

[166] Livermore, *The Cultural Intelligence Difference*, 41.

with people like us; we feel uncomfortable and suspicious of people who are different."[167] Bias reinforces the tendencies of homogeneity; this is why this practice is essential in helping us recognize and assess our biases to moderate our actions. A helpful tool to explore your biases is through tests developed at Harvard called the implicit association tests.[168] The other two motivators of connection and fear draw from what exists naturally within us. Connections with similar interests in different cultures, whether it be music, art, sports, food, business, and others, can draw us into cross-cultural learning. On the opposite end, the power of fear can be used advantageously. Specifically, as a motivator for cultural engagement, fears of the implications of cultural ignorance and insensitivity and potential career implications can be among those named.

The sub-dimensional foci of extrinsic and self-efficacy incline towards positive motivators such as success, reward, rest, control, and adventure. These motivators help one imagine the tangible benefits of cross-cultural experiences. It explores our level of self-efficacy and honestly confronts the reality that there is an impetus to change our cross-cultural understanding. Phillips describes this as "anticipatory socialization," or the ability to be constantly aware of what it will take to continue on a journey that often encounters moments of dismay, failure, and disorientation. Livermore argues that Cultural Intelligence relies on this understanding and self-honesty. It relies on understanding clearly what drives my emotions, feelings, and behavior with the purpose of being able to be better in tune into the other more fully.[169] It is a way of doing self-inventory that one must do not only to be highly motivated but allow willing to adapt in order to find and engage in meaningful interactions with cultural others.

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[167] Livermore, *The Cultural Intelligence Difference*, 49.

[168] Project Implicit, "Implicit Association Test," *Harvard University*, accessed February 8, 2022, https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html.

[169] Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence*, 53.

The previous section states that CQ Drive develops a constant assessment of our desire to stay engaged, knowing that the journey is challenging and complex when encountering and learning about cultural difference. This capability leads us in a self-reflection to "count the cost" of engaging in cross-cultural learning. The journey to defragmentation in the church starts with speaking the truth of who we are and the ways we have not loved God and our neighbor as ourselves. Defragmentation demands sacrifice, courage, and a willingness to relinquish power and comfort for the sake of unity.

The spiritual practices that exemplify CQ Drive are confession and self-examination. As we assess our heart's motives and desires, we must confess that often our motives and desires don't align with the heart of Jesus. Confession and self-examination are the starting point toward change, reconciliation, and renewal. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun argues that confession and self-examination are practices by which "to surrender my weaknesses and faults to the forgiving love of Christ and intentionally desire and embrace practices that lead to transformation."[170] The Psalmist cries to God by saying, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."[171] The practice of self-examination and confession through a cross-cultural lens allows for biases and prejudices to be unearthed, revealed, and confessed to God and to one another so that we can walk and live in Christlike ways.

Confession and self-examination within the focus of CQ Drive offer insight into the motivation we lack and the unhelpful perspectives and patterns that have been formed in us due to the church's fragmentation. Unhelpful patterns such as fearing others who are culturally different, the stereotyping and the villainization of particular people groups, political allegiances,

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[170] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook,* 101.
[171] Ps. 139:23-24.

and other patterns have shaped us in ways that have caused division. The continual practice of self-examination leads us towards confession and repentance. "Therefore, confess your sins to each and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."[172] Confession is attached to righteousness as it leads toward correction. In Spanish, the words *righteousness* and *justice* are interchangeable because the intersection of these words is the process of "making all things right."

In summary, the capability of CQ Drive and the connection to the practice of confession and self-examination leads to an honest assessment of our motivation to engage in cross-cultural situations. The sub-dimensions of CQ Drive address various motivation levels, both negative and positive. Finally, the connection of confession and self-examination to CQ Drive guides us in recognizing unhelpful patterns that have been formed in us caused by fragmentation in the church and confessing them to God and one another.

CQ Knowledge

The second capability is CQ Knowledge. It is described as "the extent to which you understand the role of culture in how people think and behave and your level of familiarity with how cultures are similar and different."[173] Phillips argues that CQ Knowledge and CQ Strategy are the most important factors in improving one's cross-cultural understanding as they both compliment each other and hold each other accountable. CQ Knowledge starts with the most important word: understanding. CQ is a journey of understanding the cultures around us, which also includes how culture has shaped one's understanding. This assumes that one needs to go deeper into how culture affects what is visible and what is beneath the surface. For example, we need to understand cultural differences in time and punctuality, cultural norms identifying people

[172] James 5:16.
[173] Livermore, *The Cultural Intelligence Difference,* 69.

as individuals or as a collective whole, power distance, and other ways by which culture informs behavior and views others. As we deepen our understanding, a strategy to navigate a new cultural terrain is then developed with that awareness. It moves us toward better thought and intentionality of communication and action.

Livermore's earlier writings focused on short-term missions. He identified CQ Knowledge as the most essential focus because it is at the core of serving with "eyes wide open." The point is not to master CQ Knowledge… but to continue to grow in knowledge throughout our lifetime.[174] Throughout my time in campus ministry leading cross-cultural engagement trips across the San Diego/Tijuana border region, I gained an understanding that structural changes were needed as I learned about the needs of our hosts and partners in Mexico. For example, every year around Christmas time, we would host a party at a local pizzeria in Tijuana and invite our partnering children's homes. As Americans, we would transport hundreds of toys as Christmas gifts across the border, and we felt like we brought joy to these children. I would coordinate with students, staff, and faculty from the university and churches and non-profits that offered toy donations.

After several years of hosting this party, I finally decided to sit down with one of our hosts and ask the most important question: "Is this helpful for you?" At that moment, he asked me to follow him to a room with toy donations stacked up to the ceiling they had received. The host responded by saying, "Juguetes, tenemos en abundancia. Lo que no tenemos son las cosas esenciales para nuestros niños" (*We have an abundance of toys. What we don't have are the essentials for our children*). The host continued by asking about our thoughts on making a change for the following year to buy essentials such as hygiene products, school

[174] David Livermore, *Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 129.

uniforms, and donations for medications and food. For many years, this host felt it was not his place to refuse or critique our acts of giving. Yet, although well-intentioned, our American understanding of lavish gift-giving during the holidays overshadowed the needs of those we were serving. Through his courage to speak up on behalf of the children's home and a moment of embarrassment for me, a posture of learning was cultivated. It helped correct some of my false assumptions about the success of this particular event. More importantly, it created more opportunities to admit my mistakes, for greater honesty between us, and to further my understanding of hosting partner and their needs.

Although this is an example of a Christmas pizza party for a children's home in Mexico, this also identifies unhelpful patterns, biases, and assumptions due to cultural difference and the effects of fragmentation. For example, the relationship between U.S. and Mexico and how one is portrayed as powerful and wealthy, while the other is portrayed as impoverished and developing. The other is a cultural difference in prioritizing wants and needs. The last cultural difference is the relationship between host and guest and how those roles were not observed due to power dynamics. Confession was necessary to correct these unhelpful patterns due to cultural difference and fragmentation, communication and proximity needed to be increased, and cross-cultural learning and understanding needed to continue as a practice.

Within CQ Knowledge, there are four sub-dimensions: business/cultural systems, interpersonal/cultural values, socio-linguistics, and leadership. Based on our level of cross-cultural knowledge, these strategies can help us increase in this focus area. "As we learn more about cultures and different ways of doing things, it helps us better understand what is going on, which, in turn, helps us relate and work more effectively."[175] Furthermore, it helps us see the

[175] Livermore, *The Cultural Intelligence Difference,* 73.

greater world around us and acknowledge the beauty of diversity. Some of the various engagements within business/cultural systems are increasing proximity to diverse cultures, such as attending cultural celebrations, cultural observation, and improving global awareness by eating a culturally different meal with someone from that culture. Cross-cultural knowledge is increased through immersion and proximity.

Interpersonal/Cultural Values imply learning what is important in various cultures and places around the world. Livermore identifies cultural values essential to recognize when navigating in cross-cultural spaces. They are the following:

- *Individualism—Collectivism* which understands "the extent to which personal identity is defined in terms of individual or group characteristics."
- *Power distance* is defined as "the extent to which differences in power and status are expected and accepted."
- *Uncertainty avoidance* which is "the extent to which risk is reduced or avoided through planning and guidelines."
- *Cooperativeness—Competitiveness* is "the extent to which achievement and competition are valued in contrast with a priority on social relationships and emotions."
- *Time orientation* defined as "the extent to which there's a willingness to await success.
- *Context* is "the extent to which communication is direct and emphasizes roles and implicit understanding."
- *Doing—Being* is "the extent to which action and results are emphasized and valued."[176]

These values help us understand those who are culturally different and place us on a journey of self-discovery of exploring our own cultural identity.

The final two sub-dimensions of socio-linguistics and leadership offer ways to take on culturally different practices and allow them to shape our identity while also giving honor to that culture. This is embodied through engagements such as studying a new language, seeking diverse perspectives, and being mentored by a CQ coach. Exploration and engagement with the

[176] Ibid., 89-93.

cultural gifts around us create space for us to find significance in the cultural values and, at the very least, have an understanding of those who are culturally different. CQ Knowledge aims to open our eyes to the greater community to which we belong.

CQ Knowledge is connected to the spiritual practice of community. The spiritual practice of community helps us to better journey with others. The practice of community for Christ-followers "exists when believers connect in authentic and loving ways that encourage growth in Christ. They engage in transparent relationships that cultivate, celebrate and make evident Christ's love for all."[177] Our connection and our acknowledgment of one another's uniqueness moves us toward becoming what God intended the body of Christ to be. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun says that "God's family is meant to be the 'show and tell' of what true belonging and love looks like… God's one plan for reaching the world is rooted in the community of broken people who gather with a desire to bring in God's own dream kingdom of love and shalom."[178]

The practice of community helps us to be challenged by others through our willingness to step away from an individualized formation and connect with others to be formed collectively. The practice of community offers Christ-followers ways by which the members of the body of Christ can be formed in their ecclesial identity fostering unity and fellowship. To connect community to cultural intelligence, Soong-Chan Rah says, "Cultural intelligence requires creating an environment that allows for connection and understanding. It is the willingness to seek understanding from a perspective beyond one's limited worldview. By engaging in relationships across the cultural divide and learning from others, we create the possibility of expanding our cultural worldview."[179] Our connection to one another helps the church to

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[177] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook,* 149.
[178] Ibid., 150.
[179] Soong-Chan Rah, *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 85.

understand our need to be in right relationship with one another. Fragmentation along racial and ethnic lines have created false understandings of one another. The practice of community brings us together so that we can gain an understanding of how our diversity edifies and shapes us as a whole. Community also shapes to see one another as equal members of one global body. Scripture says, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'…God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another."[180]

In summary, CQ Knowledge in connection to the practice of community teaches us to increase our understanding of those who are culturally different by increasing proximity and cross-cultural engagement. This shapes our understanding of those who are culturally different but also places us on a journey of self-discovery. Through this practice, we find ourselves as part of something greater and diverse. Through the continual practice of CQ Knowledge and community, each member is edified by their connection and need for others in the body of Christ.

CQ Strategy

CQ Strategy is defined as "the extent to which you are aware of what's going on in a cross-cultural situation and your ability to use that awareness to manage those situations effectively.[181] This capability helps us to understand how mindful and aware we are when we interact cross-culturally. The sub-dimensions of CQ Strategy are awareness, planning, and checking. Our awareness is more about how we focus rather than our need to respond so that we can be fully present in situations. The capability of CQ Strategy cultivates complete awareness of

[180] 1 Cor. 12:20-21, 24b-25.
[181] Livermore, *The Cultural Intelligence Difference,* 107.

what is happening inside of us, within our body, mind, and consciousness, while also applying the same type of awareness to our environment. The other two sub-dimensions of planning and checking result in our awareness because these sub-dimensions guide us toward preparation for future cross-cultural interactions that are more thoughtful and informed. Planning ahead is an expression of honoring others while asking clarifying questions will continue to help us not repeat mistakes or missed opportunities to honor others.

CQ Strategy is connected to the spiritual practices of mindfulness and attentiveness. Calhoun says that the practices of mindfulness and attentiveness invite us into "a state of active, open, nonjudgmental attention to what is unfolding now in the moment in the presence of God."[182] Being fully present to ourselves while having the same awareness of where we are, teaches us to fully engage in the here and now while acknowledging the gifts of grace that are also present. The first gift of grace when navigating diverse spaces is acknowledging God's Spirit at work in us and around us. The other gift of grace when navigating diverse spaces is the opportunity to glimpse God's kingdom through a world and an ethnically and racially diverse church.

Our attentiveness to God's presence in our lives and in the lives of others shapes our actions and engagement in diverse spaces. Mindfulness and attentiveness reframe our thoughts and keep our "mind full" of God rather than everything else that pulls at our heart and mind.[183] Our mindfulness and attentiveness to God prepare us to navigate these spaces and engage the people we meet with honor and love. This is the reason why CQ Strategy addresses fragmentation. This capability cultivates rhythms of awareness that help us to thoughtfully prepare our interactions with the body of Christ in all of its diversity. It is a way to pause, reflect,

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[182] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook,* 114.
[183] Ibid., 116.

and fully acknowledge those in our presence, God and God's beloved children created in God's image.

In summary, CQ Strategy, in connection with the practices of mindfulness and attentiveness, teaches us greater awareness of ourselves, of others, and of God's presence. This capability and practice develop in each member intentionality in our strategy and preparation to engage in diverse spaces. CQ Strategy and the practices cultivate rhythms that help us acknowledge God's presence in us, the diverse spaces we navigate, and those we engage who are culturally different.

CQ Action

The final capability of Cultural Intelligence is CQ Action. This is described as "the extent to which you can act appropriately in a culturally diverse situation."[184] It includes our flexibility in verbal and nonverbal behaviors and adaptability to different cultural norms based on our level of interest, drive, and motivation. It answers the fundamental question, "What behaviors should I adopt for this cross-cultural situation?" CQ Action helps us effectively learn which actions should be adopted and which should not be adopted. Our drive, knowledge, and strategy all come together to help us discern how to engage best. However, those who engage with us will judge us based on this capability. CQ Action is expressed by three sub-dimensions which are non-verbal, verbal, and speech arts. These sub-dimensions are summarized in this way; what we say and what we do in diverse spaces have the power to express our values and formation.

CQ Action connects to the spiritual practice of witness. The practice of witness helps us to reflect in word and deed who we truly are in Christ and as a diverse global church. Calhoun defines the practice of witness as "modeling and telling of the difference Jesus has made in one's

[184] Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence,* 141.

life."[185] The actions of the church should reveal God's Spirit within us, bringing us together as one people who belong to one another. Unfortunately, there are voices from inside and outside of the church critiquing the inconsistency in our witness. Kinnaman claims that the gathering of different people, the physical expressions of a community being discipled together and moving toward maturity, and the constant presence and filling of God's Spirit need to be the distinct marks of the present church, especially to a generation of emerging adults who describe present day Christianity as "hypocritical, judgmental, too political, and out touch with reality."[186] Jesus's last words to his disciples were, "you will be my witness."[187] These last words proclaimed that these disciples would be his witnesses through the power of the Holy in all the world.

Interestingly, Jesus includes Samaria, people who the disciples experienced racial tensions and divisions. Jesus ties the practice of witness and navigating culturally different spaces together because of the multicultural identity of the body of Christ. Therefore, the spiritual practice of witness forms the church's actions in ways that give witness to our unity within diversity.

The capability of CQ and the practice of witness are also vital to addressing the church's fragmentation. Our actions and witness in diverse spaces must align with our claims of being one body. The urgency of addressing fragmentation in the church needs to increase in importance to pastors and leaders in the church. The Barna Group report shows that pastors and leaders rank "divisions in the church" shockingly low among a list of major concerns (selected by only 12 percent of pastors). In response to this report, Emerson says, "I am dumbfounded. Either we mistakenly believe there are no divisions in the Church, or we don't think them important. Any

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[185] Calhoun, *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook,* 180.
[186] Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 20.
[187] Acts 1:8.

division in a church means the church is ill. If we are ill, our attention must be on healing. And to heal, we must understand both the symptoms and the treatment. If we don't, the Christian Church in North America will continue to fade."[188]

The basis of CQ as a spiritual practice is founded on addressing fragmentation and desiring to live in the vision of Jesus for his disciples to be one. CQ creates patterns for continuous growth to guide us toward actionable steps to navigate diverse spaces well and give witness to Christ's love and the unity of the church. This spiritual practice is an ongoing process and continual growth with the understanding that there is more to be discovered. The more we discover about the diversity of our world, the more we know and understand the world's Creator. In Paul's letter to the Roman church, he writes, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"[189] So often, there is fear or fatigue when we understand that there is no end to our discovery. However, this is what the invitation of discipleship is all about. It is about being led by God's Spirit into a fuller and more profound knowledge of God's boundless and holy character. It is to know the love of God that has no end. This great love helps us know that our love falls short, not as a means of guilt, but as a means of grace to yearn to be filled with that great love. Love leads us into rhythms of forgiveness, grace, justice, and reconciliation. Love summons a desire to know all and receive all as those who God deeply loves.

In summary, CQ Action and the connection to the practice of witness help us discern our words and deeds in diverse spaces. Our witness as a diverse body of Christ is important to those inside and outside the church. The importance of addressing the church's fragmentation is important to the health of the body of Christ. The spiritual practice of CQ leads us on an ongoing

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[188] Barna Group, *Beyond Diversity,* 10.
[189] Rom. 11:33.

and continual process of growth in cross-cultural understanding to bring the diverse members of the body of Christ as one.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented CQ as a spiritual practice to address fragmentation in the church and as a way forward to envision a discipleship that expands into the realms of cultural learning. This chapter demonstrated the value of cross-cultural learning as a way to bring into closer proximity those who are culturally different people. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is a spiritual practice developed through the daily rhythms of CQ's four capabilities: CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, and CQ Action. CQ clearly mirrors spiritual practices teaching us the heart of Jesus for all people from all cultures. CQ's capabilities also connect with various existing spiritual practices. Most importantly, the spiritual practice of Cultural Intelligence aims to provide rhythms and learned capabilities effectively guide all Christ-followers to better navigate cultural difference within the body of Christ for the sake of unity. Spiritual practices open us up to draw near to the heart of Christ and to one another. For this reason, CQ is a spiritual practice.

The next and final chapter will demonstrate the practical application of a broader integration of the spiritual practice of CQ that enfolds spiritually formative practices of the communities of color. An expanded paradigm of discipleship that includes cross-cultural learning creates an opportunity for spiritually formative practices of communities of color to also shape the global body of Christ as a way of defragmentation. The integration of spiritually formative cultural practices within the spiritual practice of CQ will elevate and highlight communities of color in the church, and increase understanding of the faith formation of those who are culturally different, leading towards unity in the body of Christ.

CHAPTER 5:
BROADER INTEGRATION OF CQ IN DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the spiritual practice of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) was presented as a way to address fragmentation in the church through learned capabilities of cross-cultural learning and understanding. The spiritual practice of CQ is part of a paradigm shift in discipleship that expands into cross-cultural learning. The spiritual practice of CQ cultivates rhythms of cross-cultural learning through four capabilities; CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, and CQ Action. Each capability connects to spiritual practices and serves as a corrective to fragmentation, and leads toward unity in the body of Christ.

This final chapter aims to demonstrate the practical application of a broader integration of the spiritual practice of CQ that enfolds spiritually formative practices of communities of color as means of defragmentation and unity. The defragmentation of the church implies that the church should engage in cross-cultural learning and understanding by also being shaped by the practices of our sisters and brothers of color. The enfolding of spiritually formative cultural practices into the spiritual practice of CQ engages in the four capabilities of CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, and CQ Action. It will also serve to elevate the practices of communities of color in pragmatic ways to inform ecclesial formation and lead the church towards unity.

The first section will discuss how the practical application of a broader integration of CQ and the ways enfolding spiritually formative cultural practices help move the church from fragmentation to unity. The following sections will highlight spiritually formative cultural practices. The first cultural practice highlighted is hospitality as radical welcome connected to the Middle Eastern and Spanish cultural contexts and the capability of CQ Drive. The next

cultural practice is cross-cultural storytelling of *testimonios* through the Latina/o church context connected to the capability of CQ Knowledge. The next practice will be harmony within cultural difference through the experience of a Korean pastor bringing together Eastern and Western concepts of spiritual formation. The practice of harmony is connected to CQ Strategy. This will be followed by the cultural practice of marching, discussing the way of peacemaking and prayer in the Black community connected to CQ Action. Lastly, the practice of cultural heart music will be highlighted in the Indigenous community discussing the way a practice can engage in each capability. Each section will also demonstrate the ways these practices address fragmentation to help move the church forward as one body with many members.

CQ and the Integration of Spiritually Formative Cultural Practices

The section will discuss the practical application of broader integration of CQ and the ways enfolding spiritually formative cultural practices helps move the church from fragmentation to unity. Each of the spiritually formative cultural practices mentioned in the following sections will give greater insight into the formation and experience of various diverse cultures. The integration of these cultural practices is for the purpose of cultural learning and understanding and the formation of all members. The intention is not cultural appropriation, but rather it is a way of engaging in various capabilities of the practice of CQ through formative practices of diverse cultures. These practices have deep roots within communities of color, forming the body in our global ecclesial identity, and leading the church towards unity through the shared exchange of cultural practices with all members of the body. However, as Christ-followers continue in their formation and spiritual growth in the practice of CQ through the four capabilities, it will increase discernment to participate or observe from a posture of cultural respect and honor.

Our ecclesial identity is racially and ethnically diverse and therefore necessitates the integration of diverse cultural practices to move towards fuller discipleship of the church. Throughout the history of the American church, congregations have gathered in monocultural, homogenous settings with minimal opportunities to experience the spiritually formative practices of various diverse communities. Black and Indigenous communities and migrant communities from Latina/o, Middle Eastern, and Asian cultures engage in practices deeply rooted in their cultural identity that can shape and connect us to the body of Christ as a whole. As highlighted in chapter two, Black and Indigenous theologies emerged that reflected the cultural experiences of these two communities. Unfortunately, these theologies have yet to inform the entirety of the church. However, the enfolding of cultural practices in CQ will provide cross-cultural understanding and provide practices that connect diverse members to one another in formation.

The paradigm shift in discipleship that expands into cross-cultural learning opens the way for cultural practices to be enfolded in the practice of CQ with the purpose of ecclesial formation. As the practice of CQ guides through the capabilities of drive, knowledge, strategy, and action, it cultivates a constant awareness of ecclesial unity. As we learn the stories, experiences, values, and cultural practices of people who are different from us, they begin to shape our identity if they are understood as spiritual practices. In chapter four, it is stated that spiritual practices open us up to draw near to the heart of Christ and to one another. Our openness to receive these cultural practices allows God's Spirit to work through them for our formation. This identity binds us together ever more closely as the Spirit brings together the members of the body of Christ in loving unity.

Being bound together often seems challenging as various people, backgrounds, perspectives, and views come together. The American church has embraced a social narrative

present throughout our history that doing life and doing faith with those who are similar and share common values with us is normal. However, there has also been the narrative where the social construct of race and the placement of value based on skin color has created division and classification and injustices and evil toward communities of color. At its very core, the American church desires to end fragmentation because of the understanding that the divided state of the church is not representative of the kingdom of God. I believe the church has the same desire of Christ, that the church may be completely one.

The diversity of cultures should not be viewed as a barrier to overcome but as the way by which God is revealed as Creator and Lord over all. In his book *Culture Trumps Religion Every Time*, *Dr. Oliver Phillips* argues that the real miracle of Pentecost was that each culture, each tribe, and each people group heard the good news in its own language and dialect. He writes, "Culture trumped religion."[190] The diversity of cultures reveals the greatness of God. Fragmentation and division reveal that the church has strayed from God's vision for us. As we reflect on the diversity of people, languages, customs, culture, subcultures, and the uniqueness of each individual in the world, we can easily become amazed by who God is. The church engaging in cross-cultural learning and the sharing of spiritually formative cultural practice is the sign of the members of the body moving toward one another in healing and wholeness. It is also a sign of movement toward God and God's vision of unity for the body of Christ. Cultural learning and connection through our cultural practices can offer us a greater glimpse of God and the unity God desires among all of creation.

[190] Phillips, *Culture Trumps Religion*, 84.

Hospitality: A Practice of Radical Welcome

This section will present the cultural practice of hospitality within the contexts of Middle Eastern and Spanish cultures. Hospitality is deeply embedded in scripture since much of scripture's geographic and cultural setting is in the Middle East. Next, the section will connect hospitality to the capability of CQ Drive. Following the connection to CQ Drive, the section will demonstrate the ways hospitality is a practice that addresses fragmentation in the church.

The practice of hospitality is a way to increase CQ Drive by accessing motivation to discover new cultures and gain confidence to engage effectively by opening the familiar space of your home. Hospitality is a simple yet effective way to increase the CQ Drive *intrinsic* sub-dimension. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this subdimension shows the extent to which you demonstrate a natural interest in multicultural experiences by facing biases and connecting with existing interests. A shared meal at the table is at the heart of hospitality and a practical way to learn alongside and from someone who is culturally different.

The spiritual practice of hospitality connects us to scriptural insights of radical welcome within the story of God's people. However, the hospitality that is expressed in Scripture is part of a cultural norm in many regions of the Middle East and is still practiced today. In Scripture, hospitality is framed as a command to practice as part of our devotion to God and God's people. In the same ways, CQ Drive is increased through continual engagement and practice, and our capacity to radically welcome others through hospitality increases as well. Furthermore, this unique cultural value is one that shapes the church in its entirety because of its connection through the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Paul's letter to the Romans urges Christ-followers to practice radical hospitality and show cultural honor. "When God's people are in need, be

ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them… Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone."[191] Hospitability is ultimately about incarnating the welcoming heart of God for the world.

Radical welcome through hospitality has been extended throughout church history. During the fourth and fifth centuries, the church founded various institutions for the care of pilgrims and the poor.[192] Modern-day pilgrims on journeys to holy sites, such as the *Camino de Santiago* in Spain, rely on the hospitality and welcome of others. Pilgrims often leave things behind and dislocate themselves as they intentionally seek and trust in God through the welcome of strangers. Within a cross-cultural context, hospitality, both as a welcome of home and heart, is essential for unity. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier argues that the first step in multicultural living is hospitality. "It is the practice that brings us closer in alignment with the basic values of the kingdom. It is part of worshipping Jesus."[193] As we practice radical welcome, this creates trust, openness, and vulnerability that can lead toward true offering of life to one another.

In Scripture, we understand that hospitality involves preparing one's space to receive others and preparing one's heart to receive others. Matthew 25 equates offering food, clothing, shelter, visitation, protection, and welcome to the "least of these" to offering it to Jesus himself. In Luke 10, we read of the hospitality of Mary and Martha to receive Jesus. As Martha was preparing their home, Mary was in a posture of listening to receive what the Master was offering. Both are good, but, as Jesus points out, the one who was at his feet listening "has chosen what is

[191] Rom. 12:13-14, 17-18, NLT.
[192] Conde-Frazier, Kang, and Parrett, *A Many Colored Kingdom,* 171.
[193] Ibid.

better, and it will not be taken away from her."[194] One offered an open home of welcome. The other offered an open heart of welcome. Offering our space and heart allows others to enter, creating closer proximity with those around us.

Chapter four discusses the concept of proximity in body and proximity of heart in relation to crossing boundaries. Proximity to one another is the starting point; however, it must go beyond that physical presence towards openness of heart to love and receive. Chapters one and two discuss the increase of multiracial churches. Although congregational demographics show racial and ethnic diversity, Christians of color report feeling pressure to give up their cultural identity in order to assimilate to the majority culture. Bringing diverse people together cannot defragment unless it includes the radical welcome of members in the fullness of their identity to participate as an equal contributor to ecclesial unity. The practice of hospitality ties the offering of one's space, identity, presence, and resources as a way of being shaped in the image of Christ.

The welcoming heart of God for the world is the core of this practice. Hospitality is not a reflection of our kindness but of God's love extended through us that goes beyond the ways of this world, reflecting God's kingdom. This is a practice that needs to become part of the formative rhythms of Christians, especially when addressing fragmentation. Hospitality opens the door, the physical door of our homes and also the spiritual door of our hearts, to others receive. This practice welcomes, receives, shares, and remains all in proximity to others.

This section has discussed the practice of hospitality and the connection to CQ Drive's intrinsic subdimension of facing biases and desiring connection. This practice is tied to scripture, and church history, connecting to cultural values found in Middle Eastern and Spanish cultures. Hospitality addresses fragmentation because it moves beyond bringing diverse people together

[194] Luke 10:42b, NIV.

but radically welcomes all in the fullness of their identities. Continuing to practice hospitality connected to CQ Drive increases our ability to welcome and be shaped more in the welcoming heart of God. The following section will discuss cross-cultural storytelling.

Cross-Cultural Storytelling: *Testimonios*

This section will highlight the cultural practice of cross-cultural storytelling within the Latina/o church context expressed in *testimonios*. This cultural practice is spiritually formative for Latina/o Christians by the way it increases understanding of individual life, family and extended family life, the diversity of cultures within a larger ethnic and racial group, and connection to another that leads to care. This section will discuss the ways cross-cultural storytelling is connected to the capability of CQ Knowledge and how this practice develops learned capabilities to address fragmentation in the church.

The practice of cross-cultural storytelling or *testimonios* increases CQ Knowledge. Paying attention to details that reveal individualistic or collectivistic cultural values can help us discern your engagement with the story and interactions in the future. It may also stir up our own exploration of cultural identity. Everyone has a cultural and ethnic heritage. A story of your heritage may include movement, migration, push and pull factors to certain destinations, trauma, pain, and longings for hope. The capability of CQ Knowledge helps to humanize complex situations and issues. Within these stories, you will also see the presence of God even in the midst of pain and suffering. Knowledge of one another can produce in us a greater capacity for God's love to exist.

To listen to others, particularly as they open up about their lives and offer their stories to you, is an act of hospitality and belonging. Soong-Chan Rah argues that "the art of storytelling

allows us to develop effective cross-cultural communication skills and calls us to communicate truth in more effective ways."[195] It is a way in which we can be deeply known and reveal ourselves in ways that offer a greater glimpse of who we are as the body of Christ and, ultimately, the greatness of the Creator God. The spiritual practice of cross-cultural storytelling, particularly in multicultural spaces, can be a way by which people dislocate themselves and immerse into the story and experience of another. It is both in the act of learning about another's cultural heritage and/or exploring one's own cultural heritage that we can become more mindful of others in a globalized world. This practice within the scope of spiritual formation can guide us to be more aware of who we are, a diverse and global body of Christ.

I will offer insight into this practice from my own experience. During worship services on Sunday evenings, our church community engaged in regular practice of sharing faith stories with our sisters and brothers. In the Latina/o church, this is called *testimonios*. It is through *testimonios* that many would often learn about the migration journeys of others and give witness to God's presence in those journeys. This does not mean that these journeys were free of pain, suffering, and grief, but they do however share the ways God's faithfulness has endured in the past, continuing to the present. It was a space that God used to develop character qualities of empathy and compassion, leading toward actions of intercessory prayer and care in the members of our congregation. This cultural practice shaped us individually and collectively to be more Christlike.

Developing the character qualities of empathy and compassion leads us toward Christ-likeness while also cultivating the understanding necessary for defragmentation. Chapter one explains the patterns of American evangelical discipleship that are privatized and individualized.

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[195] Rah, *Many Colors*, 141.

This pattern of individualized discipleship has formed Christians who are "scattered," not in proximity with other Christians in their discipleship, and not formed by others' experiences and stories. Chapter three discusses the biblical vision of unity in diversity and the ways Pentecost is an event where the scattered world is being re-collected in all of its difference to bring glory to God's name. The re-collection in all of its difference is the hope for defragmentation. Through cross-cultural storytelling, differences are being shared in ways that humanize the various complex experiences that many people face. This cultural practice is a way to a greater understanding of one another.

Although this was a Latina/o church, it was culturally diverse as many Latin American countries were represented. This practice not only informed our individual needs but also the needs of various cultures. Some were migrating due to civil unrest and war, while others were leaving to find better economic opportunities to support their families or to be reunited with loved ones from whom they had experienced separation. In the midst of that, our congregation was able to hear the pain of others, see their tears, and pray together for God's faithful presence in those long journeys.

Often, complexities such as war, racial tensions, immigration, economic hardships, and poverty can be issues that polarize. Particularly when individuals are detached from people who experience these complexities, it can be easy to dismiss or not be empathetic. However, *testimonios* created the opportunity to listen, learn, and humanize these complex issues. Developing qualities of empathy and compassion help us to be others-centric. These are qualities that are needed for unity in the body of Christ. God has used cross-cultural storytelling to develop these others-centric qualities to lead us towards actions of intercessory prayer and care

for the members of our congregation. This cultural practice shaped us individually and collectively to be more Christlike.

In summary, this section has discussed the ways cross-cultural storytelling is connected to the capability of CQ Knowledge. Listening to the stories of others increased our understanding of other members, their families, cultures, and the complexities each member faced. This also increased our ability to empathize and act with compassion towards other members. These qualities are essential to address fragmentation where many members are formed in an individualized discipleship. Cross-cultural storytelling re-collects members in our differences to develop a greater cross-cultural understanding with our sisters and brothers in Christ. The following section will discuss the cultural practice of harmony within cultural difference.

Harmony within Cultural Difference

This section will discuss the cultural practice of harmony within cultural difference connecting it to the capability of CQ Strategy. This perspective of harmony is drawn from the formational life of Korean pastor and author Joshua Choomin Kang, as well as larger religious themes between Eastern and Western faith. The discussion of this cultural practice draws out implications and practical applications to addressing fragmentation in the church.

Literature categorized in the area of discipleship and spiritual practices written by pastors, leaders, and theologians of color is far less common than those of White authors. This is due to the lack of elevation of authors of color in the church, who are mostly highlighted in areas of cross-cultural ministry and missiology. Coming across Kang's book, *Deep-Rooted in Christ: The Way of Transformation*, offered me a unique way of understanding discipleship through the lens of Korean cultural values, customs, and faith. Although Kang has authored several books, this is his first book translated into English and distributed to a largely American audience.

Kang's book has language that is relatable to Western discipleship and spiritual direction, such as soul care, slowing, and spiritual growth. Kang also uses culturally normative language within Eastern Spirituality like harmony, balance, self-emptying, tending to the inner garden, meditation, and discipline to connect these two together and find ways to bring them together towards life in Christ. Although many of these practices are attached to Buddhism and other Eastern religions, it is clear that he does not separate these from the Christian faith. Instead, Kang allows them both to inform the Christian faith giving the church a fuller understanding of Christ.

Kang shares about the ways he has learned to bring ideas of East and West in his own life as a person born in Korea who migrated to the U.S. and has now lived in the US for many years. In his book, he writes:

> I live in two worlds, the East and the West. I communicate in two languages, the one Eastern, the other Western. I also have two streams of spirituality flowing within me, Asian and American… While living in two worlds that are often at odds with each other, I've learned how to bring harmony out of conflict. Inevitably, the meeting point, the balancing point, the unifying point is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the language in which the East and the West converse. He is the Lord of all things. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth with his Word. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. His love, mercy, kindness, peace, reconciliation and forgiveness are the parts of speech in the common language. In him anyone can love and everyone can communicate.[196]

Joshua Choonmin Kang does not reject ideas that draw from Eastern religions, nor does he take on the Western cultural lens to understand the spiritual life. Rather, he allows his cultural values to enhance and expand his understanding of faith in ways that are true to Jesus and uniquely broaden our perspective of Jesus. Kang's unique insight into his experience in both the Western and Eastern worlds allows for the reconciliation of cultures that often seemed in conflict with

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[196] Joshua Choonmin Kang, *Deep-Rooted in Christ: The Way of Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 15-16.

one another. Also, for those who have struggled to reconcile East and West, Kang's experience can instill a sense of hope. Kang holds two culturally different spiritualities and finds unity within the person of Jesus.

Kang is engaging in CQ Strategy, becoming deeply aware of the cultural dissonance that exists between these two cultures he is navigating, Eastern and Western. His awareness is causing him to notice the difference, identify the difference, and think widely of it. CQ Strategy within the subdimension of awareness helps to shift from narrow categorizers to broad categorizers so that these differences can meet in the space of distinctness, rather than wrong or right. He draws upon the common language of love, mercy, kindness, peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness within his strategy.

One of the ways that make Kang's work unique is his ability to move between cultures in his writing and articulation of this spiritual journey and his ministry to the church. This is a gift, and this gift is needed for the church's journey toward defragmentation. The ability to bring harmony from opposing views is fully embodied in Kang's identity as a Christ follower. This practice of harmony in cultural difference addresses the heart of fragmentation. Addressing fragmentation is not about compromise but about harmony while cultural differences remain.

In chapter four, I highlight a term used by Conde-Frasier called "mestiza/o consciousness." This is the ability to embrace mutuality, partnership, and constant mindfulness of one another while continually navigating from one culture to another. It is a way of understanding how opposing ideas can interact with one another. In Latino/a culture, a mestiza/o is someone who is of mixed race. This is a person who understands multiple cultures and has the ability to navigate in each cultural setting with fluency. Soong Chan-Rah uses a similar language of "mestizaje" and argues that those of biracial identity, young migrants, and children of

migrants can provide a common link across various ethnicities. In short, those with a biracial identity have cultural intelligence skills because of their unique perspectives and "the ability to straddle different cultures with greater sensitivity."[197]

When addressing fragmentation and the movement toward unity, cultural intelligence and the ability to practice harmony within cultural difference is vital. Drawing from Kang, Conde-Frazier, and Rah, those with a biracial and mestiza/o identity are key people in guiding the church towards defragmentation because movement through cultures and finding harmony within difference is their reality. The mestiza/o has the skills, awareness, and commitment to reconcile and honor both cultures while acknowledging the beauty of difference. Therefore, I believe culturally intelligent biracial and mestiza/o identity leaders are instrumental in leading the church towards unity.

In summary, the cultural practice of harmony within cultural difference was discussed and connected to the capability of CQ Strategy. CQ Strategy develops the skill of awareness and cultural dissonance with strong parallels to Kang's understanding of bringing Eastern and Western spirituality that leads to Jesus. Kang's connection to both Korean and American cultures gives him the ability to move between cultures effectively. This ability to move between cultures is vital to addressing fragmentation. The idea of mestizo/a consciousness was discussed, identifying the ways biracial and children of migrants can straddle different cultures with greater sensitivity due to their identity. This section concluded with an argument that culturally intelligent mestizo/a and biracial leaders are key to moving forward towards defragmentation and unity. The following section will discuss the cultural practice of marching.

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[197] Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism,* 186.

Marching: A Practice of Peacemaking and Prayer

This section will discuss marching as a cultural practice of peacemaking and prayer within the context of the Black community. The cultural practice of marching connects to the capability of CQ Action. This cultural practice shaped the Black community while also shaping the nation through their faithfulness to this practice of prayer and peacemaking. This section will discuss how marching is connected to CQ and the ways it addresses fragmentation in the church.

The practice of marching brings to mind the Civil Rights Movement, particularly the March on Washington in August of 1963 with the famous "I Have a Dream" speech by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The other march that often comes to mind is the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, ending in a horrific scene known as *Bloody Sunday.* Throughout an era of segregation and the struggle for equality for people of color, largely led by members of the Black community, the Black church would march as a way of non-violent protest. It also served as a way of engaging in the practice of peacemaking and active prayer. Marching was a call for solidarity by the church to stand in unity against the horrors and injustice of racism.

President emerita of Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Barbara A. Holmes, writes of marches she engaged in. "Soon after the four little girls were killed in the church bombing in Alabama, our church, Dixwell Avenue Congregational in New Haven, Connecticut, prepared to send a group of teens and adults south to participate in the marches. We would go into small towns to support the civil rights workers who were risking their lives every day."[198] So often our view of people committed to peace is defined by avoidance of involvement rather than active engagement.

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[198] Barbara A. Holmes, *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 120.

In Jon Huckins and Jer Swigart's book, *Mending the Divides*, they argue that a new way of seeing is the beginning of practicing peacemaking. They contend, "Everyday peacemakers are men and women who see the humanity, dignity, and image of God in all people. They see the pain of others and they understand their own contributions to the injustice around them."[199] For Huckins and Swigart, peacemaking is to be lived out and put into action and engagement in places where divisions exist.

Engaging in places where divisions exist is important to address fragmentation. Peacemaking is embodied prayer that not only longs for unity but also moves towards action. Peacemaking moves past desire, understanding, and assessment towards intentional change. Peacemaking requires self-sacrifice and the willingness to do all that we can to be people of peace and unity. As followers of Jesus, we are to be a people with transformed minds and cleansed eyes to see ourselves and others as God's image-bearers and to move courageously into places of brokenness and injustice as representatives of God's great love and shalom in our world. Jesus, in the Beatitudes, offered us a different vision of power within the kingdom of God, proclaiming, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."[200] Our identity is attached to the God of peace, and therefore the church is to be a people united in the way of peacemaking.

A visual image I will offer comes from the movie *The Hate U Give*. It is a scene of a funeral service at a church following the death of a member of the community killed by a police officer. Those who were gathered at the church moved from the pews and out church doors to march as a practice of peacemaking. It is an embodied image starting from the place where the

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[199] Jon Huckins and Jer Swigart. *Mending the Divides: Creating Love in a Conflicted World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 71.

[200] Matt. 5:9, NIV.

gospel is proclaimed through the doors where the gospel is lived out in the community. The church congregation understood themselves as a people committed to action and justice and demonstrated it as they exited the church doors entering into the practice of marching. Marching reminds us of the community we belong to, those we currently walk with and the great cloud of witnesses that have marched before us. Marching reminds us of the witness of the church in the community to be the overflow of our love for God and neighbor. Marching reminds us of our call to follow Jesus. "Christian community is a waiting community. But it is also a group of people who pray the reality of their sense of belonging into being."[201]

The spiritual practice of marching connects with engagement in CQ Action. CQ Action moves beyond our motivation, understanding, and strategy to engage in multicultural work and relationships. This is not easy because it requires solidarity in suffering and the ownership of the pain of others. Often, cross-cultural engagement requires hard things from us. This is because Christian discipleship and unity in the body of Christ requires hard things as well. CQ Action is a transformation of behaviors for the sake of responding appropriately in diverse situations and culturally different relationships. It is the embodiment of unity, which is the hope of the spiritual practice of CQ.

In summary, marching is a practice of peacemaking and prayer that is part of the experience of the Black church. This practice is connected to CQ Action because of the ways marching embodies and physically moves towards engagement. Similar to the cultural practice of marching, CQ Action moves beyond desire, understanding, and assessment toward doing hard things for the sake of cross-cultural learning and understanding, and for the sake of unity. The practice of marching, in connection to the capability of CQ Action, is important in addressing

[201] Holmes, *Joy Unspeakable,* 124.

fragmentation because it is about engaging in places where divisions exist and acting in ways that create change.

In summary, this section has discussed the cultural practice of marching. This practice is connected to CQ Action because it is the embodiment of our longings for peace and change. Marching is vital for the church because it teaches us to take action and do hard things that require sacrifice and solidarity for the sake of peace and unity. This final practice is cultural heart music connected to the spiritual life of the Indigenous community.

Cultural Heart Music

This section will discuss the practice of cultural heart music, particularly focusing on the musical expressions of the Indigenous communities of North America. This cultural practice will discuss the connection between all four of the CQ capabilities. The cultural heart of the Indigenous community has been used as a way to reclaim cultural practices. This practice will also inform how to address fragmentation in the church.

The Indigenous communities of North America have endured a hard history since the arrival of European settlers. The erasure of cultures among the Indigenous populations continues to be a stain in the history of the U.S. and of the church. Part of the role of the church is to address the harm caused to Indigenous communities that have created divisions. The role of the church is also to highlight those who are reviving the Christian worship practices that honor the revival and recovery of cultures close to extinction. The unity of the church necessitates confession for harm caused and the inclusion of culturally diverse expressions of worship, faith, and formation that shape the church in its unity.

Chapter two highlights Richard Twiss as a key voice in Indigenous theology and native expression of Christian faith. Twiss claims that Indigenous churches were not permitted to write

original songs in their own languages and use the tribal instruments or music styles for many years. Instead, they were encouraged to translate Western-style hymns and songs. Much of the opposition came from other Native church leaders. Some had even demonized the drum and, with it, an entire genre of traditional native music.[202] Most native churches assimilated to Western-style worship music rather than engaging in sounds and music connected to Indigenous cultures.

In recent years, Twiss reports a renaissance in the use of Native drums, music, and the *powwow* in religious practice. Twiss speaks of contextualization, the process of framing the gospel message culturally so that it makes sense to people where they live every day. He argues that for contextualization to be effective, heart issues must be addressed:

> The Christ-honoring *Mni Wiconi Wacipi*—Living Waters Powwow is much more than an evangelistic outreach. It promotes the 'restoration of souls' in a holistic way and encourages involvement in tribal identity. The powwow brings the tension between faith and culture into balance and allows participants the biblical freedom to dance their prayers in worship to Jesus.[203]

Similarly, to Kang, in relation to the practice of harmony, Twiss recognizes the tensions when recognizing and holding differences. Twiss uses the word "balance" as the way cultural heart music reemerges to reclaim cultural identity alongside faith identity in Christ. This recognition of tension between differences is engaging the capability of CQ Strategy. As an observer invited to engage in this practice of cultural heart music, this can address CQ Knowledge as a person in a culturally different space for learning. CQ Knowledge is required to understand the sacredness of this practice and the stories that help reclaim cultural identity within the music

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[202] Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel,* 153.
[203] Ibid., 163.

Similarly, from a desire to preserve and highlight cultural uniqueness within musical worship, Sandra Maria Van Opstal, a second-generation Latina pastor and worship leader, challenges the idea of personal worship and advocates for multicultural worship as an act of solidarity. Van Opstal argues, "The primary reasons we should pursue multicultural worship…are neither pragmatic nor trends, but biblical community and mission."[204] Multicultural worship is an expression of our unity. It gathers the racial and ethnic diversity of the church to worship God together within the difference of language and genre as one people. Some members engage in the cultural heart music. Other members are intentional in practicing the cultural heart music of others as an act of cross-cultural learning. However, all members worshipping one God united within their difference. Cultural heart music is an expression of being known in worship where our stories and cultures are honored.

The engagement in multicultural worship as an act of solidarity connects with CQ Action. Van Opstal argues that engaging in multicultural music is done to live faithfully to biblical community and mission. This is a way to take action toward the unity and defragmentation we long for as the body of Christ. This is also a way to access CQ Drive as an observer, sorting through overcoming biases and fears and increasing the desire to engage.

In summary, this section has discussed the practice of cultural heart music, particularly highlighting the reclaiming of Indigenous cultural sounds in worship. Twiss holds the tension of difference to bring faith and culture into balance leading Indigenous Christians to a renaissance in the use of Native musical sounds. Van Opstal argues for multicultural worship as an act of solidarity in the church. All four CQ capabilities made a connection to the cultural heart music of Indigenous cultural sounds in worship and multicultural worship. CQ Drive and CQ Knowledge

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[204] Sandra Maria Van Opstal, *The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 23

were applied from the point of view of an observer, while CQ Strategy and CQ Action were applied from the point of view of a participant. This cultural practice addresses fragmentation through the ways the church takes action toward unity through multicultural expression in worship that proclaim our diversity as the body of Christ.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the practical application of a broader integration of the spiritual practice of CQ that enfolds spiritually formative practices of communities of color as means of defragmentation and unity. Each section highlighted spiritual formative cultural practices with the purpose of elevating the practice of communities to form the church as a whole. These cultural practices proved to make connections with each of the CQ capabilities of Drive, Knowledge, Strategy, and Action. This section highlighted cultural practices connected to Middle Eastern, Spanish, Latina/o, Asian, Black, and Indigenous communities to offer practical and diverse ways of engaging in the spiritual practice of CQ. The enfolding of diverse cultural practices into CQ addresses the fragmentation of the church by helping Christians practice cultural intelligence as discipleship and formation and offer the diverse church practices that are reflective of our ecclesial identity as a global church. CQ as a spiritual practice for all Christians is a way forward than can lead the church to be one body with many members.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has aimed to address fragmentation in the church by proposing Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a spiritual practice—a globally-recognized way of assessing and improving effectiveness in diverse situations that is both measurable and cultivates honor and respect for cultural difference. This dissertation has clearly proven that CQ can offer a way forward that aligns with following Christ faithfully while expanding our discipleship through greater cross-cultural understanding among the diverse and global membership of the body of Christ, strengthening our global church identity, and guiding us toward that heavenly image of a united body with many diverse members.

Chapter one acknowledged the problem of the current reality of the American church's existence in racial and ethnic homogeneity. The American cultural value of individualism has informed discipleship practices reinforcing the church's fragmented state. This value has created a privatized discipleship and formation, rather than shaped by Christ and the diverse community of Christ-followers. It was accessed through the gathering of sociological and ecclesial data that a new understanding of discipleship was necessary for a movement toward church unity.

Chapter two examined the fragmentation of the American church along racial and ethnic lines through its problematic history with colonization, slavery, segregation, and its continued patterns of homogeneity. The fragmented state of the church has had implications on the American church's response to racial tensions, theologies shaped by cultural values, Christian higher education, and varying responses on how to address disunity in the church. An extensive literature review examined various experts on American church history, sociology, missiology, and theology.

Chapter three demonstrated that the current model of discipleship necessitated a paradigm shift that went beyond the current spiritual practices to guide Christ followers towards unity with Christ and the global body of Christ. This paradigm shift of discipleship for a global church demands intentionality in cross-cultural learning and engagement for the sake of unity in the body of Christ. A thoroughly formulated biblical, theological, sacramental, and credal rationale was developed to argue the necessity and the belonging of a spiritual practice of cross-cultural learning such as Cultural Intelligence. This rationale was founded on the confessions of the church's identity as a united, global body.

Chapter four presented CQ as a spiritual practice to address fragmentation in the church and as a way forward to envision a discipleship that expands into the realms of cultural learning. This chapter demonstrated the value of cross-cultural learning as a way to bring into closer proximity those who are culturally different people. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is a spiritual practice developed through the daily rhythms of CQ's four capabilities: CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, and CQ Action. CQ clearly mirrors spiritual practices teaching us the heart of Jesus for all people from all cultures. CQ's capabilities also connect with various existing spiritual practices. Most importantly, the spiritual practice of Cultural Intelligence aims to provide rhythms and learned capabilities effectively guide all Christ-followers to better navigate cultural difference within the body of Christ for the sake of unity. Spiritual practices open us up to draw near to the heart of Christ and to one another. CQ as a spiritual practice was demonstrated as a way forward towards oneness in the Body of Christ.

Chapter five demonstrated the practical application of a broader integration of CQ that enfolds spiritual formative cultural practices of communities of color as means of defragmentation and ecclesial unity. This integration enfolded cultural practices to elevate the

practices of communities of color to form the church as a whole. Each cultural practice was connected to the CQ capabilities: CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, and CQ Action. In addition, this section highlighted cultural practices connected to Middle Eastern, Spanish, Latina/o, Asian, Black, and Indigenous communities to offer practical and diverse ways of engaging in the spiritual practice of CQ. The enfolding of diverse cultural practices into CQ addresses the fragmentation of the church by helping Christians practice cultural intelligence as discipleship and formation and offer the diverse church practices that are reflective of our ecclesial identity as a global church.

Further considerations for study would include the development of a booklet and study guide that helps guide congregations in engaging in the spiritual practice of cultural intelligence. Recognizing that this dissertation develops the theory, rationale, and demonstration of CQ as a spiritual practice, churches will require helpful tools that make the findings of this dissertation accessible and available for congregational use. The development of a resource for the church would necessitate certification in Cultural Intelligence as a trainer. Although these past three years of doctoral work have led me to produce this dissertation, I am not considered an expert or certified by the Cultural Intelligence Center. This next step in study and certification will help me continue in my journey toward helping the church in the way of unity through cross-cultural learning.

It is in our pursuit and daily practice to love God with our entire being and neighbor as ourselves that we can, by God's Spirit, be one with Christ, one with each other, and one in our ministry to the world. We recognize that our “neighbors” and fellow members in the body of Christ are a diverse people from many nations, cultures, and languages. From the beginning of the church, this has been both a gift and a challenge to navigate. This requires a discipleship and

spiritual practices that can help us to grow more in the likeness of Jesus Christ. We recognize that Jesus's very nature, being God incarnate, is an expression of engaging cross-culturally. God came down through the person of Jesus to dwell among us, live as one of us, and die as one of us so that we can be transformed to be like Christ. Christ's church initiated a diverse, multiethnic, and multicultural reality. And although it exists in this way, it is not united in this way.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has proven to help many people to navigate a globalized and increasingly diverse world in ways that help to honor cultural difference. Beginning with assessing motivations, gaining knowledge, being strategic, and acting in ways that show love and respect for different cultures. The road to Cultural Intelligence is a journey of continual growth. There are strong parallels between CQ and spiritual practices and discipleship. CQ, as a part of regular discipleship practices for every Christian, is a good, attainable, and Christ-centric way forward that will lead to better unity within the body of Christ.

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APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Culture: Consists of beliefs, behaviors, objects, and other characteristics common to members of a particular group. [205]

Diversification: the act or process of diversifying something or of becoming diversified: an increase in the variety or diversity of something.[206]

Diversify: to make diverse or composed of unlike elements.[207]

Diversity: The condition of having or being composed of differing elements: the inclusion of people of different races, cultures, etc. in a group or organization.[208]

Ethnicity: Based on perceived cultural similarities that are often linked to a shared ancestral background or heritage. This may include one's nationality, but also may be defined by or exist in combination with one's language, religion, tribe, or places of origin.[209]

Heterogenous/multiracial churches: Those where no single racial or ethnic group comprises more than 60 percent of the congregation, according to practicing Christians' estimations of the congregational makeup.[210]

Homogenous/monoracial churches: Those in which more than 60 percent of the congregation is racially or ethnically homogeneous.[211]

Practicing Christians: Self-identified Christians who say their faith is very important in their lives and have attended a worship service within the past month.[212]

Race: A set of socially created categories based on selected perceived differences in physical traits such as skin tone, facial features, hair texture, etc.[213]

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[205] Barna Group, *Beyond Diversity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2021), 22.
[206] Merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversification
[207] Merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversify
[208] Merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversity
[209] Barna Group, *Beyond Diversity*, 22.
[210] Ibid
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.