

the multicultural ministry



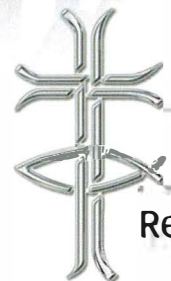
toolkit

a training resource for growing multicultural churches



The United Reformed Church is a Multicultural Church

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(For the use of all local churches and groups!)



The
United
Reformed
Church



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Foreword

The church of Jesus Christ is called to proclaim what shall be in the good will and time of God, and then to embody the reality of that rule in its life. The church is properly a prophetic community. In 2005 the United Reformed Church General Assembly acted prophetically. It proclaimed itself a multi-cultural church.

Scripture bears witness to our barrier-breaking God. God's concern has always been for all the world's peoples. That was why God signed the sky with a rainbow signature and promised, 'I will never again curse the ground because of humankind' (Gen 8:21). That was why Israel was called, a light to the Gentiles. That was why Jesus died. All too often though God's people have tried to build barriers, and divide God's people from each other. But God has been resolute, and through prophets and poets, visions and politics, we have been taught that this is not God's way.

Acts 10 offers us wonderful insights. Peter is one of my heroes, a saint who ricochets between weakness and strength, stupidity and insight, faith and doubt. Many of us can see ourselves in Peter. In Acts 10 Peter the honest, upright, faithful apostle thought he'd got everything sorted out. He is living God's way with integrity and dedication. Then he falls asleep, and dreams, and God enters Peter's dream. All the rules about what was 'clean' and 'unclean', who was acceptable and who not are suddenly, dramatically thrown into the air, and Peter hears a voice, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' (Acts 10:15). God isn't into barriers. Cornelius might be a Gentile, but Jesus died for Gentiles just as he died for Jews. The church would never be the same again.

And throughout history the same message has echoed. Sometimes we've been so slow and dim that we've failed to hear what God is saying, with terrible consequences. That way lies the history of persecution and slavery. But at other times, we've heard, and at those times astonishing things have happened. People have been set free, and walls have been knocked down, and black and white, rich and poor, men and women, have come together in a different kind of community – the kingdom of Christ our Lord.

In 2005 we heard God's call to be a community where all are welcome, and the gifts of all cultures are valued. We realised that it is only by encountering each other in all our diversity that we will appreciate the full richness of the Christ who comes to each of us in our own cultures.

This toolkit offers all of us the chance to learn more of God's extraordinary love and grace as we learn to accept the Christ in each other. I hope and pray that it will be widely used.

David Cornick
General Secretary, United Reformed Church





Background Paper

The Vision Declared

In 2005 the United Reformed Church declared itself to be a Multicultural Church¹. This declaration reflects both the reality as well as a goal to be achieved for while the United Reformed Church is multicultural, its functioning life and witness is predominantly mono-cultural. This pronouncement is a bold statement of what the United Reformed Church intends to be and do. It also reflects an awareness of the mission opportunities God provides, and a consciousness of the necessity to relate across cultural barriers. While ethnic and cultural diversity is seen and experienced daily in British society, most people do not rush to cross different cultural barriers, and the majority of British Churches remain racially and culturally homogeneous.

The vision of multicultural ministry is about inclusiveness wherever any part of God's creation is rejected and marginalised. It seeks to include all regardless of creed, age, gender, sexuality, ability, class and any other excluding factor. However, this toolkit is specifically about being multicultural in terms of race and ethnicity, and it is hoped that the users of the toolkit will adapt and apply the suggestions and principles of inclusion therein to any other excluded group in their church or community.

Biblical and Theological Foundations²

Pentecost provided a taste of God's Kingdom. In declaring itself to be a multicultural church, the United Reformed Church has expressed its self-understanding as a Kingdom building church, recognising that there is no more obvious way to live God's Kingdom on earth than to be a church that is visibly and fully multicultural. The vision of multicultural ministry is rooted in the New Testament Church, which was multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual. It is a thoroughly biblical approach to being church. Embracing cultural diversity is a thoroughly biblical approach to being church. It affirms the faith that the Holy Spirit moves the church to bear witness to our essential unity in Christ whilst at the same time respecting and

accepting the uniqueness of ethnic and cultural differences. At the very least, it is an affirmation of the theological understanding that in God's providence we are placed in a multicultural world and society where we are called to bear witness to Christ's power to break down all barriers that keep humanity separated from each other and from God.

The Vision Implemented

There is always a tension between the biblical vision and actually living out that vision. Indeed, inclusiveness does bring certain challenges. It is hoped that this Toolkit, **aimed primarily at assisting all local churches and groups**, can make a visible impact in moving the United Reformed Church further in developing and growing as a multicultural church.

Terminology

Recognising that terminology and language are always risky in this area, it is good practice to strive as far as possible to use language that is clear and inoffensive. Some of the terms used in this toolkit are still debated in public and academic discourse. We strive to be clear about why certain terms are used throughout the toolkit, and we apologise in advance for any offence we may cause despite our efforts.

There are ongoing debates surrounding the term multiculturalism in the media, academia, and in the political arena. From the perspective of racial justice, some are reluctant to accept the term fully, arguing that it has been used to avoid addressing racism. On the other hand, some argue that there is no true multiculturalism without racial justice. The fact is there are different understandings of the term. It can be used as a demographic description of a population, as a strategy for inclusiveness, as an instrument for social justice, in reference to social structures and institutions, and to describe a political response to the needs of minority ethnic groups³.

contd.
over>>

¹ Resolution 52, Catch the Vision Report, General Assembly 2005 ² See esp. Acts 2:1-11, 43-47; Revelation 7:9-12; Galatians 3:23-29; Ephesians 2:11-22
³ Sophia Ng in Growing Multicultural Churches, Uniting Church in Australia, 2003





Glossary and Definitions⁴

In relation to work on Racism and Racial Justice within the British and Irish Context

Black

A term of political unity, based on experiences of discrimination among people whose skin colour is not white. The term is used mainly by and for people of African, Asian and African-Caribbean origin/descent.

White/whiteness

The notion of being “white” is alien to most white people. “Whiteness” is associated with ‘supremacy’ and unearned privileges, but it is difficult for white people to see these since ‘whiteness’ determines what is normal. Focussing on individual violent acts of racism can mask a system of power that privileges white people. Such privileges include for example, the assurance that white people will appear in history as leaders and heroes.

Race

A dictionary definition is: ‘the descendants of a common ancestor, especially those who inherit a common set of characteristics...’ However scientists have proven that the differences between racial groupings are superficial and thus the term ‘race’ is in fact meaningless. There is actually only one race, the Human Race.

Culture

This term refers to attitudes, values and ways of life (including religion, customs, and food) belonging to a particular group of people.

Prejudice

This is expressed in acquired beliefs and opinions that lead an individual or group to be biased for or against members of a particular group. In practice ‘prejudice’ means pre judging others and is normally used in negative ways. Prejudiced opinions are not based on actual knowledge but on hearsay and assumptions that generate hostile views.

⁴Adapted from papers of the Churches Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ) in Britain

Background Paper contd.

The important point to understand is that multiculturalism is relevant to the whole population, not just for people from minority ethnic background. Further, it is not a cheap and diluted version of racial justice. Multiculturalism makes the assumption that there are sacrifices and inconveniences involved, and that power and control must be shared for transformation to take place, both visibly in outward appearance as well as in the hearts of people.

The distinction between *multicultural* and *cross-cultural* as approaches to growing the *multicultural* church is important. *Multicultural* encourages engagement, interaction, fellowship and celebration to enrich the life of the whole church. *Cross-cultural* is the deliberate crossing into another culture to learn and participate so as to appreciate what that culture is experiencing.

The term *race* is also debated. In this toolkit the underlying assumption is that the notion of *race* does not exist. The classification of different groups in terms of *race* is meaningless because biologically we are all one human race. However, popular usage continues to use the term *race* to denote ethnicity or nationality. From time to time the toolkit may use a hyphenated form (i.e. racial-ethnic) in the hope of signaling clearly what is meant.

Following is a list of terms and definitions to aid not only the use of this toolkit but also to encourage continuing efforts to deepen understanding and to use the appropriate language to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds. They may also help people cope with changing and evolving terminology in their communities and society.





Glossary and Definitions

In relation to work on Racism and Racial Justice within the British and Irish Context

Stereotyping

This refers to an image or opinion about a particular group, which is then used to characterise or label the group itself as well as all its members too readily and simplistically. Such images/opinions are often based on myths and hearsay (stereotyping also operates in relation to sexuality, gender, disability and nationality or regions).

Ethnic

Derived from the Greek word 'ethnikos' and refers to a people or a nation. An ethnic group is a self-conscious collection of people, united or closely related by shared experience and distinct identity (e.g. language or culture). The terms 'ethnic minority' or 'minority ethnic' refer to such a group of people who are numerically a minority within a majority dominant group in a society. Minority ethnic is the preferred term as it recognizes both the minority status of the group in the society as a whole, and the ethnic origin of the majority culture.

Ethnocentrism

Refers to the belief in the superiority of ones' own cultural group or society and the corresponding dislike and disrespect of other such groups.

Xenophobia

'A fear of strangers.' Many white Europeans are happier with this word rather than racism. The implication here is that we all fear strangers thus avoiding the more fundamental demands of racism.

Racism

(Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report by Sir William Macpherson)

Racism in general terms consists of conduct, words or practices which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form it is as damaging as its overt form.

"Institutional Racism"

Institutional Racism consists of 'the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin'. It can be seen or detected in the institution's culture, practices, and processes. Individual members of the institution can racially discriminate without being racially prejudiced personally (e.g. unwittingly through uncritical acceptance of company policies, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping) thereby disadvantaging minority ethnic people.

Racist Incident

A racist incident is any incident, which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

Racial Discrimination

This is when someone is treated badly or as inferior because of racial or ethnic origin. This is a way of acting/behaving that affects people's lives and life chances. For example, minority ethnic groups often get second rate treatment in regards to access to services like education, employment, housing and health. Such treatment can also be experienced in the church.

Institutionalised /Systematic Racism

This occurs when racism is built into laws and/or expresses itself through administrative and structural processes and practices.

Racial Harassment and Violence

This refers to harassment or violence experienced and suffered by individuals or groups because of their ethnic or national origins. It could be physical, verbal or emotional and can include attacks on property and land as well as people.





Models of Multicultural Church⁵

The Multicultural United Reformed Church welcomes all people and embraces diverse models of the multicultural church locally. Currently within the United Reformed Church these or similar models of multicultural church exist:

I. Monocultural

a) All White Congregations

b) Single Ethnic/Language

Congregations (members of specific minority ethnic group, e.g. Urdu Speaking Pakistani, Ghanaian, Korean) which could be:

- I. A congregation of the United Reformed Church using mother tongue mostly or English
- II. An independent group meeting in a United Reformed Church building
- III. A fellowship in process of becoming a congregation of the United Reformed Church
- IV. An independent group that regularly worships in their mother tongue, consisting of URC members and others who see the group as their main and only church



2. Multi-cultural Churches

a) Multi-ethnic Congregations

Membership is ethnically diverse and worships together as one congregation using either the majority ethnic group's language or the English language. The majority ethnic group is dominant though the church is seen as having a multicultural flavour.

b) Multicultural Congregations

The church membership may (or may not) be ethnically diverse but it is living and witnessing consciously and intentionally in a multicultural way. It expresses unity in diversity in the church's whole life, always seeking to be multicultural in everything the church does. It uses the diverse gifts and talents of all its members. Above all it empowers and nurtures leadership among all its members especially minority ethnic groups. This is a truly multicultural church, not only in its membership but also in living experience.

This is the model that we focus on in this toolkit.

c) Black Majority Congregations

Here 75 - 100% of membership are black from diverse ethnic backgrounds. English is language used.



⁵ See Appendix 1 for further models of the multicultural church





Introduction to the Multicultural Toolkit

Introduction

The Multicultural Ministry Toolkit represents a strategy not only for growing multicultural congregations in the United Reformed Church, but it can also be a strategy for church growth. The potential for churches to become not only more visibly diverse but to also be vibrant and growing cannot be underestimated. If our diminishing membership is to be reversed, and if the United Reformed Church is truly serious about being part of the scene, then here is a strategy to live. This is all part of the vision of multicultural ministry, and the congregations and members of our Church across the three nations are encouraged to be open and willing to make full use of what is offered here.

Multicultural/Multi-ethnic Congregation⁶

A multicultural church/congregation primarily means a church that is not only multi-ethnic in its membership but is also intentionally multicultural in its whole life. It is a church where the leadership encourages participation of all its members, enabling people of different ethnic backgrounds to contribute their own cultural gifts to the life of that multi-ethnic church. In short, it is a church that is not only ethnically diverse but is also intentional in ensuring that it reflects its multi-ethnicity in all that it does. However, a more homogeneous church can be multicultural when it is living and witnessing consciously and intentionally in a multicultural way, always seeking to reflect God's diverse gifts in everything that it does.

This toolkit is not a resource for minority ethnic churches only. It is a tool for equipping every local United Reformed church or group to become multiculturally literate. The multicultural church model is our denominational aspiration for we believe that to be the authentic way to be a community of Christ's followers in the 21st century. However, to get there every local church or group needs assistance to understand what

being a multicultural church means, and to grow multicultural communities of faith. This toolkit is to help the United Reformed Church get closer to that goal.

Aims and Objectives

The Multicultural Toolkit is a resource aimed at:

- Raising awareness about the 'Vision of Multicultural Ministry' throughout the Church as a Gospel imperative and a core characteristic of the communities of Christ's followers.
- Encouraging the Church to see diversity as a source of spiritual and social growth.
- Enthusing the Church at every level to become multicultural.
- Equipping local congregations to be intentional about becoming multicultural communities of faith and to involve youth and children.

Objectives:

- To develop a wide network of trainers/advocates who will assist congregations/groups to be multicultural where they are.
- To assist synod racial justice advocates raise awareness at synods and at every level of the United Reformed Church.
- To ensure that the toolkit is user friendly, accessible, and adaptable to all situations, setting forth standards of good practice.
- To ensure that it is an effective tool in helping make real, through the church, the vision of God's multicultural kingdom.
- To monitor progress periodically across the Church using the checklist provided in the toolkit.

⁶ In the 2005 Assembly Book of Reports (Appendix 3 p.110) we give a definition of the multicultural church. Also see Appendices 1, 2 and 3 in the back of the Toolkit





Introduction to the Multicultural Toolkit

The Format

There are nine sessions on key characteristics of a multicultural church. Each session has:

- introduction
- interactive activity
- group reflection
- resource materials (where appropriate, otherwise see appendices)

These sessions are to help users engage more deeply with the topics covered, and to reflect on how to apply the toolkit more effectively in their churches/groups. Users may wish to do all sessions in the form of a short course, others may wish to concentrate on a few sessions at a time. Each session should take a maximum of ninety minutes and a minimum of forty-five minutes.

A checklist is included at the end of the final session for self-monitoring by the group.

The Users

The toolkit is for use by groups within and beyond the United Reformed Church. Users may also be a gathering of several local congregations, ecumenical partners, or local community groups.

Activities are for use with adults and older young people. Session 7 (p.19) gives suggestions for use with younger people and with children.

Facilitators

The United Reformed Church Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry office (and some synod offices) can provide facilitators⁷ on request. However, the toolkit itself is accessible and user-friendly so that trainers, educators, church leaders and others committed to growing multicultural communities should be able to facilitate its use by their groups.

Additional Materials

Appendices in the back of the toolkit include further resource materials for reference and reflections.

A bibliography is provided for further research and reading.



⁷ The URC Secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry and the Synod Advocates for racial justice are available as facilitators. Groups are encouraged to contact URC Church House on 0207 916 8655 or email ktw@urc.org.uk ; Gillian.Jones@urc.org.uk





Session 1

Welcome and hospitality

Introduction

A multicultural church/group is typically a centre of welcome and hospitality for all people, as it believes its key role is to reflect God's hospitality and welcome. It accepts these elements are necessary Christian practice in response to God's love and welcome to us all. It strives to model the Household of God where all become family to each other, transcending ethnic and cultural boundaries.

Such a church is familiar with how different ethnic groups represented in its membership understand and practice welcome and hospitality, and provides a strategy for incorporating and affirming these diverse practices in its ongoing life and witness. It is a church that is children and youth friendly!

Its members willingly participate in not only greeting and welcoming newcomers, but also in fostering a warm and friendly atmosphere in the church. Further, the church building and the spaces around and within convey signs of invitation and welcome to all.

Interaction

In the big group:

- i. Begin this first session with a short devotion, which can be a prayer, or sharing of a reading/poem/song.
- ii. Introduce the members of the group by asking each person to say their names and give three words that encompass what welcome and hospitality mean to them. Then in pairs share why they picked these words.
- iii. Read the introduction together, and
 - Share immediate thoughts in relation to this particular group's dynamics. Discuss how members would like to see welcome and hospitality reflected in the way the group engage and interact for the duration of the whole course/session.

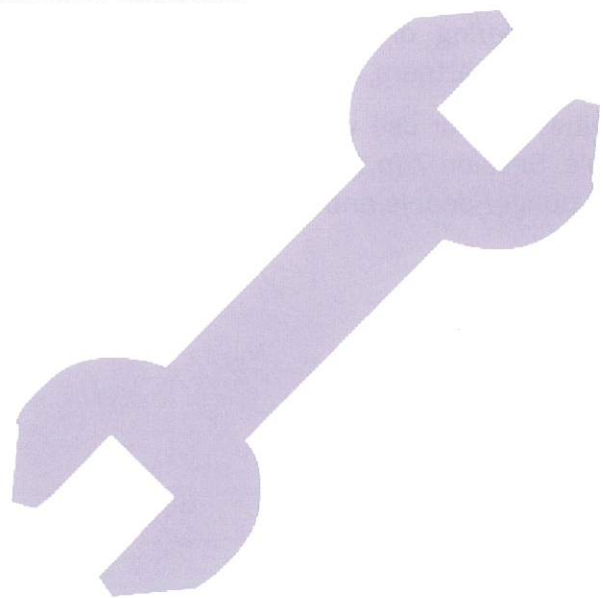
- List ideas on flip chart and if group agree, use the list as guidelines for how members relate throughout the duration of the course/sessions.

In small groups:

- i. Share experiences of positive and negative hospitality and pick two of those situations to role-play in the group. Identify the main principles needed to implement good welcome and hospitality in a church.
- ii. Consider what a church can do to become more inclusive and welcoming to newcomers to the church and perhaps even to the community⁸.
- iii. Together design a culturally aware and sensitive welcome flier/poster that can be offered to home churches/groups.

Group Reflection

Share reflections on how significant welcome and hospitality might be in Britain today, especially for Christians committed to living Christ's message of peace and justice, given the current socio-political rhetoric of exclusion.



⁸ Refer to Appendices '2,4,5'





Session 2

Worship and Liturgy

Introduction

A multicultural church is intentional in developing multicultural worship. Though aware of the challenges in developing worship that enables inclusive input and participation, it knows that unity cannot be achieved if one part of the church is overlooked or diminished. It strives to weave different experiences and rituals into its worship using images, symbols, and language that are inclusive, and which honour and respect different cultural traditions and spirituality. Several languages are often used and translation is a normal part of

its worshipping life. It also develops or sponsors the production of multicultural/cross-cultural worship materials, and actively provides opportunities for combined worship services with other churches.

Leadership in a multicultural worship service is shared, is visibly diverse, and is sensitive to different communication styles. Inclusive multicultural liturgies are developed as liturgy has an important role in nurturing and supporting the multicultural church.

Woven together in love: a story

Our church has gradually become more multi-cultural. It began when a few black people started attending. Over time, the number of black and minority ethnic people who attended the church grew. Yet for the first several years, our worship looked as it had for generations – a choir that specialised in classical music, European hymns from the 19th and 20th centuries, and of course, a quiet congregation (no alleluia, amens, and no clapping from this crowd).

Then our minister asked our black and minority ethnic members about how they experienced our church. They spoke of missing the music they had grown up with and still enjoyed outside of church. They found the worship very white-oriented, and wondered if the congregation would be willing to experience something new from time to time. Out of these conversations, we began to change our worship to reflect everyone who was sitting in the pews.

Liturgy, after all, means the work of the people – the whole people of God. Now we have a Gospel Choir, made up of black and white members of our congregation that sings regularly in worship, and we sing from a broader repertoire of hymns and spiritual songs. It hasn't always been easy. People who strongly prefer one form of music have had to make room for those who prefer another kind. Our worship, every Sunday, is diverse...which means that at some point in the service, someone could be unhappy, if they thought that worship was about meeting their preferences. Instead, we consciously cultivate the awareness that our worship is a gift we give to God, from the whole church. And while I might not like a particular style of hymn or music, I can practice being happy that someone sitting in the pew next to me speaks to God that way. We are letting God weave us together in love, and practicing the ancient Christian virtue of hospitality. We have found that sharing in this way has made our life together all the richer and more faithful to the call to build an inclusive community.

Thanks be to God!





Session 2

Worship and Liturgy

Interaction

In small groups discuss:

- What helps or hinders multicultural worship?
- Share experiences of the use of inclusive or exclusive language in worship and liturgy.
- Consider ways to encourage different ethnic members to be involved in planning worship and liturgy to reflect their spirituality.
- Discuss ways to encourage an all white rural church to be multicultural through its worshipping life. Why should multicultural worship matter for such a church? Where would it find resources, worship materials and persons to assist in this process?

In big group:

- Share quick thoughts on why multicultural worship and liturgy might be important for all churches in Britain today
- List ideas on a flip chart that would enable worship services to be more inclusive
- Develop a multicultural act of worship or devotion the group can use to open and close the toolkit sessions
- Develop a multicultural worship service that can be offered to local churches

Group Reflection

Close the session with the multicultural act of devotion the group developed above.

Resource Material:

There are many books and resources that provide prayers, liturgies and songs from other cultures that you can use to enrich your worship. Here are just a few:

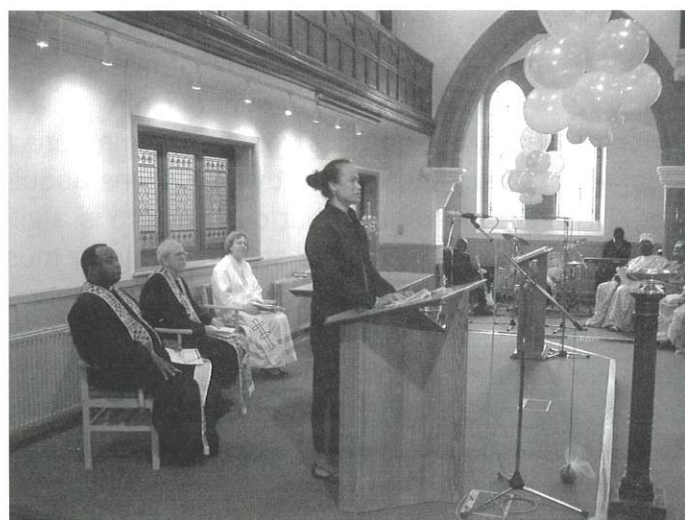
Tirabassi, M.C. and Eddy, K.W. (1995) *Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community*, Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

Aebi, B. et al (1995) *Thuma Mina [Send Me]: International Ecumenical Hymnbook*, Germany: Strube Verlag GmbH.

Iona Community (1990) *Many and Great: songs of the world church*, Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, and other Wild Goose publications.

Common Ground: a song book for all the churches (1998) Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press.

Robson, P. (2000) *A Celtic Liturgy*, London: HarperCollinsReligious.





Session 3⁹ Theology, Spirituality and the Bible⁹

Introduction

Growing and maintaining a multicultural church must be based on biblical and theological imperatives because it is the work of the Kingdom of God. A multicultural church obeys God's call to respect the dignity of all human beings. This obedience is reflected in how it honours diverse spirituality, how it reads and interprets the Bible, how it understands and does theology.

A multicultural church accepts that there is more than one way of reading and interpreting the biblical texts because each person's reading of the Bible is influenced and shaped by their context and where they are located in life/society. It recognises that while the Bible reveals the word of God, and offers guidance to the way people live, the Bible also contains passages that can be harmful without careful study. It provides opportunities for members to reflect together on how to cross different boundaries in order to create new spaces for cross-cultural theologies and to share spirituality.

Interaction

This session uses biblical narratives to help the group reflect biblically and theologically on the significance of:

1. Developing and maintaining a multicultural church, and
2. Reading the Bible from different cultural perspectives

a. Being a Multicultural Church

- Genesis 1: 26 reveals the truth that we are all made in the image of God.
- The Book of Jonah makes it clear that God loves and forgives all people.
- John 4 shows that central to Jesus' ministry was breaking down barriers of gender, culture, and religion.
- Acts 10 shows the church being forced to confront the issue of the 'gentiles'. Peter realised that God treats everyone as equal (v.34) and the church in Jerusalem agreed that gentiles must be accepted, Acts 15.
- Acts 13: 1-4 presents a truly multicultural church with Jews, Gentiles, black, white, and people from around the Mediterranean Sea. Recognising the potential of growing the multicultural church, the multicultural leaders laid hands on Paul and Barnabas and sent them off to start the great mission to the Gentiles (Acts 11: 25-26).



⁹ See appendix 6 and also refer to: Growing Multicultural Congregations, ed. Myong Duk Yang, Uniting Church in Australia, 2004; Many nations, one church, Baptist Union, 2006.





Session 3⁹ Theology, Spirituality and the Bible

b. Reading the Bible

- Mark 7: 24-29/Matthew 15: 21-28 'Syro-Phoenician Woman'

This passage demonstrates the impact culture and identity can have on how we interpret the Scriptures, and how we apply that interpretation to our multicultural relationships in the church/society today. The woman is identified and set apart from Jesus by her gender, ethnicity, religion, and class. She is determined to challenge Jesus by crossing her own boundaries and Jesus' for the sake of her daughter. Jesus himself is challenged to broaden his vision of God's saving grace. In the end he affirms her faith and her human dignity.

- Genesis 11:1-9 'Tower of Babel'; Acts 2 'Pentecost'

The first passage gives a good example of the importance of how we interpret the scriptures. Many Christians have used this passage as rationale for racial segregation and apartheid. The second passage however can be read as God breaking down cultural barriers and affirming diversity through Christ.

- Numbers 12:1; Acts 8 'Black African Presence in the Bible'

These two passages demonstrate how reading and interpreting the Bible from a dominant ethnocentric perspective can portray inaccurate biblical images and marginalise others' stories. In this way black African presence throughout the Hebrew Bible and from the very beginning of Christianity has been silenced. Few Christians realise that Moses' second wife was black, and that black Africans spread the gospel even before Paul began his Christian ministry on European soil.

In small groups:

Read and reflect together on the above narratives, then discuss the following:

- Name some of the multicultural challenges for the church today that you see in the biblical narratives above.
- Identify some unhelpful boundaries in your church that need to be challenged in order to nurture genuine cross-cultural relationships and move the church forward? How do you see this happening in your church?
- Share experiences of times when, like the disciples in Matthew, your church prevented people from experiencing or sharing their diverse gifts in church and society.
- In what ways can the Bible's positive treatment of difference and diversity be communicated and affirmed by local churches/groups?

Group Reflection

Reflect together on what it means to be a multicultural church in relation to the biblical notion of the 'Kingdom of God'. Identify other biblical passages consistent with the ideas expressed in the group.

Resource Materials

- Bible
- Appendices 2,6,11





Session 4

Overcoming Prejudice¹⁰

Introduction

A multicultural church is where all members accept and respect one another as equals, united by the love of Christ. It is intolerant of racial prejudice, rejects ethnocentric attitudes, and recognises that everyone has a cultural heritage that must be valued. It is typically a church where people from diverse backgrounds feel welcomed and at home. It knows that there is only one Human Race.

Such a church runs cross-cultural and racial justice awareness training for members to foster mutual respect and understanding. It ensures that opportunities and safe spaces are provided for members to share their feelings and attitudes to those that are different from them. It encourages volunteers to advocate for racial justice within the church and beyond. It supports links¹¹ and encounters with minority ethnic peoples both in Britain and abroad to help foster good relations.

Interaction

Dispelling Myths

In the big group consider the following:

Prejudicial Statements¹²

- Blacks and Asians really don't suffer from discrimination.
- Most single mothers on welfare benefits are black.
- Blacks operate on 'African time' and so are always late.
- Goods and services are better from white establishments.
- Black people are laid back and carefree.
- Most drug addicts in society are black and minority ethnic.
- Most black people have large numbers of children.

- Black people in church only like happy clappy hymns with rhythm.
- It is difficult to distinguish one Chinese person from another.
- Most white people don't like to adopt black children.
- White people should adopt black children as they can provide better opportunities for them.
- Criminal behaviour is most common in multicultural inner-city areas.
- Lighter skinned people have prettier children.
- White people are generally more reliable than black people.
- White parents prefer to send their children to schools in white areas as education there is better than in multicultural areas.
- People of ethnically mixed parentage are confused.

1. Ask group to line up single file. Read out the statements. Participants are asked to move back if they agree with the statement and forward if they don't.
2. In pairs ask participants to discuss why they disagree/agree with the statements.
3. Share stories that highlight issues of prejudice, dispel myths, and enable new learning.

Definitions/Word Glossary (optional)

In small groups give participants a handout of the glossary list (p.5&6). Ask them to choose some key words from the list and give their own definitions for them. Write them up on flip chart. Compare with the given definitions.

¹⁰See appendices 7 & 9 ¹¹See appendix 8 ¹²Adapted from Building a racially inclusive Methodist Church, The Methodist Church in Britain, 2005





Session 4

Overcoming Prejudice

Cross-cultural Links

We've highlighted the importance of cross-cultural approaches to growing multicultural churches. A church/group that is cross-culturally aware is effective in overcoming prejudice. It provides opportunities for cross-cultural experiences for the membership. Some of the ways to do this include:

- Links/twinning with another church/group based on a particular cultural/socio-political issue like urban/rural, ethnicity, inner-city/farming.
- Youth faith and culture exchange.
- Pulpit exchanges.
- Faith, culture and resource sharing with partner churches abroad.

In small groups:

- a) Discuss creative ways that such cross-cultural links can be made¹⁴.
- b) Outline strategies for arranging cross-cultural links between the following:
 - rural white church and urban minority ethnic church/group
 - local church and other groups in the community
 - local church and partner church abroad

Group Reflection

- a) Discuss constructive ways to challenge prejudice expressed by individuals and/or groups in home church.
- b) Reflect together on the benefits and/or pitfalls for local churches in developing cross-cultural links and relationships.

Resource Material

- Glossary and Definitions (p.5&6)
- Appendix 8



¹⁴see appendix 8



Session 5

Mission Possibilities¹⁵

Introduction

A multicultural church is fully engaged with its context and the community around as a core part of its multicultural mission and evangelism. Formulating a mission statement in a multicultural setting is one of its top priorities. It ensures that in the process of mission planning any programs it adopts and implements must be relevant, taking into account the needs, gifts and voices of its diverse membership, and of the community around. It enables its members to reflect together on God's mission call, consider who God might be calling the church to be in mission with, and together agree on activities/strategies for practical and spiritual witness. It prioritises mission tasks and resource allocation sensitively so that all voices are heard and in order for the whole church to take ownership of the mission.

Interaction

In the big group look at the following:

Diversity and Differences¹⁶

This exercise is designed to help people know each other on a more personal level. It is intended to create a climate for exchanging ideas and perspectives in a multicultural setting. It creates an atmosphere for considering mission possibilities for the church.

1. My name is...
2. Three words that describe me are...
3. To me difference means...
4. Sameness means...
5. When a friend or colleague makes a biased or racist statement, I...
6. My vision of a multicultural church is one which...
7. In a multicultural church the task for a) white British members and for b) minority ethnic members would be...

8. Conflict makes me feel...
9. I want to be the kind of person who...
 - i. Spend 5 minutes completing the questionnaire above.
 - ii. In pairs spend 10 minutes discussing your responses then in the whole group discuss how this exercise can help the church's mission planning process.
 - iii. List ideas on a flip chart on what should be included in a multicultural church's mission statement.

Group Reflection

- Identify tools that can help a church develop inclusive mission strategies involving adults, youth and children, and the community around.
- Develop mission programs/activities that utilise the skills of minority ethnic members alongside and together with those who traditionally did this work.



¹⁵Use Appendices 2 & 11 to assist group reflection and discussion ¹⁶Developed by the Institute for Multicultural Education and Training (IMET), 1991, Revised 1992. All rights reserved. Permission is granted by Training Research Development (TRD), Inc. to ECLA to reproduce this exercise





Session 6

Leadership Issues

Introduction

In a multicultural church the leadership embraces diversity in its composition, self-awareness, and practice. Multicultural leadership rejects exclusive practices, respects different traditions, and values every member's contribution giving special attention to the nurture and empowerment of young people and children. It ensures power and decision making is shared justly among the different cultures in the church. It creates a community environment where there is mutual confidence and trust. It knows and understands the diverse cultures in the church and surrounding area, and their diverse needs and gifts including rites of passage. It is highly skilled in cross-cultural communication and knows the importance of relevant and inspiring leadership.

Multicultural leadership is a servant-hood role through which the love and grace of God is shown. It is intentional about preparation and continuing education for better and effective leadership. It is skilled in methods of conflict resolution and knows how to conduct and run meetings in culturally sensitive ways. It ensures that church programmes/activities are inclusive motivating groups to cross cultural barriers, develop friendship and be enriched by each other.



Interaction

In small groups share stories and experiences from the home church and elsewhere using the following as focused questions to help with the discussion:

- Who is in leadership in your church? Why?
- Who is not in leadership? Why?
- Do you believe the situation relating to leadership should change? If so, what strategy would you put in place to ensure that those who are not sharing in leadership, especially those from minority ethnic backgrounds, do get involved and participate?
- Consider what training can be offered or provided by your church to equip people for leadership both in the church and in the wider community.

Reflection

- Reflect on Romans 12:8 and what it says about leadership. Then list on flipchart ideas of what a model/ideal leadership is.
- Consider some biblical models of leadership that may be helpful for developing multicultural leadership in the church (e.g. Moses, Esther, Jesus) How did such leadership practice the servant-hood role, and were they instruments of the love and grace of God for their world/community? What are the implications of such style of leadership for the church today?
- Name some Christian leaders today from different ethnic backgrounds.

Resource Material

- Bible





Session 7

Inter-Generational Relations

Introduction

A multicultural church is a church for all ages. It is a church that is fully aware of the different generations in its membership and how different ethnic groups relate across the generations. It understands that inter-generational tensions may be further compounded by cultural differences, and provides opportunities for sharing and engaging across generations to develop mutual understanding and support.

It enables the active involvement of its multi-ethnic children and youth membership. It understands and respects children and youth culture and ensures that they are supported and affirmed for who they are. It provides cross-cultural workshops tailored for children and young people. It identifies and encourages role models from different cultural backgrounds to actively participate in nurturing children and young people in the church. It provides leadership training for young people to equip them for the leadership of the church.

Interaction

The following activities are for use with adults and older young people.

In small groups consider the following case studies:

Case Studies

X

Adwoa, a young Ghanaian is growing up in a United Reformed church. Her mother was telling her about a new Sunday afternoon service that was starting for the Ghanaians in the Twi language. Adwoa responded, "Why would I want to do that? I can speak Twi at home or family gatherings. I don't want to do church in Twi. All my friends in church are from different cultural backgrounds and we speak in English and do everything in that language. We also go to school together. I don't want to do church things separately from them."

¹⁷ For resource on working against racism in Children's Resources, see www.wgarcr.or.uk or contact : Unit 34 Eurolink Business Centre, 49 Effra Rd, London SW2 1BZ, Ph/Fax: 0207 501 9992, email: Positiveimages@wgarcr.or.uk. Also Core Skills for Children's Ministry, www.brf.org.uk BRF, 1st Floor, Elsfield Hall, 15-17 Elsfield Way, Oxford OX2 8FG.

Y

Jermaine and Ricardo, both of Jamaican parents, are preparing a Christian rap to do in the church youth service. While practising at Ricardo's home, his grandmother asked what they were doing. When they told her, she was shocked and said they could not do such a thing in church as it would offend people. Ricardo told her that their youth leaders encouraged them and gave them permission to perform at church.

- Identify some of the issues young people face today in British churches. Try to name some postmodern youth generations (e.g. new millennium generation/mobile phone generation) and see if the group can describe them accurately. How important is it that older generations know and understand contemporary youth culture?
- Share some of the expectations between parents/grandparents and children. How can these create tension between younger and older generations? Discuss the impact cultural differences bring to the mix.

Practical Ideas

a. For adults who work with children¹⁷

- It is important that all children hear positive stories about all ages especially about children from many different cultures. Picture books are useful.
- Toys (e.g. dolls) should be chosen in a culturally inclusive way so that all children can identify themselves as included. This is especially important where local children may be predominantly from one culture.
- Be intentional about choosing stories about cross-cultural co-operation between children to help model sensitive and respectful ways of relating to others.





Session 7

Inter-Generational Relations

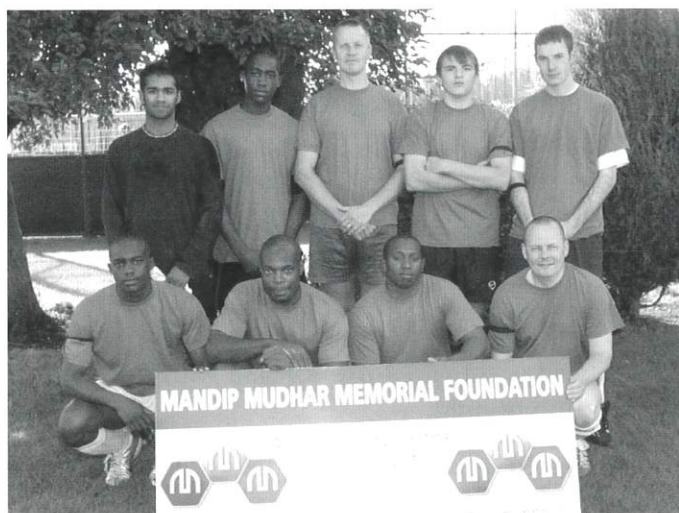
b. For adults to use with children¹⁸

- Do activities that increase children's awareness of valuing the gifts of people/children from different cultures – food, games, stories etc.
- Over several sessions compile a group collage. For each session, each child need one hexagon – large hexagons can be gathered in a wall display/smaller hexagons can be used to make a large leaf book – and the first time each child draws themselves and their names is added. The collection is labelled US! The following session can be 'Our Favourite Food', 'Our Favourite Toys', 'Our Families' etc... All have a contribution to make to the glowing picture.



c. For adults and children to use together

- Make food from several cultural backgrounds and invite others to share
- Have a session on sharing and learning games between groups of families from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Take digital photos of each child in the group and print them with space to write the words 'XXXX is special'. Use coloured pens, post it notes, or coloured stickers for everyone to write and put alongside the photograph – e.g. helps with singing, smiles, cuddles the babies, collects the offering, etc...
- All the pictures are displayed together with the heading 'We are loved by God'.
- In worship use stories, words and music from a variety of cultures. Wholly Worship – material to develop inclusive worship in the United Reformed Church.



Group Reflection

Reflect on personal experiences of conflict between generations in the church and list ways to tackle inter-generational differences.



¹⁸See some of Pilots annual material at www.pilots.org.uk





Session 8 Meetings

Introduction

A multicultural church conducts multicultural meetings ensuring that people listen to one another, seeking solutions, sharing hopes/concerns, and building relationships as they seek the will of God for the church's mission and ministry. It honours different cultural understandings of conducting meetings in its meeting procedures and practices. To aid successful cross-cultural communication and understanding in meetings, it sets up ground rules that accommodate unspoken assumptions and expectations a multicultural membership bring to the meeting. Its multicultural approach to meetings respects and honours different cultural traditions to ensure that no one culture dominates meeting procedures and decision-making. It provides cross-cultural training programmes for the whole church, focusing on cross-cultural communication, decision-making, time-management and conflict resolution. It enables the development of a multicultural meeting resource manual for the church that includes clear guidelines on cross-cultural meeting etiquette.

Cross-cultural conflict can be the most challenging element to a church committed to becoming multicultural. Cross-cultural communication and understanding is critical and especially so in the context of a meeting. Knowing some of the assumptions different cultures make about each other in a conflict is therefore quite helpful to resolving it. The tables¹⁹ below outline some highly generalised examples of assumptions people from the 'West' and 'East' tend to make about each other, and how to deal with such assumptions in meetings to avoid cross-cultural conflict.

The following are examples only to help group reflections on meetings and conflict resolutions. Users may use more helpful distinctions from other parts of the world.

Key distinctions

Western

- Rational problem solving
- Interest/Issues based
- Linear
- Information oriented
- Individualistic
- Distinguish person from problem
- Legal orientation
- Professionalism

Eastern

- Affective Approach
- Relationship based
- Holistic
- Experience oriented
- Collective/Communal
- No separation
- Social tradition
- Status/Stratification

¹⁹Adapted from 'Growing multicultural congregations', Myong Duk ed., UCA, 2004





Session 8 Meetings

Hints for Meetings²⁰

For Western members

- Avoid personal attacks
- Understand event-oriented means completion of event is reward
- Avoid strong eye contact
- Establish relationships over meals
- Respect social status and titles
- Avoid direct disagreement
- Avoid patronising
- Modify individualistic tendencies
- Avoid speaking too much
- Be more relaxed with ambiguity
- Be aware of imbalance of power and address it
- Always clarify for full understanding
- Understand reluctance to share personal life

For Eastern members

- Avoid perceiving attack as personal
- Understand time-oriented means punctuality is important
- Attempt eye contact when speaking
- Establish relationships at meetings
- Respect personal performance
- Say 'no' or 'yes' clearly
- Overcome internalised inferiority
- Speak for yourself not your people
- Speak up more
- Be more logical
- Be aware of others oppressions and privileges
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarification
- Respect open sharing of personal life

Interaction

i. In the big group share immediate thoughts about the introduction then:

b) Role Play a Church Meeting²¹

Invite volunteers to imagine they are in a church meeting to plan

An Away Day. They are briefed that the planning process must be representative of the membership of the church, ensuring that all make their contributions and feel included.

Assign different roles to members of the group:

- Encourager – who affirms others and is good at involving people in a gentle and non-threatening way.
- Clarifier – who explains the main points and repeats the decisions made so that all are clear on what is going on.
- Fence-sitter – who does not commit to anything and is indecisive.
- Obstructor – who always finds a reason why something can't be done and stands in the way of the group moving forward.

● Can-doer – the creative can-do thinker who always finds a way to get things done.

ii. In small groups after the role play:

● Share thoughts/feelings about how the meeting went.

● Highlight issues raised about running meetings.

Invite comments about:

- a. The decision making process in the meeting;
- b. How people value themselves and others;
- c. Any conflicts of interests;
- d. The sharing of power.

Group Reflection

● Devise 'Ground Rules for Multicultural Meetings' that can be used for the benefit of your own church and others.

● List key elements a Multicultural Meeting Resource Manual should have.

²⁰ibid p.72

²¹see appendix 10





Session 9 Rites of Passage²²

Introduction

A multicultural church provides appropriate pastoral care and support to its members and community around it. It is familiar with the rites of passage (e.g. birth, marriage, death) of each culture represented in its membership and enables the leadership to incorporate these elements in its pastoral duties, church activities, and rituals.

It understands the different cultures that are part of its membership and surroundings and is actively engaged with them. It is aware of the wider significance of such knowledge in terms of mission opportunities and in drawing the church closer to its members. It ensures that its leaders, including the minister, elders and members of the church are provided with rites of passage awareness training.

Interaction

Sharing Stories and Experiences

i. Invite participants to share key happenings in their lives that have marked special occasions. What did they mean to them and their families and what were the significance of these events?

ii. Consider what would be helpful for ministers and elders to know about different rites of passages (e.g. birthday, wedding, and funeral) in relation to the different cultures that make up the membership of the church.

iii. Why might it be important to know these things and what are the pastoral implications of knowing, and also not knowing?

Reflection

Recall a biblical story that includes rites of passage rituals and identify key issues highlighted in the story. Together produce a general guideline or strategy for learning about different rites of passage rituals. What questions would need to be asked? How would the person who needs to learn go about finding the information they need? What pastoral and theological issues should they be aware of?

Resource Material

● Bible

In Closing...

- Do an evaluation of the whole course with the group.
- Discuss the next step and identify who will be responsible for ensuring that they do self-monitoring periodically using the checklist below.
- Ensure that all tasks and helpful ideas produced by participants throughout the 9 sessions are recorded properly and distributed for further use by participants and others.
- Close with a multicultural act of worship.

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the willing co-operation and help of many people throughout the United Reformed Church who are deeply committed to the vision of the multicultural church. Most particularly we wish to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the Synod Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry Advocates' Network. Also to the many individuals and friends who gave us valuable comments and feedback we thank you. Special thanks go to Gareth Jones for the layout and cover design. We pray that God will bless our efforts in this toolkit to bear fruit in the multicultural life and witness of the United Reformed Church as it re-visions what it means to be church in the 21st century.



Katalina Tahaafe-Williams
Racial Justice & Multicultural Ministry



Sandra Ackroyd
Urban Churches Support Group

²² see appendix 12





Check List

This checklist is provided so that a growing/developing multicultural church/group can monitor and assess its own progress.

If you have less than 10 'yes' to the questions your church still needs more work in growing as a multicultural church. If you have more than 10 'yes' your church is doing OK. If you have more than 20 'yes' your church is truly becoming a multicultural church and should be congratulated.

a) Welcome & Hospitality

- ☛ Do you have an orientation program for new members to know the church and the other members better?
- ☛ Do you have social events where members share their cultures and food with each other?
- ☛ Do you intentionally foster an atmosphere of welcome in and around your church, using diverse visual images and clear information that communicate warmth and openness to all people?

b) Worship and Liturgy

- ☛ Does your worship life reflect the languages and cultures of your congregation and the surrounding community?
- ☛ Do you encourage your worship leaders to use multicultural worship resources?
- ☛ Do you provide your young people with opportunities to participate, create and experience different worship styles?

c) Overcoming Barriers

- ☛ Do you pray regularly asking the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of each member to love and respect all people as unique gifts from God?
- ☛ Do you explore, biblically and theologically, God's call for inclusiveness in church and community?
- ☛ Do you provide opportunities for members to encounter and make friends with people of different cultures and ethnicity?

d) Mission

- ☛ Do you seek to discern the mission to which God is calling you and formulate a mission statement relevant in a multicultural society? Do you ensure that any minority ethnic voices are heard in this process?
- ☛ Do you consider seriously the gifts and needs of all members as you prioritise and resource your mission tasks?

e) Leadership

- ☛ Do you consider the gifts and skills of the diverse members of the church in electing leaders, planning mission, and developing church programmes?
- ☛ Do you require your leadership to be committed to the vision of the multicultural church and to develop links between the church and the diverse communities in the area?

f) Inter-generational issues

- ☛ Do you have a multicultural youth programme?
- ☛ Do you provide opportunities for older and younger generations in the church, especially if there is minority ethnic presence, to develop better understanding of each other?
- ☛ Do you encourage youth programmes for experiencing different cultures and learning how different cultures care for the elderly?



Appendix I

Models of Multicultural Church²³

1) The Interim church/congregation

The minority ethnic members prefer to be part of the host church though they welcome the opportunity of a service in their mother tongue at least once a month so they can have fellowship among themselves.

2) Component church

Separate churches co-exist holding separate services in their own mother tongues, but with one Council of Elders representative of each church. Joint activities are held either occasionally or regularly to maintain links between the churches.

3) Multi-ethnic church

The membership is ethnically diverse and worships together in one church using the majority culture's language. The majority culture is dominant, though the church is seen as having a multicultural flavour.

4) Mono-ethnic church

The church composition here is predominantly from one ethnic group. Most United Reformed churches are in this category. Some minority ethnic churches in this model are set up by migrants who seek the security of a church of their own culture and traditions and worship regularly in their own mother tongue. They are committed to actively participating and making their contribution to the life of the URC. It is not necessarily mono-cultural, e.g. an Urdu speaking congregation could include Indians, Pakistani, and Afghans etc.

5) Bi-cultural churches

Two major language groups exist in this model. They get along very well, and organise themselves as one church, though they still prefer two separate services conducted in the two languages. Combined services have simultaneous translations.

6) Migrant-ethnic fellowship

This model is typically mono-ethnic and mono-cultural and, though welcomed by the host church, is not formally related to it. The group uses the church properties for worship and fellowship in their own tongue, preserving and celebrating their own culture and identity. Many who attend this fellowship are already members of a United Reformed church in the vicinity. For instance, the Ghanaian Ebenezer Fellowship is attended by Ghanaians from around the city, some of whom are already members of a URC congregation. Such groups may or may not become congregations of the URC.

7) Multicultural church/congregation

The multicultural model is not only ethnically diverse in its composition but is also living and witnessing consciously and intentionally in a multicultural way. It expresses unity in diversity in the church's whole life, always seeking to be multicultural in everything the church does. It uses the diverse gifts and talents of all its members. Above all it empowers and nurtures leadership among all its members especially minority ethnic groups. This is a truly multicultural church, not only in its membership but also in experience.

²³ Adapted from emerging models in the Uniting Church in Australia noted in the 6th Assembly 1991, and from Sophia Ng's article in 'Growing Multicultural Congregations', UCA, 2003.

Appendix 2

Building the Multicultural Church

10 Steps to Creating a Multicultural Church²⁴

1. Start by evaluating and understanding what the church already has.
2. Develop new cultural approaches and cognitive activities that train people to be more open minded and accepting of others different from them.
3. Identify potential elements of a multicultural church in the area.
4. Develop models for relating to a diverse population:
 - Meeting the people
 - Greeting the people
 - Inviting the people to share the multicultural vision
5. In partnership with the people develop activities incorporating their values and preferences.
6. Begin to develop spiritual, social and educational systems that respect and serve the whole group.
7. Develop smaller specific interest/thematic components for ongoing events.
8. At the outset create a value of strong active participation on the part of each member as a desired Christian witness.
9. Equip members on how to find meaning for themselves in the experiences.
10. Emphasise inner transformation as essential to Christian witness and discipleship. Accepting others' values and behaviour is important as long as such values are acceptable to God and conforms to Christ's teaching.

Ten Points for Growing Multicultural Churches²⁵

A growing prophetic and multicultural church is one where:

1. Worship is vital, alive, challenging and involves everyone.
2. Pastoral care is about making real the love of Christ especially to new members and those on the fringe, and involves knowledge by leaders of the rites of passage practices important to different groups in the church.
3. Christian education for different age groups, bible study, house groups and constant prayer life are normative.
4. There's real compassion and engagement with local community, meeting the needs of the suffering and victims of injustices with empathy.
5. Effective communication and publicity are important.
6. Hospitality, spirit of generosity, willingness to help and serve, fellowship and food sharing are encouraged.
7. All ages are welcome and nurtured especially children, young people and the elderly.
8. There is desire to be a healing community bringing Christ's healing to all, with prayer and action in atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance.
9. There is active and ongoing empowerment of members, diverse gifts are utilised, and members are trained for different kinds of leadership.
10. There is vision and enthusiasm rooted in the Holy Spirit, joy and celebration of faith, with daily praise and thanksgiving to God.

²⁴ Adapted from materials of Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA)

²⁵ Adapted from material of High Cross United Reformed Church, Tottenham, North London, 2005

Appendix 2

Building the Multicultural Church

Ideas for Building an Inclusive Church²⁵

A Multicultural Church...

- Affirms and lives out its faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ
- Appreciates the interconnectedness of people of all cultures and ethnicity
- Embodies and rejoices in cultural diversity as gifts to humanity
- Welcomes all into the community of faith without discrimination
- Values and utilises the diverse gifts in the Christian family
- Stands in solidarity with those committed to inclusion
- Affirms multicultural inclusiveness as key organising force for the church
- Works for justice and peace in the world

A Multicultural Church Member can...

- Pray for the multicultural vision to become a reality in your church
- Examine your own feelings and attitudes about other cultures
- Learn about other cultures and make friends with their people
- Learn another language or teach English as a second language
- Join advocacy for the rights of minority ethnic groups
- Join or build group to meet socio-economic needs of new migrants
- Support church youth programs on cross-cultural awareness

A Multicultural Congregation can...

- Form cell groups to biblically explore God's call to inclusiveness
- Form partnerships with churches of other cultures locally and abroad and organise church exchanges and visits
- Identify socio-economic needs of groups within the church and in the area and set up network/ecumenical partnerships to work with local/central government agencies to meet those needs (e.g. housing, bank loans, health and business education etc...)
- Develop multicultural youth programs and youth cross-cultural experiences
- Welcome minority ethnic groups who need a space for worship
- Run anti-racism awareness seminars and observe special days/occasions (e.g. Martin Luther King Day)

²⁶ Also adapted from PCUSA materials

Appendix 3

Multicultural United Reformed Churches

1. Introduction

1.1 As well as the emergence and growth of single-ethnic minority ethnic congregations in the UK some of which have associations and relationships with the United Reformed Church in some of our Synods; multicultural United Reformed Churches are growing and form a significant presence within the United Reformed Church. Ministry, mission and resources in relation to these churches need to be taken seriously by the denomination.

2. History

2.1 Multicultural United Reformed Church congregations have been a feature of the United Reformed Church since its beginning in 1972, but the number of such congregations has grown steadily since that time. The most significant minority ethnic group in the early days were from different Caribbean roots (e.g. Jamaica, Guyana, St Kitts, Barbados, Trinidad etc). There were in fact a few people of Caribbean roots in Congregational churches pre 1950. Many people who came from the Caribbean in the Windrush era and tried to settle in churches went through many painful experiences. People naturally looked for church of the same or similar tradition to the areas they were familiar with in the Caribbean, but were met with a cold reception or ignored or told that they would surely be happier down the road where there was a black church (usually a Pentecostal one). This kind of situation was also experienced by West Africans trying to worship in Churches of Presbyterian tradition in the 1960's, 70's and 80's. However there were a few Congregational and Presbyterian Churches that did warmly welcome people from the Caribbean and other places in the early days (e.g. Church in Sheffield, now a United Reformed Church and same now United Reformed Church congregations in London). Between the 1970s and 1990s there has been a steady increase in the number of people from Caribbean and West African roots joining United Reformed Churches. The majority of the people of West African roots are from Ghana. Some church congregations also include people of different Asian and European roots.

3. The Current Situation

3.1 At present in the United Reformed Church we have churches that include a small number of minority ethnic members, others where 50% of the members are of minority ethnic origin and some that are predominantly or even totally minority ethnic in composition. Such churches are often referred to a black majority United Reformed Churches. London has the largest percentage of minority ethnic people in the UK (approximately

60% of the minority ethnic population in the UK) so it is not surprising that the largest United Reformed Church minority ethnic population can be found in United Reformed Churches in London. For example approximately 47% of the United Reformed Church's in Thames North Synod are multi-cultural to a lesser or greater extent. The following is a very approximate estimate of the minority ethnic percentage in church's in the Thames North Synod.

24% of Churches have only a few

12% of churches have fifty percent

11% of Churches have a predominantly minority ethnic members

3.2 A similar pattern to a lesser extent can be found in the London Churches of the Southern Synod. Multicultural United Reformed Church's can also be found in several other Synods, particularly in the West Midlands (e.g. Birmingham and Wolverhampton) but also in Yorkshire and South Western Synods, and others.

3.3 Many of the churches described here are maintaining their level of membership and some are growing steadily in membership. They are not declining churches. There are many good examples within these churches of community outreach and community work within the church building. In terms of what is happening in multicultural United Reformed Churches, they could be said to be in continuum. At one end there are some that still have a white core group of members holding all the power and responsibility and where minority-ethnic members are on the fringes of the church. At the other end of the spectrum there are churches that have undergone a transformation in leadership, where minority ethnic members have been invited, enabled and empowered to lead and reshape the church and are in positions of responsibility in eldership, leadership amongst children and young people and in finance and management. They are also offering their gifts and talents in worship and some are serving in the wider church at District, Synod and National levels. Some churches have been and are being enriched and changed through the mutual growing together of all the different ethnic and cultural groups, within a congregation.

4. Lessons to be learnt

- Ensure that ministers and elders do not speak on behalf of minority ethnic members of their churches
- Identify and deal with any racist behaviour in the congregation. If left unattended, such behaviour can create a real block, which will prevent the church becoming truly multicultural

**contd.
over>>**

Appendix 3

Multicultural United Reformed Churches

contd

- Avoid paternalistic approaches towards minority ethnic members
- Stress the importance of the different cultural groups and members recognising and valuing each other
- Multi cultural churches themselves must not get too comfortable with the composition of their congregations, because there may be other and emerging ethnic groups settling in the neighbourhoods around the church, that maybe the church should be reaching out to. Just as the ethnic composition in communities can shift and change over a period of time, so must the church also respond to such changes

5. Principles to work at and continue to work towards:

Building confidence

Amongst people who have been let down and kept down by churches in the past. So that people's gifts, talents and skills can be used shared and developed.

Real sharing

Sharing between different cultures within a church does not only imply eating and drinking together, but means sharing power and responsibility. It means being around the decision making table as well as the food table.

Spiritual nurture

The spiritual nurture of minority ethnic members as for all members needs to be carefully considered. Particularly in multi cultural churches, there can be different kinds of spiritual needs which will require a variety of responses.

Education and training

It is important to ensure that minority ethnic members of churches have, as well as all members' information about training and resources in relation to eldership, Youth and Children's work training and ordained ministry. They should be actively encouraged to enquire about these opportunities and be able to access them.

Participation

It is important that minority ethnic members of congregations are invited to consider church membership, if they are only worshippers. Also within some cultures the practice of volunteering comes after a personal invitation to get involved in an aspect of Church life or take responsibility within the Church.

Empowerment

Empowerment of and amongst minority ethnic member churches to participate, be involved and to take up leadership is crucial, so that the whole church can benefit from peoples gifts, talents and skills and be truly enriched.

6. Gains and benefits

6.1 The gains and benefits of being a multicultural United Reformed Church include;

- The variety of worship experience (that can be drawn on) that not only comes from experience of church in other countries but also because minority ethnic members also come from different denominational backgrounds.
- The Rites of Passage practices and experiences relating mainly to birth, marriage and death and also particular kinds of services relating to the offering, gift days and fund raising all provide good opportunities for theological reflection and pastoral care.
- The great opportunities for youth and children's ministry. Many multi cultural churches have sizeable numbers of children and young people. Such local churches are enriched by their presence and therefore so is FURY at local level. Minority ethnic young people within the United Reformed Church could become a sizable and significant presence and force within FURY in the wider United Reformed Church.
- The relationship that many minority ethnic members have with families, communities and churches in their countries of origin, provides natural links with churches in other countries. Opportunities for forming links and twinnings between United Reformed Churches and churches in these countries are many (e.g. With Churches in Ghana and also with the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands).

7. Conclusion

It is important that the national level of the United Reformed Church recognises that multicultural United Reformed Churches exist and have great potential for growth.

It is also important that District Councils and Synods also recognise that such churches exist within their areas and that minority ethnic members of these churches should be thought about when considering representation on committees and councils of the church.

It could be useful if the United Reformed Church provided opportunities to invite multi-cultural United Reformed Churches to write and tell their stories so that the denomination can hear first hand the diversity of life that exists in the United Reformed Church and the potential for growth and development.

Committee for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry 2005

OUR VISION AND OUR FRAMEWORK

As people of faith we believe hospitality is spiritual and divine. We worship a welcoming God who welcomes and embraces all His/Her children. We need to grow in faith and in expressing Christian values. As well as seeking God's guidance in all we do, we need to respect and appreciate one another.

It is important that people of all ages and of different ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds are welcomed in non-judgemental ways. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to enable us to develop a sense of a living church.

The story of the Prodigal Son reminds us that the father did not wait for his son to come right in to the home before welcoming him; he went out of his way, to reach out, to meet and welcome him.

God's call to us is the call of love, the call to come home. As the father of the Prodigal Son ran to meet him and take his shame upon himself, so God welcomes us home.

We can only be welcome because God first welcomed us. This is God's call to us to be welcome, and involves us in welcoming God and in welcoming each other, our neighbours, strangers, and the weak and vulnerable.

The writers of the letters to Timothy and Romans shed some light on how hospitality should be practised in Christ's church when they wrote that hospitality is a noble task and worthy of respect. As we engage in it we must be devoted to one another in sisterly and brotherly love, enthusiastic, devoted to the task, patient, willing to share, and joyful.

What I would expect and hope for IF I WERE A NEWCOMER TO YOUR CHURCH

- A smile
- Genuineness
- A spiritual experience
- Concern
- Warmth
- People's interest and kindness
- Relevance
- Involvement

THE THINGS THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

- The openness of the initial greeting.
- Being helped to feel comfortable and confident.
- Someone to listen, befriend and help.
- Being called by name.

PRACTICAL ISSUES

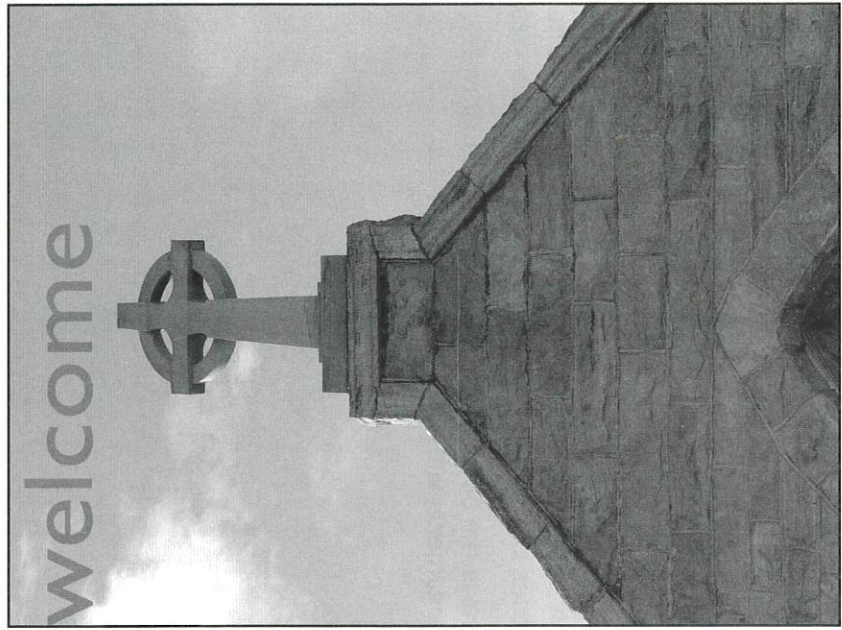
- I will need to be given information about the building – e.g. what goes on in the church? Where are the toilets? Is there tea/coffee? Etc.
- Does your welcome and care include the needs of my children?
- Do you have the flexibility and ability to cope with any special needs I may have?
- Am I receiving good communication and getting a sense of who is in this church?

Appendix 4

HINTS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

- WITHIN THE CHURCH – share responsibilities; value one another.
- WORK ON HARMONY – not disharmony. There may be a need to address internal tensions.
- People need to be prepared to get involved SPONTANEOUSLY.
- Be prepared for CHILDREN if they turn up – ensure there is a facility for a crèche.
- Always look for NEW VOLUNTEERS – practise personal invitation.
- Consider what MIGHT happen when visitors come to worship – don't think only about what usually happens.
- LEARN NEWCOMERS' NAMES and use them.
- SHARE SKILLS and train one another. Break down and define tasks to make them less daunting.
- Encourage SHADOWING, so that new people experience sharing in the work.
- Make 'welcome' an aspect of WORSHIP.
- In larger churches arrange for one elder or member to look out for the newcomer, even sit beside them, and maybe form a WELCOMING & HOSPITALITY GROUP.
- Challenge and break OLD PATTERNS if they are not helping in being a welcoming church, and move forward.
- KNOW YOUR OWN MEMBERS and the wider community.
- AVOID EMBARRASSING OR EXCLUDING PEOPLE.
- Be there for a VISITING PREACHER. Offer him or her a drink before the service.
- Compile a WELCOME PACK to give to visitors.
- MAKE IT EASY for a visitor to come into your church – ensure the way in is clearly marked, and have a welcome by the door or in the vestibule.

HOW TO BECOME AN EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE WELCOMING CHURCH



If I were a newcomer to your church...
 A leaflet of ideas put together by members of Leytonstone Free Church, High Cross URC, Streatham URC (Thelma Christie, Daphne Standford, Elaine Robertson-Doyley, Myra Davis), and of the Urban Churches Support Group.

THE URBAN CHURCHES SUPPORT GROUP
 In Thames North and Southern Synods of the URC

TEN COMMANDMENTS of Human Relationships

- 1) **SPEAK TO PEOPLE:** There is nothing so nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
 - 2) **SMILE AT PEOPLE:** It takes 72 muscles to frown, only 14 to smile.
 - 3) **CALL PEOPLE BY NAME:** The sweetest music to anyone's ears is the sound of their own name.
 - 4) **BE FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL:** If you would have friends, be a friend.
 - 5) **BE CORDIAL:** Speak and act as if everything you do is a genuine pleasure.
 - 6) **BE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PEOPLE:** You can like almost everybody if you try.
 - 7) **BE GENEROUS WITH PRAISE, CAUTIOUS WITH CRITICISM.**
 - 8) **BE CONSIDERATE WITH THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS:** There are usually three sides to a controversy; yours, the other person's, and the right side.
 - 9) **BE ALERT TO GIVE ADVICE:** What counts most in life is what we do for others.
 - 10) **ADD TO THIS A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOUR, A BIG DOSE OF PATIENCE, AND A DASH OF HUMILITY.**
- (Source: 'A Guide for all Managers, Supervisors and Shop Staff')

QUESTIONS FOR A WELCOMING CHURCH

- Are we applying Gospel Values to welcoming and including newcomers?
- What message are we giving out through our attitudes and behaviour?
- Are we communicating sincerity and commitment?
- What do we communicate about the sharing of power and resources in our church?
- Are we prepared to meet people where they are?
- Is the message given by the welcome more powerful than the message of the sermon?
- Would the teaching of our church enable newcomers to discover and develop their faith?
- How important is it to review our church's history and traditions, and reflect on whether the latter are still appropriate and helpful, especially to newcomers?
- What strategies do we have for ensuring that everyone can feel involved in the life of the church?

BE WELCOMING to any visitor to the building

Try to make sure that users of the building feel at home, and try to make a community out of the users of the building.

SUGGESTED WAYS OF DOING THIS INCLUDE:

- Make sure there is always a church member on the premises when it is used by outside, casual groups.
- User groups should have keys, as a sign of trust and respect (but insurance needs must be considered, and casual users would not qualify).
- Invite Christian groups and churches to share worship from time to time (not just attend your worship).
- Send Christmas cards to all groups.
- Invite groups to special church services (anniversaries, inductions, etc) and parties (harvest supper, etc).
- Suggest that user groups invite church members to visit them during their activities (as appropriate – be careful with numbers).
- Look at prejudices and fears within the church's own ranks, and in the neighbourhood, and try to tackle these (particularly important when the building is used by Black community churches).

LEASE AND LICENCE

Proper business arrangements must be made, including a licence or lease agreement, preferably after negotiation with each user group. Advice as to whether a licence or lease is necessary must be sought from the appropriate Synod Trust.

SUGGESTED FACTORS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN PREPARING AN AGREEMENT AND WHEN SETTING FEES:

- Length and frequency of use.
- The needs of each outside group, and the resources on offer.
- Whether the group will have exclusive use of any space (including storage) or whether others will have the use of the space at other times
- The resources of the outside group.
- Any external support (access to grants) for the outside group.
- Expected levels of wear and tear, use of gas and electricity, etc.
- Availability of and/or need for storage space.
- The availability of lettings/bookings officer, cleaner, caretaker (or any contribution in kind – such as cleaning – the user group may offer).
- Clause for occasional cancellation in case the church needs to use the space for special occasions – carefully explained and justified.
- A complaints procedure for both sides.

MANAGEMENT

A church needs to consider the form in which the building is managed.

POSSIBLE STRUCTURES INCLUDE:

- A 'Management Committee' or 'Management Task Force' made up of users.
 - A management committee/task force on which the church is just one of the user groups.
 - A management committee made up of church members/elders, with a programme that includes regular user group meetings in which problems can be discussed and the relationship between church and user groups can be affirmed and strengthened.
 - A management committee of church members only with no involvement of users in any aspect of management.
- A church should consider the whole range of sharing/involvement structures and understand why the one it chooses is most appropriate in its own circumstances. However the buildings are managed, a regular review of arrangements with user groups is essential.

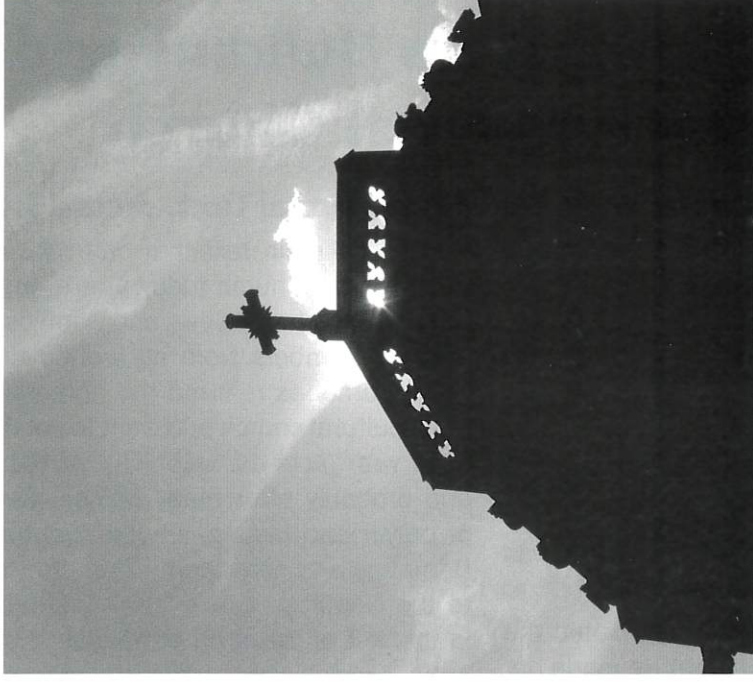
A THEOLOGY OF BUILDINGS

A church should develop a 'theology of the use of buildings'.

AMONG THE ELEMENTS THAT SHOULD SUPPORT SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING:

- Buildings are God's gift. As good disciples we should use them for purposes in accordance with the gospel and with the growing of God's reign.
- The church should reflect the neighbourhood in which it is situated. Therefore the building needs to be open to different people and groups in the neighbourhood. A divide between the sacred and the secular might become smaller as a result of this.
- If other churches use or want to use the building, it is important to show that all Christians are one in Christ, and therefore links between the churches should be developed. (See the section on 'Be Welcoming'.)
- A church may well decide to have stated criteria about those groups that are welcomed as users (whether this includes differential 'rents' or not). If this is so, any request to use the premises would have to include a 'mission statement' by the would-be user.

Guidelines on Good Practice for CHURCHES THAT RENT OUT THEIR BUILDINGS



Please note that this leaflet was produced out of the experiences of URCs across London.

Any church that has other suggestions, out of its own experience, is invited to offer them for addition to the list.

There is no expertise other than that of churches involved in sharing their buildings.

A Collation of ideas from participants in UCSG's 'CAN SHARERS BE CARERS?'

Consultation Day
(February 1993)



Appendix 6

Theological Reflections on Building and Maintaining a Multi-Cultural Church

Such work must be based on Biblical and Theological imperatives. It must happen because it is the work of the Kingdom of God. When the church was founded at Pentecost, the Old Testament background was strong.

Old Testament Background

Genesis 1 v.26 helps us understand the basic truth that we are all made in the image of God.

Deuteronomy 16 v.11-12 states that people are to care for widows, orphans and foreigners because the Hebrews had been slaves in Egypt and knew what it was like to be 'outsiders'.

The book of Ruth tells us that God so appreciated the love and loyalty of the foreigner, Ruth, that He made her the ancestor of both King David and Jesus.

The Book of Jonah reveals Jonah's prejudice against foreign nations. God endeavours to teach Jonah that he loves and forgives all people

Jesus' Teaching

John 3 v.16. The teaching in this passage shows us that Jesus came for all peoples.

Again John 12 v.32 shows that Jesus died to draw all people to himself.

In John 4, the story of the Samaritan Women reveals Jesus breaking down barriers of gender, culture and religion. When Jesus comes, his love accepts all people and change of attitude and behaviour must come.

The Founding of the Church

When the church was founded, Peter quoted the Old Testament prophet Joel, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2 v.17). What so surprised everyone was that although they were of different cultures and languages, they could all understand God's message.

Acts chapter 6 v.1-7 describes how the Greek-speaking Jewish widows were not receiving help in the same way as the Hebrew-speaking widows. There was prejudice on cultural lines that may have denied them equal access to the church's resources. The apostles quickly called a church meeting and resolved the matter by appointing mainly Greek-speaking Deacons.

In Acts chapter 10, the church has to confront the big issue of the Gentiles. Could they also be accepted in the church? God not only had to convert Cornelius, but also Peter! After seeing the 'great blanket' he comes to the conclusion in v.34, "I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis." Many discussions and arguments followed and in Acts chapter 15 we read of an important church meeting in Jerusalem when it was decided that the Gentiles must be accepted in the new church, and a letter was sent to the Gentiles in Antioch.

The Central Text. Acts 13 v. 1-4.

This is the main text that can help us reflect on our multi-cultural church today. Here we see a truly multi-cultural church with Jews and Gentiles, black and white, indeed, members from all around the Mediterranean Sea. Barnabas realized the potential of this amazing multi-cultural church and went to get Paul to teach them for a year (Acts 11 v.25-26). At the end of this time and probably after many church meetings and times of prayer and fasting, leaders laid hands on Paul and Barnabas and sent them off to start the great mission to the Gentiles. Some black leaders were prominent in this act of laying on of hands. It was this church at Antioch which was the real powerhouse instrumental in bringing the Gospel to Europe. Paul would go there to report about his missionary journeys, and to recharge his batteries!

So we long to see the Kingdom of God growing on earth as in heaven. The Lord's Prayer and also Jesus' prayer (John 17, v.21) can be an inspiration to us, reminding us of Jesus' hope that all may be one. In Revelation 7 v. 9-10 we read of the great vision of a large crowd from every nation on earth that will make up God's Kingdom. We must seek, and work for such signs of the Kingdom in our church and world today.

Questions for Today's Church

1. What Bible passages above do we find challenges the church today and in what ways?
2. In Acts, some groups thought of themselves as 'insiders' and some as 'outsiders'. How does this relate to our church and how can we help 'outsiders' within the church to feel 'insiders.'
3. When we think of attitudes we may have grown up with towards some other cultural groups, have our attitudes changed over the years and in what ways?
4. If our church has become more culturally diverse, how has this helped us develop our mission in the community?
5. Church meetings seemed to be very important and formative in the early church in breaking down cultural barriers and moving the church forward. How do we see this happening in our church today?

Francis Ackroyd

Appendix 7

Guidelines for Challenging Racism²⁷

1. Challenge Discriminatory Attitudes and Behaviour

Ignoring such behaviour and attitudes sends the message that you agree with them. Address the problem promptly making clear that you will not tolerate any slurs that demean any person or group. Be non-aggressive but firmly communicate the message that issues of human dignity, justice, and safety are non-negotiable.

2. Be Prepared to Manage Tension and Conflict

Entrenched beliefs do not change without some struggle but remember that tension and conflict can be positive forces for growth if managed properly.

3. Be Aware of Own Prejudices

Know your own limitations and bias as none of us are untouched by the discriminatory messages in our societies. Be honest and open to new learning without defensiveness.

4. Value Others' Experiences

Listen with empathy to others' concerns and do not minimise or trivialise their needs and experiences.

5. Use Inclusive Language

Always use language that is inclusive and non-biased.

6. Take Initiative in Cross-cultural Education

Do not always expect others to educate you about their culture and history, or to explain racism to you. Take responsibility yourself for people are more willing to share when you actively participate.

7. Affirm Diversity and Difference

Acknowledging difference is not the problem, putting negative value judgements on those differences is! They generalise, limit and deny people's full humanity.

8. Establish High Standards and Model Behaviour

Model anti-bias multicultural values in your own life and demonstrate commitment to inclusiveness in your own actions and attitudes. Hold your organisation accountable and expect same high standards from all.

9. Develop Networks

Support joint and collective efforts to combat prejudice and injustice to make a stronger impact. Social transformation is a long-term struggle and the encouragement of others is important.

10. Self-Assessment

- 🌀 If your child informs you that they are engaged to a person from a different ethnic group to yours would you give them your full support?
- 🌀 Do you believe that people from black and minority ethnic communities are lazy, dangerous and violent?
- 🌀 Do you shy away from befriending or sharing faith with people of other ethnic backgrounds for fear of criticism or rejection by your own group?
- 🌀 Do you challenge racist attitudes/behaviour in your family, church, schools or community?
- 🌀 Do you respect the leadership and authority of a person of another culture over you?
- 🌀 Do you assume that black and minority ethnic people devalue a community when they move in?
- 🌀 Would you be willing to live in very multicultural areas?

²⁷ Adapted from materials developed by the Presbyterian Church, USA

WHAT MAKES US THINK WE'D LIKE TO FORM A LINK?

It is important for your church to identify openly the main reasons why you feel interested in developing links with a church set in a different kind of area from your own. Do any of the statements below ring true for you?

1) We recognize how fortunate we are and would like to offer some help to a church less well-off than ourselves.

OR:

We recognize that we're struggling and would appreciate any help that other churches might be able to offer us.

YOU ARE SEEKING A DONOR-BENEFICIARY TYPE OF LINK

2) Many of our members come from overseas. As a congregation we'd like to develop links with one or more of their 'home' churches.

YOU ARE SEEKING TO EXPLORE CULTURAL LINKS

3) We are aware of the problems of the inner city and would like to support inner city mission work, even though we live some distance away.

OR:

We are an inner city church actively engaged in mission work and would welcome outside help as our resources are thinly stretched.

YOU ARE SEEKING MISSION LINKS

4) We think it would be good to make friends with Christians whose lives are very different from our own, to share our stories and experiences.

YOU ARE SEEKING FELLOWSHIP LINKS

SOME PROS AND CONS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF LINK

DONOR-BENEFICIARY LINKS

PROS

With this kind of link, well-resourced churches can express their solidarity with fellow Christians who are 'less well-off' than themselves. Churches struggling with limited resources receive valuable assistance and are assured that others care.

CONS

The relationship is one-sided and paternalistic.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

This kind of link is a potential minefield of patronizing attitudes, misunderstandings and hurt good intentions. It is probably best initiated by poorer churches actually appealing for help, or where the need is known to be very great. Acute need is more likely to be experienced by Christians overseas than within the UK. Donations and assistance are best directed towards the work of the church itself rather than towards its members, except in cases of dire need.

CULTURAL LINKS

PROS

Here, members from overseas keep in touch with their 'home' church. The congregation as a whole gains cultural insights and a sense of involvement in the wider church.

CONS

The link will mean much more to some members of the congregation than to others, and could lead to feelings of resentment.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

Consider supporting specific projects from a variety of overseas churches with which members have connections. Let the people and their 'home' churches share their stories.

MISSION LINKS

PROS

Churches engaged in inner city mission receive practical/financial/prayerful support from Christians living outside the immediate locality. Churches placed far from the areas of greatest need benefit from learning about the challenges of inner city mission and from contributing in some way to the work.

CONS

None?

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

It is important that the inner city church has a properly researched, Christ-led mission strategy. Support should be given to/sought for specific projects, for which the inner city church will need to be accountable. By a willingness to share information about the work as it progresses, the inner city church can help their partner church/es to feel involved in what is going on and encouraged to offer their ongoing support

FELLOWSHIP LINKS

PROS

Christians make friends with other Christians whose circumstances are very different from their own. As relationships deepen, people experience how our oneness in Christ transcends culture, social standing, wealth or poverty. The nature of the church-partnership is developed gradually as mutual understanding grows.

CONS

None?

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

Initial contact is made easier where either the minister or a church member already has some kind of connection. Begin with no pre-conceived notions. Seek merely to get to know one another over a period of time. Individual friendships within the partnership will strengthen the bond and are to be encouraged. The greater the contrast between the two churches the better.

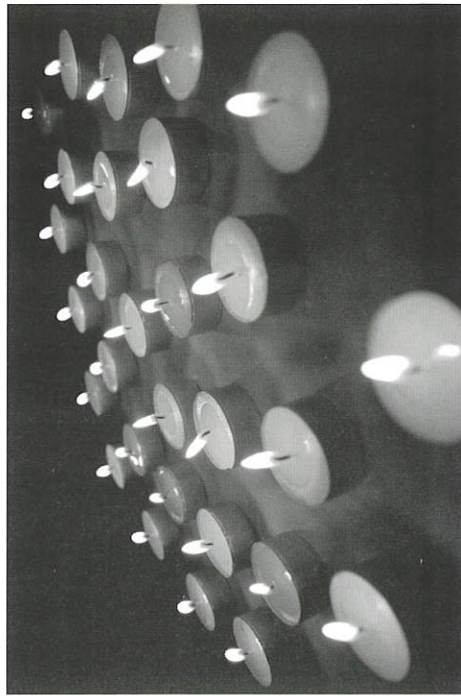
WHAT RESOURCES WILL HELP YOU MAKE THE LINK?

ESSENTIAL

- A positive sense of your unique identity as a Christian community.
- A genuine interest in Christian communities different from your own.
- A minister or church leader with enthusiasm for the project.
- A small core group of people willing to accept initial responsibility for liaison, planning and information-exchange.
- Humility.
- Open-mindedness.

WHAT COULD GET IN THE WAY?

- Lack of a real sense of identity and of confidence as a Christian community.
- Patronizing attitudes.
- The fear of being patronized.
- Unresolved problems within the fellowship.
- Mistrust of any kind of church link, due to previous unpleasant experience, or negative feelings aroused by enforced church 'cluster' groups.
- Fear of reduced ministerial provision if the partner church is close by.
- Too many other things going on.
- Ecumenical or 'cluster' group meetings already taking up too much of the minister's time.



Getting Well Connected

SOME SURPRISING OBSERVATIONS

The most successful links are often established between churches at some considerable distance from one another. There is genuine curiosity and opportunity for mutual enlightenment; less sense of threat, and a real sense of occasion when face-to-face meetings can be arranged.

The most successful links are often established by churches who are already working collaboratively and creatively with other churches, either ecumenically or in URC cluster/focus groups, rather than by the lone church.

The aim of this leaflet

is to provide some pointers and discussion material for URCs who are considering forming some kind of link with another church that is sociologically different from their own – that is, a link that reaches across the Urban-Suburban divide.

The ideas were drawn from responses to a survey carried out in Thames North and Southern Provinces in 1999.

If you would like to see a copy of the full report of this survey: **'Are You Well Connected? What the Churches Said'**, please contact Sandra Ackroyd of the Urban Churches Support Group.

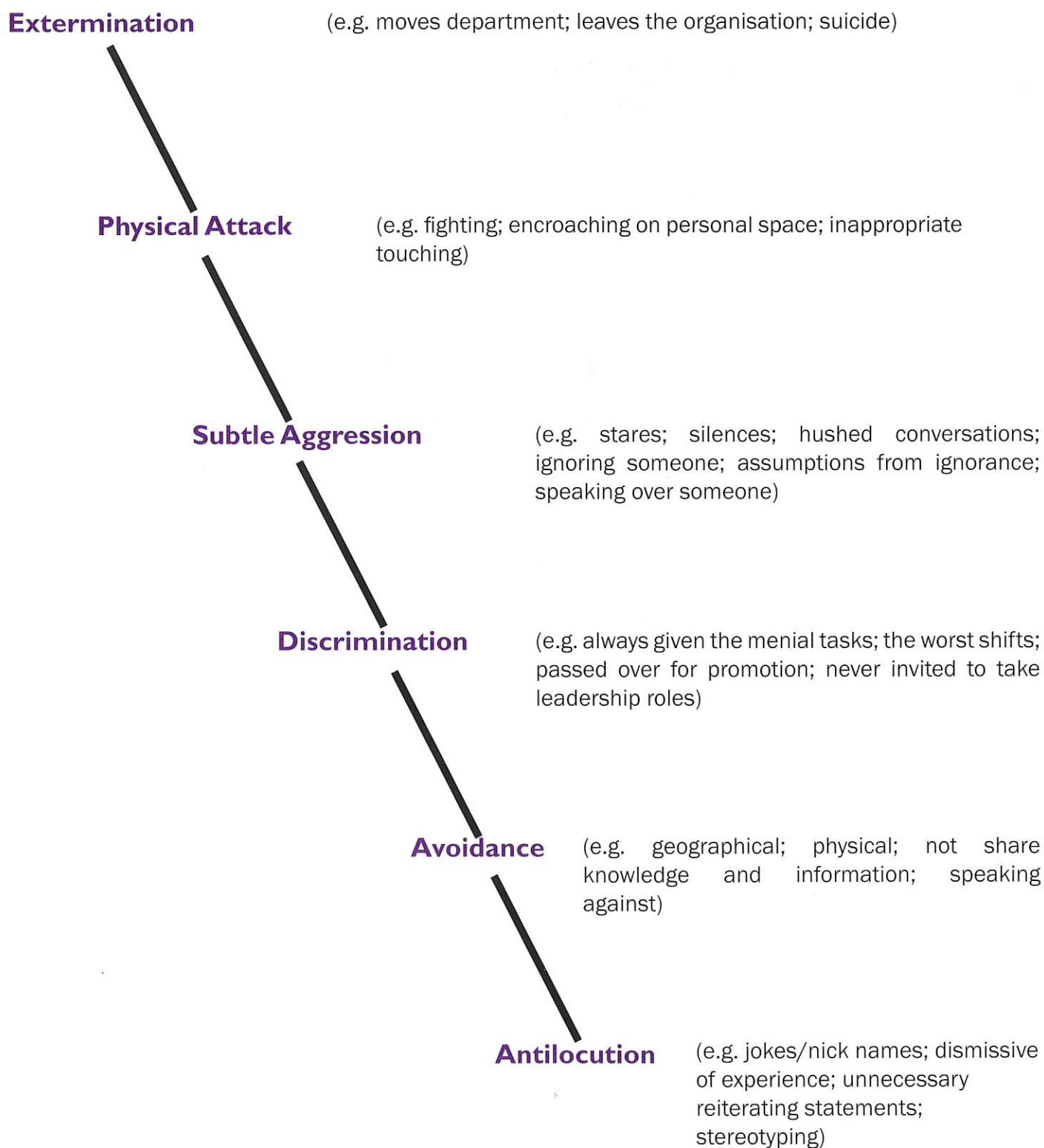


for the
URBAN CHURCHES SUPPORT GROUP
United Reformed Church
Southern and Thames North Province

Appendix 9

Allport's Scale

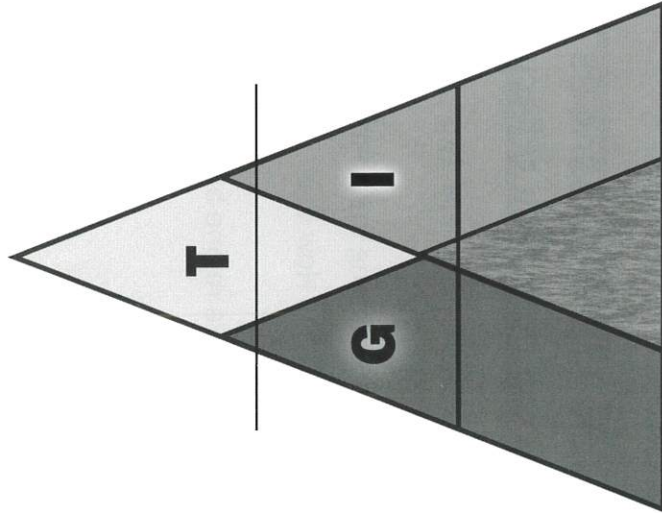
Paradigm: This is a paradigm that has been developed from 'The Nature of Prejudices' by George W. Allport²⁸ and it demonstrates what can happen to individuals in any organisation including the church when they experience discrimination in different ways and over a period of time.



²⁸G. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Cambridge, MA: Wesley Publishing, 1958

HOW GROUPS WORK

Here is a model that can help us to understand how groups work.



T = TASK NEEDS

The task focus is on simply getting the job done. This means having:

- A worthwhile goal
- A clear goal
- Agreement about the goal
- A plan of action to achieve the goal
- A way of recognizing when the goal has been achieved.

I = INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Each individual needs to feel that he/she can:

- Exchange ideas freely
- Participate in the tasks
- Be involved in the group's life and decisions
- Share in the ownership of the group's purpose and work
- Help with:
 - Sharing/seeking information
 - Initiating ideas and actions
 - Sharing responsibilities
 - Implementing the task.

G = GROUP NEEDS

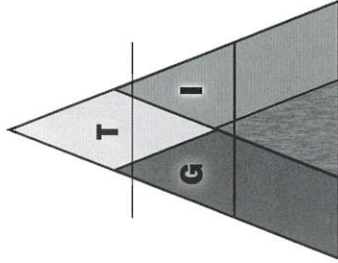
The group as a whole needs to ensure that:

- Good communication happens
- It focuses on the task and on appropriate procedures
- It co-ordinates ideas and suggestions
- It measures goal achievements
- It acts on decisions taken:
 - What is going to happen?
 - When will it happen?
 - How will it happen?
 - Who will make it happen?

Although these three sets of needs overlap, at first sight it is only some of the **TASK** needs of a group that are visible and obvious. This is what is known as the iceberg effect.

THE ICEBERG EFFECT

If this model is taken seriously, it is possible to realize that the major areas of need in the life of a group lie hidden below the surface. A group can be serviced only if this is worked at, so that all the group's needs are dealt with – that is, the needs of the whole group, the needs of the individual, and the needs of the task. A group will only accept change if all its needs are being dealt with.



VALUING OTHERS AND OURSELVES

As we work in and with our group, it is helpful at all times to:

- ☺ value one another;
 - ☺ value the contribution each can make to the group;
 - ☺ value the contribution each can make to the task in terms of individual gifts, skills and qualities;
 - ☺ recognize the importance of each person's gifts.
- It is also important for each of us to acknowledge what we ourselves bring to the group, and to recognize the presence of God in our midst.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES that can help us to reflect...

- Matthew 18:19-20** – “Where two or three are gathered in my name...”
- Acts 2:43-47** – Life among the believers
- I Corinthians 12:3-8** – How each member is to be valued...
- Romans 12:3-8** – “We re one body in Christ...”

WHO DOES WHAT?

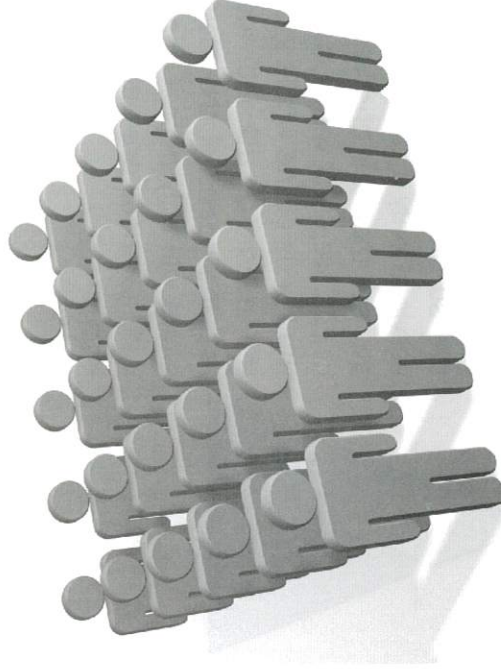
ANY MEMBER OF THE GROUP may share in the leadership by taking initiatives and actions that serve that group's functions.

ANY LEADERSHIP FUNCTION may be fulfilled by different group members performing a variety of relevant actions.

THERE MAY BE AN ALLOCATED LEADER WITH A SPECIAL ROLE, such as **CHAIR, GROUP LEADER, CONVENOR, FACILITATOR**.

LEADERS OF GROUPS can play an important part in the development of the skills and gifts of all the group members by

- ☺ consulting others
- ☺ delegating tasks
- ☺ trusting people
- ☺ supporting individuals
- ☺ and sometimes taking risks.



WHAT ABOUT OUR GROUP?

How EFFECTIVE are we?

Much of our work in the church is carried out in and by small or medium sized groups, but how well do these groups work?

THE URBAN CHURCHES SUPPORT GROUP



In Thames North and Southern Synods of the URC

Appendix I I

Transforming Our Church for the New Millennium²⁹

Plan for Transformation

- Embrace potential for becoming diverse and inclusive
- Adapt worship and music to include the local culture
- Extend outreach by advertising and promotion in the mass media
- Be active in the neighbourhood through co-operative mission outreach and community development
- Offer holistic seven-day-a-week programming
- Offer a community of caring and sharing, solace and healing, of values and visions for purposeful life

Community Outreach

- Partner with a church of different ethnicity to yours and share joint mission projects, social events, special worship services, etc...
- Invite preachers, speakers, and pulpit exchanges from diverse ethnic groups
- Welcome guest singers, choirs, choir exchanges and willingly use local music
- Observe special days that are significant to another group, e.g. Black History Month, and run seminars on history/traditions/heroes of that group
- Support the causes of another ethnic group
- Seek out minority ethnic candidates for church staff openings
- Plan and promote special events that interest diverse groups in the area

Principles of Multicultural Evangelism³⁰

- Multicultural evangelism involves all parts of the church sharing the Gospel of God's love and salvation in Christ to all people.
- It involves making friends with people, sensitively learning about them, caring for them, and entering into dialogue with them. There must be sincere intentions to welcome people into a circle of life-long friends, sharing hospitality, common needs and activities, and joys and sorrows. There is mutual appreciation and respect.
- It requires a collaborative approach working in close co-operation with the whole church thereby faithfully and responsibly witnessing to our unity in Christ as well as model a more effective witness to those we are mission with.
- Learning the language of the people in the community is a wonderful way to make friends and to share in dialogue with them.
- Prayer is essential to multicultural evangelism, seeking the mind of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we minister to those around us.
- Christians are called to special sensitivity in witnessing to their Christian faith in a multicultural setting. There must be careful attempts to understand and respect other people's religion, culture and faith journeys. Beyond that Christians are called to 'give account for the hope that is in you' (1Peter 3:15) as they share the gospel with others. Some suggestions:
 - i. After listening to a person's story, identify points of similar experience and share one's own faith journey and how the Grace of God in Jesus has been active in one's own life. Do this in the attitude of 'one beggar telling another where to find bread'.
 - ii. Invite people to participate in Bible study around various subjects or issues – from the context of their respective lives.

²⁹Adapted from Transforming the Mainline Church by Dr Robert Chestnut, PCUSA

³⁰Adapted from Revd Raafat Girgis' paper of same title, PCUSA

Appendix 12

Rites Of Passage

Exploring and understanding Rites of Passage experiences belonging to peoples of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, is important to the life of the church and community. Such experiences are often the focus of great sensitivity and vulnerability in people's lives. Therefore it is important that ministers, elders, leaders and members of churches are aware of the important practices of different rites of passage and their implications for PASTORAL CARE, THEOLOGY, MINISTRY and MISSION.

The Urban Churches Support Group (UCSG) of the Thames North and Southern Synods developed a series of training days, and also some materials on the subject of Rites of Passage. Below are the issues that have been tackled and found to be useful by ministers and elders who participated in these training days.

- Rites of Passage practices relating to BIRTH, MARRIAGE, DEATH
- Examples were drawn from countries of the Caribbean, countries of West Africa, Pakistan and England
- Definitions and Explanations of a Rite
- Pastoral Care implications
- Theological issues

• Worship Ideas that have been used by churches.

Birth - a Thanksgiving for a child of Christian-Muslim background

Confirmation - a service used with young people

Marriage - examples of cultural-specific input included in marriage service, drawing on the African roots of the marriage couple

Death - A funeral service (African - Caribbean)

Gift Day and Fundraising services - drawn from Guyana and Ghana

Healing - following Domestic Violence

An act of witness - against racism

A thanksgiving Celebration - Jewish

Some songs of grace - Hindi and English with Romanised and Gujarati Script

For particular items or handouts, contact UCSG coordinator: Sandra Ackroyd, email: sandack96@hotmail.com phone: 020 8881 7733



Bibliography

List of possible Resources for the Toolkit

Novels Title / Publisher / Author

White Teeth / Penguin / Zadie Smith

A story focusing on three families and how they dealt with life issues including friendship, love, war, and cross-cultural relationships over three generations.

Small Island / R Review / Andrea Levy

A story set in the post-war Windrush years interweaving the lives and cross-cultural relationships of four characters.

Every Light in the House Burnin' / R Review / Andrea Levy

This story deals with the life of parents from the Windrush generation looking for 'better opportunity' for their families in Britain.

Never far from Nowhere / R Review / Andrea Levy

The story of two sisters born in London to Jamaican parents and brought up on a council estate.

Fruit of the Lemon / R Review / Andrea Levy

Faith, English born to Jamaican parents goes back to Jamaica – and discovers stories about her family history that stretch across the world.

Brick Lane / Scribner / Monica Ali

A story of a muslim girl from a Bangladeshi village in an arranged marriage and her ability to transcend the cultural, economic, and religious constraints on her.

The Secret Life of Bees / R – Review / Sue Monk Kidd

A story of friendship between a white child and a black servant.

Anita and Me / SP / Meera Syal

The Screenplay based on her novel about the colourful, often painful life of the first generation of Indians to be born and brought up in Britain.

Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee / Black Swan / Meera Syal

A very funny, but sad reflection on the life of Punjabi families in the East End of London, making serious points about the choices women face today.

Books with children and young people in mind

Children of Britain Just Like Me! / Unicef / B & A Kindersley

A portrait of British children

Acker Backa Boo! / Frances Lincoln O Dunn & S Winter

Games to say and Play from around the world

For Every Child / Random House/ Unicef

The rights of the child in words and pictures

Action for Racial Equality in Early Years / Jane Lane

Songs... from around the world/ Unicef UK / Harriet Goodman (ed.)

It's not fair / Christian Aid / Ann Wilkinson

A handbook on World Development for Youth Groups

A Caribbean Dozen / Walker books / Jagard & G Nichols (eds)

Poems from Caribbean poets

Art

The Bible through Asian eyes / Pace / M Takenaka & R O'Grady

Christ for all People / WCC / Ron O'Grady (ed.)

Celebrating a World of Christian Art

Born among us – an all-age Christmas resource inspired by the world church

The Christ We Share / CMS/USPG / Methodist Church/USPG

The Life We Share / Methodist Church

Immanuel / Eerdmans/WCC / Hans-Ruedi Weber

The Coming of Jesus in Art & the Bible

Assemblies from the Gallery / RMEP / Margaret Cooling

A resource for collective worship using paintings from the National Gallery

Music

Every Day in your Spirit / Hope/ Shirley Erena Murray

In Every Corner Sing / Hope / Shirley Erena Murray

World Praise / Marshall Pickering / D Peacock & M Weaver

Many and Great / Wild Goose / John L. Bell

Sent by the Lord / Wild Goose / John L. Bell

Halle, Halle / Choristers' Guild/ C. Michael Hawn

Slides

New Heaven New Earth / Christian Aid

A visual Meditation based on Isaiah 65

Films

Bend it like Beckham (2002) directed by Gurinder Chadha

Dirty Pretty Things (2002) directed by Stephen Frears

TV Plays

The Street (episode 5 BBC01.05.2006) Jimmy McGovern

Refugees/Asylum Seekers

(First three are stories by Refugees in Wales)

Between a Mountain and a Sea (1) (2003) available on the website

Nobody's perfect (2) (2004) Swansea Hafan Books / E N

Charles, T Cheesman & S Hoffman

Soft Touch (2) (2004) Swansea Hafan Books / E N Charles, T

Cheesman & S Hoffman

Welcoming Asylum Seekers / Grove EI33 / Stephen Burns

Issues – A Very British Monster / Wild Goose / Stanley Hope

A Challenge to UK Immigration Policy

Web sites

www.hafan.org Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers (and Refugees) Support Group

www.pilots.org.uk

Specific Resources on Building the Multicultural Church

A Time to Die / United Reformed Church

Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals/ Southwark Diocese

Embracing Diversity / The Alban Institute / Charles Foster

Growing Multicultural Congregations /UCA / M DukYang (ed.)

Many Nations, One Church / Christian Aid/Baptist Union of

Great Britain

Marginality / Fortress Press / JY Lee

Multicultural Ministry (vols. 1,2,3) / Inform/WCC / Yoo-Crowe,

S & C (eds.)

Living the Vision / PCUSA / A Parker & R Girgis

Relations with Migrant Churches / Kerkinactie UPCN / I M

Pluim & E Kuyk

Rejection, Resistance and Resurrection / Darton, Longman &

Todd / M Barton

Rites of Passage / Dragon's World / Jacqueline Dineen

United by Faith / Oxford University Press / C P DeYoung et al

We Belong / Baptist Union of Great Britain & United Reformed

Church, UK

Non-fiction

An Amazing Journey / Church House Publishing / G Gordon-Carter

The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain / Profile Books / Runnymede

Trust

Who do we think we are? / Penguin / Y Alibhai-Brown





The
United
Reformed
Church



The United Reformed Church is a Multicultural Church



the multicultural
ministry

toolkit

a training resource for growing multicultural churches