

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MULTICULTURAL CHRISTIANITY
AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION: QUANTITATIVE
CORRELATIONAL STUDY

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Jack Andrew Wingard II

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

The population in America has changed dramatically over the past twenty years. The homogenous communities present when churches began in America have become heterogeneous. The homogeneous church growth models have possibly hindered spiritual formation for churches in America. Multicultural churches seek to solve this problem by creating environments that strategically create congregations that match the demographics of American communities. The purpose of this correlational study was to explore if a relationship exists between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation in spiritual, social, and intellectual areas. The study employed survey instrumentation that used the MCSFS. Overall, five distinctly multicultural churches spread out across America were involved in the study. A non-probability purposive sampling method was used in acquiring the sample. Survey Monkey was employed to deliver the surveys. The data was placed in SPSS statistical software to perform Spearman's rho to determine if correlations exist. There was also a Cronbach's alpha test calculated for internal validity. The study's results showed a significant positive correlation for spiritual, social, and intellectual maturity relative to multicultural church practices. Also, Cronbach's alpha determined a strong internal validity for the instrumentation.

Keywords: Multicultural, Heterogeneous, Homogeneous, Spiritual Formation, Social, Intellectual, Non-probability

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beautiful wife, Christina Wingard, who has helped me through many trials and tribulations and continues to support me as we journey through life together. Her stability and fierce drive to excel have given me the needed structure to succeed.

Acknowledgments

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding in all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths (*King James Bible*, 1611/2003, Prov. 3:5-6). In acknowledgment of my wonderful Lord and Savior who loves me and gave his life for me that I might live. His enduring love and correction have changed my life in ways that are unexplainable by grace alone.

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List of Abbreviations

Intellectual Maturity (IntellectualMa)

Internal Review Board (IRB)

Multicultural Church Practices (MCChurchPr)

Multicultural Church Spiritual Formation Survey (MCSFS)

Research Question (RQ)

Social Growth (SocialGr)

Spiritual Growth (SpiritualGr)

Question (Q)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

The demographic makeup of America has changed in recent years because of immigration and decreasing birth rates of the majority population versus increasing birth rates of the minority population (Canales, 2019). The demographic makeup has been shifting since the 1980s and has already reversed in California, with similar shifts in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Florida. The overall demographic makeup in America is predicted to no longer be a white majority between the years “2040-2050” (McGhee, 2021, p. xv). If the church is to maintain its relevance and ability to minister to diversified communities, strategies must shift from homogeneous to heterogeneous practices. Kim & Francis (2017) state, “most churches have not made intentional efforts to break through the racial and cultural divides but have struggled to maintain the monocultural worship serve” (p. 10). Because of the churches’ tendency to maintain homogeneous environments, spiritual formation is being hindered. This study's research questions and design looked for a correlation between spiritual formation and multicultural church practices. Chapter one included a background to the problem, a statement of the problem, a purpose statement, research questions, a research hypothesis, assumptions and delimitations, the significance of the study, and a summary of the design.

Background to the Problem

God has called people to love him and their neighbor as themselves, which is a recurring theme throughout the New Testament (King James Bible, 1611/2003, Mt. 19:19, Mt. 22:39, Mr.

12:31-33, Luke 10:27, Romans 13:9-10, Romans 15:2, Gal 5:14, James 2:8, 1611/2003)¹. God's commandment is to love our neighbors and build a church that is not dependent on our homogeneous makeup (Ephesians 2:14). Spiritual formation is primarily a work of the Spirit in the New Testament based on the finished work of Christ. The church is to be one body, and the spiritual formation will be enhanced when this body is in unity. The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ will reflect the fullness of Christ to the world (Ephesian 4:4 & John 17:21). Because of a lack of authenticity between our churches and communities, spiritual formation is being hindered: spiritually, socially, and intellectually (Wright, 2017).

The lack of diversity in our churches is also causing a lack of creativity because of homogenous practices. Creativity is essential because it involves spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects of spiritual formation. Pandarakalam (2017) states that creativity can be defined as bringing something new into existence. Inward spiritual growth is connected to creativity because of the change factor. Change should occur both individually and collectively as the church reflects its communities. However, North America is primarily based on a homogeneous church growth model (Steward, 2017). Bevans and Tahaafe-Williams (2012) state, "it is not too harsh or radical to observe that in many places in Europe, and in the Western Christian context generally, theologizing continues to be rather pale and monochrome because theory is still so remote from practice" (p. x). The author says communication is hindered because of a lack of context. "Surely a sign of good health, as opposed to a sickly pallor, is vibrant color and energy"

¹ "Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the Bible are from the King James Version Bible (1611/2003)".

(Bevans & Tahaafe-Williams, 2012, p. x). The solution to this paleness is diversity, which celebrates our differences and forms natural creativity (Livermore, 2016).

Livermore (2016) explains how, in the corporate world, diversity with cultural intelligence is used to drive innovation and creativity through a fusion process. An example of the fusion process would be using Americans' drive for production with Germany's attention to detail to produce a high-quality product that meets production demands. Without both cultures, you would not have this product and production. A similar concept must be applied in the church; without each culture's strengths and gifts, the church may fail to produce God's creative design in spiritual formation.

Joustra (2017) explains that each individual uniquely represents God and humanity. Joustra (2017) explains that "Bavinck presents a corporate account of humanity, arguing that the "image of God is much too rich for it to be fully realized in a single human being, however richly gifted that human being may be"(p. 12).

When homogeneous churches ignore other people groups, they deny themselves the ability to image God in the fullness of his glory in humankind and suffer both in spiritual development and the ability to draw the world to Christ. Walker-Barnes (2018) states, "a truly multicultural congregation recognizes that no one cultural group has a complete understanding of God's kingdom and that everyone benefits when they embrace and learn from different groups' views of the divine"(para. 8). Multicultural churches that enhance spiritual formation fill in a gap between the spiritual formation of the traditional church of America and the globalized societies of the present.

Pettit (2007) describes how spiritual formation is being changed into the image of Christ and depends heavily on our interactions with other people. We are changed by loving God and loving others. Lee (2010) describes how the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are the expressions of spiritual formation. Lee (2010) states, “community in which everything exists in the order as God created. It is a community where all people and cultures are linked together in unity and apparent equality” (p. 9). Chandler (2020) describes how anything that hinders reconciliation between man and man also hinders spiritual formation; therefore, the church should be proactive in creating environments that promote diversity for the fullness of formation.

Statement of the Problem

Dunlow (2017) points out that multi-ethnic churches have challenged the racial divide over the past decade, but research on multi-ethnic discipleship and spiritual formation is less prevalent. Churches struggle to find multicultural material for their congregations and are left to make their own material (Dunlow, 2017). Willis (2019), a multicultural pastor in Chicago, stated: “the more I looked for printed help, the less I found” (p. 19). There is a gap in research for multicultural churches and spiritual formation, and there is also minimal curriculum for multicultural churches trying to bridge the gap. This study helped fill this gap. The study will hopefully spur more research on multiculturalism and spiritual formation and lead to curriculum development for multicultural congregations.

America has battled through slavery and the civil rights movement of the 20th century; and is currently struggling with racism, which is sometimes “less explicit and more codified” (Kiuchi, 2015, p. xi). During the history of America, from the 18th century until the 20th century,

it made sense to be homogeneous to avoid hostility during the worship of God (Williams, 2017). However, with the change in demographics to a globalized society, there is a need for a parallel shift in church strategy to meet the needs of society (Kim & Francis, 2017). Mainline Protestant churches have struggled recently to adjust to a changing diversified society; they are aging and declining in number (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018). “Those churches once played a central role in America Christianity, but now they find themselves diminished in adherents and overall influence as they struggle to connect with younger generations and an increasingly diverse population” (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018, p. 33). Chaves et al. (2021) state “ in 2018-19, 43% of the adults in the average congregation were over 60 years old, up from 29% in 1998. And 24% of the adults in the average congregation in 2018-19 were younger than 35, down from 30% twenty years earlier (p. 42). If this pattern continues, the traditional churches may be too disconnected to mainline culture to influence a growing population of youth and diversity. A lack of diversity in leadership and homogeneous ministry strategies creates environments that promote assimilation and homogenous congregations (Walker-Barnes, 2018). Research also shows that spiritual formation is suppressed because of a lack of not honoring God’s creative design in humanity (Lee, 2010).

Because of errors in the image of God doctrine, protestant churches have not been motivated to produce multicultural environments (Kilner, 2015). Also, youth raised in a globalized society but churching in a homogenous environment is experiencing a lack of authenticity and relevance between church and society (de Souza & Halafoff, 2017). This perceived lack of relevance by our youth may also suggest why protestant churches are suffering from an aging population (de Souza & Halafoff, 2017). The lack of contextualized theology that

lines up with practices may hinder intellectual formation because of insufficient cognitive connections (Loewen, 2016). Mark DeYmaz (as cited in Barna Group, 2017), a multi-ethnic pastor states, “we preach a message of God’s love for all people, but it otherwise undermined in an increasingly diverse society that’s not buying it due to the systemic segregation of our churches” (p. 164). The primary problem is that homogeneous church practices hinder the spiritual formation of heterogeneous communities in America.

Purpose Statement

This correlational study explored if a relationship exists between spiritual formation and multicultural church practices for people attending multicultural churches in America. This research defines multicultural church practices by Anderson and Cabellon (2010) and Kim and Francis (2017). Moreover, spiritual formation is defined by the work of (Lowe and Lowe (2018) and Stanford (2017). The goal was to find out if multicultural church practices are connected to individuals maturing into the image of Christ in all three areas of spiritual formation: spiritual, intellectual, and social. Stanford (2017) states, “our spirit, when connected to God, works to transform the mind into the very image of Christ...This interaction within our being allows us to be involved in healthy, meaningful relationships with others” (p. 8). Stanford (2017) states, “since we were created as a unity, dysfunction or disorder in one aspect of the self negatively affects all levels of our being” (p. 8)

Spiritual formation is essential because it is the goal for all believers to be holistically conformed to the image of Christ (Stanford, 2017). Spiritual formation includes reconciliation between man and man through redemption and forgiveness (Willis, 2019). Dunlow (2017) points out Paul’s rebuke of Peter when he withdrew from the Gentiles because of fear of the Jews. This

withdrawal is occurring in American churches systematically, but changing demographics are causing this phenomenon to be too striking to ignore. The spiritual formation of believers also has strong connections to drawing the world to Christ for salvation because it makes God's invisible power visible (Barna Group., 2017).

Spiritual formation is invaluable in measuring if the church is truly being changed into the image of Christ by grace, both individually and corporately (Kilner, 2015). Spiritual formation is grounded in change; therefore, every aspect of human beings should be changed: spiritual, intellectual, and social. This holistic view considers change from homogeneous groups to heterogeneous groups with the logic that if this has not changed, then spiritual formation is not changing properly. Lowe & Lowe (2018), concerning whole person transformation, state, “regarding Paul’s description of “the fullness of Christ” and how Christians together are “to grow up in all aspects into Him” indicates that they are necessary for achieving the targeted outcome of the spiritual formation process”(Eph. 4:13,15) (p. 185).

Research Questions

Based on the research purpose stated above, the following questions will guide this research. The questions measure a connection between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation.

RQ1. What relationship, if any, exist between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity?

RQ2 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity?

RQ3 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity?

Statistical Hypotheses-Null

H01: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity

H02: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity.

H03: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity.

Assumptions and Delimitations

The following sections describe two areas of research called assumptions and delimitations. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state that assumptions are concepts accepted as basic information and are not necessary to quantify. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state, “whatever things the researcher is not going to do in a research project are known as delimitations” (p. 80).

Research Assumptions

The first assumption is that spiritual formation can be quantified based on gathering information about the three categories of formation in a participant's life: spiritual, intellectual, and social (Stanford, 2017; Lowe and Lowe, 2018). The second assumption is that multicultural church practices can be researched to discover participants' involvement in these practices. Also, since spiritual formation can be quantified and multicultural practices identified, this leads to determining a connection between spiritual formation and multicultural church practices. A further assumption is that spiritual formation is not a formula and that there is no one systematic way for everyone to be changed into the image of Christ. Another assumption involves the

interconnectedness of spiritual formation (Lowe and Lowe, 2018). Although each formation area was investigated separately and collectively, they cannot be removed from the whole person's change into Christ.

Delimitations of the Research Design

This research was delimited to ages eighteen and above to avoid some of the natural changes that adolescents go through. This allowed for consistent measurement of more mature people and avoided gaining consent from minors while doing an online survey.

This research is further delimited to multicultural churches. Multicultural churches must have a strategy for reaching people of different cultures; their congregation can be no more than 80 percent of one ethnicity.

This research was delimited to lay people to understand how congregations are formed spiritually. However, the delimitation was changed to include a layperson and leader because of a lack of surveys being returned; this was discussed with my supervisor. This research was delimited to participants attending at least two church services per month. The participants must also have participated at a multicultural church for at least six months. This ensured that the participants had experienced multicultural practices long enough to affect their spiritual development. Attendance included attending virtual online services because of the natural trend that Covid 19 has created. This research was delimited to multicultural churches in the United States and within the Multiethnic.Church database. This ensured that a large enough pool of candidates was established and provided a variety of people across the United States.

Definition of Terms

The researcher will define the following terms to help clarify and understand this study.

- *Multicultural Church Practices*: The practice of a local church to reach all people groups in a community with strategies that include shared leadership, intentionality, contextualization, storytelling, and multicultural philosophy (Anderson & Cabellon, 2010; Kim & Francis, 2017)
- *Traditional Church Practices*: Practices that have been established in America by predominantly protestant mainline churches that have sound doctrine but do not strategically pursue the different cultures, ethnicities, or races of a community (Dunlow, 2017).
- *Heterogeneous*: A congregation or group of people of many different cultures, ethnicities, or races. The group will comprise no more than 80 percent of one culture, race, or ethnicity (Dunlow, 2017).
- *Homogeneous*: A congregation or group of people of one culture, ethnicity, or race. The group will comprise more than 80 percent of one culture, race, or ethnicity (Walker-Barnes, 2018).
- *Spiritual Formation*: The process whereby a person is changed into the image of Christ through a relationship with Christ, the word of God, the Spirit of God, interactions with a local body of believers, and all circumstances in life. Spiritual formation consists of whole-person transformation and will be categorized as spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social (Lowe & Lowe, 2018; Stanford, 2017).

- *Spiritual maturity*: The part of a human that has a connection with God; humanity is born with a dead spirit, but their spirit comes back alive at salvation. Stanford (2017) states, “as a spirit being, it is possible for us to be in an intimate spiritual union (Proverbs 20:27; Romans 8:15-16) with our Creator, who is also Spirit (John 4:24)” (p. 7). It is how God communicates to us and whereby all other parts grow from in the innermost part of man.
- *Intellectual maturity*: The process whereby a person is changed into the image of Christ in their thoughts, mental processes, and cognitive capacities. Intellectual development includes knowledge of the social sciences and thinking regarding relationships and creativity. Stanford (2017) states, “sanctification is a process by which our minds are transformed through submission to Christ” (p. 14).
- *Social maturity*: The process whereby a person is changed into the image of Christ in relationships with humanity. This includes communicating, relating, caring, interacting, and showing love and empathy with many different people groups. Characteristics should reflect a change from homogeneous to heterogeneous groups to honor God’s image-bearers. Social growth includes the ability for humanity to express themselves; therefore, it has a creative element. Stanford (2017) states, “while our first and greatest relational need is to know God, we should never underestimate the importance of being in fellowship with other believers” (p. 7).

Significance of the Study

There is much research on multiculturalism and spiritual formation; however, little research seeks a relationship between the two (Dunlow, 2017). Empirically there are few

curriculums for multicultural churches to help their congregations grow. Dunlow (2017) states, “the most common response from the churches was that there is nothing available that fits their unique situations” (p. 297). The reality is that most church Sunday School curriculums and literature are designed for middle-class white suburban culture (Dunlow, 2017). Research is needed to develop theoretical perspectives and help create empirical literature for multicultural churches across America. Stewart (2017) explains that multicultural church practices do not guarantee spiritual formation, but building deep relationships between God and humanity does. This research helped churches not merely grow in number but in the deep spiritual connection between diverse populations. Stewart (2017) states that growth does not occur by different cultures hanging out together, but spiritual practices need to be applied to help form bonding as one body.

Kilner (2016) points out that a protestant message of a diminished image of God has been used to justify enslaving Blacks, mistreating American Indians, and oppressing minority groups, throughout the history of America. The message of a diminished image is still preached in most protestant and evangelical pulpits today. Kilner (2016) points out that this inevitably leads to comparing cultures and a possible lack of motivation in pursuing relationships with minorities. Spiritual formation of both the minority and the majority can help overcome these misconceptions about the image of God in all humanity or at least improve appreciation for God’s image-bearers. The understanding is that when we marginalize or mistreat someone because of their skin color, we marginalize God. “With due appreciation for the evil involved here, Christians will not be satisfied with bandaging the wounded but will insist on transforming the social practices and structures that perpetuate racism”(Kilner, 2016, p 321).

One primary reason for this study was the belief that the New Testament story is more than just reconciliation between God and man but leads us to reconciliation between man and man (Dunlow, 2017). God demonstrated the significance of this concept with Jews and Gentiles at the beginning of the church in Acts. As time passed, the church omitted the gospel's secondary purpose, which includes loving our neighbor. Van Gelder and Zscheile (2018) point out that one mistake denominations made was viewing the Bible from a lens that omitted the diversity in the New Testament. This error was unnoticeable in an early America whose demographics matched their misconception. "The church today, however, lives within a profoundly divergent context in America, one that does not correspond well with sixteenth-century Europe or nineteenth-century America" (Van Gelder and Zscheile, 2018, p. 240). This present culture includes a youth raised during the information age and experiencing levels of diversity that have never been seen before (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018).

Multicultural practices are needed to help America understand that God is more concerned with building a body of diversity for the glory of God rather than our ethnocentric views of the church. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:16). Barna Group (2017) states, "having a less divided church doesn't mean we agree on everything, but it does mean-as followers of Jesus-we leave our microcultures to empathize with one another in patience, compassion, and love"(p. 39).

Summary of the Design

The design of the study was a quantitative correlational methodology. Data was collected using an online survey questionnaire. A nonprobability purposive sampling method was employed, and the primary statistical test included Spearman's rho test for the strength of the

relationship because the data were ordinal. Pastors were contacted through email and phone calls based on the Multiethnic.Church database. If pastors agreed to the initial interview, they were sent an official consent form and details on how the researcher gained e-mails from the participants. Their e-mails were loaded into online survey technology to deliver the questionnaire. The desired participants were 285 to ensure that the study provides significance. However, in the end, there were only 130 surveys received, with only 97 usable surveys.

Because this is a correlational study, the two variables were multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. The variables were not manipulated and delivered in the questionnaire with one survey. The Multicultural Church Spiritual Formation Survey (MCSFS) measured participants' perceptions of spiritual formation in the three areas defined as spiritual, social, and intellectual (Appendix A). The questions and answers measured the participants' involvement and formation perceptions using ordinal data. The three categories of formation make up the subsets of the main variable of spiritual formation. The data from this survey was entered into Spearman's rho calculator to determine correlation strength and direction. Further analysis was applied as a relationship or non-relationship was established to identify patterns. The measurement of the coefficient correlation of Spearman's rho decided whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis and answered the research questions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Changing demographics and attitudes of younger generations may be causing homogeneous churches not to meet the needs of diverse communities in America. One model of church that seeks to solve this problem is multicultural church practices. This chapter reviews the literature on multicultural church practices and related topics and examines how this affects conformity to Christ in spiritual, intellectual, and social development. This literature review provided a history of church practices, social justice issues, immigration, and racism and how multiculturalism may help reconcile the relationships between fractured cultural, racial, and ethnic groups in America. The examination of multiculturalism, both theologically and theoretically, helped discover that it is a sound solution to the spiritual, intellectual, and social problems facing the church and the communities it serves. The rationale for the study and the literature gap was revealed logically and systematically by the evidence of current and past trends in the church and culture of American society, along with related literature and similar studies.

Theological Framework for the Study

This section explored the study's theological framework, focusing on the image of God, loving God and others, and perichoresis as the theological foundation. These theoretical concepts are interconnected and help understand why different cultures are necessary for a whole person's transformation into the fullness of the image of God.

Image of God

To understand how God interacts and changes man properly, one must have a proper understanding of man being created in the image of God. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (King James Version, 1611/2003, Genesis 1:26-27).

Kolawole (2019) states that man was the only creature given this label, and because of this, humanity is God’s crowning jewel in all creation. This image is a representation and is connected to humanity's spiritual, mental, and moral aspects. God ascribed that human beings should be protected against harm (KJV, 1611/2003, Gen. 9:6) or defaming them verbally (KJV, 1611/2003, James 3:9). Emutche (2013) states, “a genuine conviction that all people are created in the image and likeness of God is the first theological conviction that will help us, love, relate, and seek to understand others who may not look, act, or behave like us. If they are believers in Christ, we become family, members of the household of God, made new in Christ” (para. 11).

Connection to Multiculturalism and Liberation of People

Humanity's relationship with each other should be motivated by the image of God doctrine (Lee, 2010). No matter their ethnicity, race, or situation, every person shares this common identity and has a unique value. Lee (2013) states that multiculturalism’s fundamental principle is the image of God doctrine, and it should produce empathy and deep respect for human life. Kilner (2015) describes how humanity in God’s image has helped free people throughout the history of Christianity from oppression and lack of basic needs. Kilner (2015)

states the knowledge that man is made in God's image helped create the movement to free Black Africans and help the Native American Indians.

Kilner describes how the great Martin Luther King Jr. pulled on the heartstrings of Americans to help God's image-bearers during the Civil Rights movement - and to learn from them because of this identity. There was also an appeal by activists to the oppressed not to allow themselves, who are made in the image of God, to be treated with disrespect and in oppressive ways. One way slaveholders enslave people is to rob them of their identity and "stifle what is human in [enslaved people] and prevent the development in them of that 'image and likeness' of God in which they were created" (Kilner, 2012, p 12).

Image Hard to Define

There have been many definitions for precisely what the image of God entails. Joustra (2017) explains how an embodied image describes all of humanity, reflecting God both corporately and individually. The idea is that no single person can reflect God, no matter how talented or gifted a person. Within this concept is that each culture, ethnicity, and race reflects the image differently. Walker-Barnes (2018) describes how each culture images God a little differently, and we can all benefit from the exposure and learning from these various cultural lenses of God's image. Eastvold (2018) states that Luther believed that the image of God was connected to righteousness, and Calvin believed it was related to a relationship. Eastvold claims that image is the part of man connected with God; this is sometimes referred to as the spiritual aspect of man. "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor" (KJV, 1611/2003, Psalm 8:5). Kilner (2015) states that the image of God is a

special connection to God and a potential reflection of God. As we advance, Kilner's description of the image of God will be used for this research.

Connected to Bondage

Kilner (2015) states that when attributes have been connected to God, this has led to the perversion of the image, which has placed men in bondage. During the early days of America, the church was involved in describing Blacks as not being fully in the image of God to help justify slavery and oppression (Kilner, 2015; Moy, 2000). The teaching that the image of God can be diminished leads to races and cultures judging other races and cultures to declare that the image is so damaged that they have lost the ability to adequately reflect God's glory (Kilner, 2015). To offset this horrendous teaching that has permeated evangelical, protestant mainline churches, one needs the proper biblical understanding that to be in the image of God; one must be merely human (Kilner, 2015).

Image of God's Connection to Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation in the New Testament is the process whereby we are changed into the image of Christ (Pettit, 2008). This study explored the change spiritually, socially, and intellectually (Stanford, 2017; Hiebert, 2008). The change process is a holistic process with the concept that everything is connected (Lowe & Lowe, 2018; Hiebert, 2008). Hiebert (2008) explains that "we must also take spiritual systems seriously. Satan seeks to blind people by keeping them bound by false ideologies, and God seeks to open their minds to the truth" (p. 87). Stanford defines mental change as the process whereby God changes the human mind through sanctification to the image of God's Son.

Stanford (2017) describes our spiritual growth as being in a union with Christ that is intimate and involves our spirit. It is the part of man connected to God in sometimes mysterious ways. Social or relational change is the part of humanity that interacts with each other and connects to God, the church, and humanity (Stanford, 2017). Each of these dynamics is connected to the perfect image of God in Christ. Humanity is changed spiritually through honoring God's image-bearers and by honoring God himself. Spiritual, social, and intellectual growth is stifled when image-bearers are not honored through intentional love and interaction (Lee, 2010). God is so closely related to the image-bearers that what is not done to them is not done to himself. The King James Bible states,

“For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me” (1611/2003, Mt. 25:42-45).

Love God and Others

Wright (2017) states that all love flows from God and is the source of all human love. Peckman (2015) describes Augustine's description of God's love as the very essence of God. Peckman represents Martin Luther's understanding of God's love flowing from God and directed toward humans. “Therefore, sinners are attractive because they are loved; they are not loved because they are attractive” (Peckman, 2015, p. 20). Wood (2015) explains that Augustine believed that scriptures could not be understood apart from loving God and others in a double

love relationship. Reynolds (2016) describes the Catholic Church's decision to employ the commandment of Christ to love God and love others in a universal appeal after the 2nd Vatican council. Reynolds (2016) states, "this is a natural manifestation of living out the correlation between the love of God and the love of neighbor" (p. 264). Also, love for neighbor should be growing in amount and toward different cultures; "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:"(KJV, 1611/2003, 1Thess.3:12).

Loving Neighbor is Loving God

The love of God and the love of neighbor are united and inseparable (Reynolds, 2016). "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God" (KJV, 1611/2003, James 3:9). The concept of loving God and loving others is grounded in the fact that God has first loved a host. They can then love others because they have received God's love (Reynolds, 2016). The author describes how Christians are called to welcome strangers not as people to be straightened out but as someone to be loved. Mark Batterson, a multicultural Pastor in Washington D.C, states, "We challenge people to be friends with those who have different skin color, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. And it's not about having an "agenda" for them; our agenda is love" (Barna Group, 2017, p. 45). The Good Samaritan showed this kind of love when he helped an individual who had been passed by the religious Levite and priest (KJV, 1611/2003, Luke 10:33).

Wright (2017) describes the love of God as a love that brings people together who usually would be enemies. Wright describes loving others as evidence of faith in Jesus and God. Jesus commands his disciples to love one another throughout the scriptures (Jn13:34-35,

Jn,15:12, Jn. 15:17; 1Jn3:11, 1Jn3:17-18). Wright points out that Jesus attaches love for him to a person's love for others. Wright (2017) states, "we can't claim to love God, or that God's love is within us if we don't help the needy when we can do so. Well, we may claim to love God, but it's simply a lie-as, John later says with devastating logic" (p. 28). "Whosoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whosoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen" (KJV, 1611/2003, John 4:20).

Love and Connection with Spiritual Formation

Kim & Francis (2017) describe how loving God and loving others are the telos of human development. Dreher (2017) explains that even Christian practices should not be seen as an act of willpower but drawn by a heart of love. Smith (2009) explains that we love first, then obtain sound doctrine and practices. We come to know Christ with our hearts (KJV, 1611/2003, Romans 10:9-10) than with our minds. Smith states that proper behavior is not getting the right knowledge to get our behavior right but getting our hearts right to love God and others. Humans often look at others and despise them, but they despise God. "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit" (KJV, 1611/2003, 1Thes.4:8).

One of the Christian's greatest needs is to grow in love (Pettit, 2008). Pettit explains three principles not defaulting to the status quo, not focusing on sinning less, and the dynamic process of love. Christians often focus on sinning less instead of loving others. Pettit explains sin is still essential because it does not seek the best interest of others and keeps one from loving God and others properly. Pettit describes how this is exemplified in Peter's failure in Galatians 2:12 (KJV, 1611/2003) when Peter withdrew from the Gentiles upon the arrival of the Jews. Pettit explains

that Peter was not moving toward loving others as yourself and expressing genuine care for people. Pettit describes the dynamic process of love as a constant thought and engagement with others around us. Though the principle is easy, the process is complex and involves learning from those around us and how they interact with each other. Pettit (2008) states, “God grows us by putting us in new situations, as he did with Peter, so that we grow to trust him more and learn to love well in a variety of circumstances” (p. 169).

Wright (2017) explains that love for one another is evidence of our faith and love for Jesus. He explains that if we do not show practical love for others, we are disobeying the commandments of Jesus. Wright explains that loving others makes the invisible God visible in this thought process. The hiding of God’s love keeps him from working in the lives of Christians and the people around them. In Galatians 2:12, Peter was hurting his formation and causing the Gentiles to think less of themselves. Multiculturalism takes God’s love out of their small context and crosses boundaries of race and culture to demonstrate the model of Jesus crossing boundaries (Barna Group, 2017). Hiebert (2008) explains the love that God desires is not controlling but empowering and does not seek to destroy its enemies but to win them through a commitment that is devoted to the well-being of others.

Perichoresis

Kim and Francis (2017) define perichoresis as “the perichoresis relationship of the Trinity, which means “the unity and plurality of the being of God” is the divine mode of living, through which the divine unity is actualized by realizing the differences of the others and sharing love in the lives of the others” (p. 19) The concept of perichoresis is often found in multicultural books and articles (Kim & Francis, 2017). Davis (2015) states it was first used to describe the

union of God and humanity in Christ by Gregory of Nazianzus. Davis explains that Damascus used it in the seventh century to explain the interpenetration of the Trinity. As time passed, it became the description to describe the interactions between God and humanity (Davis, 2015; Kim & Francis, 2017). The Triune God comprises three persons, but they are also one; they are the same and uniquely different. In this relationship, they exist for both themselves and others (Kim & Francis, 2017). The idea is that they maintain their identity while also enriching the lives of others.

Kim & Francis (2017) state the term is also related to the glory and beauty of the Triune God and should be reflected in human diversity, worshiping God as three persons in one. The King James Bible states, “ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (1611/2003, John 17:21). Kim & Francis (2017) explain that this verse connects the perichoresis of the Trinity with the diversity of humanity that should bring glory and beauty to God. The body should be unified while maintaining unique differences that cause the world to see the gospel's power, love, and beauty to unite people who are different into one body (Davis, 2015; Kim & Francis, 2017).

Loving at a Deeper Level

As a result of first receiving the love of God, humanity can love others through friendship and interaction. This love is more than tolerance for others but entails embracing, celebrating, and truly loving others as the Triune God loves each person of the Trinity. Perichoresis is two or more people sharing their inner lives (Davis, 2015). This involves opening the heart to each other and the Spirit's involvement in helping the reciprocal interactions. Davis (2015) states, “the presence of God within the church and the believer, in an astonishing depth of intimacy through

which God intended to impart all the fullness of his love for Christ his Son” (Eph3:17-19) (p. 149).

Davis (2015) also explains how a person involves in more than just a physical body. God is three persons in one and can interpenetrate each other in their non-physical space. Human minds, which are not contained wholly by their bodies, can penetrate the other's space through language, speech, writing, and digital communication. Davis explains that humans can penetrate other human's world and spaces through physical and non-physical contact. Through vulnerability and an open heart, one person enters the inner world and affects others mentally, emotionally, and relationally. Davis explains that humans are designed for perichoresis, and people long for this type of communication; the world's love songs, poetry, and love express the heart-to-heart intimacy that perichoresis describes. Davis also states this is the relationship that Jesus was praying for in John 17:21 and the telos of Christian salvation. Multiculturalism creates environments for reciprocal perichoresis between all cultures to help fulfill Jesus' John 17:21 high priestly prayer. “That they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us that the world may believe that thou has sent me” (King James Bible, 1611/2003).

Perichoresis and Connection to Spiritual Formation

The mental, spiritual, and social implications have already been described by perichoresis penetrating the minds through social interaction with others and God. However, there is even a greater Spiritual awakening connected to Perichoresis. Davis (2015) explains John Wesley's spiritual awakening at Aldersgate can be viewed through perichoresis. In 1738 Wesley felt his heart warm, which led to his conversion to Christ. Davis states this was the Holy Spirit revealing

the truth to Wesley and helping him come to a saving knowledge of Christ. Through perichoresis, each individual comes to personally experience the love of God and the intimacy with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Davis explains that everyone created in the image of God is designed for a perichoretic relationship with the environment, each other, and God. Davis (2015) states, “Human beings must be connected to survive: connected to an environment with air and water and sunlight, and the food chain; to families, neighborhoods, and social institutions; and to God and the people of God” (p. 155).

Lowe & Lowe (2018) state, “human growth takes place within human ecologies that represent social connections to and interactions with other developing humans—connections and interactions that lead to mutual human growth” (p. 16). Kim & Francis (2017) describes how in the New Testament church age, the Holy Spirit became the life and power source of the struggling church (KJV, 1611/2003, Acts 2). Today the Holy Spirit encourages people to create friendships outside of their race, ethnicity, and cultural groups. Through these multicultural relationships, individuals can enjoy the double perichoresis of people and the agent of perichoresis, who the Holy Spirit is to transform them into the beautiful image of God in Christ (Kim & Francis, 2017). “In order to accomplish this task, preachers and worship leaders need to open their eyes to see the image of God in every human face and recognize the presence and work of the triune God in the human community” (Kim & Francis, 2017, p. 21).

Connecting the Theology

Our world is changing exponentially toward a more diversified and culturally rich global population. However, most seminaries continue the same monocultural practices to prepare and develop spiritual leaders (Kim & Francis, 2017). “Long-established patterns and practices that

worked for decades are failing to connect internally or with the larger world” (Van Gelder and Zscheile, 2018, p. 29). With the change in demographics, there needs to be a theological understanding of how the church can help meet the spiritual needs of a changing population. One church model that attempts to address these dynamics strategically is multiculturalism.

Multicultural church theology of honoring God’s image-bearers, loving God and others, and perichoresis is grounded in biblical theology (Kim & Francis, 2017). The image of God, loving God and our neighbor, and perichoresis is ecologically interconnected in the spiritual formation process (Davis, 2015).

Honoring all of humanity because we are all equally created in the image of God is the motive (Lee, 2010). Loving God and loving others is how we demonstrate our belief that all men are created in the image of God (Wright, 2017). Perichoresis is the fullness of God that we receive from the reciprocal interactions of God and other humans in a world of diversity (Davis, 2010). Ultimately the intention is to create environments that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and honor humanity created in his image to satisfy the John 17:21 prayer of Jesus Christ. “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (KJV, 1611/2003).

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Multiculturalism attempts to heal the racial divide in America today by creating welcoming environments for all cultures (Anderson & Cabellon, 2010). Most Americans will agree that slavery and the civil rights movement were racist (Kiuchi, 2015). However, statistics show the enormous health and wealth gap between minorities and whites still exists (Kiuchi, 2015). One might ask why the American capitalistic ideals and the concept of being a Christian

nation have not decreased this margin. Critical race theory examines race from a realistic perspective and gives possible strategies for going forward (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

This study discussed Maslow's hierarchy of needs and growth theory to examine how multiculturalism can help all cultures' spiritual growth by meeting diverse communities' needs. Maslow (2017) focuses on humans' desire for lower and higher levels to grow into their self-actualization needs and higher callings. Maslow's theory may help understand why social injustices and racism have affected the growth of both the dominant and minority populations (Kiuchi, 2015; Bell & Anderson, 2018). The oppression that has affected spiritual, intellectual, and social maturity due to deficiencies based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the lack of transcendence in the oppressive groups need to be examined (Maslow, 2017).

The last theory was James Fowler's stages of faith theory. This theory gave unique insights into faith development as this study seeks a correlation between multiculturalism and spiritual growth. Fowler's stages create a theoretical understanding of growth and development that may help understand multicultural church practices and spiritual development dynamics. Fowler (1981) states that faith development has six unique stages, although all individuals may not reach each developmental level or are developmentally rigidly assigned age.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory became a movement that studied and sought to understand race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The theory did not just question the history of racism but also critiqued the civil rights solution to racism in America (Bell & Anderson, 2018). Critical race theory originated in the 1970s as the civil rights movement started to lose its strength. Although it has changed throughout the years, its original designers were Derrick Bell,

Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The theory studies race from a structural viewpoint and gives researchers insights as they conduct studies (Ford, 2010).

Delgado etc. (2017) explain the four main principles of critical race theory. First, racism is ordinary and what most people of color experience daily. Ordinary means it is not talked about and remains silent but occurs frequently.

Bell & Anderson (2018) state that the legal aspects of American law and legislation only curb blatant acts of racism, not the more subtle ones that occur today. The second principle of interest convergence states that since discrimination advances large populations of elite and working-class whites, there is little motive to eradicate racism. The third tenant focuses on race classification, which traditionally focuses on lower physical differences and not higher commonalities such as personality, intelligence, and morals. The fourth and final element focuses on minorities using storytelling to communicate their racist experiences so whites can better understand unknown perspectives. Delgado (2017) states that “people of color lead shorter lives, receive worse medical care, complete fewer years of school, and occupy more menial jobs than do whites” (p. 13).

Harvard law professor and father of critical race theory Derrick Bell notes that Jim Crowe laws were brought down by a legal campaign and multicultural movement that swept across America (Bell & Anderson, 2018). However, many of our schools in America have resegregated, and mass incarceration continues to decimate minority families. Bell & Anderson (2018) states how racism belongs at the center of American conversation because of the reality and permanence of its presence in society. One of the critical race theory principles is that racism

will never be eliminated in America. Bell & Anderson (2018) states, “accepting the permanence of racism in this country does not mean accepting racism”(p xviii).

This principle helps understand the enormity of the struggle and the possible ramifications of assisting people who have suffered so much. Bell & Anderson (2018) state, “statistics cannot, however, begin to express the havoc caused by joblessness and poverty: broken homes, anarchy in communities, futility in the public school” (p. 4). Bell states that few whites can understand and feel what blacks go through due to racism in America. Bell & Anderson (2018) explain that one of today's goals is to find meaning, engagement, and humility to keep serving.

A Change of Variables

Ford & Airhihenbuwa (2010) describe how critical race theory offers new ways to examine American housing, educational, and health disparities in American structures. Critical race theory is not like traditional theories but provides a methodology for helping researchers gain a racial lens to understand the dynamics of racism in affecting outcomes. One of the critical race theories' fundamental principles refutes the concept that race consciousness is associated with racism and that color blindness is associated with equality. Critical race theory is essential in helping researchers with a framework, vocabulary, and analysis for understanding findings from race-related research (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010).

Ford & Airhihenbuwa (2010) applies critical race theory to a study where Blacks were studied for exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. Ford & Airhihenbuwa explains that race is a characteristic that predisposes certain people toward certain behaviors in traditional studies. However, in critical race theory, race is socially constructed. Ford & Airhihenbuwa explain,

“Removing race from the model shifted the focus from how Black might influence behaviors to how the racialized experience of African Americans might do so” (p. S33).

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs states that man has individual physiological and psychological needs that must be met to move to the next stage of growth and development (Maslow, 2017). The most basic needs are physiological, food, water, and shelter, followed by safety, love, and higher self-actualization needs. Self-actualization is the higher need to become the real you, critical thinking, calling, and purpose in life. Maslow’s theory states that needs are related and developmental. To move to the next stage, the previous stage must be satisfied. The environment is essential in satisfying these needs and can be considered a deficiency until met.

Maslow (2017) states certain principles that can be applied to each stage: “1. The deprived person yearns for their gratification persistently. 2. Their deprivation makes the person sicken and wither. 3. Gratifying them is therapeutic, curing deficiency-illness. 4. Steady supplies forestall these illnesses. 5 Healthy, gratified people do not demonstrate these deficiencies” (p. 83). Strength and priority determine when one need is desired over another. An example is that safety is more pressing than love, and food precedes most other needs. All these needs progress toward self-actualization, the higher-order needs of reaching one’s full potential.

Needs Connected to Growth

Maslow (2017) describes how healthy people meet these needs at appropriate times and life stages. In addition, healthy individuals display healthy characteristics, which include: (a) clearer perceptions of reality; (b) more openness; (c) wholeness; (d) full functioning aliveness;

(e) a real self; autonomy, uniqueness; (f) transcendence; (g) creativeness; (h) ability for concreteness and abstractness; (i) democratic character; (j) love for others.

Garvey (2020) conducted a study that showed belonging affects academic behavior. The study showed that students who felt greater belonging showed better educational improvements and continued at their institution. This is important for minority students from marginalized populations who feel like they do not belong. The study focused on first-generation students and showed the importance of belonging to this population. Two main factors were reported: the amount of labor required to handle the hidden curriculum and the need for peer support. The study also revealed the need for comfort, safety, and the necessity of establishing good relationships with staff for minority students to be successful.

Transcendence and Culture

Understanding how people grow is essential in understanding growth within the church in multicultural contexts. American society has often created environments where people have not felt love, compassion, and belonging, stifling growth (Barna Group, 2019; Maslow, 2017; Bell & Anderson, 2018). To help humanity reach its full potential multicultural churches can create safe, loving, engaging environments for all cultures (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016). Venter (2016) describes Maslow's highest level of growth, self-transcendence. At this stage, a person is freed from their environment affecting their development.

Venter (2016) identifies a person's culture as one of the inhibiting factors of personal growth. Venter states that unless a person transcends their own culture, they will fail to see people outside their cultural lens. At this level, they do not have an overidentification with one group. Venter (2016) states, "without distortion of their own cultural identity or developing

crippling insecurity, they can identify and side with other people, different groups, entities, causes and nationalities” (p. 3). At this level, individuals are focused on the entire plight of the world. Without transcendence, individuals are static and oversimplistic and strive to conquer others instead of empowering them to be themselves (Venter, 2016).

Fowler’s Stages of Faith

The last theory utilized in this study is James Fowler's stages of faith. This study examined how multicultural practices affect spiritual growth in spiritual, mental, and social areas. Therefore, this theory complements the research and gives a theoretical lens to view the formation process and outcomes. Willhoit & Dettoni (1995) state that Fowler described himself as a liberal protestant. His six stages of faith are universal in that they focus on how people believe, not what people believe.

Stage four, called individuative-reflective faith, occurs in early adulthood but may not be reached at all, and many do not reach it until their thirties and forties (Fowler, 1981). Fowler states that a double development characterizes this stage: self-identity and worldview outside of one's group. There is a marked tension between the emerging self and identification with a group. Willhoit & Dettoni (1981) describe how one can struggle to wonder if they are growing in faith or losing faith. This confusion is worsened by the group’s attack on an individual leaving and questioning the departing member’s decisions. This stage is also marked by searching for meaning through rituals and symbols. Willhoit & Dettoni (1981) state, “seeking can be important to the integrity of the group but, can also be indicative of failure at any level to submit to the authority of the group, God, or the gospel” (p. 80). This stage can be visited with “disturbing inner voices” as stage three's neatness is left behind (Fowler, 1981, p. 183).

Fowler (1981) states stage five is conjunctive faith and integrates the self and a new understanding of reality. This stage typically occurs after mid-life. Fowler says a deeper awareness of the majesty of God and a “second naivete” form to create a “deeper self” (p. 198-199). Justice becomes more important than one’s group, community, or nation. During this progression, one decides to help others with identity and meaning. Wilhoit & Dettoni (1981) writes, “when coupled with proper biblical constraints, stage five can be profoundly helpful in allowing persons to see the multiple facets of truth and the limitations of any human perspective” (p. 81).

Fowler (1981) describes stage six as universalizing faith that surpasses stage five's justice and seeks the ultimate love for all humanity. Transcendence is a significant characteristic of this stage and often ends in martyrdom. Fowler states that Martin Luther King did not write the Klu Klux Klan in jail, but leaders of the Christian faith compromised with racism. Fowler writes that people at this level make others question their understanding of justice, righteousness, and normalcy. Willhoit & Dettoni (1995) notes that “stage six requires a radical decentralization of the self and a radical new quality of participation with God” (p. 81).

Theories Connected and Implications

Theoretical perspectives help us understand the truths that happen in science and the created universe (Wilhoit & Dettoni, 1995). Critical race theory helped understand the connection between racism, social justice, and other variables that multicultural education includes in its practices (Bell & Anderson, 2018; Kim & Francis, 2017). Maslow helps connect why spiritual formation is possibly hindered when basic needs such as safety, love, and belonging are unmet. Maslow (2017) states, “it is these needs which are essentially deficits in the

organism, empty holes, so to speak which must be filled up for health's sake and must be filled from without by human beings other than the subjects" (p. xxvi).

Maslow states the need for love is the same as the need for nutrients in human diets. Bell (2018) explains that racism is why we see images and pictures of third-world countries in many cities. Healthy people make healthy choices, and unhealthy people make unhealthy choices because of deficiencies in growth and development (Maslow, 2017). Finally, Fowler describes the stages of growth and development relative to faith. In Fowler and Maslow's, social justice, universalism, and transcendence characterize the higher developmental stages. This helped us understand this study's data to interpret why certain practices are connected with spiritual development in our American faith communities.

Related Literature

This section explored the related literature, similar studies, the rationale for the study, and the literature gap. The related literature examined the primary variables of multicultural church practices. These practices include multiculturalism, intentionality, multicultural leadership, multicultural education, contextualization, and storytelling (Loewen, 2016; Naidoo, 2019; Dunlow, 2017; Ramirez, 2016). Along with these churches, practices are concepts examined closely and include social justice, immigration, and racism commonly addressed in multicultural church practices (Lee, 2010, Anderson & Cabellon, 2010; Kim & Francis, 2017). All variables were examined and synthesized, producing the study's rationale. Lastly, similar studies were discussed to show a gap in the literature.

Related Literature

In America, multiculturalism became famous following the civil rights movement (Lee, 2010). This was in response to the Brown vs. Board of Education decision and the 1964 Civil Rights Act that strengthened the previous court decision (Walters, 2008). When integration became mandatory for most American institutions, there was a need to bring people together that had previously been separated by centuries of racial tension and American laws of racism. Kim & Francis (2017) define multiculturalism as a “socio-cultural and political movement that aims to change the multicultural society into a better world where people who differ in race, ethnicity, culture, and religion can live peacefully with equally respected recognition of their diverse cultural identities. Constructing such a community is “a two-way process involving changes in both the majority and minorities” (p. 15). Ekstrom (2016) defines a multicultural church as a “church where there are people of all backgrounds, cultures, classes, income levels, and ethnicities” (p. 173). Ekstrom defines monoethnic as a church where most individuals are from one ethnic grouping. A monocultural or homogeneous church is based on one particular principle: class, age, language, or culture.

Demographic Changes

Another recent reason for multiculturalism to gain popularity is trends in the demographics of America. Van Gelder & Zscheile (2018) report how immigration and demographic patterns have changed our communities into diverse, multicultural communities. Part of this phenomenon's equation is low birth rates among non-Hispanic whites and growing birth rates among minorities (Gans, 2013). The birth rates and surging immigration from Latin America, Africa, and Asia create an ethnic makeup that no longer resembles the population

present when membership in protestant churches was initially formed (Van Gelder & Zscheile 2018; Dunlow, 2017; Okobu, 2016). Van Gelder & Zscheile writes about how churches have struggled to represent the changing face of America. This is especially concerning, considering the white majority is expected to be the minority by 2044, a commonly reported statistic (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018).

Multicultural Church Practices

Multicultural church practices seek to establish environments that match our increasingly diverse communities. Dunlow (2017) defines multicultural churches as congregations comprised of no more than 80% of one ethnicity or racial group. Therefore, a homogeneous church would form a community where more than 80% of the congregation comprises one ethnicity or racial group (Walker-Barnes, 2018). However, Dunlow also points out that multiculturalism is not new to the 21st century but is part of the Bible's fabric. Dunlow states that homogeneity runs contrary to the New Testament and that God expects his children to live in harmony and peace with all cultures in the church. Dunlow points out how Paul rebuked Peter for withdrawing from the Gentiles and that Christ's followers were first called Christians in Antioch's multicultural environment. However, Dunlow points out that there is not much literature on multiculturalism and the spiritual formation of individuals and congregations.

Anderson & Cabellon (2010) describe four building blocks of multicultural ministry which are: (1) personal calling and commitment by leaders; (2) clear vision and staffing for multicultural ministry; (3) intentional pursuit of multicultural ministry; and (4) unified philosophy of multicultural ministry. The church needs to know that the leader is committed to diversity. Anderson & Cabellon (2010) write that diversity must be intentional in every ministry

area. This includes the leadership team, worship services, racial ratios of people involved in the service, even down to racially mixed greeters at the door. Race and culture must maintain balance throughout the entire process of growth. Intentionality creates an atmosphere that tells each person church is a place for them. The goal is for everybody to feel at home when worshipping the Lord. Anderson & Cabellon states that people should see others like themselves when they worship the Lord. Anderson & Cabellon (2010) state, “if there is a large population of Chinese in my local area and I am not reaching out to them in ministry or relationships, I am missing an opportunity for our church to reflect the image of God. This strategy takes relentless evaluation, restructuring, and an ever-increasing amount of flexibility” (p. 18).

There are also theological parameters that Anderson & Cabellon (2010) maintain to influence a diverse population. They major on the majors and minor on the minors when dealing with theological issues. The majors include the trinity of the Godhead, humanity is sinful and needs a Savior, the church is the primary agency on earth to carry the message of reconciliation, and Jesus Christ is returning one day for his. All other points are minor flexible and a matter of conscience. People that do not adhere to these beliefs may not want to make their church home (Anderson & Cabellon, 2010).

Celebrating Other Cultures Shows the Heart

Okubo (2016) describes how celebrating cultures is the true essence of multiculturalism. Kim & Francis (2017) describe this celebration as not being tolerant. We learn our hearts through what we celebrate. Okubo explains that to celebrate, one must acknowledge other cultures and not settle for colorblind practices that seek to treat all people the same. He explains that this robs people of their cultural identity and impedes intimacy, a goal for reconciliation between man and

God and man and man. However, Okubo states we must not stereotype cultures either because this takes away intimacy and destroys relationships. The goal is to know people as they are and celebrate each other for their cultural differences and their reflection of God's image. Okubo (2016) states that it is essential to be a multicultural church because "the church by its very nature is multicultural...The one Holy Church of God is a multicultural entity; peoples of all nations standing before the throne, joined in the one true faith" (p. 205).

Limiting the Gospel

Okubo (2016) writes that a church that has allowed itself to become homogeneous has limited itself from spreading the gospel. This is summarized by understanding that America is multicultural, and becoming multicultural increases the ability to love. Although this may seem simple, it involves learning to love radically different people than we are. These differences, which generally separate include values, ethics, worldview, customs, and traditions, should be used to draw us together. Okubo explains that it is not in the big things that one must learn to love but in the small stuff. He explains that big things are easy to sacrifice for, but love is the only reason to offer the little things. Okubo uses the analogy of being married to just dating. When people are married, they must accept each other's differences rather than go home and nothing changes. When multiculturalism is involved, there must be an acceptance of differences, engagement, and decision-making involvement. Okubo states being together "means considering the other congregation's needs along with your own, communicating with them, including them in the decision making, being one flesh, sharing a life. It means intimacy...and celebrating the differences" (p. 207).

Understanding the Minority

Being a multicultural church means understanding what it means to be a minority (Okubo, 2016). This means being color-sensitive, not color blind, showing intentional love, and asking questions such as why is the dominant culture portrayed in congregations' art, population, and environment? Is it deliberate or unintentional, and can we show love by changing the practices created in these environments? Okubo describes the prodigal son of Luke 15 in the Bible (KJV, 1611/2003). The older son was angry because the father celebrated the younger son's return. Okubo explains that it is not about who is on the inside or outside or what culture there from, but about celebrating any person in any culture that comes to know Christ and be in the family of God.

Multicultural Education

Loewen (2016) describes that contextualization pays “careful attention to the learner” (p. 340). He explains how people often do not care enough to contextualize the gospel to other Western cultures. Contextualization involves using content and teaching to connect the learner to their context (Ramirez, 2016). Ramirez states that multicultural education accepts that different cultures learn differently. Teaching must involve creative strategies to help each individual and culture learn to maximize each student's academic needs. Ramirez states that multicultural education is a moral process that assists the learner and teacher's spiritual development. Another reason for multicultural education is that the learner will be ready to function in a multicultural society.

Loewen (2016), a missionary to Africa, noticed a gap between what the missionaries and Africans discussed and experienced. Loewen explains that the missionaries often attempt to stop

certain behaviors from helping the Africans adopt their seemingly more Christian behavior. This erroneous assumption left the Africans without a working framework of accepted action. Loewen describes how worldviews must connect new thinking in the Christian faith. However, a person will drift toward syncretism if there are too many breaks without new reference points. A person must connect new material to material they already know. This is called prior knowledge in education, which Loewen describes as existing cultural maps. Loewen states, “therefore, Christian education and discipleship ministries that do not address the current worldview of learners, or the way learners connect values to what they learn, simply cannot penetrate cultural maps deeply enough to establish and support lasting change”(p. 343).

Loewen (2016) states that material that connects the spiritual with the learner must relate to their life experiences. Loewen also describes how cognitive processes must be taken into consideration. Specific populations may have different learning abilities because of isolation or oppression. Loewen describes African cognition as abstract/conceptual, concrete/relational, and intuitional/physical. In Africa, the cities have better abstract/conceptual thinking, but the cognition may be stuck in rural areas because of a lack of electricity and education. Loewen states, “Contextualizing the discipleship process requires recognition of the cognitive priority in the respondent culture” (p. 349). Loewen suggests that this concept is why Jesus used parables and stories to connect to his followers' cognitive reasoning. Loewen also points out that the Africans he ministered to were on the lowest level of Maslow's hierarchy and had little motive to learn who God intended them to be. Because of this dilemma, Loewen created teams that included locals as leaders, which enabled them to meet the Malawians' needs.

Twiss (2015) describes contextualization as a process within a community that embraces culture. He describes this as a correction from the colonization and modernity approach that resulted in hegemony. Twiss explains that the dominating colonialization of countries left most indigenous people in bondage and blinded them to the gospel. This was evident in the early days of America when colonists attempted to bring Jesus to the natives and get the savage out of the Indians. Twiss (2015) writes after “four centuries, First Nations people's cultural expressions are still marginalized or oppressed across North America. Traditionally America has thought it okay to fly an American flag beside the Christian flag and acceptable to mix American culture with being a Christian nation. However, if Indians play drums and include their culture in the worship of Christ, it suddenly becomes syncretism (Twiss, 2015).

However, multiculturalism that includes contextualization is being used to finally free indigenous people worldwide (Twiss, 2015). Contextualization is why Christianity is rising in the Global South and stalling in the Global North (Twiss, 2015; Bevans & Tahaafe-Williams, 2012). It creates an atmosphere where missionaries from the Global South come to America to free the marginalized from the Christianity of America's past.

New Kind of Immigrant

Bevans & Tahaafe-Williams (2012) write that Christianity's practice in the West is losing relevance in changing demographic societies. There is a substantial migration of people from Africa, Oceania, and Latin America to wealthier countries such as North America and Europe. These immigrants are not like immigrants of the past, whose goal was to assimilate into the host country. Bevans & Tahaafe-Williams state that immigrants' attitudes today are to maintain their identity and cultural and religious practices. This results in a society that is more multicultural

and multireligious. These shifts and changes are also causing the church to become less dominated by Western thought and more inclined toward a global community and non-western.

Multicultural practices and contextualization make way for “new agendas, new methods, new voices, and a new dialogue” (Bevans & Tahaafe-Williams, 2012, p. 101).

de Souza & Halafoff (2017) explain that multicultural education is essential to help grow understanding and awareness of others and reach one’s potential in a globalized society. The author points out that globalization has affected most people, and multicultural education is essential for belonging, identity, and the spiritual well-being of young people. To meet students' spiritual needs, teachers can create spaces where young people can grow in creativity, curiosity, and knowledge of those around them to live in harmony within communities. Multicultural education provides cultural settings where students can learn about different people and their unique relationships with the Creator (Lee, 2010). In learning from each other and different cultures, students wonder and awe the beauty of diversity (de Souza & Halafoff, 2017).

Spiritual Formation

Samra (2006) states the church plays a central role in the spiritual formation process that helps Christians grow into Christ's image. Various labels have been given to the formation process, such as sanctification, formation, spiritual growth, and spiritual formation (Samra, 2006). Pettit (2008) states, “spiritual formation is a composite term not found explicitly in the Bible. It refers to all God undertakes and undergoes for us to bring us to maturity” (p. 1105). The formation is heavily involved in how we interact with each other and society. Samra also describes how maturity is learning to walk by the Spirit and be under the control of the Spirit.

Pettit states that maturity is becoming more like Jesus through interactions with people who desire to grow in Christ's image.

Spiritual growth is often hard to detect, but spiritual transformation includes conformity to Christ. The characteristics of spiritual change include showing kindness instead of anger, being still in times of difficulty, and positively influencing others' lives around us. (Pettit, 2008). Lowe & Lowe (2016) write a holistic spiritual formation element with the interconnectedness of different aspects of change. Three of these elements are social, intellectual, and spiritual. Combined, they have the potential to bring a person into the fullness of Christ, where Christ himself is being formed in the person (Lowe & Lowe, 2016). Christ's image is being stamped onto a person's identity. A person should be growing in their social relationships, spiritual growth with God, and maturing mentally into the mind of Christ; multiculturalism uses the logic that Christ is involved in all cultures, and therefore Christlikeness includes each person moving toward different cultures or growth is partially hindered (Moe, 2019; Lee, 2010).

Formed Spiritually

Spiritual formation, or being changed spiritually, is defined by our union with God and involves growing reliance and intimacy with him personally (Stanford, 2017). Pettit describes how all growth comes from God. The beginning of spiritual formation is when a person comes to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Currington, 2004). Currington describes how love, joy, and peace, three of the Spirit's first fruits, speak of our spiritual growth with God. These three fruits demonstrate our hearts being right with God and are inward manifestations of the presence of God.

Lee (2010) states multiculturalism is obedience to God first and foremost. His logic is that God created diversity and gave humans authority over creation. Lee states, “hence multicultural education is our responsibility to take care of the culture that God created sincerely” (p. 5). Lee also states that multiculturalism is how we form our spiritual formation. Lee (2010) speaks of multicultural education “it is the practice of the fruits of the Holy Spirit that is described in Galatians 5:22, which include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (p. 4). Spiritual formation is first being in a right relationship with God and connected with being in a right relationship with others (Currington, 2004). Barna (2017) states you can come to know God in your own culture, but if you want to grow with God, a person must cross cultural boundaries. Moe (2019) describes how Jesus crossed cultural lines when he left heaven to come to earth for all humanity.

Social Formation

Loving God and others are the two main commandments of the Bible and are interconnected within an ecology of faith (Lowe & Lowe, 2017). Stanford (2017) defines social maturity as interacting with each other in healthy Christlike ways. Pettit (2008) states that God works through the community to unite all people to worship God. This is exemplified in the New Testament when Jews and Gentiles are brought together (KJV, 1611/2003, Eph. 2:14-17). Lowe & Lowe state how social interactions have the power to help or hurt behavior. Interactions create encouragement, growth, development, discouragement, and lack of growth. Currington (2004) describes the Spirit's second three fruits: longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness, as outward manifestations of the Spirit working through individuals toward others in relationships.

A relationship with Christ interconnects the first and second fruits through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The last three fruits of faith, meekness and temperance are connected to the whole person's transformation of man. When a person is right with God first, second right with others, they can transform their outward man and enjoy life to its fullest without being in bondage to creation. This is all connected through what Lowe & Lowe (2017) call an ecology of spiritual transformation.

Van Gelder & Zscheile (2018) states that there continues to be a marginalization of mainline evangelical and protestant churches, especially in the last ten years. White Protestants have decreased from 51 percent of Americans in 1953 to 32 percent by 2014. Southern Baptist lost four percent of its membership between 2010 and 2014. There is also an age problem in the protestant church, with the median age being fifty-three for white protestant Christians in 2014. The older white evangelical protestant churches are causing them to be irrelevant to a society that is becoming young and colorful (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018).

Multiculturalism and Social Reconciliation

The separation of races, cultures, and ethnicities is causing racial tension in society. Naidoo (2017) points out that religious organizations have the potential to draw people out of their racially segregated lives. Naidoo (2017) states, "Churches, instead of being places of acceptance and love, become an arena for subtle racial tension, sexism, and homophobia" (p. 1). Barna Group (2017) "found that evangelicals are more likely than other U.S. adults to say they would find it difficult to have a natural, normal conversation with someone unlike them themselves" (p. 127). When one thinks of Christ entering into conversation with humanity, that

was “such a great contradiction,” then this statistic should be alarming (KJV, 1611/2003, Hebrews 12:3).

Barna Group (2017) calls this the propinquity effect, where individuals become like the people around them and cannot hear or speak the truth to people outside their group.

Naidoo (2017) writes it is difficult for churches to transform society socially when the church itself has not been transformed socially. Barna Group (2017) explains how we have a society-changing church instead of the church changing culture because of the refusal of the church to embrace diversity. Naidoo (2017) writes about correcting racism through multicultural churches by embracing diversity and celebrating the community's differences. Multicultural churches have the potential to break down the racial divide in communities.

Oneness Without Sameness

The word *mestizaje* stands for oneness and represents multicultural congregations without sameness (Naidoo, 2017). Naidoo points out that the gospel is not captive to one culture, generation, class, or race. However, the gospel comes alive in each culture's heart language. This established the necessity of oneness without sameness. This is accomplished by contextualization, diverse leadership, and celebrating and honoring every culture. Storytelling is another method where social interaction can occur while strengthening reconciliation and awareness of each culture. Theology becomes real and personal and crosses cultural limits when storytelling becomes part of the congregational practice. To promote multicultural social interaction, theology should be expressed with the gospel story (Naidoo, 2019). Naidoo (2019) writes, “Storytelling encourages social interaction across differences and can ultimately help churches deepen their reconciliation potential” (p. 2).

Intellectual Formation

Stanford (2017) describes spiritual formation as God changing his children's minds through a process that brings people closer to his Son's image. The mind consists of thoughts and mental processes that help determine our behavior and will. Stanford states we "think and choose with our mind. Our mind controls our actions" (p. 5). Stanford further states that behavior and actions are determined by what we think about ourselves, others, and the world. The more we can remove distortions and develop healthy thinking, the more we will be transformed into Christ's image. Stanford states how the scriptures remind Christians to rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep (KJV, 1611/2003, Romans 12:15).

He established the church to grow intellectually in compassion, empathy, and maturity in our thought processes (Stanford, 2016). Wilhoit & Dettoni (1995) explain that intellectual growth is not Bible knowledge about facts but changes into Christlikeness with a pure heart and the motive of love. Christ's experience in community and relationships is the primary means of intellectual maturity (Willhoit & Dettoni, 1995). Hiebert (2008) points out that academic growth is primarily fostered through the renewing of our minds (KJV, 1611/2003, Romans 12:2). Furthermore, Hiebert (2008) discusses that as the mind grows, understanding the cross's higher morality comes. This morality does not look at everything through the lens of static right and wrong but has a more sophisticated knowledge that takes in more variables (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). This can include the ethics of care and compassion that understands how minorities have been mistreated and consider the best path forward for all involved (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016; Bell & Anderson, 2018).

Moe (2019) states that intercultural theology produced out of multiculturalism has the usual minorities of the Global South learning from the Global North Christian theologians. The Global south consists of Africa, Latin America, and Asia and has a thriving Christian growth. The Global North of North America and Europe has seen Christianity's spread stagnate (Bevans & Tahaafe-Williams, 2012; Moe, 2019). With this change in Christian growth, Christian theology has also changed, and the West no longer dominates. Moe points out that with the rise of the Global South, there needs to be a sharing of knowledge to understand better how these usually marginalized people interact with the gospel.

Moe (2019) states that Global North theologians are not interested in education from below, which are marginalized Global South students. They transfer their knowledge to them and do not learn from them. The Global North does not allow the marginalized to have a voice in the game. They guard their Christian beliefs with an overreliance on the past and keep out the marginalized beliefs by claiming the theologians do not back it up. The result is that the marginalized return to their homes with knowledge not relevant or applicable to their context.

In multiculturalism, one cannot rely on instincts or an overreliance on past theologians dominated by prejudice and colonialism (Kilner, 2015; Twiss, 2014). The concept of entering the other's world and welcoming the other to enter into their world is employed in intercultural theology. This means the evangelical sends missionaries to Africa and allows Africa into their local church culture (Moe, 2019). Multicultural practices require a fundamental change of mind that embraces zero tolerance for superiority and injustice and considers the past's dominance. The mind of Christ is both the incarnation and his compassion for the marginalized in “the least, the last, and the lost in the world of human injustice” (Moe, 2019, p. 22). Moe points out that

both the oppressed and the oppressor need liberating. The oppressor from the bondage of being the center of socio-political dominance and the oppressed from the darkness of oppression and sin.

Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature

The following sections describe the study's rationale and the literature gap. The rationale for the study drew out the problem from the past and current changes that create a need for a new solution. The gap in the literature showed how the body of literature is inadequate for meeting the needs of a new globalized society.

Rationale for the Study

One thing that is not debatable is the changing demographics in American communities. Van Gelder & Zscheile (2018) reports how there has been an influx of immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Immigration, coupled with low birth rates among non-Hispanic white populations and increased birth rates of minorities, especially Hispanics, has increased the demographic change. This phenomenon has created exponential change that is growingly obvious. It is predicted that America's white community will no longer be the majority by 2044 (Van Gelder & Zscheile, 2018). Immigrants today do not assimilate as in the past but seek to establish their own identity (Bevans & Tahafee Williams, 2012).

There is also a debate in America over how immigrants should be treated, with roughly 800,000 legal immigrants per year, and churches need a strategy for reaching these image-bearers of God (Amstutz, 2017). Another change is the Millennial's and Generation Z's attitudes, which were not raised in the civil rights movement but have grown up in an information age with great diversity. Barna Group (2017) reports that Millennials will have the highest minority population

of any other generation in American history. These younger generations are turned off by the homogeneous church practices that make it irrelevant and strangely different from most other American institutions (Barna Group, 2017). Generation Z and Millennials wonder why their church is homogeneous and the world is filled with diversity (Barna Group, 2019).

America's Long History of Racism

There is also America's history with its long and undeniable struggle with slavery, civil rights, and the aftermath that followed that has left many people groups bitter and divided (Moy, 2000). The church's history with blatant admitted and egregious acts of racism (Burgen, 2011). Trust is an issue after the Bible was used to justify placing God's image-bearers in the New Testament, where all men are to be free, in bondage (Burgen, 2011; Kilner, 2015). Many churches have repented or asked for forgiveness publicly in some way (Burgen, 2011). However, because of the church's eternal nature, there may be too much damage and hard-wired thinking for traditional denominations to have a voice in this much-needed area (Burgen, 2011).

There is also the evangelical decision of the past to pursue large profitable ministries in the suburbs and go against the multicultural fabric of the Bible (Dunlow, 2017, van Gelder & Zscheille, 2018). Dunlow (2017) describes how God used Paul to strongly rebuke Peter in Galatians 2 for upsetting the multiethnic fiber of the Bible. Peter was hurting the growth of the Gentiles by showing superiority toward the Jews. Dunlow also points out how nowhere in the New Testament does God condone separating different ethnicities, races, and cultures to form homogeneous churches. Dunlow points out how, in the New Testament, "diversity in the church is a glorious demonstration of the work of Christ" (p. 290).

The evangelical church withdrew from the cities and minorities in the middle of the 20th century based on building principles called the homogeneous unit principle (Rah & Vanderpol, 2016). This principle states that building homogeneous churches is easier and more profitable than the Biblical model established in the New Testament. To help justify this move, the evangelicals have focused on the great commission at the expense of the great commandment (Gustine & Edwards, 2019). The church could not abandon the cities and social injustices without abandoning justice. It becomes an elaborate systematic theology to offset something as simple as showing love to neighbor and justice (Gustine & Edwards, 2019). Van Gelder & Zscheile (2018) write about how these homogeneous patterns worked for over 350 years. Still, long-established institutions are cracking with the information age, immigration, minority births, and changing cultures. “Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy” (KJV, 1611/2003 Proverbs 31:8-9).

Recent Events Showing America’s Pain

Recent events of COVID-19 racial disparity and the social unrest with the George Floyd incident have again shown the tension and divide in our country (Godoy & Wood, 2020; Silliman, 2020). Once again, the complaint against the evangelical response is that it continues to be silent on this matter, which matches the 20th century (Manis, 2020). Fortunately, multicultural churches have a solution that breaks the silence, creates strategy, contextualizes the message, and seeks to heal hurting humanity in society and the church (Lee, 2010; Kim & Francis, 2018). The irrelevance problem also occurs when Christian education does not prepare students with

authentic experiences in learning about and interacting with a diverse population (de Souza & Halafoff, 2017).

Multiculturalism seeks to move past tolerance and show love through real intimacy and engagement with one body of Christ. Barna (2019) states reconciliation should affect every area of a person's life: personal, social, cultural, and economical. Multiculturalism seeks to engage in real conversations about each other, the past, and how to move forward in everybody's best interest. Multicultural ministry means multicultural leadership, not merely congregations; there must be change across the board. This study was necessary to find the relationship between multicultural practices and education with spiritual formation. To investigate if honoring God's creation and all of his image-bearers is connected to the enhancement of being changed into the image of God in Christ spiritually, intellectually, and socially.

Similar Studies

There are many studies on multiculturalism and spiritual formation; however, few connect these concepts. Stewart (2017) performed a mixed-method analysis of the importance of relationships and building a multicultural church. Some of the topics discussed were the need for leadership that intentional. Multicultural churches do not happen by accident. Stewart also stated that churches should reflect their community because homogeneous settings run contrary to the New Testament. One of Stewart's (2017) main points discussed was that multiculturalism might become the model for handling globalization in North America. He found that most pastors and members did not understand how multiculturalism helped their spiritual formation. One consistent finding was that multicultural pastors used stories in a narrative approach to reach their members.

Huyser et al. (2011) performed a case study of two Christian schools in Illinois. These schools were in neighborhoods where the white flight had occurred, and the Black population had caused changing demographics. The schools were both of the Christian Reform Church (CRC), which has a history of being homogeneous and striving to preserve its identity. However, the CRC maintains that God's promises are for all world's people groups. For this case study, one School called Reformed Christian School (pseudonym) and the other called Oquam Christian (pseudonym) faced declining enrollment due to demographic changes. This case study performed interviews with participants from both schools. The Reformed Christian School adopted an attitude that accepted diversity and called for change that included seeking students outside of the CRC. While the Oquam School resisted change and was confused with a lack of identity.

In the interviews, one of the problems that Oquam discussed would be the effect that change would have on small things such as music and books in the library. Another finding was that anxiety increased with Oquam, but Reformed Christians learned to accept the changes and trust diversity. One central concept that helped Reformed Christian was the school board's change that allowed diversity from the neighborhood to become members. Reformed also changed how they accepted students outside of their usual churches. Oquam struggled and maintained its traditional practices of enrollment and leadership. The attitudes of Reformed Christian were one of humility and learning from the other, while the interviews of Oquam did not mention these principles. Reformed Christians also focused on a biblical reason for creating diversity, while Oquam only said diversity reflected a better attitude.

Dye (2017) performed a qualitative case study investigating multicultural churches in Germany initiated by church planters from the Global South. In his literature review, he discusses racial reconciliation and overcoming the homogeneous unit principle in places where community diversity exists—he also discussed how local churches had bad attitudes toward immigrants and immigrant churches. Dye’s literature review revealed how God is involved in the movement of people. Dye shows how God moved with Israel in the wilderness, Jesus leaving heaven, and the diaspora of God’s people in the Old Testament. His literature showed how God is too big for one homogeneous person to claim dominance over him. Dye also writes about the multicultural flavor of the New Testament and heaven in Revelation 7:9 (KJV, 1611/2003).

Another case study by Dunlow (2017) looked at seven multi-ethnic evangelical churches in Boston, Massachusetts, to explore spiritual formation. The study's logic focused on the biblical model of the New Testament that is grounded in diversity. One of the findings of Dunlow was that spiritual formation is lacking in the literature for multiethnic churches. The literature showed that the New Testament does not condone ethnocentric homogeneous church practices but that the body of Christ is called to be one in unity and diversity. Another significant finding in this study was the lack of material for spiritual formation in churches, including Sunday school lessons or Bible study materials. Seven churches involved in the study found the language challenging to overcome. Most of these churches could not obtain appropriate material but had to make their own. Dye (2017) found “that the vast majority of the curriculum is designed for the middle class, white, suburban people” (p. 297).

Fisher & Crawford (2016) performed a qualitative study on improving low-income schools using Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as the guiding theory. The data was collected using a

semi-structured interview protocol focused on teachers, parents, students, and administrators. They first concentrated on physiological needs, then safety, and eventually self-efficacy. Teachers were encouraged to become involved in the students' lives showing care and interest inside and outside the classroom. The research showed that it makes a difference to the students academically when they know that the adults care about them, starting with Maslow's lowest needs and moving upward to the higher requirements.

The Gap in the Literature

The literature's main findings show a gap between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. The Dye (2017) study spoke directly about this and lacked appropriate literature for spiritual formation. The Stewart (2017) review did discuss spiritual formation in terms of relationships and disciplines but did not show a direct connection between the two. There are no studies that seek to determine a specific relationship between multiculturalism and holistic spiritual formation in spiritual, mental, and social growth. The Huyser et al. study example investigates multiculturalism and immigrants but does not seek to establish a relationship between the two. This is found in most of the literature that this researcher investigated. There is a general lack of connecting the specific practices of contextualization, intentionality, diverse leadership, and honoring God's image-bearers with the particular maturity outcomes in each spiritual formation area.

The literature also showed the pattern of America's majority not learning from the minority voices (Moe, 2019; Dunlow, 2017; Huyser et al., 2011). With the change in demographics, honest dialogue between the center and margins must occur for fundamental social change (Moe, 2019). No problem has ever been solved by silence, which is one of the

biggest complaints by American society against the majority white churches (Barna, 2017; Moy, 2000; Moe, 2019; Hays, 2003).

Summary

This literature review established a biblical theology for multiculturalism that included God's image, loving God, neighbor, and perichoresis. Also, the need to study the correlation between spiritual formation and multicultural church practices was argued. There was an in-depth discussion of theoretical arguments of critical race theory, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and James Fowler's stages of faith development to help understand the connection between multicultural church practices and human growth from a scientific lens. Lastly, this literature review examined multicultural practices that include: shared leadership, cultural intelligence, contextualization, intentionality, and storytelling to help better understand how multiculturalism can help create a diverse church congregation that enhances spiritual formation. The spiritual formation of Christians was also discussed in the literature review to help understand how Christians are changed into the glorious image of Jesus Christ in spiritual, mental, and social maturity.

Profile of the Current Study

Multicultural Church Practices seek to create environments that are attractive to the communities in which churches reside. These strategies aim to help people love God and others more by intentionally seeking reconciliation with all people groups for the glory of God. God is involved dynamically with his church to spread the grace of God to all of humanity. The spiritual formation of his people is of great importance.

This research examined the spiritual formation and multicultural church practices to see if a relationship exists. The instrument to gather the data was the Multicultural Church Spiritual Formation Survey (MCSFS). This survey quantified multicultural church practices and spiritual formation for participants attending multicultural churches throughout America.

The study focused on the population as defined by the Multiethnic.Church database established by D.J. Chuang.

This database contained 344 multicultural churches that self-identify as multicultural churches across the United States of America. The sample was supposed to comprise at least 285 participants chosen from the selected churches in a quasi-cluster nonprobability purposive sampling method. Only five churches agreed to participate during the survey stage, leading to only 97 participants. The data was collected through e-mail and the survey software Survey Monkey. The data was placed in SPSS statistical software. The primary statistic was Spearman's rho statistic to investigate all aspects of a possible relationship between the independent variable of multicultural church practices and the dependent variable of spiritual formation.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study determined if there was a correlation between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation in the areas of social, intellectual, and spiritual development into the image of Christ. This section discusses the design synopsis, the problem, and the purpose statement. The population was defined, along with how the sample was chosen. The instrumentation was explored in detail, including the study's process. The rationale for this study, sampling methods, statistics, and analysis were explained. Finally, a summary of the methodology, data, and the resulting correlational test was presented in this chapter.

Research Design Synopsis

The following section explored the main concepts of the research design. This analysis included the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the study's methodology.

The Problem

America has been changing demographically and is expected to no longer be a white majority by 2044 (Van, Gelder & Zscheile, 2018). In addition, traditional church models that promoted homogenous congregations are no longer meeting the needs of diverse communities of race, ethnicity, and color (Kim and Francis, 2017). Lee (2010) states spiritual formation is being changed into the image of Christ by loving God and loving others. However, the ability to love others is hindered because of a lack of strategy that intentionally seeks to draw diverse populations together in American churches (Barna Group, 2019).

Kim and Francis (2017) state multicultural church models seek to create church environments that draw different cultures into one space. The ability and strategy for interacting

with other races, ethnicities, and cultures affect our relationship with God (King James Version, 1611/2003, Math. 25:45). A multicultural church environment meets the needs of a globalized society and diversified American communities. Because individuals grow and are changed spiritually through interactions in local congregations, multicultural churches also affect spiritual development (Dunlow, 2017; Kim & Francis, 2017). This study explored the relationship between heterogeneous environments and spiritual growth. There is much research on spiritual formation and multicultural church practices but little on the relationship between these two concepts (Moe, 2019).

Purpose Statement

This quantitative correlational study explored if a relationship exists between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation for people attending multicultural churches in America. This study was conducted by surveying members of multicultural churches through the Multiethnic.Church database of self-reporting multicultural churches throughout America (Chuang, n.d.).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following section states the research questions that focus on the relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation in spiritual, social, and intellectual areas. This section also includes the null hypothesis, which focuses on no connection between the independent and dependent variables.

Research Questions

***RQ1.** What relationship, if any, exist between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity?*

RQ2 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity?

RQ3 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity?

Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity.

H02: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity

H03: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity

Research Design and Methodology

This correlational design examined the relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation and determined that multicultural church practices are a reliable predictor of spiritual formation. This study was a quantitative correlational methodological design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) write that “quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures” (p. 4). The research revealed that intentionality, team leadership, contextualization, unified philosophy, and storytelling are consistent multicultural practices, and these independent variables were included in the survey.

The dependent variable of spiritual formation was examined in terms of spiritual, social, and intellectual development into the image of Christ in the same survey. Statistical analysis was then performed between the independent and dependent variables to examine all possible relationships. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe that “a survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or tests for association among variables of a population, by studying a sample of that population” (p 147).

A correlational study was chosen as the most effective process to measure the association of the two variables of multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state how correlational analysis examines differences in one or more variables, and patterns are discovered where if one variable increases, the other variable may also increase or decrease. If there is a positive correlation, the two variables will increase, whereas negative correlations will move in the opposite direction of each other. Also, the coefficient correlation can examine the strength of the relationship. This determined how closely multicultural practices are connected to spiritual formation. Chaisson (2021) chose this same methodology to find a relationship between transformational leadership and the spiritual growth of multicultural churches. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) explain how correlational studies “can describe the degree to which the two variables are intercorrelated...and most importantly-we can interpret these data and give them meaning” (p. 149).

Correlational designs also help study variables that have occurred naturally, which matches quantitative studies and the relationship between two variables that have already occurred in multicultural churches. However, Leedy and Ormrod (2019) write, “correlation does not necessarily indicate causation” (p. 327). Correlational designs do not show the variables'

connection, only the association. The design of a quantitative correlational study matched the hypothesis and research question that creates variables and requires an analysis to determine if an association exists. Because an association exists, the organization can make decisions based on the predictions that were determined by the study.

Population

The population was 344 multicultural churches that self-identify as multicultural churches in America. Of these 344 multicultural churches, 33 have closed during the pandemic. This led to the population being approximately 22,392 (Chavez & Eagle, 2015; Fillinger, 2022). After the survey stage began and recruitment was ongoing, it became evident that the 95% confidence level was not obtainable. This eventually led to 5 churches agreeing to participate by placing the survey on their social media or sending it out to their participants. None agreed to give the researcher their list of congregants. After conferring with my advisor, it was decided to make the population be only the churches that agreed to participate. This led to a population of 298 approximate individuals for the population. This included five churches, one of which decided only to do ten surveys.

The church database was established with the Multiethnic.Church hub created by D.J. Chuang for multi-ethnic churches in America. D. J. Chuang is a strategy consultant and author who advocates for Christianity and multiethnic issues (Chuang, n.d.). The Multiethnic.Church site is a digital hub organization that creates resources for helping churches become multicultural and have a place to discuss topics—the Multiethnic.Church website is a free exchange of information to empower churches to be multicultural. These multicultural churches have a population of no more than 80% of one ethnicity, race, or cultural group (Dunlow, 2017). This

means these churches can be multicultural, multiracial, or multiethnic. The database represented 38 states spread out across the United States. The population consisted of individuals 18 years of age or older to help identify the formation of adults instead of children. Both males and females participated in the study, and all races and ethnicities were included.

It was essential for this researcher to focus on these types of churches relative to multicultural environments. Also, the absence of denominations is unnecessary, but it was also important that no one denomination alone was the focus in attempting to be multicultural. The Multiethnic.Church group list of multicultural churches meets these parameters of being uniquely multicultural while also including some denominations. There are no multicultural denominations, such as the United Methodist or Southern Baptist, which creates difficulty in obtaining a purely multicultural list of churches. Therefore, this database represented an excellent variety and representation of multicultural churches in America.

Also, because of this study's population size and the characteristics that represent the actual population, it may be considered a superpopulation. However, because of the lack of involvement, the population cannot be a superpopulation. Goldstein et al. (2015) state, "for scientific purposes, however, the real population serves as an instance of an underlying process that generates a data set at a particular time, and where inference is to all possible instances. This is often referred to as a superpopulation approach, and the actual real population is treated as if it were a sample from such a conceptually infinite population" (p. 448).

The study investigated the congregation's spiritual formation. The churches' themes represent their communities and focus on loving God and loving others (Barna Group, 2017). The doctrines discussed and established by Anderson and Cabellon (2010) focus on significant

themes such as forgiveness by faith in Christ, loving God, loving others, and social reconciliation. Also, the church is the local support group established by God to demonstrate the love of God to the world and should be culturally sensitive. The doctrinal issues were also minor in things deemed insignificant and divisive. These minor doctrinal issues are to be decided by each person's conscience. The requirement of participants in reference to the length of time is that they attend these multicultural churches for at least six months. Attending was defined as someone who frequently attends church service at least two times a month, including virtually.

Other important factors in these multicultural churches included intentionality, contextualization, social reconciliation, storytelling, and a focus on one body of Christ. This population allowed for a large sample and ensured the ability to test the hypothesis statistically in that it matched the church types conducted in the literature review and research. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state, "identify the population in the study. Also, state the size of the population, if the size can be determined, and the means of identifying individuals in the population. Questions of access arise here, and the researcher referred to the availability of sampling frames-mail or published lists-of potential respondents in the population" (p. 50).

Sampling Procedures

The method for obtaining the sample was a non-probability criterion sample, also known as purposive sampling. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state, "this particular sampling strategy is used not only in some quantitative descriptive studies...purposive sampling involves choosing participants or other units of study, as the name implies, for a particular purpose" (p. 178). In this study, the researcher did not seek information about all churches and spiritual formation but only about multicultural churches that are already established and need to be examined for spiritual

formation relationships. Criterion sampling helps when there is a large group of samples, the criteria have been identified, and the participants that match those criteria have also been identified. Many participants may help generalize to a larger group. Etikan (2016) states that the researchers have something specific in mind with purposive sampling, and the participants match those thoughts. However, Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state there is no guarantee that each member of the population will be represented, and some members will not be sampled (p 177).

The sampling group was taken from the database of multicultural churches. The researcher contacted the list of churches and sought access to the individuals through email and phone calls as directed by the local pastors. In anticipation that surveys may not be returned, the use of social media was included—this employed Facebook and Twitter. The use of Survey Monkey was utilized to deliver the MCSFS survey.

The population size of congregants of the multicultural churches established in the Multiethnic.Church database is approximately 22,392 individuals (Ellinger, 2022; Chavez & Eagle, 2015; Chuang, n.d.) To reach a 95% confidence level within 5 points of the confidence interval, the sample would need 285 participants. Therefore, assuming a 50 percent response rate, over 570 surveys will need to be distributed. However, it has already been discussed how the population number changed to 298, and the sample would need to be 147 for a 95% confidence level. This sample size was calculated using the online program called Raosoft from www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html. To obtain 147 surveys, 294 surveys would need to be sent out. The survey stage eventually sent out 344 surveys. However, only 130 were returned, and 97 were usable, resulting in an 83% confidence level. It was discussed with the researcher's supervisor, and this was deemed an acceptable level.

Limits of Generalization

This study was limited to multicultural churches and their relationship with spiritual formation; therefore, non-multicultural churches may not apply the predictors of spiritual formation. The study was also designed for congregations within the United States; therefore, information obtained in this study may not apply to congregations outside of America. Also, the study was intended for laypersons only. However, laypersons and leadership were included in the sampling to increase the number of surveys. This study was limited to a relationship and not causation because of the nature of correlational studies.

This study was limited to adults to avoid the natural growth of people under 18, which could be mistaken for spiritual growth and the avoidance of the need to obtain parental consent for children. In addition, the study is a non-probability criterion sampling method, making it difficult to generalize to the population. However, because of the population being studied and the sample size, there can be possible connections to the population. This study sought to find a relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. Churches that meet the 80% or less parameter for one ethnic group but do not employ multicultural practices may still infer the relationship to spiritual formation within their congregation. The study revealed that most multicultural churches are located in large urban cities; therefore, the results should be limited to this environment.

Ethical Considerations

To help ensure that ethical considerations are maintained at the highest level, this researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Initiative (CITI) for Liberty University. In addition, all research was reviewed by Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB)

before the study was conducted on participants to ensure all ethical standards were maintained. Only adults (participants 18 years or older) were included in this study, and a statement declaring the nature of the research and the voluntary characteristics of the study was included before participants began the surveys. The participants were also informed they could withdraw at any time. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state, “when people are specifically recruited for participation in a research study, they should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating” (p. 112).

The surveys gathered information about spiritual formation, which involves God, others, and specific behaviors increasing and decreasing in people’s lives; therefore, the questions were as sensitive as possible and stated gracefully. This was noted in the study beforehand on a declarative page that discusses what the study is for and what will be involved. The study was aimed at participants already in multicultural churches and sought to gain a relationship with their formation. This purposive study should not cause participants to harm their worship style. The study aimed to discover what had already occurred. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state, “in cases where the nature of a study involves creating a small amount of psychological discomfort, participants should know this ahead of time” (p. 112).

The study was primarily conducted digitally using SurveyMonkey online survey tools. They have state-of-the-art security programs and help a researcher with strategies to protect their data. All information is confidential, stored using the Survey Monkey software, and destroyed within three years. Personal emails were only used to recruit participants with surveys delivered through SurveyMonkey software. Also, this researcher has no known conflict of interest in researching this study which should help avoid personal bias.

Instrumentation

A survey design was determined to be the best method of collecting data for this study. The reason is that a survey matches a correlational descriptive research design, and the population is spread across America. O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) state, "survey research is the quintessential descriptive research design because it is used when the purpose of the research is to describe the characteristics of a population by making inferences from a sample drawn from that population" (p. 155).

This study aimed to ascertain if a relationship exists between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation for multicultural churches in America. In this study, the independent variables include multicultural church practices that include: (1) an intentional pursuit of multicultural ministries, (2) a vision for diversified team leadership, (3) storytelling, (4) cultural contextualization, (5) a unified biblical doctrine of multicultural ministries, and (6) congregations that are no more than 80 percent one ethnic, racial, or cultural group. The dependent variables for this study are spiritual formation in spiritual, social, and intellectual.

Variables vary, so the research intended to determine if a relationship can be established by these variables formed with the literature review and resulting theories. Bredfeldt (n.d.) states using triangulation of the research questions is an essential first step in creating the questions. This was done by creating subtopics from the research questions; multicultural practices, spiritual formation, social formation, and intellectual formation were formed. At least three statements for each subtopic were created to help collect data that helped answer the research questions.

Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state, “in triangulation, multiple sources of data are collected with the hope that they will all converge to support a particular ascertain, hypothesis, theory, or conclusion” (p. 93). In this situation, the survey statements are created by converging the research questions with the subtopics and making at least three statements on each subtopic. In this research, the independent subtopics of multicultural church practices produced six questions for the survey. The subtopic of spiritual formation produced six questions for the survey. The subtopic of social formation produced six questions for the survey. The subtopic of intellectual formation produced six questions.

The instrumentation containing these questions will be an (MCSFS) Multicultural Church Spiritual Formation Survey (Appendix A). This survey consisted of 31 structured (close-ended) survey questions. The first seven questions were screening and demographic questions; therefore, they will not be discussed in this section. Questions 8-13 of the MCSFS measured the degree of multicultural church practices experienced at church (intentional pursuit, vision for team, storytelling, cultural contextualization, unified biblical doctrine, 80% threshold of one people group). The rationale underlying the development and use of the MCSFS is that it fits the research's unique and specific needs more than other generic surveys already made. These questions were answered with Likert-type responses of (1) Never, (2) Sometimes, (3) Often (4) Always. This determined a person's multicultural church practice involvement. The high score in this area was 24, while the low score was 6. The higher the score was, the more the individual has been involved with multicultural church practices within their church. A lower score means the person had not been exposed to multicultural church practices.

The next set of questions 14-19 of the MCSFS (Appendix A) came from the subset of spiritual formation in the area of spirituality. This subtopic had six questions, focusing on a person growing spiritually in reliance and trust upon God. These questions were closed-ended survey questions that measured a person's spiritual formation in dependence upon God. These questions were answered with Likert-type responses of (1) Disagree Strongly, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree (4) Agree Strongly. The high score in this area was 24, with a low score of 6. The closer the score is to 24, the more the person has matured in spiritual formation.

The next set of questions 20-25 of the MCSFS (Appendix A) came from the subset of spiritual formation in the area of social formation. Six questions in this subtopic focused on a person growing socially into the image of Christ. These were closed-ended survey questions that measured a person's growth in social maturity. These questions were answered with Likert-type responses of (1) Disagree Strongly, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree (4) Agree Strongly. The highest measurement in this area was a 24, while the low score was a possible 6. The closer the score is to 24, the more the person has matured in social maturity, and the closer the score is to six, the less the person has developed in social formation.

Questions 26-31 (Appendix A) came from the subset of spiritual formation in intellectual maturity. Six questions measure if a person is developing the mind of Christ. These questions were answered with Likert-type responses of (1) Disagree Strongly, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree (4) Agree Strongly. The highest measurement was 24 and showed mature development in intellectual growth, while the low of a possible 6 indicated a lack of development in intellectual development.

Validity

O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) state, "instrument validity refers to the accuracy of the inferences made from the data provided by the instrument" (p. 100). There are two main categories of validity which are external and internal. External validity is the ability to generalize to the population based on the instrument's trustworthiness. Although this is a non-probability sampling, there may still be possibilities to use generalizations if specific criteria are met. One aspect that increases generalization is a large sample size and a well-defined population.

The population is 344 multicultural churches in America, defined by the Multiethnic.Church website. The church database, of which 33 have closed, produces 22,392 estimated congregants. This will create 285 participants for the sample, which will also be spread across the United States. The population changes have already been discussed and calculated to be 298 possible participants, of which 97 surveys were produced for an 83 % confidence level. The large population and sample will help external validity even though it is a purposive sampling method. The population has a specific characteristic, and the sample has the same desired characteristic, which helped generalize to specific multicultural churches. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state that many researchers do not plan to generalize to broad populations but restrict research to a particular population with unique characteristics.

To ensure validity, this research focused on two internal validity aspects, which are construct and content validity (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). Construct validity concerns whether the instrument provides meaningful information about the studied characteristics. O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) state, "as a first step, representative items must be carefully developed to sample the content knowledge and skills within each sub-domain" (p. 116). Construct validity

has recently been identified as being at the “core of establishing overall instrument validity” (O’Dwyer and Bernauer, 2014, p. 116). This researcher used the research questions to form the four subtopics and then chose six questions for each subtopic. Triangulation requires at least three questions per subtopic (Bredfeldt, n.d.).

Construct validity is also concerned with ruling out alternative reasons for scores of observations. This researcher deals with maturity in this study, so the participants were restricted to 18 years or older to rule out the natural growth process. This threat to validity is called the “maturation threat” and “occurs when participants in the study “mature” during the course of the study, thereby affecting the attributes or characteristics being studied” (O’Dwyer and Bernauer, 2014, p. 139).

Content validity concerns that the survey questions represent the “universe of behaviors” for a specific characteristic. The extensive literature review helped form the primary questions related to multicultural practices. These characteristics are stated by many multicultural church organizations, one of which is included in the study population (Anderson & Cabellon, 2010). Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state that “an assessment tool has high content validity if its items, questions, or tasks reflect the various parts of the content domain in appropriate proportions and if it requires the particular behaviors and skills that are central to that domain. Using the content from the literature review that formed the research questions ensures that multicultural church practices and spiritual formation are being measured with the survey questions.

Reliability

Reliability is the consistency and repeatability of an instrument. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state, “more generally, reliability is the degree to which an assessment strategy

consistently yields very similar results when the entity being assessed hasn't changed" (p. 107). O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) state an instrument is reliable if it provides similar information when administered at different times to the same group. To ensure reliability, this researcher performed a Cronbach's alpha statistic on the MCSFS. O'Dwyer and Bernauer 2014 state, "fortunately, the most common statistical software packages (e.g., SPSS...can be easily used to calculate Cronbach's α . A correlational coefficient measurement of the .70 threshold will be sought to ensure reliability. This was performed on the participant's surveys by running a simple Cronbach's alpha test to check for reliability.

O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) state that Cronbach's alpha "is measured on the same scale, with zero indicating unreliability and values close to 1 indicating higher reliability. Values of Cronbach's α equal to, or greater than 0.70 are deemed optimal" (p. 124). Cronbach's alpha considers the average difference among the responses compared to the whole instrument's number of responses. After collecting surveys and performing Cronbach's Alpha, the statistic measured a strong .912 score for internal validity. Also, to help with reliability, when this researcher designed the questions, they were aligned positively for all questions. If strongly agree is a positive characteristic, this pattern should be consistent with all the questions.

Research Procedures

When Liberty University and the IRB Process granted permission, this researcher began collecting data on May 25, 2022, to answer the research questions. The instrument was created by the researcher using Word processing software. The database contains 344 churches spread over the United States of America. America was divided into four regions: South, Northeast, Midwest, and West. From the four areas, three churches were chosen for each part using a

purposive non-probability design. The design of dividing the population into regions and drawing samples out of each area is a quasi-cluster nonprobability sample. This provided approximately 864 samples, of which at least 570 surveys need to be sent out to obtain the necessary 285 surveys to reach the 95% level of confidence; overestimation is involved to account for the number of congregants under 18 in an average congregation size of 72 (Fillinger, 2022; Chavez & Eagle, 2015). As already discussed, the changes produced 294 surveys to reach 147 participants at 95% confidence. However, there were 294 surveys sent out, with 130 returned and 97 usable for an 83% confidence level.

Once the sample was determined, each chosen church's leader was contacted by telephone and email. The church's leadership was asked if their congregation could participate in a study about multicultural churches and spiritual formation; those that agreed were sent a consent form (Appendix B). If permission was granted, they were given a link to forward their congregation with the electronic consent form and the online survey containing the MCSFS. The surveys were embedded using Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey was used because it automatically places data into SPSS. Once the surveys were collected, SPSS software, Survey Monkey, and Social Science Statistics calculators analyzed the data. However, only SPSS, Survey Monkey, and Raosoft were used in the study.

In addition to contacting the churches directly, surveys were sent out by contacting members through DJ Chaung, the Creator of the Multiethnic.Church database and website. This researcher contacted DJ Chuang, and he placed my survey on his Facebook. He is dynamically involved in helping multicultural churches and has established social media sites. This researcher also sent surveys through Survey Monkey embedded in social media sites to create more survey

responses. Use of Facebook and Twitter were employed to obtain participants. Screening questions were embedded in the Survey Monkey survey to ensure that participants met the study's parameters. Church members frequently use these social media sites to communicate, and these venues have grown during the pandemic era of church structure. There was also a quasi-snowball sampling method in this communication medium to recruit more surveys. This was done by Facebook, allowing the sharing of the survey if the Facebook participant desired to share the study. This was done in anticipation of problems evident in other research because of COVID-19 (Chaisson, 2021; Harris, 2020). There have been data collection issues during this stressful time in America, especially in multicultural churches with congregations disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Although during the actual study, the quasi-snowball sampling did not create surveys for this study.

Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

This section gives a brief overview of how the data was collected and the statistical procedures performed on the data—a brief view of what visual representations are used in a correlational study.

Data Analysis

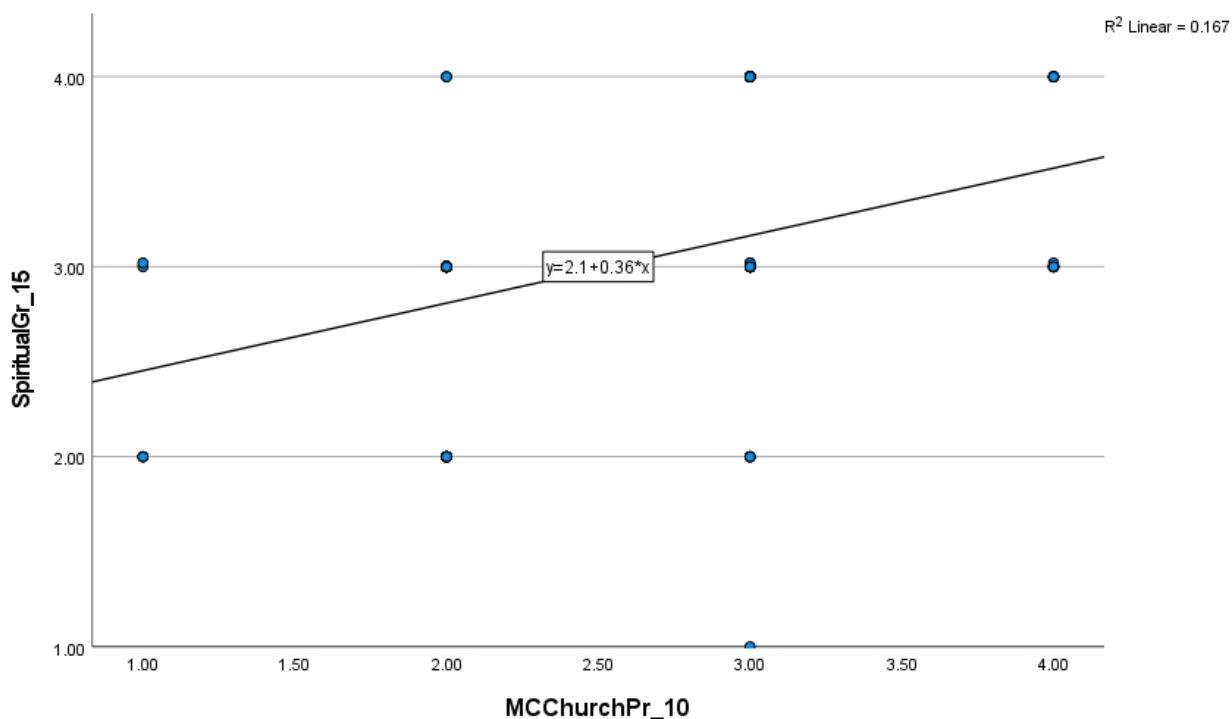
Once the data was collected using Survey Monkey, the data was placed into Spearman's rho correlation statistic. Spearman's rho answered the research questions on whether there is a relationship between multicultural practices and spiritual formation. When conducting descriptive analysis, graphs, visual representations, correlations, and scatterplots with lines of best fit are commonly used to help understand the data.

RQ1 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity? Once the data for questions 8-13 and 14-19 was placed in Spearman's rho correlation statistic, it determined if a relationship exists between the independent variable of church practices and the dependent variable of spiritual formation. If it is positive, there will be a positive correlation; if negative, there will be an inverse correlation. Next, Spearman's rho will determine the correlation coefficient, determining if the relationship is a strong or weak correlation. The closer to 1 or -1, the stronger the correlation or inverse correlation. The closer the correlation is to 0, the weaker the correlation between the variables. After collecting surveys and placing the data into SPSS, there was a strong significant .634 correlation coefficient between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation.

Graphs are essential for displaying correlational information; a diagram showing a positive, negative, or no correlation was used to help understand this information. The following scatterplot in Figure 1 on page 92 represents a scatter plot for spiritual growth question 15 and multicultural church practices question 10.

Figure 1: Scatter Plot of Spiritual Growth and Church Practice

Scatter Plot of Spiritual Growth and Church Practice



For Research Question 2, the data was collected from the surveys with the independent variables of multicultural church practices and the participant's perceptions of spiritual formation in intellectual maturity. **RQ2** What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity? The data from questions 8-13 and 20-25 were placed in Spearman's rho to measure the relationship between the two variables. The corresponding statistics determined the relationship's existence, direction, and strength between these two variables. Data is often placed into tables to allow for analysis. Frequency tables and graphs allow for summarizing, understanding, and seeing patterns quickly. The data was displayed in Table 1 on page 93 and shows how SPSS

calculates missing data in the subsets of multicultural church practices and spiritual growth by using the mean.

Table 1: Statistic for Finding Missing Data in Surveys Using the Mean

Statistic For Finding Missing Data in Surveys Using the Mean

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Missing		No. of Extremes ^a	
				Count	Percent	Low	High
MCChurchPr_8	97	3.04	.86503	0	.0	0	0
MCChurchPr_9	97	2.97	.89505	0	.0	0	0
MCChurchPr_10	97	2.63	.76811	0	.0	0	0
MCChurchPr_11	97	3.09	.90234	0	.0	0	0
MCChurchPr_12	97	2.92	1.03753	0	.0	0	0
MCChurchPr_13	97	2.72	1.10625	0	.0	0	0
SpiritualGr_14	95	3.33	.58951	2	2.1	1	0
SpiritualGr_15	95	3.03	.67559	2	2.1	18	22
SpiritualGr_16	95	3.13	.60541	2	2.1	8	22
SpiritualGr_17	95	3.30	.63229	2	2.1	1	0
SpiritualGr_18	95	3.25	.66294	2	2.1	1	0
SpiritualGr_19	95	3.29	.61160	2	2.1	0	0

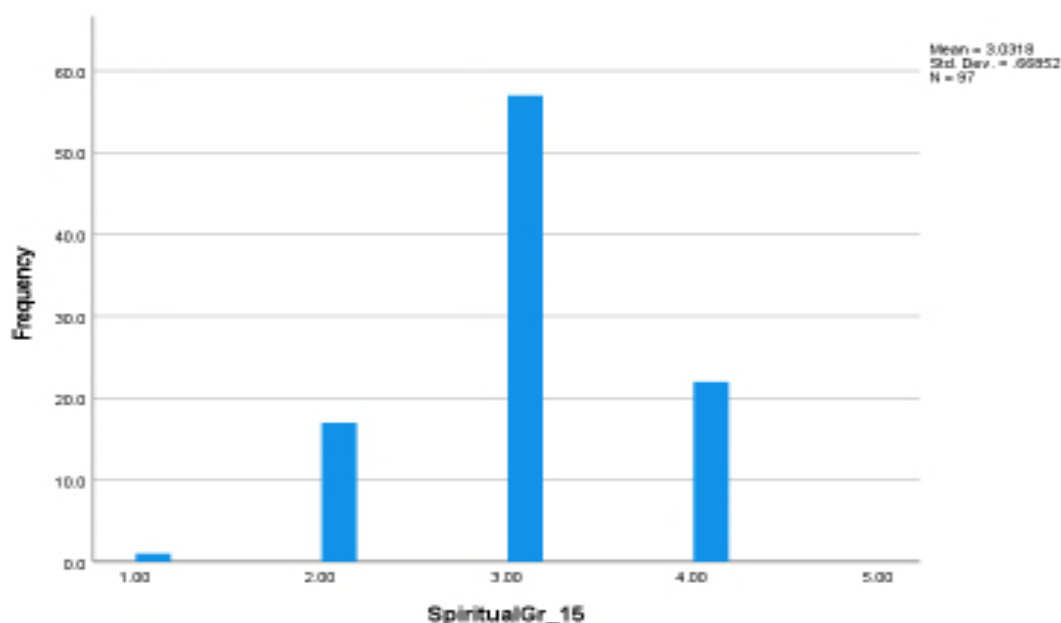
The data was collected from the surveys using Survey Monkey and SPSS, which placed the data into Spearman's rho statistical test. Questions 8-13 and 26-31 measure the relationship between multicultural church practices and social formation. After collecting the data and placing it into SPSS software, the actual correlation coefficient was a significantly strong correlation coefficient of .658 between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation.

RQ3 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in intellectual maturity? After collecting and placing the data into the SPSS software, the correlation coefficient was .390 for Spearman's rho.

This was still significant and positive; however, considered weak, especially relative to the other two relationships. The corresponding statistics measured the relationship between these two variables' existence, direction, and strength. Bar charts are often used to represent data for quick analysis and understanding. The following bar chart illustrates an analysis after data is collected. Figure 2 shows what the average answers were for question 15.

Figure 2: Bar Graph for Average Answers to Spiritual Growth Q15

Bar Graph for Average Answers to Spiritual Growth Q15



Statistical Procedures

O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) write, “descriptive analysis is used to summarize and describe data; the aim is to reveal patterns in the data that are not immediately apparent when inspecting raw data” (p. 191). O'Dwyer and Bernauer state that the data is collected for one reason only to answer the research questions. The primary statistic that was used is Spearman's rho correlational statistic. The data that was collected is discrete non-continuous ordinal

numbers. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) write the “Spearman rank-order correlation statistic (Spearman’s rho)” is used when “both variables involve rank-ordered data, and so are ordinal” (p. 325). Cronbach’s alpha statistic was employed to test the survey's reliability. This statistic is often used for correlational surveys to measure the variability of each response to the variability of the whole study. The Survey Monkey research software placed the data into SPSS statistical software to perform the appropriate analysis and create relevant charts to help visually represent the data. The research questions will be answered after collecting, analyzing, and understanding the data.

Chapter Summary

This section discussed the study of multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. The overall purpose of this correlational descriptive study was to investigate if there is a relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation in spiritual, social, and intellectual development. The design of the study is a correlational nonprobability criterion study. The sampling method of purposive nonprobability was chosen because of the desire to study only multicultural churches and not churches in general. Also, this population is challenging to access and spread across America.

The population consists of 344 self-reporting multicultural churches on the Multiethnic.Church website created by D.J. Chuang. This was changed to 298 participants in five multicultural churches. The desired sample population was 147 participants. The data collection resulted in 130 total surveys, with 97 usable surveys and an 83% confidence level. The results were accomplished using a quasi-cluster nonprobability purposive sampling method. The survey design is thought to be the best method to obtain the data to answer whether a relationship exists

in each area of spiritual formation. The instrument was the MCSFS to measure if a relationship exists between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. The data analysis statistic of Spearman's rho has been discussed and shown to be the appropriate statistic for nonparametric ordinal data and was used in the research study.

Also, Cronbach's alpha statistic is suitable for testing the reliability of the survey and does not require two points in time measured against each other. Survey Monkey and SPSS were chosen because of their compatibility and history of successful survey research designs. Correlational research also uses various graphs such as lines of best fit, frequency, bar, and scatterplots.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This research study aimed to find if a relationship exists between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation for multicultural churches in America. This topic was chosen because as this researcher began their doctoral work, there seemed to be a problem with homogeneous churches not meeting the needs of the heterogeneous communities. There was also the continued struggle of racial tension in America and the inability of the churches to meet this spiritual need. This chapter describes the processes involved in collecting the data, instrumentation, and the statistical tests involved in validity and answering the research questions. The central theme of this chapter is data analysis and answering the research questions. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the research design.

The following questions formed the basis of this research which sought to find a relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation.

Research Questions

RQ1. What relationship, if any, exist between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity?

RQ2 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity?

RQ3 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity?

Based on the above research questions, the following hypotheses were explored.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity.

H02: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity.

H03: There is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

The study was a quantitative correlational study; therefore, a Spearman's rank-order correlation (Spearman's rho) was chosen to measure the relationship between the independent variables of multicultural church practices and the dependent variables of spiritual formation. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) state that Spearman's rho statistic is best when both variables involve rank-ordered data and are ordinal. Both the independent and dependent variables were gathered using Likert Scale ordinal data. The Spearman's rho will calculate the data from the research questions and determine if there is a relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. Spearman's rho is also used for non-continuous data, and analyzing group means. This fits the study's parameter because each subset was grouped into one variable using the mean of multicultural church practices, spiritual growth, social growth, and intellectual maturity. Although each question is also measured against each question, the research questions will have to use the means of the four subsets. The analysis finds a correlation coefficient between -1 and 1. The closer the coefficient is to 1 or -1, the stronger the relationship between

the variables. If the correlation is negative, the variables behave inversely, whereas if the variables are positive, they travel in the same direction.

The MCSFS sent out included consent, screening question, gender and subtopics of multicultural church practice, spiritual growth, social growth, and intellectual maturity. There were six questions for each of the four subtopics. These four subtopics gather the essential data for inputting into Spearman's rho to determine if a correlation exists between the independent variables of multicultural church practices and the dependent variables of spiritual growth, social growth, and intellectual growth.

Once the surveys were collected, they were placed in SPSS version 28 statistical software. This software did the major statistical test and data frequencies, including Spearman's rho and Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha statistic is not used for correlation but measures the internal validity of the instrument used to measure. Cronbach's α measures the reliability of an instrument, and values equal to or greater than .70 are considered optimal (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014).

Demographic and Sample Data

The original population of 344 multicultural churches from the Multiethnic.Church website was established by D.J. Chuang (Chuang, n.d.). The participating congregations were to have a congregation of no more than 80% of one race, culture, or ethnicity. To qualify, they were also to have attended a multicultural church for at least six months and two services per month. Once IRB approval was obtained, the contact information was pulled from the websites of each of those 344 churches. During the collection of contact information, several of these churches were permanently closed from the pandemic and inflation that the country is currently

experiencing. The church experience has changed to include online as a hybrid experience (Standard, 2022). Many of the congregations would meet on Sunday and have online on Wednesday.

The MCSFS was first sent out via Survey Monkey to several states in each region of the United States in a quasi-cluster nonprobability purposive sampling method starting on May 25, 2022. A quasi-cluster sampling method divides the population into regions and chooses a select few from each region. The nonprobability purposive sampling is not randomly chosen but prefers churches that fit a specific description; something unique that the researcher intends to study. The researcher also called these churches on the telephone to ask for participation. The initial goal was for 285 participants to reach a 95% confidence level. After sending surveys to the four regions of America: South, Northeast, Midwest, and West, the surveys were expanded to all the churches on the Multiethnic.Church website. Thirty-three email addresses were no longer valid. In addition to the recruitment emails, the researcher began calling several churches from each state to stimulate participation. Many churches stated they were not interested in participating, which included reasons such as being too busy, not being multicultural, and not allowing surveying of their congregation. For example, one church reported that online congregations were already overloaded with the digital platform and did not want to add anything digital or technological to their capacity. All churches contacted refused to give out their email list, possibly because of the current digital overload that most people are experiencing and their policies to protect the privacy of their congregations.

After the initial survey, follow-up recruitment emails were sent two weeks later, along with phone calls to random churches in each state. The follow-up emails informed the churches

that laypersons and leaders would be included in the study (Appendix K). The researcher and his advisor agreed this was an acceptable change. After this change, surveys began coming in more frequently. Eventually, four churches agreed to put the survey on their social media page. One church placed MCSFS in its newsletter. One church decided to do ten surveys for the study. In the end, there were a total of five churches that agreed to participate in the research study. This brings the approximated population to 298 possible participants. The churches came from across the United States and included the locations of Little Rock, Arkansas; Chicago, Illinois; Queens, New York; Washington, DC; and St Louis, Missouri. There are correspondence letters in (Appendix J)

The survey was also placed on the D.J. Chuang website, where the original list was obtained. The MCSFS was closed in July 2022 because the list was exhausted, and no more surveys were being received. Additionally, we had reached an acceptable confidence level of 83%, and after conferring with my supervisor, the survey was closed. The total number of surveys returned was 130, with 97 completed and usable for the study. This produced an 83 percent confidence level with a 5% margin of error and 25% population proportion using an online program called Raosoft from www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html. The following Table 2 and Table 3 on page 102 show the demographics of the study.

Table 2: Layperson or Leader

Layperson or Leader

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Layperson	59	60.8	62.8	62.8
	Leader	35	36.1	37.2	100.0
	Total	94	96.9	100.0	
Missing	3.00	3	3.1		
Total		97	100.0		

Table 3: Gender*Gender*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	53	54.6	56.4	56.4
	Female	41	42.3	43.6	100.0
	Total	94	96.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.1		
Total		97	100.0		

Data Analysis and Findings

After collecting the surveys and placing them into SPSS, descriptive data were calculated. This granular data will calculate Spearman's rho correlation and analyze the subtopics to help understand the correlation between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. The following Table 4 (p. 103), Table 5 (p. 104), Table 6 (p. 104), and Table 7 (p. 105) include the

descriptive statistics for each subset of the 24 questions. The tables include the mean or average answer, the mode, which is the one that appears the most, the standard deviation, which is the dispersion around the mean, and the sum, which is the total score for that question of all 97 surveys. They show that the mean scores for multicultural church practices were below those for spiritual growth, social formation, and intellectual growth. All the descriptive data will be input into the SPSS for complicated analysis, such as Spearman's rho and Cronbach's alpha.

Table 4: Descriptive Data for Multicultural Church Practices

Descriptive Data for Multicultural Church Practices

		MCChurchPr_ 8	MCChurchPr_ 9	MCChurchPr_ 10	MCChurchPr_ 11	MCChurchPr_ 12	MCChurchPr_ 13
N	Valid	97	97	97	97	97	97
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.0412	2.9691	2.6289	3.0928	2.9175	2.7216
Mode		3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Std. Deviation		.86503	.89505	.76811	.90234	1.03753	1.10625
Sum		295.00	288.00	255.00	300.00	283.00	264.00

Note. The data for Table 4 came from Appendix A concerning questions 8-13 on p. 140.

Table 5: Descriptive Data for Spiritual Growth*Descriptive Data for Spiritual Growth*

	SpiritualGr_14	SpiritualGr_15	SpiritualGr_16	SpiritualGr_17	SpiritualGr_18	SpiritualGr_19
N Valid	97	97	97	97	97	97
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.3332	3.0318	3.1287	3.2969	3.2470	3.2899
Mode	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Std. Deviation	.58333	.66852	.59906	.62591	.65600	.60520
Sum	323.32	294.08	303.48	319.80	314.96	319.12

Note. The data for Table 5 came from Appendix A concerning questions 14-19 on p. 141

Table 6: Descriptive Data for Social Maturity*Descriptive Data for Social Maturity*

	SocialMa_20	SocialMa_21	SocialMa_22	SocialMa_23	SocialMa_24	SocialMa_25
N Valid	97	97	97	97	97	97
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.2089	3.0770	3.0219	3.1318	3.2307	3.2635
Median	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000
Mode	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Std. Deviation	.72910	.81944	.70678	.64886	.56045	.55594
Sum	311.26	298.47	293.12	303.78	313.38	316.56

Note. The data for Table 6 came from Appendix A concerning questions 20-25 on p. 141.

Table 7: Descriptive Data for Intellectual Maturity*Descriptive Data for Intellectual Maturity*

		IntellectuMa_ 26	IntellectualMa _27	IntellectualMa _28	IntellectualMa _29	IntellectualMa _30	IntellectualMa _31
N	Valid	97	97	97	97	97	97
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.2959	3.1367	3.2500	3.2275	3.2500	3.4316
Median		3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.4300
Mode		3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00
Std. Deviation		.52359	.67980	.54486	.57241	.66536	.59153
Sum		319.70	304.26	315.25	313.07	315.25	332.87

Note. The data for Table 7 came from questions 26-31 Appendix A on p. 142.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

Research question one seeks to find if there is a relationship between multicultural practices and spiritual growth. To answer this question, the multicultural church practice questions were compared to the spiritual growth questions from the MCSFS. This analysis compared questions 8-13 of the Multicultural Church Practices and 14-19 of the spiritual growth questions. The Likert scale questions Never, Sometimes, Often, and Always for multicultural church practices and Disagree Strongly, Disagree, Agree, and Agree Strongly for Spiritual Growth.

The Spearman's rho correlation was used because the data is ordinal. First, the total multicultural practices and spiritual growth subsets were calculated in the SPSS software. Figures 3 on page 106 and Figure 4 on page 107 show these totals, which are the totals of each of the 97 surveys. The multicultural practice total score sub-topic mean is 17.3711, and the mean for the spiritual growth sub-topic is 19.3296. That means all six questions added up in each

subtopic: averaged 17.3711 for multicultural church practices and 19.3296 for spiritual growth. These averages come from answering the six questions, which range from 1, 2, 3, and 4. So based on the answers, a person could score between 6 and 24. If a person's score is six, that means they have low exposure to multicultural practice, or they could have a 24 and high exposure to multicultural practices; this same theory applies to each subset. In the spiritual growth bar graph below, a person's score could also range from 6 to 24 according to how they answer the spiritual growth questions. These averages of 17.3711 and 19.3296 would then be divided by 6 to find the mean of each subtopic which is 2.8952 for the multicultural church practices and 3.2216 for the spiritual growth mean. These means will be placed in the SPSS to compute Spearman's rho for each subtopic.

Figure 3: Histogram of Total Score on Multicultural Practices Per Survey

Histogram of Total Score on Multicultural Practices Per Survey

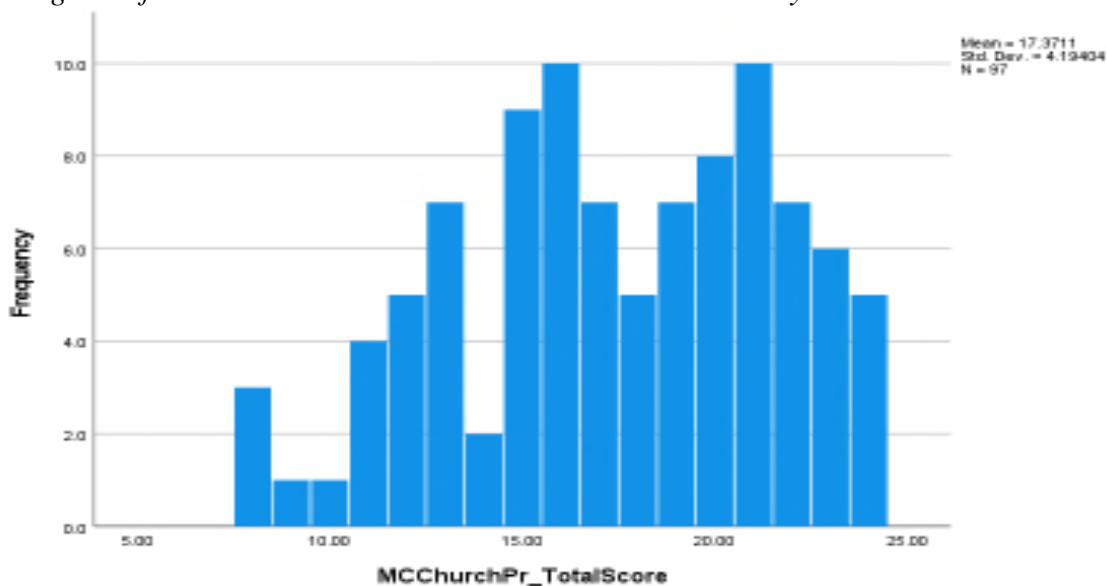
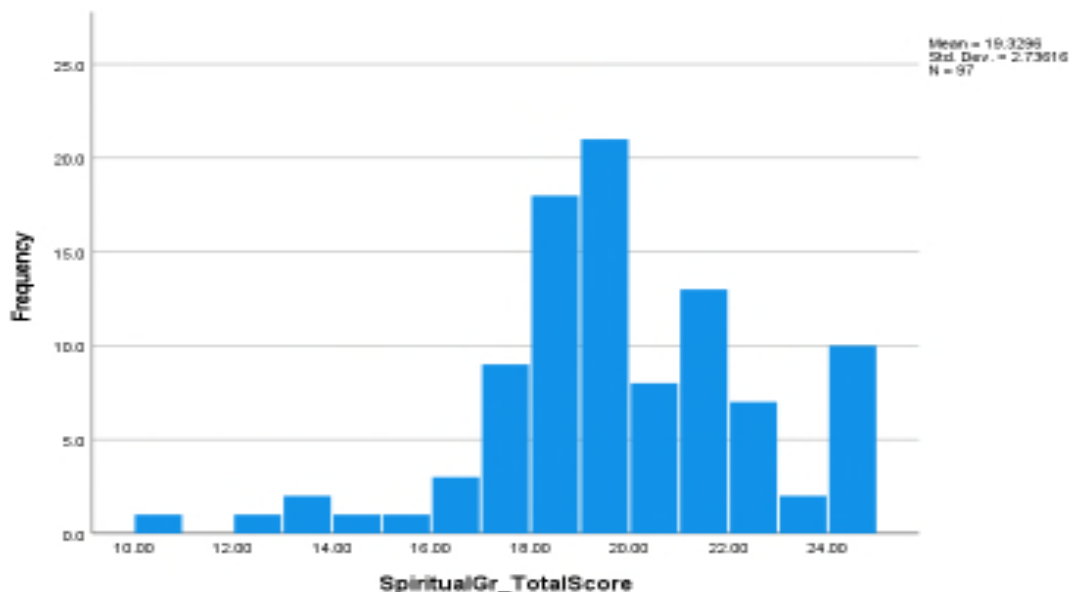


Figure 4: Histogram of Total Score of Spiritual Growth per Survey

Histogram of Total Score of Spiritual Growth Per Survey



From the means of the total scores, one would find the mean of each subset to be placed into Spearman's rho; they are displayed in Table 8 on p. 108. The average answer for the independent variable multicultural church practice was 2.8952, which is between sometimes and often. The average score for the dependent variable spiritual growth, is 3.2216, which is between agree and strongly agree. This is found by dividing the average total by 6 for the number of questions in each subtopic. One could interpret this as meaning when one is exposed to multicultural church practices at a 2.8952 level; their spiritual growth is at a 3.2216 level.

Table 8: Mean of subsets of Multicultural Church Practices and Spiritual Formation*Mean of subsets of Multicultural Church Practices and Spiritual Formation*

		Multicultural Growth Mean	Spiritual Growth Mean
N	Valid	97	97
	Missing	0	0
Mean		2.8952	3.2216

Once there is a mean for multicultural growth and spiritual growth, we can place these two variables into Spearman's rho correlation statistic, which is displayed in Table 9 on page 109. The correlation coefficient is .634 with a two-tailed significance level of $(\alpha < .001)^2$. This means a significant positive relationship exists between Christians attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in spiritual growth. Therefore, the null hypothesis **H01**, which states there is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity, is rejected. And as such, the answer to **RQ1** is that there is a strong relationship between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity. Significance was determined at an $\alpha < .05$ level, meaning there is less than a 5 percent probability that the null is correct. In this correlation, an alpha of $<.01$ and directional significance was included (2-

² **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These are the significance levels for all alpha correlations in this study.

tailed) because the correlation could be positive or negative, as shown in the literature. This means that spiritual formation can decrease as multicultural practice increases, but that was not evident in our research.

Table 9: Spearman's rho for Multicultural Church Practices and Spiritual Formation

Spearman's rho for Multicultural Church Practices and Spiritual Formation

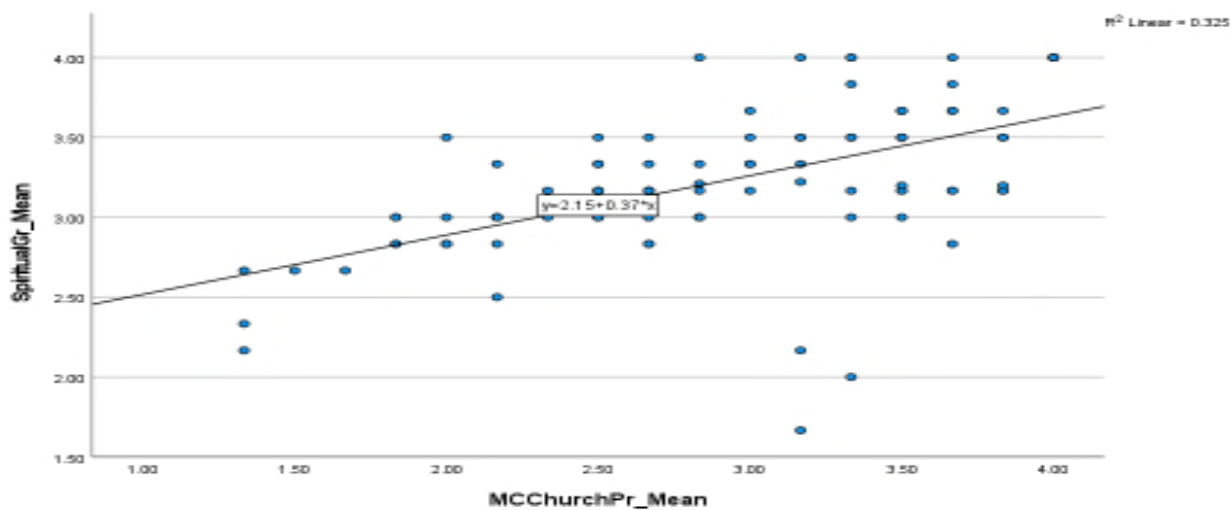
			Spiritual Growth_Mean	Spiritual Growth_Mean
Spearman's rho	MCChurchPractice_Mean	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.634**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	97	97
	SpiritualGrowth_Mean	Correlation Coefficient	.634**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	97	97

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Also, to help understand this positive correlation, a scatter plot with the best fit line is in Figure 5 below on page 110. The .634 correlation is considered strong. The best fit line helps you see the pattern. The R^2 variable shows how well the data is dispersed around the best fit line.

Figure 5: Scatter Plot of Multicultural Church Practices and Spiritual Maturity

Scatter Plot of Multicultural Church Practices and Spiritual Maturity



To further show the correlation between multicultural church practices and spiritual growth, a Spearman's rho was correlated between each question of the two subsets in Table 10 on page 111. They are all positively correlated, and 35 out of 36 questions are significant except Q8 and Q16.

Table 10: Spearman's rho for Multicultural Church Practices and Spiritual Growth*Spearman's rho for Multicultural Church Practices and Spiritual Growth*

			Spiritual Gr_14	Spiritual Gr_15	Spiritual Gr_16	Spiritual Gr_17	Spiritual Gr_18	Spiritual Gr_19
Spearman's rho	MCChurch Pr_8	Correlation	.391**	.284**	.197	.256*	.408**	.470**
		Coefficient						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.005	.053	.011	<.001	<.001
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_9	Correlation	.357**	.392**	.342**	.392**	.460**	.445**
		Coefficient						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_10	Correlation	.247*	.436**	.313**	.262**	.378**	.319**
		Coefficient						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	<.001	.002	.010	<.001	.001
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_11	Correlation	.217*	.312**	.299**	.367**	.411**	.466**
		Coefficient						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.002	.003	<.001	<.001	<.001
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_12	Correlation	.310**	.307**	.310**	.448**	.439**	.316**
		Coefficient						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002	.002	<.001	<.001	.002
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_13	Correlation	.267**	.285**	.283**	.396**	.313**	.271**
		Coefficient						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.005	.005	<.001	.002	.007
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97

Summary of Research Question One's Findings

Research question one shows that there is a strong relationship between multicultural church practices and growth in the spiritual aspect of spiritual formation. The R^2 of .325 means that about 32% of the spiritual growth is closely aligned to the independent variable of multicultural church practices. Therefore, multicultural church practices can be a predictor of spiritual growth. The two questions with the highest correlation coefficient were questions 8 on multicultural church practices and 19 on spiritual maturity. This analysis connects intentionality with multicultural practices and being led by God's Spirit as the most substantial relationship. Lastly, H_01 , which states there is no statistically significant positive or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity, is rejected.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

Research question two seeks to find if there is a relationship between multicultural church practices and social growth. This question includes growing not only with your homogeneous groups but with all of God's image-bearers. The data from the subset of multicultural practices will be measured against the data in the social group subset of questions. Social growth includes relationships with different races, ethnicities, and cultures, being concerned with social justice issues, questioning biases, growing deeper in relationships, being involved with all of God's image-bearers, and listening deeply to others.

Discussions will first focus on Spearman's rho for this question because the last question showed how the means of both subtopics were attained. The mean of multicultural practices is 2.8952, and the mean of social growth is the mean of the total scores of the subset divided by the

six questions, displayed in Figure 6 and Table 11 below. These will be placed in Spearman's rho statistic.

Figure 6: Histogram for the Total Scores of Social Growth Subset

Histogram for the Total Scores of Social Growth Subset

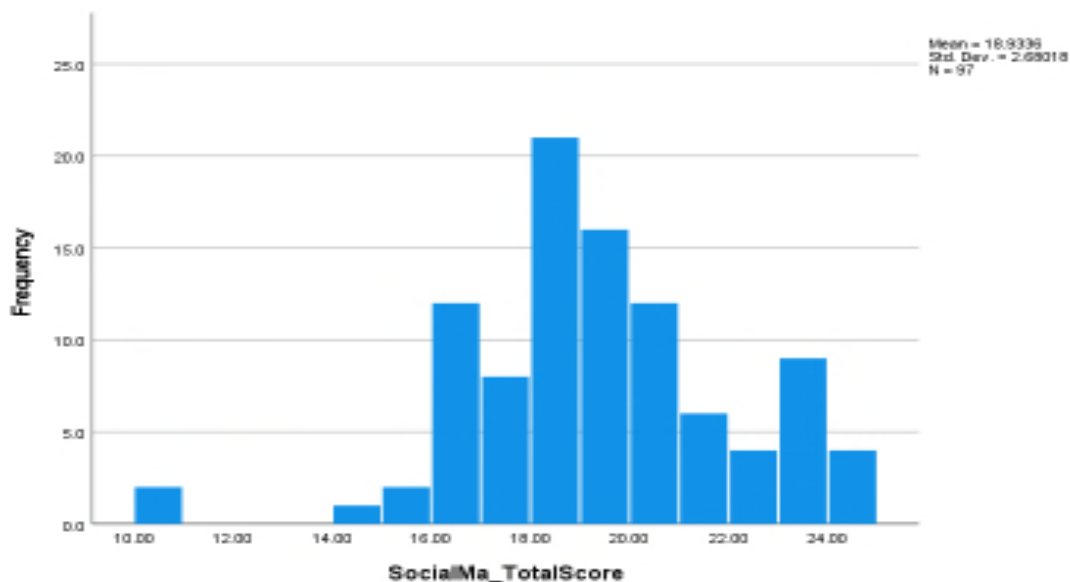


Table 11: Mean for the Social Growth Subset

Mean for the Social Growth Subset

N	Valid	97
	Missing	0
Mean		3.1556

Placing the mean of the multicultural church practice of 2.8952 and the social maturity mean of 3.1556 into Spearman's rho correlation statistic in SPSS is shown in Table 12 on page 114.

Table 12: Spearman's rho for Multicultural Church Practices and Social Maturity

Spearman's rho for Multicultural Church Practice and Social Maturity

			MCChurch Practice_Mean	Social Maturity Mean
Spearman's rho	MCChurch Practice_Mean	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.658**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	97	97
	Social Maturity Mean	Correlation Coefficient	.658**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	97	97

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient is .658, a strong positive correlation with a significant two-tailed coefficient of an alpha < .001. This describes a relationship that as the independent variable of multicultural church practices increases, the dependent variable of social growth will increase. Therefore, the null hypothesis **H02** is rejected, which states there is no statistically significant, positive, or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity. Significantly the rho of .658 is considered strong. This means the answer to **RQ2** is that there is a strong positive relationship between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity.

A Spearman's rho was calculated for each question of the multicultural church practice and social growth subset in Table 13 on page 115 to break down the correlation further. They are all positively correlated, and 35 out of 37 questions are significant. The two insignificant

question sets are multicultural practice Q10, social maturity Q21, and multicultural Q12 and social maturity Q21.

Table 13: Spearman's rho for Multicultural Practices and Social Growth

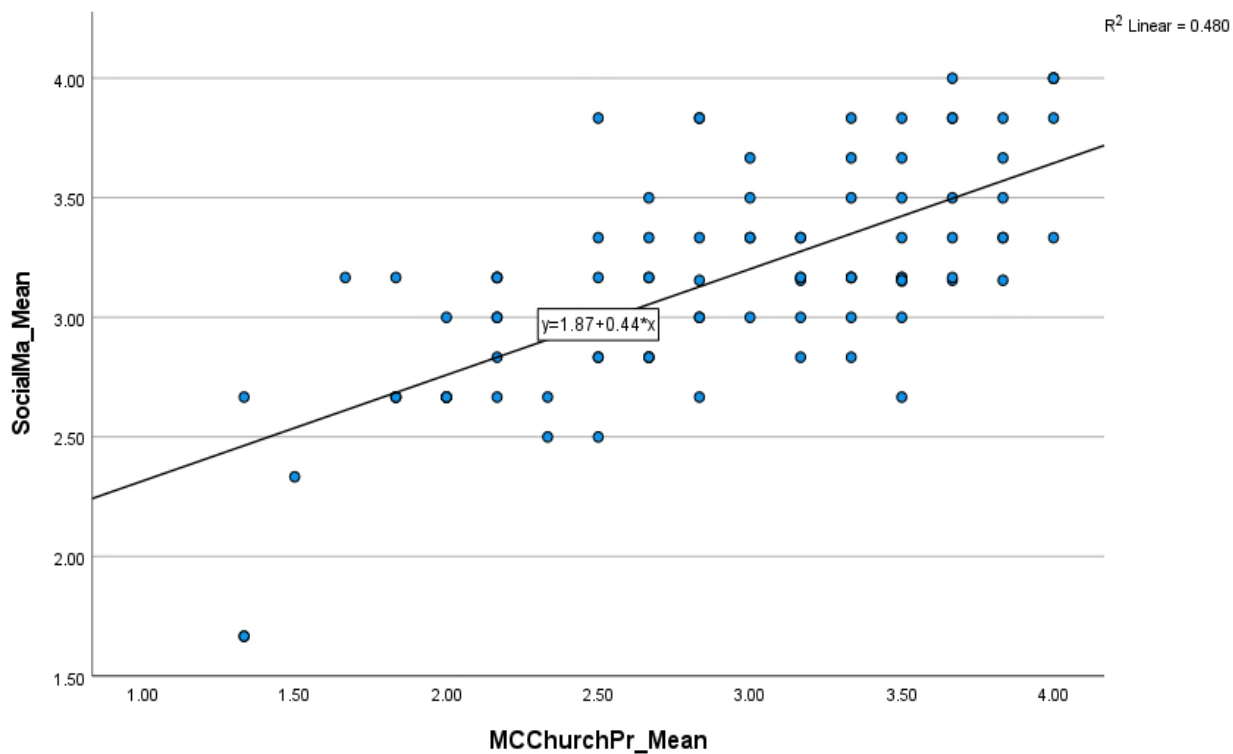
Spearman's rho for Multicultural Practices and Social Growth

			SocialMa _20	SocialMa _21	SocialMa _22	SocialMa _23	SocialMa _24	SocialMa _25
Spearman's rho	MCChurchP r_8	Correlation Coefficient	.398**	.398**	.453**	.363**	.525**	.349**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurchP r_9	Correlation Coefficient	.469**	.444**	.456**	.333**	.363**	.453**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurchP r_10	Correlation Coefficient	.286**	.193	.293**	.339**	.423**	.326**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.059	.004	<.001	<.001	.001
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurchP r_11	Correlation Coefficient	.539**	.414**	.530**	.328**	.376**	.358**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	.001	<.001	<.001
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurchP r_12	Correlation Coefficient	.437**	.265**	.193	.310**	.335**	.225*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.009	.058	.002	<.001	.027
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurchP r_13	Correlation Coefficient	.440**	.402**	.325**	.238*	.287**	.200*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.001	.019	.004	.049
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97

The scatter plot in Figure 7 below visually displays Spearman's rho's positive correlation between the independent variable of multicultural church practice and social maturity. The R^2 variable shows the strength of the relationship of the data points concerning the best fit line. The R^2 being .480 means the best fit line accounts for about $\frac{1}{2}$ of the spread around the best fit line. The Spearman's rho was .680, showing a relatively strong positive relationship between church practices and social maturity. Therefore, the more a church exposes its congregation to multicultural practices, the more it should mature socially

Figure 7: Scatter Plot of Multicultural Church Practices and Social Maturity

Scatter Plot of Multicultural Church Practices and Social Maturity



Summary of Research Question Two's Finding

The relationship between multicultural practices and social maturity was the highest of all the correlations, which makes sense because of the nature of interacting with different people groups. The correlation was .658, and the R^2 of the best fit line was .480. Therefore, almost half of the participants were closely aligned with Spearman's rho. This means the independent variable of multicultural church practices strongly predicts the dependent variable of social maturity. The most substantial connection between any two questions on multicultural practices and social maturity was question 11 and question 19. Therefore, when a church teaches that God's word promotes multicultural congregations, individuals perceive they are growing in relationships with different races, ethnicities, and cultures the most. The research also showed that **H02**, which states there is no statistically significant positive or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity, is rejected.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

The two mean measurements were placed into Spearman's rho statistic to describe the relationship between multicultural church practices and intellectual maturity. The dependent variable of intellectual maturity involves growing in humility, using more variables in judging morality, being more open-minded to different perspectives, having fluid thoughts, allowing the Holy Spirit to help one's thinking, and overall maturing intellectually. The mean of the dependent variable of intellectual maturity of 3.2652 is in Table 14 on page 118.

Table 14: Mean of the Intellectual Maturity Subtopic*Mean of the Intellectual Maturity Subtopic*

N	Valid	97
	Missing	0
Mean		3.2652

The Spearman's rho statistic in Table 15 on page 119 reveals a positive correlation coefficient of .390 with a significant two-tailed score of an alpha < .001. The rho of .390 is considered a weak correlation between two variables; intellectual maturity increases with a weaker connection as multicultural practices increase. However, the alpha, which is the significance level, is <.001. This means there is less than .1 % that the null hypothesis is true. This means the weak correlation is still significant. Therefore, the answer to RQ3 is that the relationship is a weak significant positive correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity. So, as the independent variables of multicultural practices increased, the dependent variables of intellectual maturity increased at a lower percentage of connection. This was the weakest of the correlations of all three questions. Spearman's rho for the relationship between the two variables of multicultural church practices and intellectual maturity is shown in Table 15 on page 119.

Table 15: Spearman’s rho for Church Practices and Intellectual Growth

Spearman’s rho for Church Practices and Intellectual Growth

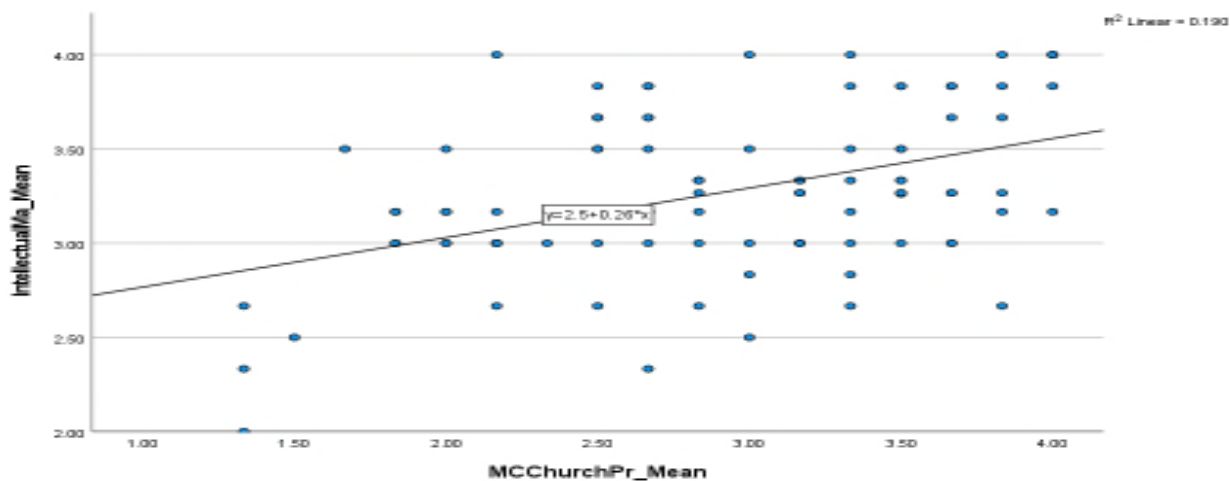
		MCChurch Practice_Mean	Intellectual Maturity_Mean
Spearman's rho	MCChurchPractice_Mean	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.
		N	97
	IntellectualMaturity_Mean	Correlation Coefficient	.390**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
		N	97

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The scatter plot below in Figure 8 visually represents the weaker correlation between multicultural church practices and intellectual formation. The data has a correlation coefficient of .390 and has a low R² for the dispersion around the best fit line. It is easy to see from the graph this was the lowest correlation for Spearman’s rho and had the lowest R².

Figure 8: Scatter Plot for Multicultural Church Practices and Intellectual Growth

Scatter Plot for Multicultural Church Practices and Intellectual Growth



There is also a Spearman's rho for each question of multicultural church practices and intellectual maturity below in Table 16.

Table 16: Spearman's rho for Multicultural Practices and Intellectual Maturity

Spearman's Rho for Multicultural Practices and Intellectual Maturity

			Intellectu alMa_26	Intellectu alMa_27	Intellectu alMa_28	Intellectu alMa_29	Intellectu alMa_30	Intellectu alMa_31
Spearman's rho	MCChurch Pr_8	Correlation Coefficient	.391**	.351**	.503**	.458**	.392**	.313**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.002
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_9	Correlation Coefficient	.233*	.209*	.237*	.302**	.281**	.263**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.040	.019	.003	.005	.009
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_10	Correlation Coefficient	.165	.198	.334**	.246*	.250*	.157
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.106	.052	<.001	.015	.013	.125
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_11	Correlation Coefficient	.202*	.288**	.262**	.383**	.300**	.194
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.004	.009	<.001	.003	.056
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_12	Correlation Coefficient	.180	.056	.194	.200*	.259*	.175
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.078	.588	.057	.049	.010	.086
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97
	MCChurch Pr_13	Correlation Coefficient	.229*	.206*	.290**	.205*	.175	.149
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.043	.004	.044	.086	.145
		N	97	97	97	97	97	97

Summary of Research Question Three's Findings

Research question three, which seeks to find a relationship between multicultural church practices and intellectual maturity, was the weakest of all their correlations at a .390 statistical connection. The strongest connection between multicultural church practices and intellectual maturity was being intentional about diversity and being more open-minded to different perspectives. The lowest correlation in this subtopic included questions 12 and 27. This correlation connected having different cultures present within the congregation and growing in using more variables in judging morality. This could be associated with the church's traditional belief in right and wrong being absolute. Also, the lack of growth in intellectual maturity could relate to the lack of curriculum and knowledge of how to operate as a multicultural church. The research still showed that **HO3**, which states there is no statistically significant positive or negative correlation between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity, is rejected.

Evaluation of the Research Design

In the original population, 344 multicultural churches were included during the survey stage, but only five were eventually involved. The five churches were distinctly multicultural, providing an excellent purposive sample for the study. One particular church came from Queens, New York, considered one of the most diverse cities in the world. The other churches came from Washington D.C., Chicago, Ill., St Louis, Missouri, and Little Rock, Arkansas. So, even though only a small percentage of the original population participated, the sample contained a wide variety of the United States of America and gave unique insights into how multicultural churches respond to practices and growth

Also, the survey design was interconnected, making it easy to go from one section to the next. The researcher noticed a problem within American churches and society regarding social unrest, interaction, and homogeneous populations. This led to the research questions, the literature, the survey questions, and eventually, the analysis. The variables conducted the research toward a quantitative correlational study. The interconnectedness made the research occur with a natural flow. The outcome of the data analysis proved this conceptual connection. The quantifiable data measured multicultural church practices and compared the data with quantifiable spiritual maturity. The two variables showed significant relationships using Spearman's rho statistic, which supports the overall design of the research. The significant correlations also supported the literature review concepts and the long-standing problem in America of homogeneous worship styles that match America's original culture.

One of the weaknesses was the survey collection stage. This particular stage became complicated. There seemed to be a strain on the multicultural churches because of the post-pandemic era and the current economic inflation the country is experiencing. This made it hard to add anything else to the agendas of these churches. This caused the surveys to be below the 95% goal but still reached the 83% acceptable percentage. If one church could be the population, it might help with the confidence level. This would take someone to gain the trust of one multicultural church enough to obtain an email list. All the data came from church Facebook sites and the pastors sending emails to the congregations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter five discusses the conclusion, implications drawn from the data results, and corresponding statistics. The researcher will look for patterns, possible reasons for action, and recommendations for future research. This section will also examine validity and end with a summary.

Research Purpose

This correlational study explored if a relationship exists between spiritual formation and multicultural church practices for people attending multicultural churches. The study's sample was a survey purposive non-probability type; therefore, generalizing to the total population of multicultural churches may be difficult. However, a conclusion can be made from the patterns that are seen according to relationships between the independent variables of multicultural church practices and spiritual formation

The following research questions were the essential purpose of the study and were used to direct the research design.

Research Questions

RQ1. What relationship, if any, exist between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of spiritual maturity?

RQ2 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of social maturity?

RQ3 What relationship, if any, exists between Christians who are attending multicultural churches and their perception of spiritual formation in the area of intellectual maturity?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

There have been many studies on spiritual formation and multicultural church practices but very few on the correlation between spiritual formation and multicultural church practices. This is why the MCSFS was divided into four subtopics of multicultural church practices and the dependent variables of spiritual growth, social growth, and intellectual maturity. Therefore, this study will provide implications and applications which center on the relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation.

Research Conclusion

The research revealed a significant positive correlation between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation in five distinct churches. All three questions resulted in the same conclusion. The strongest correlation was between multicultural church practices and social formation at .658. This seems natural as many practices focus on bringing different cultures together, a natural social process. As the theoretical literature states, this must be done with intention, or you will simply have a multicultural church by name only. Overall, the participants exposed to multicultural practices positively correlated with growing relationships at deeper levels and with more diversity. This included listening to others without judging and questioning any biases that might interfere with socializing with different people.

The second strongest correlation was spiritual growth, with a correlation of .634. This data matches love for God and love for others. People can love God in homogeneous relationships; however, loving others is magnified when we intentionally love all of God's image-bearers. Multicultural Christianity is not thought to be one model that is the best strategy but merely a model that may work in diverse communities. God correlates to how we treat the

least of others as how we treat him (MT 25:40). Therefore, to focus on people is to focus on God. One should expect multicultural practices to reflect a positive relationship with spiritual growth. All multicultural spiritual means for that question subset was above 3.0, agreeing with positive social interactions.

The lowest correlations were between multicultural practices and intellectual formation, with a Spearman's rho of .390. The researcher believed this was because the Christian life of loving God and others does not place a high value on intellectual knowledge. Growing socially does require knowledge of different cultures. However, this study measured intellectual maturity as growing in humility, using more variables in judging, being more open-minded, fluidity, being led by the Holy Spirit in thinking, and overall maturing. These questions may be difficult for one to self-measure because of their complexity. This is also a result of the many different cognitive structures of living in different environments. However, the overall subset was intended to reflect the mind of Christ. The research also showed in many studies that Christian multicultural literature is limited, which could also cause intellectual growth to be affected because of a lack of curriculum (Loewen, 2016). This was shown in the means of the individual question with "my thinking is maturing overall" as the lowest scoring question of the survey at 2.7216, which is between Disagree and Agree. Also, social sciences were involved in the study, which could affect spiritual growth in intellectual maturity. The relationship of growing in the knowledge of social science may be low in growing in maturity with Christ.

Implications

One of the significant implications of the study is that multicultural churches must be intentional about being multicultural. Anderson and Cabellon (2010) state that multicultural churches must be dogmatic about the intentionality of their multicultural appearance. This implies everything from greeters to leadership to the mix of entertainers' race and culture in each service is included in being intentional. This also includes teaching in a way that is relevant to one's culture. This was the lowest correlation for spiritual growth at .197 and was connected to joy. Contextualization is one of the major themes of multiculturalism (Kim & Francis, 2017). The correlation between multicultural practice question 8 and spiritual growth question 19 is the highest for Spearman's rho at .470. This question involves intentionality and being led by God's Spirit. Therefore, one can see the importance quantitatively of being intentional.

One of the complaints about homogeneous evangelical churches is the inability to talk to people outside of their group (Barna, 2017). The participants showed a high relationship between multicultural church practices and social growth. Multicultural practice question 8 and growing in relationships with different people groups had a positive correlation of .398. So, one can see that interaction with different people groups will naturally help form positive relationships. The lowest correlation is more concerned with social justice issues at .193. The literature review showed this is one of the more debatable topics in church business, with homogeneous churches mostly avoiding the topic and heterogeneous embracing the topic. A church must have a strategy for social justice issues, or churches will maintain their homogeneous makeup. The researcher believes that management of the social justice issues to the proper degree would be the best model-not absent but not overly dominating the gospel.

The implications for intellectual maturity can be a complex variable. When maturity is the mind of Christ, this may not be as academic as some churches would make this variable. But it would have the essence of putting others first. This variable depends on cognitive levels that can be different for different demographics: rural, city, poverty, education, and many other factors. This was the lowest of the correlations for the major research questions. Storytelling is essential in multicultural environments (Naidoo, 2019). Regardless of your socioeconomic background, stories help other economic, racial, cultural, and ethnic groups understand what God is doing in a person's life and help make connections.

Applications

The five churches involved in the study were in big cities throughout the United States, where one must be multicultural at some level merely to navigate day-to-day activities. And with the strong positive correlations in these cities, an immediate application should occur. Also, our country is racing toward diversity in light of demographic trends. The results of this study should be taken seriously. The phenomenon of diversity is not going backward, nor will it reverse, so each year, our communities become more diverse. Churches should have some strategy for helping all of God's image-bearers in their community with the gospel and formation. The statistic that America will no longer be a white majority by 2050 is commonly reported in many different sources (Gans, 2013).

The correlation of spiritual growth shows that God cares about his church and heterogenous populations bring glory to God's reconciliation power. Growing spiritually is growing in our connection to God and his Spirit (Standford, 2017). Since multicultural practices are the independent variable, this is the place to begin so that the dependent variable will

increase. One way churches can accomplish this is by looking in new places for their leadership, ones committed to multicultural church practices. These include intentionality, contextualization, storytelling, unified doctrine, a diverse leadership team, and striving for no more than one culture, race, or ethnicity of 80% or less.

The applications concerning social growth are perhaps the most direct connection to naturally see in multicultural churches. But if a church is not careful, there will be a multicultural shell that lacks depth and breadth. This should go beyond the social formation questions to deeper building relationships between different cultures. This means having friends, companions, and brothers and sisters who share their lives as different people groups (Walker-Barness, 2018).

The applications for intellectual maturity involve finding the different cognitive levels of people groups in the community and having concrete, abstract, and intuitional thinking (Loewen, 2016). This can be organized and systematically placed in new curriculums that understand the different cultures and include them in their literature. One phenomenon helping with the intellectual application is globalization, which creates a kind of one-world culture with slight differences and makes contextualization easier (Barber, 2020).

Theoretical Implications

Multicultural Christianity is a highly controversial subject. However, it is a solid biblical model that began with the Jews and Gentiles of the New Testament coming together for the cause of Christ (Lee, 2010). Dunlow (2017) describes in a case study of seven multiethnic churches and explains how homogeneity is contrary to the New Testament. He cites the withdrawal by Peter in (1611/2003, KJV, Gal. 2), where Paul rebukes Peter for withdrawing from the Gentiles when the Jews came on the scene. This homogeneous was contrary to the

multiethnic fiber of the gospel that saves all that believe. The Dunlow study describes how there are few resources for multicultural churches. Dunlow also cites how formation needs to be focused on more than just gathering different people groups. This was evident in this research study, where multicultural practices scored the lowest subtopic. Dunlow also cites how the language barrier can be challenging but overcome with translators and lots of love and strategy.

The Huyser et al. (2011) study was a case study of two Christian schools that were both struggling: one school embraced diversity from a biblical standpoint while the other remained traditional. The traditional school was confused and had a lack of identity by the changing demographics around them. The school that embraced diversity centered around humility and learning from others. These studies complement the current study and show why multiculturalism is necessary for the 21st century. One of the driving forces of the diversified school was a unified leadership that believed diversity was grounded in the Bible and essential to the community.

Fisher and Crawford (2016) focus on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which centers around meeting people's lower needs for growth to come into play immediately. Therefore, when one realizes they are loved and belong, they immediately seek higher intellectual and spiritual needs. People begin to want God's will and calling to be realized. MCSFS confirmed this by showing the connection between church practices that focus on intentionally loving our neighbors, which in turn causes them to grow spiritually.

Empirical Implications

Multicultural Christianity is not new in 2022, but many churches under the multicultural name do not practically use multicultural practices. Also, multicultural is often related to liberal ideas that include non-biblical practices. This was evident in the multicultural church subtopic, the lowest scoring of all three subsets. Stewart (2017) performed a study on multicultural churches and relationships. Stewart stated that connections do not happen by chance, but leadership must implement fundamental strategies to bring different cultures into deeper relationships. Spiritual formation can often be ambiguous but growing closer to God and each other will always result in maturity. The telos of formation are the love of God and the love for others. Stewart also states how multicultural Christianity is simply the churches reflecting the demographic makeup of the communities.

The Loewen (1016) study focused on helping Africans with spiritual formation, and one of the biggest challenges is learning their current worldview and then “communicate biblical worldview to Africans, focusing on new ways to look at life and reality, rather than merely telling them what not to do” (p. 343). The current study showed this when contextualization had a high Spearman’s rho correlation to all spiritual growth elements. This is in line with the King James Bible (1611/2003), which states, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 16:2). This is critical in multicultural environments which mean not preaching in an overly authoritative way but through contextualization allowing the word of God to transform lives. This requires strategies that include multicultural preaching

practices in relevant cultural methods, high levels of contextualization, and modeling by the leadership team.

The Dunlow study (2017) stressed the lack of curriculum, which is a significant problem for multicultural churches and may be one reason the intellectual maturity correlation coefficient was the lowest of the three Spearman's rho correlation. The Dunlow study also revealed a lack of cohesive multicultural strategies for multicultural churches. This led to churches gathering as multicultural but not engaging in multicultural practices, which the current study also revealed.

Research Limitations

This study focused on distinctly multicultural churches; therefore, surveying non-multicultural churches for multicultural church practices was unreasonable. This is why a purposive non-probability design was used. Therefore, the results should not be applied or patterns looked for in traditional churches in America. Also, the non-randomized sample means that the conclusions should not be generalized to all multicultural churches. However, the patterns and relationships can be used to gain valuable information for multicultural churches, especially with the churches coming from across the United States of America.

Additionally, causation should not be considered because of the correlational nature of this study. Only relationships can be determined from the MCSFS. Another limitation would include the research being applied to an urban big city context. The churches included in this study were limited to that environment, although smaller towns could still learn from the study but would need to be cautious. Also, one could assume that people may have answered questions that they believed should be considered positive spiritual growth. In addition, this was a self-made survey, so the effectiveness of this survey has never been tested. Because of this,

Cronbach's alpha test was run for internal validity. The instrument used in this study was the MCSFS, and the author created it for this study. So, to strengthen the reliability of the study's results, Cronbach's alpha was used for internal validity. Triangulation was used for external validity.

O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014) state that "values of Cronbach's α equal to or greater than .70 are deemed optimal as they indicate that at least 70% of the observed person-to-person differences in response to the items on the instrument are due to person-to-person differences in the "true amount" of the attribute being measured" indicate that at least 70% of the observed person-to-person differences in response to the items on the instrument is due to person-to-person differences in the "true amount" of the attribute being measured (p. 124)". This means that 30% or less is due to random error. Therefore, the instrument is measuring what it intends to measure. The Cronbach's alpha for the MCSFS was a substantial and reliable .914 value measuring the 24 questions of the four subsets, which contain six questions each, shown in Table 16. This measurement was obtained by placing the questions into the SPSS software and using all 97 observations illustrated in Table 17 and Table 18 on page 133.

Table 17: Cronbach's Alpha Table*Cronbach's Alpha Table*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.912	.914	24

Table 18: Number of Included Surveys in Cronbach's Alpha Test*Number of Included Surveys in Cronbach's Alpha Test*

		N	%
Cases	Valid	97	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	97	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Further Research

1. A similar study that used random sampling could be performed with more stability in the country to improve generalizability. Currently, churches are going through many changes due to the post-pandemic and now economic changes
2. A particular and successful multicultural church could be chosen and used as a population to obtain a higher confidence level.
3. A study that somehow combines multicultural churches with traditional churches and then compares them to see which one has higher spiritual formation scores. This would be more like an experimental study and require more time than someone working on a doctorate.

4. A different methodization, such as a qualitative design, could be employed to gain a deeper understanding of what a participant is experiencing as they are exposed to multicultural practices.

Summary

The study sought a relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation in spiritual, social, and intellectual growth. Spearman's rho overwhelmingly showed a significant positive correlation between these two variables in each subset. The most important statistic from this study is that as multicultural church practices are performed in their congregations, the congregations increase in spiritual formation. Another important discovery is that many multicultural churches try to be multicultural but do not understand what practices to perform and how to perform them. They do not have a high contextualization intelligence, nor do they know the importance of intentionality, diverse leadership, and the amount of effort that being a multicultural church takes. Many multicultural churches meet and grow but do not have a well-defined process (Dunlow, 2017). Another essential concept is the lack of curriculum for multicultural churches, which hinders spiritual growth, especially in the intellectual area. However, multicultural churches are growing. As the country continues to change demographically, this researcher believes this church model will be one of the answers to help America grow closer to God and each other.

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APPENDIX A: MULTICULTURAL CHURCH SPIRITUAL FORMATION SURVEY

by Jack A. Wingard

Questions 1-7 were omitted because they were screening and demographic questions.

Instructions: Circle one answer that best describes your answer to the statement or question.

Questions 8-13 should be answered based on the following scale.

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

8	The church I attend is intentional about diversity.	1 2 3 4
9	The church I attend teaches and preaches in a way that is relevant to my culture.	1 2 3 4
10	The church I attend promotes storytelling or sharing one's testimony in meetings.	1 2 3 4
11	The church I attend teaches that God's word promotes a multicultural congregation for the glory of Christ.	1 2 3 4
12	The church I attend has different races, ethnicities, or cultures present in the leadership team.	1 2 3 4
13	The church I attend has no more than 80% of one race, ethnicity, or culture, making up its congregation.	1 2 3 4

Questions 14-31 should be answered with the following numbers.

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4

Questions 14-19 measure spiritual growth

14	I am experiencing God's presence in my life more frequently.	1 2 3 4
15	I am experiencing more peace in my life during stressful times.	1 2 3 4
16	I am experiencing more joy in my life.	1 2 3 4
17	I am experiencing more love for God in my life.	1 2 3 4
18	I do not want to sin as much as I used to.	1 2 3 4
19	I am being led by God's Spirit in my life.	1 2 3 4

Questions 20-25 measure social maturity.

20	I am growing in my relationships with different races, ethnicities, and cultures.	1 2 3 4
21	I am more concerned with social justice issues.	1 2 3 4
22	I am questioning my own cultural biases and prejudices.	1 2 3 4
23	I am growing deeper in my relationships with others.	1 2 3 4
23	I am more concerned with all of God's Image bearers than previously in my life.	1 2 3 4
25	I listen deeply to others for understanding without judging.	1 2 3 4

Questions 26-31 measure intellectual maturity.

26	I am growing more humility in my mind.	1 2 3 4
27	I am using more variables in judging morality.	1 2 3 4
28	I am more open-minded to different perspectives.	1 2 3 4
29	My thinking is more fluid than previously.	1 2 3 4
30	I believe that the Holy Spirit is helping me control my thoughts more often.	1 2 3 4
31	My thinking is maturing overall.	1 2 3 4

APPENDIX B: ELECTRONIC CONSENT

Title of the Project: The Relationship Between Multicultural Christianity and Spiritual

Formation: A Quantitative Correlational Study

Principal Investigator: Jack Wingard, Candidate for Doctor of Education, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age and attending a multicultural church for at least 6 months in which you attend two worship services per month. You should not be part of the paid staff such as pastor, assistant pastor, or leadership team. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to determine if a relationship exists between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation in the areas of spirit, mind, and social.

The study will help determine if multicultural practices such as diversity, storytelling, shared leadership, contextualization, and intentionality will promote spiritual formation for people participating in multicultural churches. This will help determine if there is a relationship between fostering relationships with people of different races, ethnicities, and cultures and growing in grace and into a closer relationship with Christ himself.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. If you agree to this study, you will click on a link that will ask you some screening questions; this should only take a few minutes to complete

2. If you are eligible based on the screening question you will be take to an online survey that should only take about 15 minutes to complete
3. The survey will be recorded digitally but no identifying information will link you to the survey

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include a better understanding of the relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation which can benefit in many areas of life such as loving God and loving others and better control of behaviors

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study include feelings of discomfort when filling out the survey and remembering your attitudes, feelings, and thoughts about growing closer to God and others. The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as a student at Liberty University. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, the study will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this

study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Jack A. Wingard. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 334-235-6914 or jwingard1@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, William Higley, at wjhigley@liberty.edu

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher[s], **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records/you can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the research team using the information provided above.

APPENDIX C: CHURCH LEADER(S)'s CONSENT FORM

[Date]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to see if there is a relationship between multicultural practices and spiritual formation. You were chosen because you are on the Multiethnic.Church website as a self-reporting multicultural church. The title of my research project is *The Relationship Between Multicultural Christianity and Spiritual Formation: Quantitative Correlational Study*.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, have been attending church for at least six months, and attend at least two worship services per month. Participants will first complete screening questions for eligibility; if they are eligible, then a consent form will be provided. After the consent form, participants will click to proceed to the survey. Participants, if willing, will complete an online survey. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participants will be asked to provide the name of their congregation. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be collected.

You can view the online survey and the consent form by clicking [here](#) if you're a church member and want to participate (hyperlink to begin the process of the online survey)

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at [church name]. You can forward this email to participants to fill out the survey, or you can email me a list of church members so I can send them an online survey.

Thank you for considering my request; if you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval or respond by email to jwingard1@liberty.edu. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely

Jack Wingard
Candidate for Ed.D in Christian Leadership



APPENDIX D: CHURCH LEADER'S PERMISSION RETURN LETTER

Date:

Title:

Company Address:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled, *The Relationship Between Multicultural Christianity and Spiritual Formation: Quantitative Correlational Study*, I have decided to grant you permission to:

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- I will provide our membership list to Jack Wingard, and Jack Wingard may use the list to contact our church members to invite them to participate in his research study.
- I grant permission for Jack Wingard to contact church members to invite them to participate in his research study.
- I will not provide potential participant information to Jack Wingard, but we agree to send/provide his study information to church members on his behalf.

Sincerely,

Official's Name:

Official's Title:

Official's Company/Organization:

APPENDIX E: CONGREGANTS ' RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Date:

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to see if there is a relationship between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, must have attended a multicultural church for six months, and have attended church services for at least two times per month. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the procedures: consent form, Survey. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please click here (include hyperlink to online survey).

Once you complete the screening questions used to determine your eligibility for this study, a consent document will be provided. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please click the buttons to proceed to the Survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the Survey.

Sincerely,

Jack Wingard
Candidate for Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership



APPENDIX F: CONGREGANT'S RECRUITMENT: FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Date:

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student at the School of Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. I am researching whether a relationship exists between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. [Last week/two weeks ago/etc.] an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to complete the survey if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is Date.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, must have attended a multicultural church for six months, and have attended church services for at least two times per month. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the procedures: consent form, Survey. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please click here (include hyperlink to online survey).

Once you complete the screening questions that will be used to determine your eligibility for this study, a consent document will be provided. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please click the buttons to proceed to the Survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the Survey.

Sincerely,

Jack Wingard
Candidate for Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership



APPENDIX G: D.J. CHUANG RECRUITMENT LETTER

[Date]

Dear Mr. D.J. Chuang,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. My research aims to see if there is a relationship between multicultural practices and spiritual formation. I am writing to you because of your website Multiethnic.Church. I am using this website to form my population of self-reporting multicultural churches. I want to thank you for creating this Hub and for sharing information. The title of my research project is *The Relationship Between Multicultural Christianity and Spiritual Formation: Quantitative Correlational Study*. I am using independent variables of intentionality, vision, storytelling, contextualization, unified doctrine, and diverse congregations, along with the dependent variables of spiritual formation in spiritual, social, and intellectual areas.


I am writing this letter to possibly gain access to posting a recruitment letter for participation in my research or to gain access to some of the social media platforms. I also wanted to set up an interview by phone with you to discuss my research and any ideas you may have for me. I have included in this letter some information about my research, the screening criteria, and a link so you can view the online survey.

Participants must be 18 years or older, have been attending church for at least six months, and attend at least two worship services per month. Participants will first complete screening questions for eligibility; if they are eligible, a consent form will be provided. After the consent form, participants will click to proceed to the survey. Participants, if willing, will complete an online survey. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participants will be asked to provide the name of their congregation. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be collected. You can view the online survey and the consent form by clicking here (hyperlink to begin the process of the online survey)

Thank you for considering my request; if you choose to speak to me, please answer this by email or call me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jack Wingard
Candidate for Ed.D. in Christian Leadership



APPENDIX H: SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITMENT

ATTENTION FACEBOOK FRIENDS: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree at Liberty University. My study aims to see if a relationship exists between multicultural church practices and spiritual formation. To participate, you must be 18 years old or older, have attended a multicultural church for at least six months, and have attended at least two church services per month. Participants will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey, which should take about 15 minutes. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please click the link at the end of this post. A consent document will be provided on the first page of the survey. Please review this page, and if you agree to participate, click the “proceed to survey” button at the end.

To take the survey, click here: [LINK]

Twitter

Are you a regular churchgoer at a multicultural church Click here for information about a research study on spiritual formation: [insert link to anonymous survey]

APPENDIX I: SCREENING SURVEY

Screening Survey

The following research is only available to people meeting certain criteria. Please check the following boxes. If you do not meet the criteria, the survey technology will close out the survey.

I am over the age of 18 years old: Yes No

I have attended the multicultural church for at least 6 months: Yes No

I have attended the church at least two times per month during the 6 months: Yes No

I attend multicultural church either in person or online: Yes No

If you answered yes to all of the previous questions, you may proceed to the consent page.

APPENDIX J: CHURCH PARTICIPATION EMAILS

Hello Jack,

We received your request to make your survey accessible to our church members.

The link to your survey will be on our Facebook page as well as in our online newsletter.

If you need any further assistance please let us know.

Best regards,

A thick, black, horizontal brushstroke used to redact the signature of the sender.

Hello Jack,

I am----- We spoke a few days ago about completing your survey for your Doctoral research. Dr. ----- is our founder and Senior Pastor. And he has agreed to forward this to our congregation in hopes of assisting you with your research.

Our church is in Cambria Heights (Queens), New York, and is composed by various cultures, so I hope that the information you gather will help fulfill the purpose of your research.

I wish you the best with your Doctoral work.

May the Lord bless you,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

Queens, New York

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]



Hi Jack,

We were finally able to touch base about your survey today as a staff and I wanted to let you know we will be placing it in one of our email campaigns to our congregation later this week.

Is there a deadline for this survey?

Thanks!

Blessings,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hello Jack,

I am-----, the Connection Pastor at [REDACTED]. Congratulations on your educational success thus far and moving forward.

Your request sounds like something we might help you with. I cannot allow you access to the membership list. However, I feel confident that we can provide some participation in your survey. Would ten participants in your survey be sufficient?

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best Regards,

Hi Jack,

Glad to hear of your interest in this area of church life. I would be glad to take the survey and I would be glad to announce to the church an opportunity for any who want to, to let me know of their desire to participate. I would then forward them the link to your information.

I am not sure the congregation as a whole would simply want us to give out their email info without prior permission.

If this will help, let me know.

May the Lord use this to strengthen the church.

[Redacted signature block containing four lines of blacked-out text]

APPENDIX K: FOLLOW-UP RECRUITMENT LETTER

6/15/22

Dear Church Leadership,

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Christian leadership. My study aims to see if there is a relationship between multicultural practices and spiritual formation. You were chosen because you are on the Multiethnic.Church website as a self-reporting multicultural church. The title of my research project is *The Relationship Between Multicultural Christianity and Spiritual Formation: Quantitative Correlational Study*.

I am asking leadership to take the survey along with the congregants. We have updated the survey to include online participants. You can email my link to your congregants. I am also asking if you will post the survey link to your social media accounts if possible. Here is the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RWYMTKK>

Participants, if willing, will complete an online survey through SurveyMonkey. It should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you for considering my request; if you choose to grant permission, please reply to this email at jwingard1@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Jack Wingard
Candidate for Ed.D in Christian Leadership



APPENDIX L: IRB APPROVAL

May 25, 2022
Jack Wingard
William Higley

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-812 The Relationship Between Multicultural Christianity and Spiritual Formation : Quantitative Correlational Study

Dear Jack Wingard, William Higley,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office